



# WESTERN RECORDER

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## FOR THE RECORD

**Baptists**  
Baptist World Alliance delegates approve reorganization plan. *Page 2.*

**Kentucky**  
Somerset pastor John Mark Toby to be nominated as KBC president. *Page 3.*

**Financial Forum**  
Investing your treasure here on earth is an unwise strategy. *Page 4.*

**Guest editorial**  
Are Baptist boarding schools still needed? *Page 5.*

**Kentucky**  
Inaugural 1:8 Leadership Experience prepares next generation of missions leaders. *Page 6.*

**Issues**  
Church observers ask: Where have all the good men gone? *Page 7.*

**Resources**  
Uncertain times breed anxiety in churches. *Page 9.*

**Nation**  
Four television ministries still refusing to comply with Senate probe. *Page 10.*

## Survey: Unchurched Americans may be attending worship

Phoenix (RNS)—A recent survey shows that “unchurched” Americans may be worshipping more, and “churched” Americans worshipping less, than many people might think.

Numerous surveys track trends among “unchurched” Americans, but what does “unchurched” really mean? Does it mean never attending religious services, not attending regularly, or to simply be unaffiliated with a particular congregation?

Phoenix-based Ellison Research said the most common definitions “often don’t tell a complete story about how Americans attend religious worship services.”

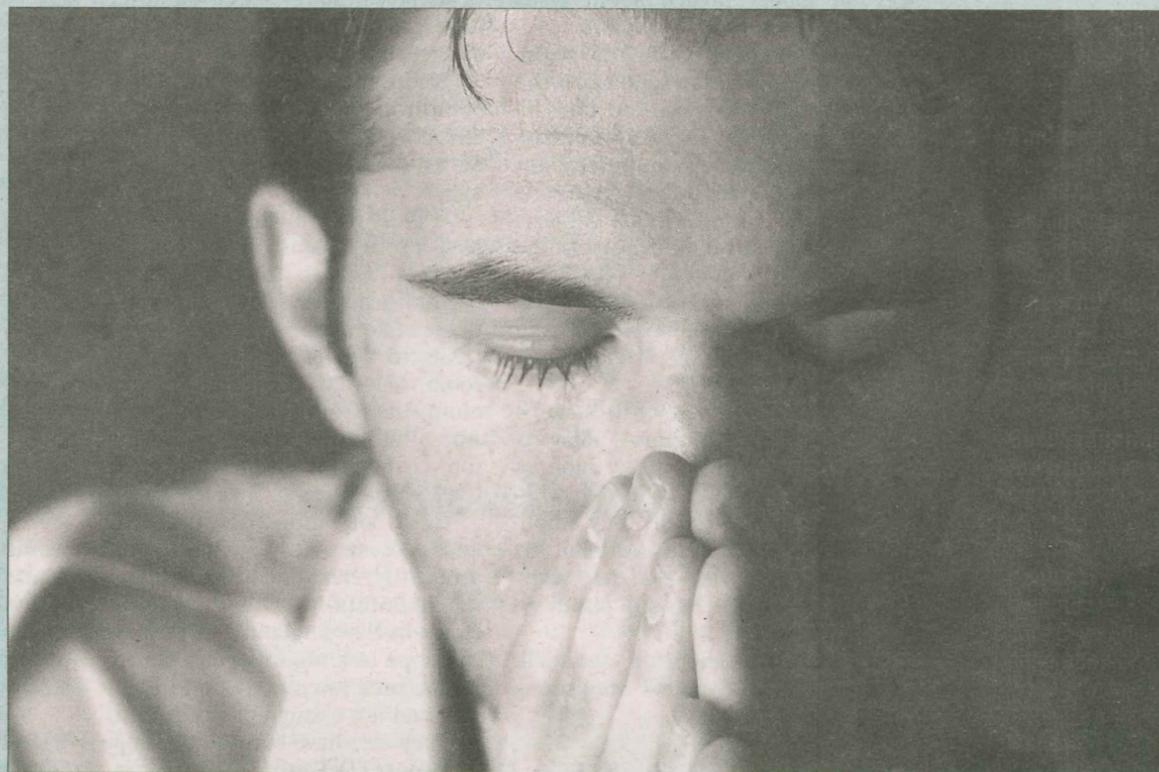
The Ellison survey, released last month, showed that 40 percent of the “unchurched” do not entirely stay away from worship services, and 37 percent of “churched” Americans do not make it to religious services every week, even though they consider themselves regular attenders.

“There’s often an assumption that people either do attend worship services or they don’t,” said Ellison President Ron Sellers. “But what we find in this study is that one out of every five Americans is attending worship services at least occasionally during the year.”

In a survey of more than 1,000 adults, 29 percent of Americans do not attend religious services at all; 10 percent attend only on holidays; 9 percent attend occasionally; 19 percent attend between one and three times a month; and 33 percent attend once a week or more.

The study also estimated that 43 million adults typically categorized as “unchurched” will visit a church at some point during the year.

## What wounds a pastor?



### Gap between dreams & reality often cause of pastors' wounds

By Jennifer Harris & John Hall  
*Associated Baptist Press*

Columbia, Mo. (ABP)—Wounds can cause ministers to question—or even abandon—their call to ministry. But what wounds a minister?

“There is a great deal of idealism wrapped up in a pastor’s desire to serve people through the church and to serve people in the church,” said Bob Perry, congregational health team leader for the Baptist General Convention of Missouri. “The reality usually doesn’t match.”

This gap between expectation and reality often leads to a degree of disillusionment when pastors find their churches are less than the ideal they had hoped.

Pastors study this ideal in seminary, but often are not prepared to deal with situations they actually encounter, according to Perry.

“Ministers sometimes lack some of the basic leadership skills,” he added.

They need to know how to work with people and understand the power structure in the church, Per-

ry suggested.

Ron Herring, director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas’ congregational-leadership team, agreed.

“Probably the thing (pastors) do most often is assume they have more authority than they do,” he noted.

They try to make rapid changes without understanding the unspoken “value system” of the particular congregation, he added.

Young ministers do not know  
□ See *Gap between dreams ... Page 8*

## Somerset volunteers help Covington church host successful VBS

By Ken Walker  
*State Correspondent*

Covington—Like many small, inner-city churches, Oakland Avenue Baptist Church in Covington was struggling after various problems reduced the once-vibrant congregation to a fraction of its 1970s attendance levels.

However, thanks to assistance from First Baptist Church of Somerset, the Kentucky Baptist congregation welcomed hundreds of people to this summer’s vacation Bible school.

Eleven of them accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior. Nine were baptized during a standing-room-only, Wednesday evening service held during the June event.

“Even the local bartender was doing outreach for us,” commented Ken Richardson, Oakland Avenue’s bivocational pastor. “There’s excitement. I think (the church members) are looking in amazement at what happened.”

“It was truly inspiring,” added longtime pianist and organist David Miller. “It’s given us a whole new hope for the neighborhood.”

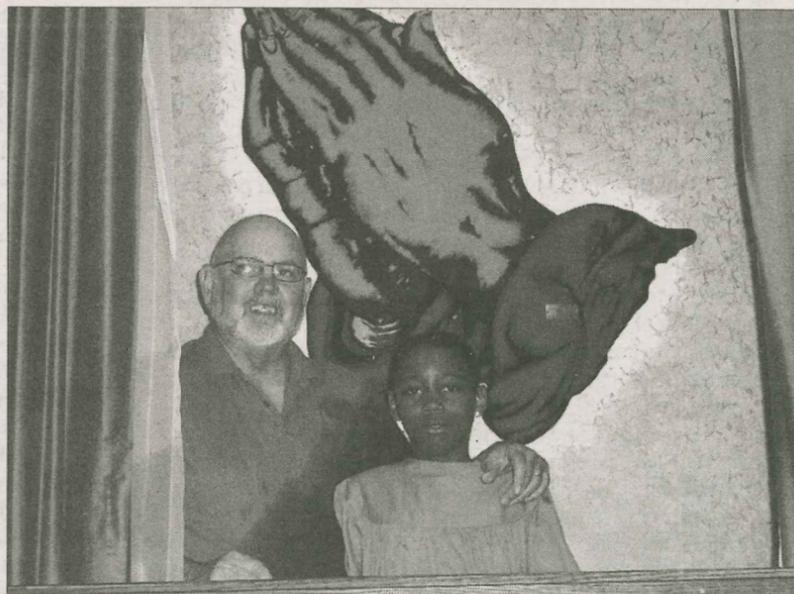
“There’s a different spirit in our church now. It’s made me feel different. It’s left a lasting impression.”

Initially, it appeared Oakland Avenue—which averages 30 on a Sunday—would not hold VBS despite the offer of a \$300 grant from Northern Kentucky Baptist Association made available to churches with annual budgets of less than \$75,000.

Although initially expressing interest, Richardson later e-mailed Director of Missions Rick Robbins to say his church could not attract enough workers. Part of the reluctance stemmed from organizing a VBS staff two years ago and only having eight children show up.

However, about the time Robbins received that e-mail, Pastor French Harmon of First Baptist, Somerset, called the association office.

□ See *Covington church ... Page 3*



**NEW LIFE** Ken Richardson (left), bivocational pastor of Oakland Avenue Baptist Church in Covington, prepares to baptize a young new believer who accepted Jesus Christ as Savior at the church’s vacation Bible school in June. The congregation, with help from First Baptist Church of Somerset volunteers, saw hundreds of people attend VBS, 11 of whom made decisions for Christ. (Photo courtesy of French Harmon)

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## Church planter gains foothold for revival in New England

By Adam Miller  
On Mission

**Winthrop, Mass. (BP)**—For nine years in Massachusetts, the town of Winthrop has been changing little by little as God has worked through the lives of Dick and Doreen May.

The Mays, natives to the area, planted the Evangelical Baptist Teaching and Worship Center in the heart of a town where most churches no longer preach about Jesus Christ.

"OK, let's start from the beginning, Genesis," May says, once the Boston-area congregation has filtered in for a Thursday evening Bible study, some coming straight from work. Dick talks about creation, then the fall of man—subjects lost on deaf ears in most parts of the region.

If doctors had been right a few years ago, this night of studying God's Word would never have come about.

"I was diagnosed with stage 4 non-Hodgkin's lymphoma," May recalled. "I was given a few months to live."

May's dire prognosis only amplified the urgency of his task. But his overwhelming vision—a true revival in New England—is still a soul-by-soul process.

"This is the 'show-me, don't-tell-me region,'" May noted. "And some-

times they don't want you to show them or tell them. They're 'all set.' It's like drilling down for oil. But here, instead of soft soil you have granite."

Though Boston and New England are historically the points of origin for much of the religious leaning of the United States, the area has in recent history leaned largely in the other direction. As a result, many of its picturesque church buildings have iced over into museums of their former selves.

Before moving into "downtown" Winthrop, members of the small church plant began by meeting in May's modified garage nine years ago.

"I built it from the ground up," May, a retired construction contractor, said of a two-story building adjacent to his house. Up the winding iron staircase he salvaged from a junkyard are his study and workout room. Below is the garage-turned-chapel-turned-garage where he stores his Honda Shadow—the motorcycle he rides into town for mid-week evangelism.

Grassroots ministries like Dick and Doreen May's—where small groups gather and the Bible is taught faithfully—are few and far between in New England. But they are the hope of a region where church has become too much of an institution and not enough of a community. They also have become the hope for people like Pauline Delassandra.

Delassandra used to be a waitress at a diner frequented by the Mays. Over the course of several months, she and Dick May became friends. They talked about her life, eventually about God and the prospect of Delassandra attending the church May was leading.

But she did not give it all much serious thought until she was diagnosed with cancer and began chemotherapy. The Mays began praying for Delassandra's physical healing as well as for her salvation. One day in

### Celebration to mark 50-year work in N.E.

**Northborough, Mass. (BP)**—The Baptist Convention of New England is making plans to celebrate 50 years of Southern Baptist work in the region and 25 years of state convention status as part of its annual meeting this fall.

The celebration and annual meeting will be Nov. 13-15 in Marlboro, Mass., near the convention offices in Northborough, about 30 miles from Boston.

The convention now has more than 250 churches and seven Baptist associations, though its leaders note the daunting task ahead in New England. Considering New England's population of 15 million people, the convention said nearly 6,000 churches would have to be started right away in order to have one church for every 2,500 people.

As they look to the future chal-

lenge, New England Baptists expressed gratitude for what God has given them so far.

"We're so thankful and want to give God the glory for what He has done here in a mere 50 years," said BCNE historian Sandy Wideman. "That's a short history compared to Southern Baptist life. We like to think it's like the granite up here—there's lots of rock and it's hard, hard work, but when it's there, it's solid."

"We're just thankful we've had Southern Baptists from literally all over the country to come in droves in mission groups as volunteers. We want to celebrate those who have built the work up here," she said.

Anyone who has had a role in New England's Southern Baptist work is encouraged to attend the anniversary celebration.

**SHARING CHRIST** *New England church planter Dick May visits with Pauline Delassandra. May and his wife, Doreen, met Delassandra at a diner where she worked as a waitress. The Mays walked with her through her battle with cancer and Delassandra eventually accepted Christ right there in the diner. (BP photo)*



### Nashville congregation votes to allow pastor to retire early

**Nashville (BP)**—An early retirement package for Jerry Sutton as pastor of Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville was approved by the congregation July 27.

The package will include one month's salary for each of Sutton's 22 years as the church's pastor, to be paid over a five and a half-year period. It also includes medical and long-time disability insurance until Sutton, 56, starts a new job or reaches the age of 62.

Sutton, in a July 24 letter to the congregation posted on the church's Web site, told Two Rivers members he hoped they would approve the package.

"Over the last 14 months, we have been involved in a conflict which does not appear will go away," Sutton wrote in the letter. "An incredible amount of energy has been expended and consumed handling the conflict. Although we have won court cases and church votes, the conflict continues."

"Our people are weary, leaders are tired, and those who love Two Rivers honestly want it to end. I do not believe that will happen as long as I am pastor at Two Rivers."

Sutton was to preach his last sermon at Two Rivers this past Sunday.

The church has been embroiled in controversy over Sutton's leadership since July 2007, when a church trustee was removed from membership. A group of about 50 current or former church members filed suit last September, seeking access to detailed financial records and launched a Web site listing their grievances against the pastor.

## BWA delegates approve plan for reorganization

**Prague, Czech Republic (ABP)**—About 400 delegates to the Baptist World Alliance's annual gathering in Prague, Czech Republic, ended their meeting July 25 with approval of a major restructuring of the organization's governing structure.

Baptists from more than 60 countries attended the meeting. BWA, the worldwide umbrella group for Baptists, links more than 214 national and regional Baptist denominational groups around the globe.

BWA leaders approved the plan, which was one result of a BWA Implementation Task Force that was appointed in 2005, during the BWA Centennial World Congress in Birmingham, England.

The restructuring plan leaves the group's largest governing body, the BWA General Council, unchanged. But it reduces its smaller governing panel—the BWA Executive Committee—from 69 to 25 members while increasing the committee's power to carry on BWA business between annual gatherings. The plan also creates a 17-member nominating committee, charged with ensuring broad representation of BWA's glob-

al membership on its boards and commissions.

The plan generated considerable debate during two open forums prior to its adoption, and BWA supporters amended it several times from the task force's original proposal.

A vocal Caribbean contingency raised questions about what impact the changes, if implemented, would have on the office of BWA General Secretary Neville Callam. Callam—the century-old organization's first non-white chief executive—took over the post last year.

Following debate, members of the Implementation Task Force withdrew a recommendation that BWA develop formal covenants with its six autonomous regional bodies. The covenants would have spelled out mutual responsibilities between each region and the organization as a whole.

Since the full Baptist World Congress meets only every fifth year, officials said they hoped that the process could be agreed upon in time for changes to be implemented by the next World Congress meeting, scheduled for Hawaii in 2010.

In other business:

■ Several BWA commissions and panels held meetings during the gathering. A joint meeting of the BWA Doctrine and Interchurch Cooperation Commission and Freedom and Justice Commission resulted in the appointment of a smaller group to formulate a response to a letter from 138 moderate Muslim scholars titled, "A Common Word Between Us and You." The letter was sent to world Christian leaders, including BWA president David Coffey, in October 2007. The group will formulate a response and circulate it to the BWA regional bodies for approval.

■ Bangladesh Baptist leader Dennis Datta received BWA's Denton and Janice Lotz Human Rights Award during the meeting. Government officials forced Datta out of Bangladesh in 1969 because of his advocacy for religious freedom and other human rights. He has since returned to the majority-Muslim nation and continued to work as a spokesman for Bangladeshi Christians as well as an outspoken advocate for the poor, women and environmental protection.

## Pastor John Mark Toby to be nominated as KBC president

By Drew Nichter  
News Director

**Louisville**—John Mark Toby, pastor of Beacon Hill Baptist Church in Somerset, will be nominated as Kentucky Baptist Convention president during the KBC annual meeting Nov. 11 in Lexington.

Toby, who was KBC first vice president in 2005-2006, will be nominated by Charles Barnes, a member of Hurstbourne Baptist Church in Louisville who served as KBC president in 1998-1999 and is chairman of the Kentucky Baptists Connect initiative.

Toby currently is the only announced candidate for the post.

"I think the most important thing that John Mark brings to the table is his experience in KBC life," Barnes said of Toby. "He has served in a number of different capacities in the KBC in recent years. He'll bring ... very steady, experienced leadership."

Barnes noted that Toby's Beacon Hill congregation has been "very

supportive of the Cooperative Program (and) very supportive of missions." According to the church's Web site, church members have been part of mission trips to Ethiopia, India, Poland and Russia.

Discussing his nomination, Toby expressed a desire to "have the opportunity to serve (and) to help ... carry out the Kentucky Baptists Connect goals."

The Kentucky Baptists Connect emphasis began in November 2004 and called for 125,000 baptisms across the state by 2009—an average of 25,000 per year. Instead, during the first three full years of the initiative, baptism numbers have averaged less than 17,000 per year, slipping to 15,503 in 2007, the fewest baptisms in more than a decade, according to KBC Annual Church Profile statistics.

Toby said the way to baptize more new believers is through personal evangelism.

"That would be the one goal I would really want to emphasize," he noted. "Personal evangelism strategies for all Kentucky Baptists to share their faith, how to share their testimonies and to be trained in evangelism."

Toby also mentioned a need to strengthen Sunday school and vacation Bible school attendance in KBC churches. In addition, he underscored the importance of Kentucky Baptist involvement in Crossover Louisville '09 prior to next year's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting. Toby said he wants to partner with the planning team already in place and to "fill in where the gaps are ... and work in those areas."

Toby, who has served Beacon Hill since 1999, also was pastor at First Baptist Church of Fairdale and Hedgenville Baptist Church in Danville. He has served as a chaplain with the Kentucky Army National Guard



John Mark Toby

## KBC's partnership missions department implements new approach

By Kristie Randolph  
Kentucky Baptist Convention

**Louisville**—Seeking to increase missions involvement convention-wide, the Kentucky Baptist Convention's partnership missions department has restructured its approach to equip KBC churches for missions.

While existing partnerships will remain a priority for the department, partnership missions director Scott Pittman said its focus is shifting toward facilitating partnerships directly between KBC churches and people groups, regions or countries throughout the world.

Pittman's vision is for every Kentucky Baptist church "to be directly involved in sending its members to all the world to share the gospel."

"In the not-so-distant past, direct missions involvement of the layperson was unheard of, but easy air travel and instant communication have increased the effectiveness of short-term missionaries," Pittman pointed out. "I believe we are seeing a cumulative effect of thousands of volunteers going overseas for the past 20 years.

"Across the (Southern Baptist Convention), this has encouraged churches to become increasingly involved in international missions efforts as they view their role in the Great Commission from a new perspective."

Pittman said that while the traditional partnership model has served Kentucky Baptists well in past years, he saw a need for a structure better suited to mobilize the growing number of volunteers and to encourage all KBC churches to increase their level of missions involvement.

The new structure also is designed to better complement the new strategies of the SBC's International Mission Board and North American Mission Board.

"Both the IMB and NAMB have recognized the importance of incorporating volunteers into their field strategies," Pittman noted. "The focus has also shifted to people groups and population segments, and we want to enable our churches to join these efforts."

Previously, the partnership missions department worked to devel-

op relationships with Baptist missionaries in select countries or regions in order to determine if Kentucky Baptists could effectively support work in that area.

Once an official partnership was approved by the convention, the department would coordinate teams from KBC churches to travel on short-term mission trips.

"The new structure is all about the churches," Pittman said. "We are here to serve the churches by helping them fulfill their call to go wherever God is leading. Now, we can help facilitate 'tailor-made' mission experiences to meet the specific needs of any church."

Pittman has developed four levels of missions involvement and is encouraging churches to identify their current level and begin to move toward the next level. Under the new structure, churches can now choose the region or people group with which they want to work.

**Level one—exploring missions.** Churches have had limited experience but understand the importance of missions.

since 1983. A former president of the Kentucky Baptist Pastors' Conference, Toby recently completed a term as chairman of the KBC's Committee on Committees. He also has served on the KBC Mission Board's administrative committee and Business and Finance Committee.

On the Southern Baptist Convention level, Toby served on the SBC Tellers Committee in 2004 and 2007.

Toby is a graduate of Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond; Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville; and Luther Rice Seminary in Lithonia, Ga.

Beacon Hill Baptist Church was among the top 40 churches in the state in Cooperative Program giving in 2007, with a total of nearly \$90,000 (10 percent of undesignated receipts), according to information provided by the KBC's business services team. Data from the 2007 KBC ACP statistics showed that Beacon Hill Church reported a total of 42 baptisms last year.

**Level two—increasing involvement.** Churches have been exposed to overseas missions and are seeking God's direction for a greater commitment to missions.

**Level three—partnering strategically.** Churches are ready to commit for a specific time to work with an IMB missionary in a specific region.

**Level four—fully committed.** Churches desire to take full responsibility for an unreached people group or area without direct missionary assistance.

Pittman said churches seeking missions experiences will continue to have opportunities through the existing partnership between the KBC and the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware.

"The Maryland/Delaware Partnership is just getting underway with scores of missions opportunities available for our churches," he noted. "We are also preparing to send several more teams to help close out our Brazil partnership, and we will continue working alongside our Tanzanian Baptist brothers."

*"The new structure is all about the churches. We are here to serve the churches by helping them fulfill their call to go wherever God is leading. Now, we can help facilitate 'tailor-made' mission experiences to meet the specific needs of any church."*

Scott Pittman, KBC's partnership missions director

## Covington church hosts successful VBS with help from Somerset volunteers

Continued from page 1

Formerly a pastor in Northern Kentucky, Harmon told Robbins his church wanted to do a mission trip in Kentucky to complement others it does across the United States and overseas. The DOM outlined a few possibilities and after praying, Harmon said it was clear God was directing them to Covington.

"Personally, I experienced a revival in my soul," Harmon said. "When you see the tremendous needs of a community and see what the gospel of Jesus Christ can bring to a person, it brings a renewal of the spirit."

Youth Director Bob McAlpin recalled that the 58-member team received a sign from God the morning it left Somerset. As the group and about 20 supporters who showed up for their send off prayed, a double rainbow appeared in the sky.

"It was absolutely beautiful," McAlpin noted. "We felt God's presence. The Lord sent us on this mission trip. I think that's

why it was so successful. He was with us every step."

Robbins also was pleased with the outcome of the cooperative venture.

"It's a great testimony of how a stronger church can link up with a smaller one and make a difference," he said.

The outreach began with flyer distribution throughout the neighborhood, located about two miles east of downtown in the Cincinnati suburb of 43,000. That is when Richardson said he met the man who had recently purchased a nearby bar.

Not only did he agree to put up three flyers, the bar owner showed up for the block party that kicked off the event.

After 225 attended the block party, about 100 children and a few parents came each of the next three days. Each day began with a free lunch for participants. Those who led the sessions agreed that the conversions topped the list of thrills.

McAlpin, who led four neighborhood children in prayers to accept Christ, said he had teens from Somerset join him in those counseling sessions.

"These kids were serious—it was real," the youth director noted. "We'd all put our hands on the Bible and say the sinner's prayer. Every time, there wasn't a dry eye in the room."

"One boy said, 'I've been to Brazil and all over the country and I've never seen anything like this.'"

"It woke us up to the number of families in our neighborhood that seem to be hurting or are hurting," Richardson said of VBS. "For us to feed that many families for four days meant a lot to them."

In addition to the spiritual revival, the Somerset team gave the building a face-lift. Among the improvements were painting the children's Sunday school rooms, patching the church steps, tarring the roof and planting flowers.

The most noticeable repair was to the large praying hands in the church's steeple, a tribute to a 14-year-old girl from the neighborhood who died more than 20 years ago.

Workers from Somerset did preliminary repairs and hired an electrician to make sure the neon-lit, light blue hands glow at night, Richardson noted.

Richardson, who can see the hands from the parsonage next door, explained that the Somerset team's visit has fired him up and let him know that God wants his family to be in this area.

Recently, a large group in the neighborhood that met Richardson at VBS waved as he drove by, although the pastor did not realize they knew him.

"God has blessed us to reach out to the neighborhood people and make relationships with them," Richardson said. "That's our purpose, to not only feed them physically but feed them spiritually."

## WESTERN RECORDER

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

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## Christianity is not a multiple-choice faith

By **Erich Bridges**

Richmond, Va. (BP)—Pop quiz: If you don't really believe Jesus Christ is the one and only way to salvation, would you:

- Pray for the lost at home and abroad?
- Give hard-earned money to support missionaries around the world?
- Consider becoming a missionary?
- Participate in mission projects or evangelistic ministries?
- Risk your personal safety to spread the gospel in hostile places?
- Encourage anyone in your church or family to take such a risk?
- Bother telling your hurting neighbor that Jesus is the answer to his or her desperate questions about life?

No? I didn't think so. I wouldn't either.

If the Good News of salvation in Christ alone is not true, what is the point of spreading it? That would be hypocrisy, fraud, false advertising, bogus journalism. The Christian mission stands or falls on the exclusive truth of the gospel—as does Christianity itself, which has always been a missionary faith.

This basic reality bears repeating—with increasing urgency—every time another study of American religious beliefs appears. The latest is the second installment of the Pew Forum's U.S. Religious Landscape Survey (released in June), compiled from telephone interviews with 35,000 Americans.

The survey explored many aspects of American faith, but the headline statistic was this: "70 percent of Americans with a religious affiliation say that many religions—not just their own—can lead to eternal life." Among Protestant evangelicals surveyed, 57 percent agreed with that statement—including an astonishing 61 percent of Southern

Baptists contacted. Solid majorities of several other conservative, evangelical denominations echoed the universalist response.

Some much-needed perspective on the validity of these responses was quickly provided by evangelicals. They suspect many evangelical respondents confused the word "religion" with "denomination."

That suspicion is "bolstered by the fact that among nondenominational church members (responding to the Pew survey), the percentage of those claiming many religions can lead to eternal life is much lower," Baptist Press reported. "For example, 34 percent of nondenominational evangelicals ... agreed with the 'many religions' option"—still a disturbingly large number, but only about half the percentage of denominational church members who picked the same option.

LifeWay Research, the research arm of LifeWay Christian Resources, also parted company with the Pew survey. As part of a major study to be published in book form this fall, the Southern Baptist entity asked 2,500 Protestant respondents, "How much do you agree/disagree: If a person is sincerely seeking God, he/she can obtain eternal life through religions other than Christianity." Only 31 percent "strongly" or "somewhat" agreed. Forty percent "strongly" or "somewhat" disagreed. Among self-identified evangelical believers, fully 80 percent disagreed.

That is reassuring, but the continuing trend in American churches toward mushy theology—or no theology at all—is clear.

Brad Waggoner, vice president of the B&H Publishing Group, wrote the forthcoming book "The Shape of Faith to Come," which explores the results of the LifeWay study. He warns that the "shape of faith to come is in some ways discouraging. Christians are becoming more uni-

### COMMENTARY

## Crossings camps set record

Over the past nine years, Crossings camps have provided incredible spiritual experiences for teens and chaperones across Kentucky.

This summer alone, Crossings hosted 6,118 participants—a new record. And while final counts have yet to be reported, Crossings has already celebrated more than 220 professions of faith and 430 calls to full-time vocational ministry.

"God chose Crossings for us ... and it was exactly what we needed," wrote Troy Richardson of First Twelve Mile Baptist Church in Campbell County in an e-mail to Scott Bidwell, program director for Jonathan Creek Camp and Conference Center.

"We had four students who made first-time decisions for Christ, and many more who said they needed to get back on track with God," Richardson said. "It felt like the 'Blueprint' theme had been chosen specifically for our group. Everything that we learned was what we needed to hear."

Richardson shared the following

quotes from students:

■ "My Bible study leader explains things in a way that I can understand."

■ "The TAWG (Time Alone With God) booklets are awesome ... they are written so I can understand them. I finally get it."

■ "We can't wait to go back to Crossings."

He also shared examples of two students whose lives were touched during their camp experiences. He told of one student who got off the bus and ran to her grandmother, wrapped her arms around her and said, "I'm sorry for the way that I have been acting. I love you."

Richardson mentioned another student who "did not eat on the way home because she had given all of her money to the missions offering used to help kids go to camp in Zambia."

"It is hard to put into words, but you and your staff have made a difference in our lives," Richardson wrote. "Thank you for your willingness to serve in this capacity."

### PARTNERS IN THE MISSION



Bill Mackey

versalistic and lack biblical views on a host of other issues"—particularly Christians under age 30.

Christian researcher George Barna, among others, has been sounding the alarm for years about biblical ignorance, theological confusion and the pick-and-choose approach to doctrine among evangelicals. Of all the challenges U.S. churches face, this is the greatest, because it undermines the most basic essentials of the faith: The Lord our God is one. Jesus Christ is His only Son, our only Savior and the only way to forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God. He commands His followers to love and worship Him alone, to proclaim the gospel, to baptize and to make disciples among all peoples of the earth (Matthew 28:19; Acts 1:8).

Would Jesus' first disciples have died the martyrs' deaths most of them suffered for an optional Savior? Would the Apostle Paul have endured innumerable beatings, death threats, chains and imprisonment for a multiple-choice gospel? Would William Carey have risked and forsaken so much in Bengal? Would Lottie Moon have given her all in China?

I am thankful that several young Christians believed in Jesus' unique saving power enough to share it repeatedly with a high school hoodlum lost in sin (me)—even as I made fun of them. Eventually the message sank in and I took the Lord's outstretched hand.

What a loving Lord He is, filled with grace and mercy toward all who seek Him. But He is Lord—there is no other.

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

### What are you thinking?

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

This is just one example of how Crossings is impacting church youth groups across Kentucky. By the end of the summer, Richardson's testimony could be multiplied more than 250 times for all of the groups that will participate in the camps.

David Melber, president of Kentucky Baptist Assemblies, is hoping more churches will bring unchurched teens to the camps. He said unchurched teens can come at half the cost, but only 42 applications were received this year.

According to Melber, the 65-member summer staff works hard to build relationships with camp participants, unlike other church group-based camps. Crossings asks youth leaders to send a prayer request for each camper before they arrive at the camp, which enables counselors to pray specifically for students in their group.

It was my privilege to visit Crossings at Cedarmore recently and to thank God for young lives that are being transformed by the gospel. Thank you, Kentucky Baptists, for making these experiences possible by your gifts through the Cooperative Program.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

### STEWARDSHIP

## Investing treasure here on earth is unwise strategy

By **Jeremy White**

A recent landscaping project reminds me of a truth



Jesus taught in Matthew 6:21, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

We spent thousands of dollars for a major re-landscaping of our front and back yards. New plant beds, new border, new mulch—we've had a botanical makeover.

After spending so much, we're now watering more faithfully than we floss. We're checking the mulch for any weed that dares to rear its ugly, green head. We're chastising the dog, "Stay out of the landscaping." We're taking a keen, abnormal interest in the activities of Japanese beetles. Our energies, our concern, our alertness has been drawn to boxwoods, roses and plant names I cannot spell.

Our focus follows our fortune. That is the principle Jesus mentioned. We're drawn toward where our treasure is.

If you buy stock in MacroHard, Inc., you start paying attention to its products. You watch for a mention of the company in the news. You may check its stock price regularly in the paper or on the Internet. You are very aware of what's going on with the company.

It is not sinful to track beetles or stocks; it's just not so smart. Why direct all our energies and attention to something that won't last? As Jesus said in the same passage in Matthew 6, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal."

It is much smarter to store up treasures that last. "But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven," Jesus continued, where they cannot be taken away.

When we invest our treasure in Kingdom causes, we're investing in something that lasts; something that thieves cannot steal; something that new technology will not supplant; something that will not rust; something that will not be overrun with weeds.

Not only is such investing of our treasure wise, it also will align our hearts with Kingdom concerns. If we are directing our treasure toward our local church, missions and important ministries, then our hearts will follow. That is what God really wants—our hearts. Our treasure does not impress Him.

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

## Going back to school can make kids both excited and nervous

**Q: How can I encourage my child as school begins again?**

As the roller coaster slowly made its way up the hill, the young man securely buckled into the seat beside me looked at me and said, "I'm a little scared." "That's okay," I told him. But I couldn't help thinking back to earlier in the day when I had asked him how he was feeling as he was ready to enter middle school. His answer had been remarkably similar: "I'm excited, but also a little scared."

### PARENTING

Most children are excited about the prospect of going back to school. However, for many children, starting back to school brings new challenges—challenges they are aware of; challenges they hope they are ready for; and challenges that might have them just a bit fearful.

Some children will be entering middle school where they will be mixed, even if just casually, with older kids. For the first time, they will be responsible for getting from class to class, opening a locker and following a school schedule different from what they are used to. Others will be starting a new school, perhaps in a new community, having left familiar friends, faces and places behind. Of course, some will be starting school for the first time.

Be aware of the particular circumstances facing your child as school begins again. Show your support. Assure your child that he or she is ready and can handle whatever lies ahead. Share a story from your own experience about a time when you were both excited and a bit scared. Most importantly, remind your child of God's love for them and presence with them. Choose a verse like Isaiah 40:10 and let it be an encouragement each day.—David Garrard

**Q: I'm a college Sunday school teacher and would like to share with students some essential thoughts about marriage. What would you say to a room full of late adolescents and early adults?**

■ The best reason to get married is because God leads you to do so.

■ More than 60 percent of people today will cohabitate before marriage, even though it increases their likelihood of divorce.

■ Unhealthy relationship styles (back-to-back, smothering, master-slave, martyr, etc.) may be based on unhealthy childhood experiences and may require clinical, therapeutic work to determine the cause and then counteract the "stuck" thinking that leads to such destructive patterns.

■ Marriage researchers have determined that couples need five times more positive interactions than negative ones, and that the four most destructive communication patterns are criticism, contempt, defensiveness and stonewalling.

■ Couples do well to "check in" with each other on a daily basis regarding five aspects of communication: appreciations; wishes, hopes and dreams; new information; things that puzzle them; and complaints with requests for change.

■ Two essential aspects of marital communication are assertiveness and active listening. It can be helpful to bring in a couples' coach to help with this.

■ Commitment is not what you do at the wedding as much as it is what you do every day that you are married.

■ Put more into the marriage preparation than the wedding preparation.

■ Rather than build a wedding based on every wedding you've ever seen, brainstorm new ways to infuse spiritual meaning into the ceremony. Have a participative ceremony rather than one designed for spectators.

■ Be careful about getting married too young. Do not marry without extensive premarital education.—James Stillwell

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## Are Baptist boarding schools still needed?

It is estimated that until about the 1880s, more than half of America's secondary schools were private academies. Many of those were boarding schools. After the turn of the last century, the numbers began to decline as more public schools were available. Today, only a handful of the boarding academies still survive. Some would conclude that private Christian boarding schools have outlived their usefulness and can quietly go the way of the dinosaur.

As one who has benefited from the advantages of attending a Baptist boarding school and has spent more than half of his adult life serving in one, I would strongly disagree. If one were to research the reasons most boarding academies closed their doors, you would discover that it was not because there was no longer a need for them, but rather a lack of funding.

One of Kentucky Baptists' boarding schools closed its doors the year before I enrolled at Oneida Baptist Institute in 1961. Some would argue that the Magoffin Baptist Institute in Breathitt County had simply outlived its usefulness. The administration would argue that the need was still there but the financial support was not.

Certainly our ministry has had its share of financial challenges. Just after World War I and before and after the Great Depression, our school was brought to its knees with financial debt. Salaries could not be paid and bills were months in arrears, to the point that Oneida could no longer charge anything, including food to feed the students. Nearly all of our suppliers were demanding cash for purchases. In 1921, Oneida's debt load was so significant that students were sent home and the doors were closed for four months. Only two students graduated in 1921 and we had no graduates in 1922.

Even during the past 50 years, this ministry has faced many financial crises. I believe that if you could talk to the 3,400 students who have graduated from OBI since 1921—as well as countless others who attended but did not graduate—most would tell you that

Oneida played a very important part in their lives. If this ministry had prematurely closed its doors in 1921 it would not have been because the need was not there for generations yet to come, but rather the funds to support us were not provided.

Do we really need Christian boarding schools any more? I would encourage anyone seriously thinking about that to talk to the teachers, administration, support staff and students of those ministries before concluding they are no longer necessary. Let them tell you of the many life-changing experiences they have seen in the lives of young people.

One of the unique opportunities we have at Oneida is being able to provide a living environment free of drugs, alcohol, physical and family conflicts, and many other life-degrading influences our young people often lived in before coming to OBI. I was one of those young people who desperately needed the advantages provided by this ministry. My home environment was a nightmare. As a new Christian, I not only needed the advantages of a Christian boarding school, but I desperately needed to be out of my environment. Like so many of our students, however, I did not have the \$1 per day room and board paid by full-paying students in the 1950s and early '60s.

I don't believe a day goes by that I do not think of the generosity of Kentucky Baptists and the many friends who make it possible for so many low-income students—just like me—to live in an environment that is radically different from the one I left in Ohio. Those wonderful friends made it financially possible for me and countless others to attend, even though I did not have the modest fees requested.

God has indeed blessed this ministry with a wonderful, loving and generous family of friends. After 25 years, I can say from firsthand experience that it will not be because of a lack of need that we may have to close our doors some day, but rather from a lack of financial support.

W.F. Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute

### GUEST EDITORIAL



Bud Underwood

## Keeping up with college-bound students

"And they're off!"

In this part of the state, that saying is usually reserved for spring in relation to the Kentucky Derby. But this time of year it can appropriately be used for youth ministry. Students are leaving this month and heading off to college. And for those leaving for the first time, it will be the only time in their lives you will have the opportunity to help them transition into the post-youth ministry world. Your goal should be to make this transition

as seamless as possible. Honestly, youth ministers should have started preparing them for this day a long time ago—after sophomore year—but there are some things that you can do even now to help.

Like it or not, youth ministers are still students' connection to the local church. You have been their support, encouragement and spiritual mentors and that responsibility does not end when they head off to college, or when you go to a new place of ministry. You need to plan on staying in regular contact with them for at least a year.

You need to ask yourself some honest questions. Have you given them all they need to know to be successful? Have you prepared them spiritually to be able to study Scripture on their own? Have you given them the address and meeting times of the Baptist Campus Minis-

try at the school they are attending? Have you contacted the campus minister to let them know who is coming to the school? Have you given them a list of churches in the area with meeting times and locations?

What about those students who are not going away to college? You need to have a plan to help them move into the big church and meet their unique needs. One of the things communities are doing with young adults who stay home is to hold

a weekly community worship experience. You may not have enough students in your church to provide a unique worship experience, but several churches or an association may have enough resources to pull together a corporate worship experience. In Hopkinsville, young adults gather one night during the week at a neutral location for a corporate worship and Bible study. It is something for those who stay behind that is uniquely theirs. It also is something the college students can plug into when they return home.

Smaller churches seem to be doing a better job at keeping these connections. The mantra, "It takes a village to raise a child," is played out in the smaller church. The pervasive view is that these are our kids. They do not belong to any one family, but to the greater church family. There are more natural connections with

adults in the church.

Adopt students out to a Sunday school class or Woman's Missionary Union group that will send them mail, brownies and, more importantly, pray for them consistently while they are away at school. You also can make sure they receive the church newsletter at college, or mail them Sunday's bulletin or the hometown paper so they can keep up with what is going on back home.

Remote accountability with college students also can be done through text messages, Facebook, MySpace or any other online social network. It gives almost instant contact with the students and allows you to stay in contact. It gives you a chance to ask your students about their classes and if they have plugged into a local church or a campus Christian community.

Also, take a day to go visit them. I know that logistically it may not be possible for you to visit every student in your church at college. But what a way to get other adults in your church involved in their lives. There are people in your church who love to travel, or travel for business purposes. Give these adults a list of students and the colleges they attend and have them contact that student when they are going to be in the area. College students will rarely turn down a free meal, so take them out to eat—someplace nice. Actually, anywhere but the cafeteria would be appreciated.

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

## Building young leaders

### *Inaugural '1:8 Leadership Experience' prepares next generation for missions*

By Garrett Wishall  
Kentucky Baptist Convention

**Louisville**—From painting the ceiling of Jefferson Street Baptist Center to installing water purification systems in the Dominican Republic, 19 Kentucky college students had anything but a typical summer.

These students were part of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's first-ever 1:8 Leadership Experience, a summer program designed to combine missions work with leadership training.

"We wanted to take direct ownership of training student leaders across the state so that when they go back to their schools they can play key roles in their churches and schools," noted Keith Inman, KBC's director of collegiate and young adult ministries.

Preparing students for leadership through discipleship is central to the KBC's approach to college ministry, he emphasized.

In prior summers, the KBC divided groups of students up into "Son Teams" for local and international missions work. Inman said the 1:8 Leadership Experience has replaced that program as a more effective way to train students and oversee their personal development.

Following the missions model presented in Acts 1:8 of taking the gospel to "Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth," Inman said the 1:8 Leadership Experience is designed to prepare students for ministry at the local, national and international levels.

"We wanted to provide an intentional discipleship and leadership experience, but at the same time have students be actively involved in ministry throughout the summer," he explained. "Many of these students are also planning on going

on to do vocational ministry. This is preparation for all of that."

Students participating in Baptist Campus Ministry programs at universities across the state were hand selected for the Leadership Experience last fall.

Nineteen students formed the inaugural group, representing Campbellsville University, University of the Cumberlands, Georgetown College, University of Louisville, University of Kentucky, Western Kentucky University, Murray State University, Northern Kentucky University, Eastern Kentucky University and Morehead State University.

The group was led by Daniel Freeman, team director for the 1:8 Leadership Experience and campus ministry intern at EKV, along with his wife, Heidi.

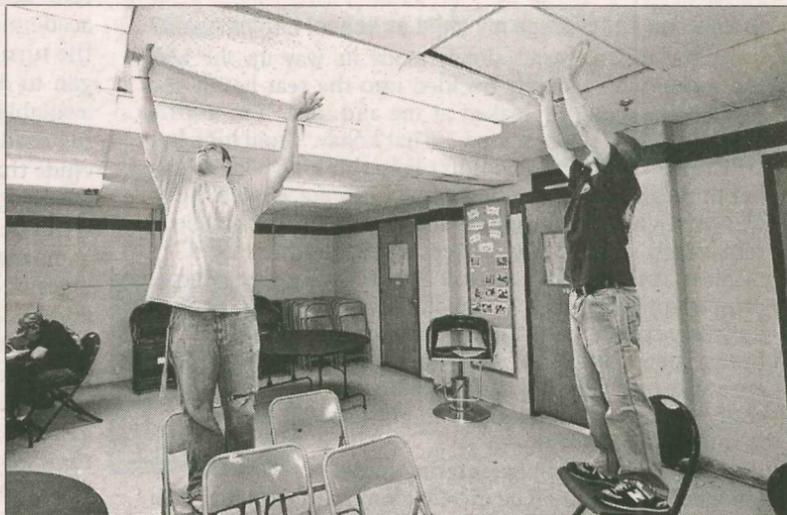
#### Opportunities to minister

Freeman noted that over the course of the summer, the students served at Louisville's Jefferson Street Baptist Center Hope Project, landscaped at Refuge in Kentucky Church in Louisville, practiced street evangelism throughout the city, helped with four vacation Bible schools at churches in the downtown area, and carried out two water purification projects in the Dominican Republic.

The group served four days at Jefferson Street, working on a variety of service projects while also engaging the guests in conversation.

"Our primary ministry there was to sit down with people and talk to them," Freeman recalled. "We had a lot of really good conversations and a lot of our students got to pray with different people they met."

The evangelistic and service work was combined with a variety of discipleship sessions led by min-



**EXPERIENCING MISSIONS** Casey O'Daniel (left), a student at University of Kentucky, and Garrett Lowery from Campbellsville University help repair a ceiling at Jefferson Street Baptist Center in downtown Louisville during the Kentucky Baptist Convention's inaugural 1:8 Leadership Experience. (KBC photo)

isterial, business and political leaders, Freeman noted.

Chuck Lawless, dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, taught a session on evangelism and spiritual warfare. John Barron, campus minister at EKV, and his wife, Elaina, spoke on relationships and purity, while Tommy Johnson, campus minister at Western Kentucky, covered the topic of discipleship.

During the evenings of one week, the group interacted with people on the streets of Louisville in an effort to reach them with the gospel. Tyler Elam, a senior at Morehead State University, had an extended conversation with a man named David.

"There was a guy holding a sign at a stoplight and the Holy Spirit convicted me," Elam recalled. "I got a bag of food at Wendy's and took it out to him. He told me that he had been raised Jehovah's Witness and I talked about Jesus with him and asked if I could pray for him."

During a missions trip to the Dominican Republic in early July, the group installed two water purifiers, one at a church and another at a school, and also led health education classes.

Toward the end of the program, each student delivered a 10-15 minute presentation about what they learned and how they could take it back to their respective campuses, Freeman said.

By combining service and evangelistic opportunities with discipleship training from experienced leaders, Freeman explained that the 1:8 Leadership Experience is equipping students to make a difference on their college campuses.

"What is beneficial about this program is that instead of it being solely a trip that gives them fun memories and cool experiences, we are teaching them how to be leaders by incorporating ministry experience with different speakers who are giving them the tools to be able to be a good leader and take that back to their campus," he said.

## Former Louisville Baptist college honored

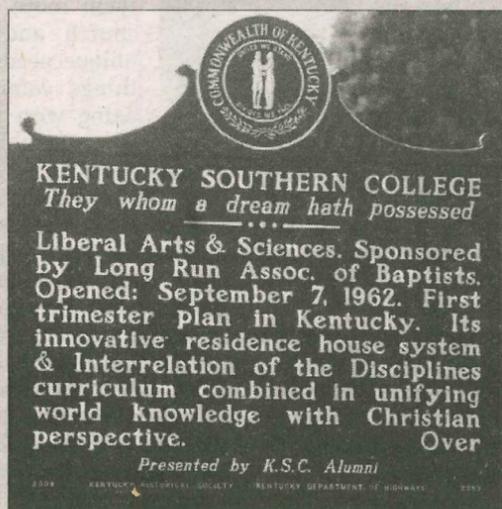
**Louisville**—Kentucky Southern College, a Baptist liberal arts university that operated in Louisville from 1962 to 1969, was recognized July 26 with the unveiling of a Kentucky historical marker at the former campus, which is now the home of University of Louisville's satellite Shelby Campus.

Kentucky Southern was founded by Long Run Baptist Association in 1962 as a coeducational college that held high academic standards combined with traditional Christian values. The school initially met at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary before eventually moving to its own campus in 1963.

The school was innovative in its approach to education, implementing the first trimester program in Kentucky, as well as an interrelation of the disciplines curriculum.

"It encouraged you to think a lot more and take knowledge, not just learn things but correlate them and interrelate them," recalled Sarah Morris Lewis, a member of Kentucky Southern's first graduating class and president of the school's alumni association.

Financial troubles plagued the school from early on and by 1967, Kentucky Southern trustees began discussions with University of Louisville to take over the college. That year, students staged a campaign to the save the college, rais-



ing \$1.3 million to keep the school going another year. Kentucky Southern College eventually folded in 1969 with U of L taking over.

The campus still bears reminders of its previous occupant. The main classroom building is named for Rollin Burhans, Kentucky Southern's only president. In addition, University of Louisville recently announced it will rename a second campus building Kentucky Southern College Alumni Hall.

## Whitley County ministry center heavily damaged by high winds

By Mark White  
Williamsburg News Journal

**Williamsburg**—Strong storms last week left the roof on Cedaridge Ministries in Williamsburg looking something like one of those old cans of tuna where you had to use a key to roll back the metal lid to open it.

That was the analogy Keith Decker, president and director of Cedaridge Ministries, used to describe the wind damage on the building.

The roof on nearly half the building curled up and peeled off July 28.

"We are just thankful that no one was hurt," Decker said.

A church youth group comprised of students from North Carolina was visiting Cedaridge at the time of the disaster, and helped with the clean up and repair work the day after.

Decker said July 29 that the main priority was to get the debris and portions of damaged roof off that day, and get plastic down for a temporary roof. He said he hoped to have a more permanent solution in place by this week.

There is currently no estimate on



**BLOWN AWAY** The roof of the Cedaridge Ministries building in Williamsburg sustained severe damage during a July 28 storm. (Photo by Mark White/Williamsburg News Journal)

the damage, but Decker noted that the roof appeared to be the only casualty and the rest of the building was fine.

Decker explained that the Kentucky Baptist Convention and others have contacted him offering to help with the repairs. "A lot of groups have stepped in and said we will be glad to help," he added.

Those who wish to help with repairs can contact Cedaridge Ministries at (606) 549-1372.

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## Church observers ask: Where have all the good men gone?

By Lee Ann Marcel  
Associated Baptist Press

Ventura, Calif. (ABP)—It's not just your imagination. Men are disappearing from the church.

According to the Barna Research Group, there are 11 to 13 million more American women who are born again than there are born-again men. While nine out of 10 senior pastors are men, a majority of regular church participants are women.

Not only are women the majority of born-again American Christians, the Barna Group suggested, "women are the backbone of the Christian congregations in America."

Perhaps indicative of women's sense of spirituality, 41 percent of women said they have set specific spiritual goals they hope to accomplish in the coming year. Only 29 percent of men have identified such goals.

"Women, more often than not, take the lead role in the spiritual life of the family," noted George Barna, president of the research group. "Women typically emerge as the primary—or only—spiritual mentor and role model for family members."

Pam Durso, associate executive director of the Baptist History and Heritage Society, agreed that women do play a major role in families as spiritual mentors. But that is nothing new, she argued. Historically women have dominated the mem-

bership of Baptist churches.

"Here is something to think about: Is 61 percent for female participation really a change for Baptists? Over the years, many Baptist churches have had a majority of female members," Durso pointed out.

At First Baptist Church of America, in Providence, R.I.—the first Baptist congregation in the New World—59 percent of the members from 1730-1777 were women, Durso noted. From 1779-1799, that percentage dropped only 1 percent.

"So perhaps the question is not where have all the men gone, but is instead where have men been all these years?" she suggested.

### Lack of appropriate marketing?

David Murrow, author of "Why Men Hate Going to Church," said he believes the way churches market themselves affects the demographics of their memberships. According to Murrow's Church for Men Web site, a typical congregation draws an adult crowd that is 61 percent female and 39 percent male.

"It's widely believed, and rarely spoken of, that men feel church is something for women, children and grandparents," Murrow explained. "If a man becomes involved, then he is less manly."

Murrow said this trend began during the Industrial Revolution in the 1840s. Harsh economic conditions drove men to seek jobs in

mines, mills and factories. While men worked, families were left behind. The only people to be found in congregations were women, children and older men. "The able-bodied man all but disappeared from the church."

Murrow mentions on his Web site, [www.ChurchForMen.com](http://www.ChurchForMen.com), that many who have grown up in the church do not recognize the "feminine spirituality." But to the masculine mind, it is obvious as a man steps through the door.

"He may feel like Tom Sawyer in Aunt Polly's parlor. He must watch his language, mind his manners and be extra polite. It's hard for a man to be real in church because he must squeeze himself into this feminine religious mold," Murrow wrote.

The tendency of targeting women has grown with the increased popularity of contemporary worship, he added.

Hymns used to be tuned into the masculine heart by alluding to God as a mighty fortress, Murrow noted. Songs such as "Onward Christian Soldiers" spurred men in their faith.

"But now worship sounds like a Top-40 love song," he said. "They are wonderful and biblical, but it's not the sentiment that will rally a bunch of men."

Murrow suggested there is nothing wrong with the gospel, just the way Christians present it. "We just

need to change the culture container that we are delivering it in and should be willing to follow the example of churches who succeed in reaching men," he added.

A leading example is Christ Church of the Valley in Phoenix. The church markets to men through the events promoted, down to the colors and design of the building. The church even changes the range of worship songs so men can feel comfortable singing.

"Everything we do when it comes to marketing is geared toward men in the 25-45 range ... an underserved demographic in the church market today," according to Michael Gray, the church's communications coordinator.

The church offers activities like motorcycle and sport groups. One of the groups is called The Edge. There men can rappel down cliffs, jump out of airplanes and bungee jump off bridges. The purpose is to cause men to take a step of faith and stretch their comfort zones. While the group focuses on adventurous activities, their ultimate goal is to lead people into an adventure with Jesus Christ.

There is more than one way to present the gospel in a way that contemporary men will respond to, Murrow emphasized. But it begins with the congregation understanding it must make an intentional effort to reach out to men.

**"It's widely believed, and rarely spoken of, that men feel church is something for women, children and grandparents. If a man becomes involved, then he is less manly."**

David Murrow, author of "Why Men Hate Going to Church"

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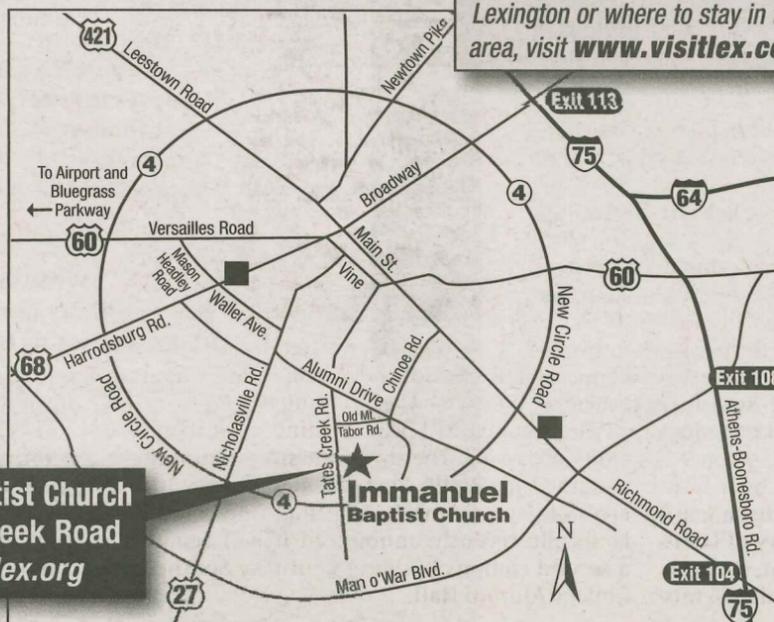
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## Foundation offers rejected pastors acceptance & help

By Jim White  
Virginia Religious Herald

Richmond, Va. (ABP)—Statistically, a pastor stands a better chance of being fired than does a coach in the National Football League.

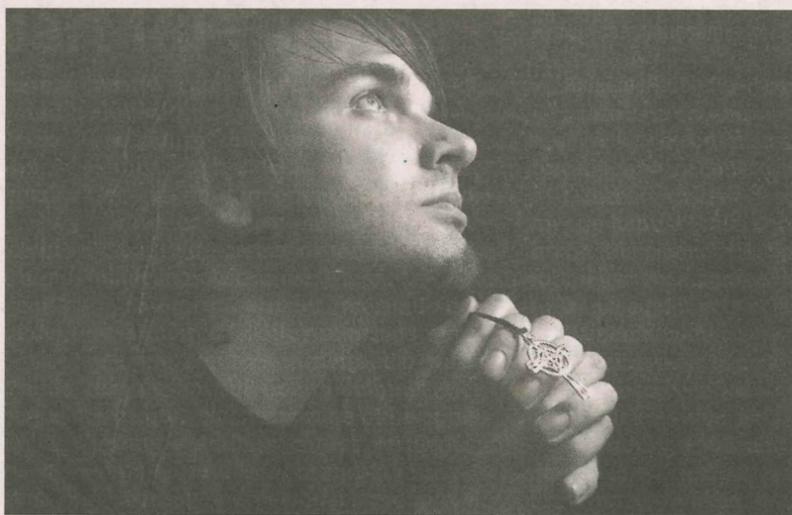
Charles Chandler, executive director of the Ministering to Ministers Foundation, reported more than 2 percent of all pastors will be fired or pushed out of their churches at some point in their careers.

He formed Ministering to Ministers in 1995 after a small group of disgruntled church leaders forced his resignation as pastor of a Baptist church in Richmond, Va. His foundation offers a five-day wellness retreat where pastors and their spouses meet others in similar circumstances and talk with support staff. A growing number of churches that terminate ministers include the cost of underwriting the retreat in severance agreements.

From the moment a retreat begins, Chandler fights the clock, because much needs to be done in a brief timespan, he noted. Although the participating couples come from varied denominational backgrounds, they share the emotional bruises, spiritual scars and psychological pain of rejection.

"Our first objective is to get them to tell their stories" Chandler said. "They come in with strong feelings of isolation and failure. Telling their stories helps them to know they are not alone. It is amazing how similar their stories are."

As each person shares, others in the group provide him or her the



balm of empathy.

"It is hard to know for sure, but according to the most reliable information we have, it seems that across denominational lines about 1,600 ministers per month are being dismissed or forced to resign," Chandler pointed out. "Their trust has been shattered—and their dreams. They're experiencing doubts about whether there is a place for them in the local church. Will they have to find fulfillment in ministry outside the (church) setting?"

### Where the problem lies

Chandler said he believes more small churches are affected by forced termination because professors, often with little church experience, are preparing seminary students for service in larger churches.

And some small churches are dominated by members of a single family, presenting challenges for which many new ministers find themselves unprepared.

"Pastors come to these churches looking to make a difference and they run into the matriarch or patriarch who doesn't want anything to change," he acknowledged.

An emerging trend Chandler has observed is music ministers and oth-

er associate-level ministerial staff forced out of church staff positions by authoritarian pastors who either are insecure and inexperienced or who have adopted the leadership styles of megachurch pastors whom they have chosen as mentors.

Wellness retreats concentrate on helping ministers and their mates understand some of the reasons for their circumstances. A therapist always is on hand to guide discussions and answer questions in the group setting or privately.

Couples who attend the retreats usually have more anger than they have allowed themselves to realize or express, Chandler noted. They have "stuffed it rather than acknowledging it and dealing with it."

Because many participants feel isolated even from God, the retreats seek to renew a sense of spirituality and reliance on God's presence in their lives. Since they often have been crushed by the power structures in their churches, the ministers have come to distrust and avoid power, he noted.

"We use Bob Perry's book, 'Pass the Power, Please,' as the starting point and emphasize that power is simply the ability to get something done," Chandler said.

Ministers need to develop a healthy sense of power in themselves and their ministries, he added.

Ministering to Ministers helps teach ministers how to write a resume and prepare for a job interview. The retreat also includes a component designed to demonstrate that ministerial skills are transferable to non-church ministries and secular posts.

"This gives hope. Sometimes ministers feel there is nothing else they can do," Chandler said. "And when you feel that you have failed at the only thing you are qualified to do, it takes away the joy of service. It is freeing to realize that you have skills that are transferable to secular positions."

Chandler conceded a few ministers who attend the retreats simply are not well suited to ministry, and the moral lapses of others—about 7 percent nationwide—require dismissal.

But he insisted most of those with whom he works are gifted ministers. Many, he acknowledged, are even better equipped for ministry following dismissal or forced resignation because they possess greater humility and empathy.

Overall, 54 percent of ministers who experience forced termination go back into church staff ministry. Among those who receive help from Ministering to Ministers, the figure stands at about 70 percent, Chandler reported. "Still, we are working to redeem an even greater number of those who have been wounded in Christ's service by Christ's own people."

"This has not dampened my enthusiasm for ministry. I would not want to discourage anyone from entering ministry, but the expectation that a minister will not face opposition is just not factual. Even in the church, a minister will experience opposition. Jesus' greatest opposition came from religious people."

## Gap between dreams, reality often leaves pastors wounded

Continued from page 1

which questions to ask to help determine expectations, according to Emily Prevost, BGCT's associate coordinator of leader research and product development.

"We have thrown our pastors into this work sort of sink-or-swim, and it's getting harder to swim," Herring said.

Expectations—for both the minister and the minister's spouse—need to be made clear, Herring emphasized. A congregation's previous pastor and spouse often create expectations for the new couple.

Disappointment with people also can wound pastors. They often expect criticism from certain church members, but "they don't expect their friends and supporters not to defend them," Perry said.

Church conflict also can lead to broken relationships. Even if the pastor is not the cause of or central to the conflict, he or she is naturally the focal point, Perry pointed out. The division can be painful and hurtful to the minister and his or her family.

Failure to set appropriate boundaries also can be a source of pastors' wounds.

"It's very easy not to set boundaries to protect your family, health or spiritual development," Prevost said. "You're doing God's work."

But, help exists for ministers to move beyond the wounds and forward with service.

Organizations, such as the Ministering to Ministers Foundation, facilitate the healing process and can help pastors take the next step, Perry indicated.

Local directors of missions try to respond when ministers are facing trouble or are in pain. State Baptist conventions also have staff available to help pastors. In Kentucky, pastors can contact the Kentucky Baptist Convention's leadership development team office at (502) 489-3382, or visit [www.KyBaptist.org](http://www.KyBaptist.org).

Ministers who survive wounded situations often point to their calling as the reason they made it. They know this is what God wants them to do, Prevost said.

With additional reporting by News Director Drew Nichter

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## Mentorship program helps ministers chart true course

Robinson, Texas (ABP)—No one ever promised vocational ministry would be easy, said Michael Godfrey, executive director of True Course Ministries. That's why he began his mentoring program for pastors.

Godfrey's 32 years experience in Christian ministry revealed to him a huge disconnect between seminary education and the practical demands of full-time ministry.

"I've had my own bumps and bruises along the way, in terms of just dysfunctional situations, relational situations ... issues with self-awareness, perceptions of others," Godfrey recalled.

After leaving one particularly difficult situation, Godfrey said he realized his struggles were not unique.

"I came to the realization that people and systems can turn and you can get caught in the middle of it," he noted.

While enrolled at Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary, Godfrey found ministry direction during a visit to the Baptist General Convention of Texas minister/church relations office.

"When I was working on my D.Min. (doctor of ministry degree), I went to Jan Daehnert's office and asked him: 'Where's the hole? Where's the need?' He said we have plenty of after care (for forced termination), but we don't have any pre-

ventive care. That's the hole," Godfrey said.

Godfrey developed True Course Ministries in 2003 as he felt God directing him to offer support and continued education to ministers. "About 90 percent of ministers feel inadequately trained," he said.

Several months of informal surveys showed Godfrey ministers were seeking mentors to help deal with feelings of isolation, loneliness and burnout. He also wanted his program to address church struggles and prevent forced terminations.

One-on-one, personal mentorship with individually customized goals distinguishes the ministry. Concerned church members sometimes refer ministers to True Course, but church staff members also choose the program—often to develop skills and to further education.

True Course Ministries' mentors are seasoned ministers themselves, experienced in the ups and downs of ministry. According to the group's Web site, the mentors are "highly trained in adult education and experienced in leadership of volunteer organizations."

Mentors also must remain active in church leadership. Some serve as interim pastors. Others focus on conflict management and counseling ministers and their families following forced terminations.

## Uncertain times breed anxiety in churches

By Norman Jameson  
North Carolina Biblical Recorder

Raleigh, N.C. (BP)—Uncertain times bring anxiety into the church and, as Wayne Oakes has observed, the conflict that often results can be traced to loss of control.

Oakes, minister/church relations consultant for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, said pastors and staff often become targets for anger when anxiety leads to a sense of insignificance and loss of control.

"When someone is attacking, they're really verbalizing their own pain," Oakes noted. "They feel freer to vent their pain in church because 'the pastor is supposed to love them anyway.'"

Mondays are always hard because that's the day of calls from distraught pastors who were terminated over the weekend, Oakes explained. Five such pastors, for example, called Oakes on a Monday in late spring. Another who called was so distressed he wanted help leaving ministry.

Oakes has developed a process called Spiritual Directions that he has utilized in 75 churches to help them work through conflict. Calls for help have increased in recent months.

"In North Carolina we have an epidemic of corporate pain in our churches," he said. "Something horrendous happened long ago. Members said, 'Time will heal everything,' so they left it alone. But time doesn't always heal and something happens in the present that triggers that ancient pain."

When everything around them is changing, Christians often cling to an unchanging local church for security, Oakes pointed out. So when church leadership suggests change, the anxious member feels the last leg of security kicked out from under him.

People want to feel they have control of at least one aspect of their lives, Oakes suggested, during these times of economic hardships. So they try to exert that control in church, which often causes conflict, Oakes said.

To avoid conflict that can disrupt ministry, split a church, ruin local witness and hurt individuals, Oakes advised these cautions:

**Take a long view.** Don't react to the current situation as if it's the first time such a thing has occurred in the life of your church.

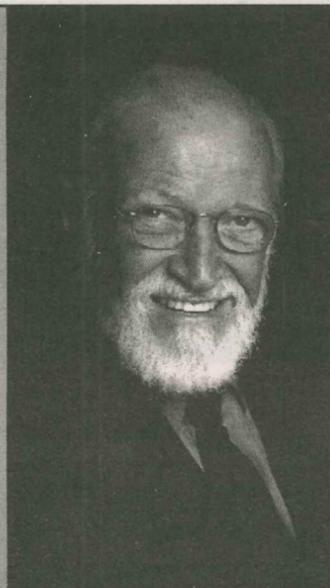
**Communicate.** "Almost without fail churches with a problem have a breakdown in communication," Oakes noted. "Our church culture has created an environment in which a 'victim' can make a few calls and put the church in absolute chaos."

Oakes said the right response to such a call is to ask the caller if he has talked to the person with whom he is upset. If not, Oakes urged the church leader to take it no further. "If a person doesn't have the personal integrity or level of concern to address his issue personally, the church should ignore it," he explained.

**Respect every voice.** "A lot of what feeds anxiety in church is when people feel dismissed or marginalized," Oakes said. "It comes when they feel their viewpoint doesn't matter and no one cares what they think."

Oakes has seen in the Spiritual Directions process that even if people don't get their way, they appreciate being heard and their anxiety level is diminished.

Concerned about corporate pain leading to problems in your church? Look for signs of low energy, bonfires of controversy, rapid turnover in leadership, inappropriate use of religious language and scapegoating.



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## NATIONAL NOTES

**Evangelist charged with murdering wife.** Anthony Hopkins, an evangelist from Mobile, Ala., was arrested July 28 while leading a revival at a church in Jackson, Ala. Earlier in the day, the body of a woman, presumed to be his wife, was found stuffed in a freezer at his house. Hopkins has been charged with murdering 36-year-old Arletha Hopkins. Mobile Police Chief Phillip Garrett said the woman's body looked like it had been in the freezer for "quite a while." In addition, Hopkins also faces charges of rape and sodomy of his 19-year-old daughter. He could face life in prison if convicted.

**Group claims soldiers coerced at church.** Americans United for Separation of Church and State has asked the Pentagon to investigate a Missouri Army base that sends trainees to a fundamentalist Baptist church on off days. The group accused commanders at Fort Leonard Wood of supporting an event which the group said "promotes Baptist church proselytism." The Lebanon, Mo., church has hosted the event for Army trainees since 1971. Americans United alleges that soldiers are "coerced" into attending the event, where they are forced to sit through a church service and asked to accept Jesus as their savior. The Army contends the program is voluntary. A previous investigation by the base's inspector general concluded that the event did not violate soldiers' rights.

**Colorado college wins state funding fight.** A Christian college in Colorado that requires students to attend chapel, and staff to affirm that the Bible is "infallible," should be allowed to receive state scholarship funds, a federal appeals court has ruled. The ruling by the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver last month over-

turns a 2007 lower court decision that found Colorado Christian University "pervasively sectarian," and thus ineligible for public money. But Colorado policies barring some religious colleges from receiving state funds violates the Constitution, the 10th circuit ruled. Colorado already allows students at Catholic and Methodist colleges to receive public scholarships.

**Court again blocks Internet porn law.** The U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals has again upheld a judge's decision to block enforcement of a congressional effort to protect children from Internet pornography. A three-judge panel affirmed in a July 22 ruling a lower-court opinion permanently preventing enforcement of the Child Online Protection Act. It marked the third time the court has endorsed a judge's preliminary or permanent injunction against the federal law. Enacted in 1998, COPA is intended to prohibit commercial Web sites from making sexually explicit material available to children under the age of 17, but it has never been enforced.

**Louisiana requests rehearing in child rape ruling.** Louisiana has asked the U.S. Supreme Court to reconsider its ruling against that state's law permitting the death penalty for child rape after it was revealed the justices overlooked a similar federal measure in their ruling. The request for a rehearing, filed with the high court late last month, followed a controversial June 25 opinion in which the high court ruled a child rapist may not be executed if he did not kill his victim. The ruling invalidated the laws of six states. The case involved the aggravated rape of an 8-year-old girl by her stepfather, Patrick Kennedy. The Louisiana Supreme Court had upheld a jury's sentence of the death penalty for the defendant.

## Ministries still refusing to comply with Senate probe

Washington (BP)—Four television ministries still have refused to comply fully with a U.S. Senate committee's probe into their financial records nearly nine months after first being asked.

The ministries of Kenneth Copeland, Creflo Dollar, Eddie Long and Randy and Paula White have provided only partial information or none at all, according to Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, who initiated the investigation by requesting information from six televangelists in November 2007.

Grassley's questions of the televangelists were based on accounts of abuses from watchdog organizations and whistleblowers, as well as investigative news reports. Accusations of contributions being used to support lavish lifestyles have been leveled against the televangelists.

In a news release, the minority leader on the Senate Finance Committee said of the noncompliant televangelists:

■ Copeland has provided partial answers to a majority of questions but nothing on inquiries about compensation. He has said he will not give further answers even if served a subpoena.

■ Dollar has refused to provide any responses, and attorneys for his church said the televangelist has not changed his mind.

■ Long has provided only general information on his ministry.

■ The Whites have submitted answers only on certain matters.

Finance Committee staff members are communicating with lawyers for the ministries in an attempt to gain responses, Grassley said. In Copeland's case, the staff is seeking advice from Senate lawyers on what should be done next, he added.

"The ministries that continue not to cooperate appear to be heeding the advice of attorneys who are not familiar with congressional oversight in general and specifically the Finance Committee's oversight and legislative work in the area of tax-exempt organizations over the last seven years," Grassley said in a news release last month.

The founder of a religious watchdog organization said the noncompliance of televangelists such as Copeland and Dollar appears to be prompting Grassley to consider further regulation of nonprofit ministries.

"Religious conservatives, like ourselves, believe this to be an unfortunate development, but if donors do not insist on even greater levels of ministry cooperation with donor advocate (organizations), unneeded government regulation is sure to follow," said Rusty Leonard of Ministry Watch.com.

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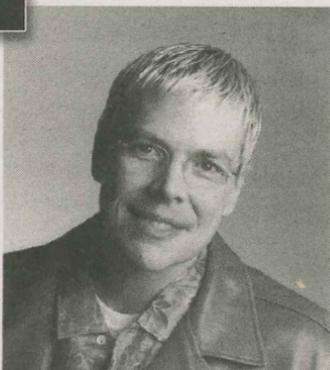
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bility of using the gift portion of the real estate to fund a charitable trust that would provide you and other family members with income until the last one dies, at which time the remaining trust assets will benefit the charitable organization(s) of your choosing.

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Call KBF Trust Counsel Laurie Valentine now for more information.

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

#### KENTUCKY BAPTIST FOUNDATION



Barry Allen

### For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan



### Church of the Covered Dish

Thom Tapp



### Bible Crosswords

By John Thornberg

#### Across

- 1 To engrave with acid
- 4 Common contraction
- 7 Woodwind
- 11 Powerful lobby in D.C.
- 12 Erstwhile emerald?
- 14 "\_\_\_ we like sheep have gone astray" (Isaiah 53:6)
- 15 Proximal's polar opposite
- 17 Central African nation
- 19 Gemstone comprising third foundation of wall of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21)
- 21 To know (Scottish)
- 22 Spigot
- 24 Balaam's beast
- 25 Marble for marbles?
- 29 Scold constantly
- 31 "\_\_\_ is finished" (John 19:30)
- 32 Gem in second row of high priest's breastplate (Exodus 28)
- 33 "I find \_\_\_ fault in him" (John 19:4)
- 34 "And on earth peace, good will toward \_\_\_" (Luke 2:14)
- 36 Bottom of the barrel?
- 37 "Some of them thought, because Judas had the \_\_\_" (John 13:29)
- 38 Familiar name of Brazilian port
- 40 Geographical abbr.
- 42 Gemstone comprising seventh foundation of wall of 19 across

1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9	10
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	19					20					
		21						22		23	
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	38		39						40		
41		42		43	44		45	46			
47	48						49				50
51				52		53				54	
55						56				57	

- 47 Return to original speed (music)
- 49 Indian communal village
- 51 Zilch
- 52 Formerly known as the coney, in Bible times
- 54 Row
- 55 Gem in fourth row of 32 across
- 56 "Thou anointest my head with \_\_\_" (Psalm 23:5)
- 57 Cause disintegration of blood cells
- 13 Conscious self
- 16 Exposure in Ixtapa?
- 18 "Go to the \_\_\_, thou sluggard" (Proverbs 6:6)
- 20 Covers with a hard, glossy surface
- 23 Slender cigars
- 24 Aspire to
- 25 First \_\_\_
- 26 Needlefish
- 27 What to wear
- 28 Printer's measure
- 30 \_\_\_ and Magog (Revelation 20)

#### Down

- 1 "But the \_\_\_ of all things is at hand" (1 Peter 4:7)
- 2 Practical joker
- 3 Converts into cold, hard currency
- 4 Soft mineral
- 5 Linking verb
- 6 To scatter or cluster
- 8 Tree found on Persian Gulf
- 9 Not a spring chicken
- 10 Character actor Jack, whose stock-in-trade was westerns
- 12 Cohort

#### Last week's solution

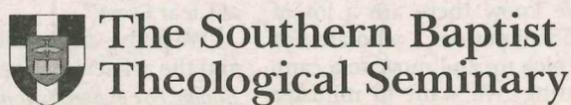
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7	29	A	L	T			30	E	L	I	A	S		31	J	A	W
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## Baptist chaplains taking gospel into Oklahoma's oil fields

By Dana Williamson  
Oklahoma Baptist Messenger

**Oklahoma City (BP)**—In a state with oil rigs on its state capitol grounds, the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma is developing an oil field chaplaincy program.

"There are 60,000-plus people in Oklahoma employed in the oil and gas industry," said Tom Beddow, who is coordinating the new outreach in conjunction with BGCO chaplaincy specialist Paul Bettis.

Wherever there is an oil and gas field in the state, Beddow said, there is a Baptist church.

"And in those churches are men and women who have or are currently working in the oil and gas industry. We want to find them, train them and send them into the community as chaplains," he noted.

The mission statement of the new chaplaincy ministry is to be available anytime, anywhere to be a caring and supportive presence in the lives of oil and gas industry personnel and their families.

Beddow, in addition to serving on the BGCO staff, has been appointed by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board. He previously served as director of counseling and family ministry at First Baptist Church of McAlester, Okla. Earlier, he owned an oil field welding business in Ada, Okla., for 20 years.

Currently, there are 15 trained oil field chaplains in Oklahoma and more in process. "Our goal is to have 200 trained chaplains at the end of three years," Beddow explained.

Bettis noted that training also is available for individuals from states

with major energy industry sectors such as Texas, Colorado and Wyoming.

Compared to disaster relief ministry's sporadic deployments, Bettis noted there are "crisis situations every day" in the oil and gas industry.

Three key components of oil field chaplaincy are:

- Critical incident response, such as death and serious injury notification and support for grieving individuals and families.

- Education and prevention, such as alcohol, substance abuse and suicide awareness and prevention, and anger and stress management.

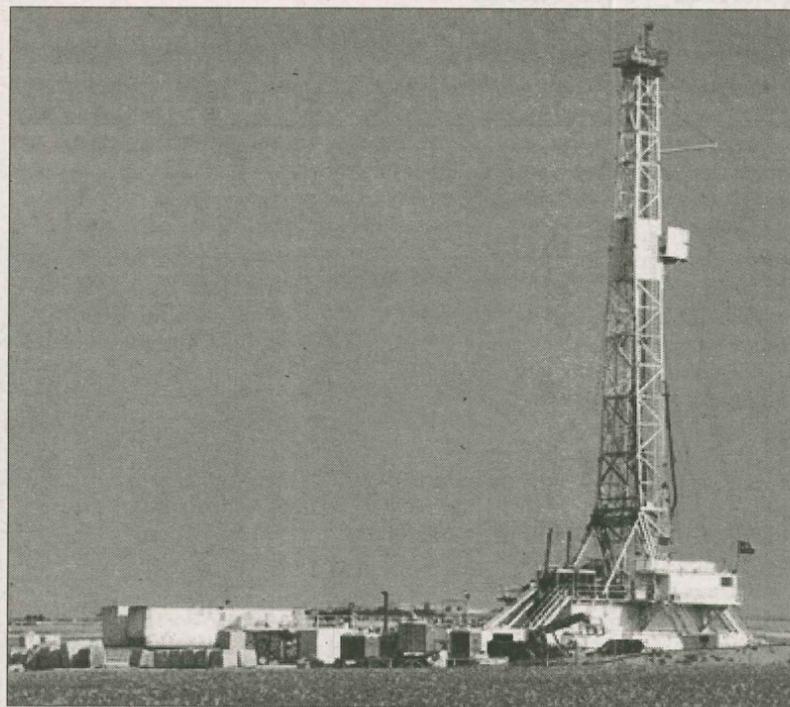
- Faith resources, such as pastoral counseling, support groups, Bible studies and referral options.

While Beddow is responsible for finding, training and sending out chaplains, he also is working with Baptist associations and churches to equip them to help in the oil field outreach.

Beddow told of visiting with the pastor of First Baptist Church of Calvin, Okla., which has a number of community ministries, including a free medical clinic. "They were looking for ways to minister to the drilling activity going on all around town," Beddow recalled.

They came up with the idea of preparing meals and feeding the crews working on rigs in the area. Beddow secured permission from the drilling company, and church volunteers fed 18 people and handed out New Testaments at one of the rigs. The church now is seeing this as a continuing ministry.

Beddow added that the church is considering opening its fellowship



**MISSION FIELDS** Oil drilling rigs are the newest focus of chaplaincy ministry for Oklahoma Baptists. (BP photo)

hall for families of workers who live in trailers in the area, noting, "It would be a great place for them to come for fellowship."

So far this year, Oklahoma oil field chaplains have responded to numerous critical incidents, including two deaths and several serious injuries.

"A young man who lives in Woodward was hurt on a drilling rig in Canadian, Texas, and was taken to a hospital in Amarillo," Beddow recalled. "Two chaplains ... were deployed, one to the rig to do critical incident debriefing and one

to Amarillo to minister to the man and his family."

Beddow said one of the chaplains was asked to return to the rig site and have prayer with the workers.

Beddow also has developed a relationship with Oil Field Christian Fellowship, which distributes Bibles and has chaplains around the country. He even was asked to pray at the annual Oil Field Prayer Breakfast recently in Houston.

As Beddow continues to make contact with oil companies, he said he hopes to get Bible studies started soon with oil and gas employees.

### A new look

#### Summer is the time to start, complete various campus improvement projects

If you have been on our campus in the past 10 years, you may remember that the entrance to our campus could be a little congested. For most of the school's history, many of our guests entered our campus by driving up the street that runs in front of the main office and chapel, Russell Hall. About 12 years ago, when the epidemic of school shootings began across the U.S., we knew we had to make some changes for the security of our students.

We requested that the Commonwealth allow Oneida Baptist Institute to become the owner of Mulberry Street, the road that had been the primary entrance to our campus. Since no private landowner needed to use the street to access his property, we believed the security issues gave us a pretty good case to become the owner. Taking ownership of Mulberry Street gave us considerable discretion about limiting much of the unwanted traffic. In less than two months, the Commonwealth deeded the street to the school, making it possible for us to make our campus much more secure by placing a gate at the entrance to Mulberry Street.

The gate, however, meant that traffic entering and exiting our campus had to use a narrow secondary street. For the past several years, plans have been made to widen that street to better accommodate the campus traffic. Finally this spring work began. After several modifications, the new street will be nearly three lanes wide. By the time you read this article, the work should be completed, including replacing the blacktop. Guests quickly will see the benefits of this desper-

ately needed improvement.

Additionally, for several years I have wanted to erect a new sign at the entrance to our campus. In the same area as the street improvements will be a new, very large sign greeting our guests. The new sign and lettering, "Oneida Baptist Institute," will sit in a backdrop of what looks like several mountain peaks. The road and sign will be a big improvement in the appearance of our campus. By this time next year, the sign should be completely surrounded by flowers.

Other major improvements this summer include completing the remodeling of the ground floor of Marvin-Wheeler dormitory. The ground floor has gone through numerous changes over the years and the current remodeling will put it more closely back to its original design and purpose.

When completed later this fall, the remodeled area will include a new office to serve current students and especially new students and their parents when they enroll. Additional pay phones and desk phones mean parents and students will have fewer busy signals. There will be a recreation/game area and several computers for student use. A new wide-screen TV, ice machine and other amenities will be provided by a church that became aware of the project last year.

A host of volunteer groups have helped with the remodeling during the past 18 months. Now it appears the end is in sight. It will not be completed when our students return this fall, just three weeks away, but there is definitely light at the end of the tunnel.

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



### Meet the Clear Creek family

#### Academics department vital to ongoing Christian mission

Things don't just "happen" at Clear Creek. God has placed a lot of people here who have answered His call to Kingdom work. In the coming weeks I will introduce you to some of these folks through this column. I hope to give you an idea of how important each part of the Clear Creek family is to this gospel ministry.

Malcolm Hester is the dean of our academic department. Within this department, he supervises the library, registrar and Christian service department, and of course, the entire faculty. Dr. Hester also supervises our distance education department. "This is an area that we are really excited about," Hester said. "Right now we are offering 62 hours of courses online. We are waiting on word from our accrediting agencies for final approval to offer our entire bachelor's degree in ministry online. We know there are a lot of bivocational pastors ... who are not able to pick up and move to a campus setting. We want to minister to them." You can find more information about our online classes at www.ccbbc.edu.

Our Christian service depart-

ment is an integral part of making sure our students already are ministering before they graduate. In any given semester, Clear Creek students serve locally as English as a Second Language tutors, mentors to middle school students, or advisors to First Priority Christian clubs in the local schools.

"All of our students are required to serve a year internship in a local church or ministry setting where they are evaluated at the end of their time of service," Hester explained. "Even our classroom experience provides more than just theory-based academics." Students learn how to lead services such as weddings, funerals, the Lord's Supper and baptisms.

So how does one man run all these departments? "I have some very, very good directors who lead all of these departments," he said. They are all very competent so I do not have to micromanage every area. We are blessed to have them at Clear Creek."

We praise the Lord for Dr. Hester and the academic department. Donnie Fox is president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, 300 Clear Creek Road, Pineville, KY 40977; toll-free: (866) 340-3196; Web site: www.ccbbc.edu; e-mail: dfox@ccbbc.edu



## Students dedicated to 'Hands On' ministry

By Shawn Hendricks

SBC International Mission Board

Port Elizabeth, South Africa (BP)—It's one of those moments where you can almost hear crickets chirping. Two Southern Baptist International Mission Board short-term missionaries are trying to get a group of high school students to open up about issues they face at home.

A sea of blue and white uniforms begins to move as the teens fidget and squirm. Jay Dannelley and Chris Reasner wait for someone—anyone—to bail them out. Just as they're about to toss this exchange into the hall of fame of awkward moments, some of the students at this school in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, start talking.

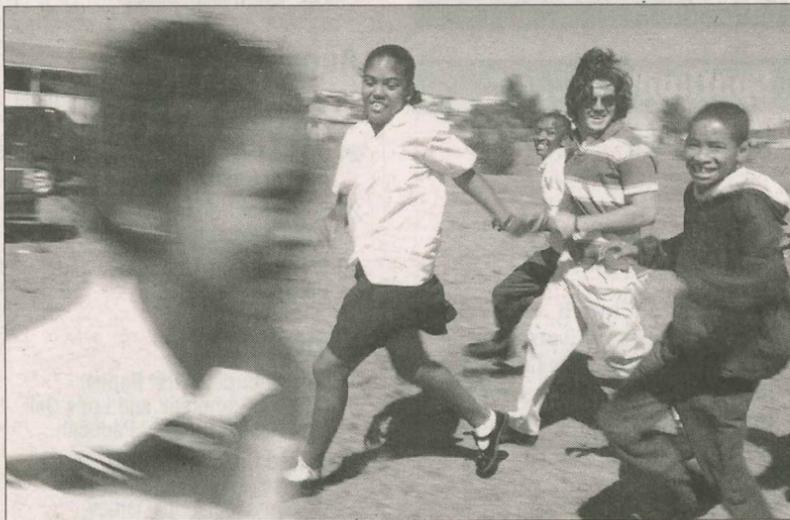
"Drugs," says one. "Abuse," says another. "Anger."

Slightly stunned by the response, Dannelley and Reasner encourage the class to share their struggles with others. They also discuss how faith in God can change lives.

"They come to school having a lot of baggage with them," said Dannelley, wearing a Texas Tech baseball cap from the school he attends. "We try to tell them, 'You can change your school. You can make it better ... if you are on fire for the Lord.'"

During a four-month stint with "Hands On," an IMB initiative, Dannelley, a member of First Baptist Church in Pecos, Texas, and Reasner, a member of Easthaven Baptist Church in Kalispell, Mont., worked in several high schools in Port Elizabeth. They taught classes on self-esteem and shared their Christian faith during sports clinics.

They are two of 44 college and seminary students devoting a semester or two to service in Africa. Dannelley and Reasner recently completed their assignment and a new team will arrive on the field this fall.



**PLAY TIME** Jay Dannelley (center-right) gets caught up in a game with high school students in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. In an area of the city where gang and drug activity are all too common, Dannelley, a member of First Baptist Church in Pecos, Texas, helps lead classes and sports clinics that promote self-esteem and Christian values, while sharing his faith.

Others are working in Tanzania, Niger, Senegal and the Ivory Coast. In 2009, Hands On goes worldwide.

The effort is a taste of life on the mission field. Various Baptist seminaries and colleges are working with the International Mission Board to offer bachelor-level missions studies that include participation in Hands On.

"I think with coming for a longer period of time you really get to experience the culture," said Reasner, a student at the University of Montana. "You really get to see what life is like because it becomes your lifestyle."

With its scenic beaches and warm temperatures, Port Elizabeth attracts tourists, but Reasner and Dannelley saw a darker side. They worked with the Cape Malay, a people of mixed races who trace their ancestry to Malaysian slaves of Dutch settlers.

The Cape Malay live in some of the roughest areas, where 70 percent of the city's crime is reported.

"The schools are the most dangerous (areas) of all," said Wayne Barros, a Cape Malay and local Baptist pastor who has been working in high schools for the past 12 years. Gangs are a problem; suicide is common.

In a city of 1 million people, Hall knows he and his team are up against a mighty challenge.

"I had a professor who told me to celebrate the day of small beginnings," he said. Hall's two Hands On missionaries are part of that small beginning.

One afternoon, the high school students crowd into a classroom. Some stand on desks. Some sing and dance. Others nibble on their lunch. To an outsider, the situation appears to be bordering on chaos. For those in the room it's a typical monthly Christian club meeting.

A Muslim boy walks in wearing a traditional hat. He asks Dannelley if he needs to take it off. He's allowed to wear it and is welcomed into the meeting. Before long, he's singing praise songs with the others.

Of Dannelley and Reasner's presence in the school, Hall said: "You see two guys that just really love the Lord and really love young people."

## Bikers map Senegalese villages

By Jeslyn Lemke

SBC International Mission Board

Senegal, West Africa (BP)—Their bikes lie nearby as the short-term missionaries sleep in their tents. Beside them are enough supplies to last a week in the African bush—cans of Spam for when they can't find local food, and patches for their tires when they spring a leak.

And along with these, their Bibles—reminders of why they're here in the first place.

As the sun rises, Jed Richards, 21, and Andrew Smith, 22, prepare for another tough day of biking. These "Hands On" workers (See story at left.) are using a GPS to map unmarked villages in southern Senegal.

Richards reads the GPS coordinates of a village out loud while Smith writes them down. The information they gather will help other missionaries create strategies to reach the Fulakunda, a people group in this area who are 99 percent Muslim. Their maps highlight villages the Fulakunda people frequently visit—where they sell their cattle and send their children to school. These locations are prime spots for future ministries.

"Our prayer is that (American) churches would be willing to come in and adopt these areas," said Scott Bradford, a Southern Baptist missionary and team supervisor. "These guys have helped us identify that there are ... at least eight to 10 areas we need to address."

The young men said their research trips often are eye-opening and marked by unexpected adventures. They've seen herds of wild monkeys running over the plains. They've eaten cashew fruit fresh off the tree. They've learned to rig broken bike chains and ride without brakes or good gears.

And they've coped with scorching temperatures.

"Flexibility is one of the biggest things you need," said Smith, a member of Faith Baptist Church in Andover, Kan. "You never know what type of village you're running into. ... You never know your sleeping arrangements. You never know what you're going to eat."

Richards, a member of First Baptist Church of Crestwood, Mo., said he prays even as he and Smith power their bikes through deep sand. "When I'm praying throughout the day, it makes things easier," he said. "If I don't take the time to get into the Word when we are out on the road, it's a lot harder ... it's just work."



**DOTTING THE MAP** On a road in Senegal, Andrew Smith (left), of Andover, Kan., records GPS coordinates given to him by his missionary partner Jed Richards of St. Louis. With a local guide, the seminary students bike 10-15 miles each day, mapping villages for future ministry efforts.

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## HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

By Billy Compton

I recently flew to San Francisco on a business/pleasure trip, rented a car and headed north on Highway 101. Soon, I saw the bright trusses of the Golden Gate Bridge where 120,000 vehicles a day travel. This wonderful display of architectural genius reminded me once again that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross became a bridge to connect us to God.

By answering three simple, yet profound, questions a person can enjoy a life-changing experience with God.

■ Why do I need to become a Christian? Romans 3:23 answers this: "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." No person has the power to fill the demands of the law given in the Old Testament. Everyone misses the mark with God until they encounter the living Christ.

■ Who is the bridge that connects me to God? The answer is Jesus Christ. John 3:16 declares, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." Christ's great sacrifice not only atones for past sins but equips man in holiness day by day.

■ How does one cross this bridge to God? Confess, believe and call. Romans 10:9,13 instructs: "That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ... For anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." One must confess that Jesus is Lord, believe in His resurrection and call upon Him to receive forgiveness.

The redemptive act of Jesus' death on the cross built a bridge for one to walk across in experiencing a true relationship with God. Only God can save you, forgive you, answer your prayers and give you spiritual life and guidance.

*Billy Compton is Kentucky Baptist Convention's executive associate for Cooperative Program and resources*

## MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **CAMPBELLSBURG**—Bert Montgomery recently resigned as pastor of Campbellsburg Church to become pastor of University Church in Starkville, Miss.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Elk Horn Church recently called **Brian Rafferty** as pastor. He previously was pastor at Liberty Church in Russell Springs.

Green River Memorial Church recently called **James Bennett** as pastor. He previously was associate pastor at Greasy Creek Church in Greensburg.

■ **CLINTON**—First Church recently called **Keith Weldon** as pastor.

**Roger James** recently resigned as pastor of Second Church.

■ **COLUMBIA**—Randall Johnson recently resigned as pastor of Columbia Church to become pastor of Florida Boulevard Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, La.

■ **COVINGTON**—Ashland Avenue Church recently called **John Paul Brady** as pastor.

■ **CRESTWOOD**—Crestwood Church recently called **Donnie Patrick** as pastor. He previously was pastor at First Church of Paintsville.

■ **ERLANGER**—Anchor Church recently called **Roger High** as pastor.

■ **FULTON**—Liberty Church recently called **Jim Keeling** as interim

## Spotlight on ...

### Horse Cave



Horse Cave Church will celebrate its 140th anniversary Aug. 10, 10 a.m., with **Billy Compton**, KBC's executive associate for Cooperative Program and resources, as guest speaker. **Kevin Denton** is pastor.

pastor.

■ **IRVINE**—Friendship Church recently called **Scott Rogers** as interim pastor.

■ **LAWRENCEBURG**—Sand Spring Church will hold revival services Aug. 10, 8:45 and 11 a.m.; 7 p.m., with **Bobby Welch**, former Southern Baptist Convention president, as evangelist. **Mike Hamrick** is pastor.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Immanuel Church recently called **Richard Wilkins** as senior adult pastor and **Nathan Cornett** as college ministry associate. **Craig Loscalzo** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Arcade Church will celebrate its 50th anniversary

## Tarleton, 48, remembered for work with missionary children

**Moscow**—A Southern Baptist missionary to Russia, who also was the wife of a former Kentucky Baptist pastor, died July 28 in Moscow.

According to the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, Teri Tarleton, 49, died from pulmonary embolism, a sudden blockage in the arteries of the lungs.

A Pennsylvania native, Tarleton was described by IMB colleagues as a devoted wife and mother who loved music and ministering to children of missionaries.

Tarleton's husband, Ed, is an IMB strategy coordinator in Russia and former pastor of Hazelwood Baptist Church in Louisville. He served the Kentucky congregation from 1985 until 1994. He also was a member of the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board.

The Tarletons served together in Moscow nearly 15 years.

"She was one of the best mothers I'd ever seen," said LaRaine Rice, a former IMB Journeyman missionary to Russia who served with the Tarletons from 1996 to 1998. "I'm sad because I was hoping that when I had children, I could get advice from her."

Rice, who is Acteens and youth-on-mission consultant for Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union, said her service in Moscow coincided with Kentucky Baptists' ministry partnership with Russian Baptists.

"When a Kentucky group would come, we'd take turns housing them," Rice recalled. "Since my apartment was so small, I would go over to (the Tarletons) to help with the food."

Rice also did some babysitting of the Tarletons' children, an easy job, she said, because of the couple's excellent parenting.

Rice joined the Tarletons as members of Second Baptist Church of Moscow where Teri sang in the choir. "She was really loved by everyone," Rice said.



Teri Tarleton

When her children were older, Tarleton became an education consultant for children of her fellow missionaries.

"Teri had an incredible love for missionary kids and repeatedly touched them in phenomenal ways," said Robin Covington, a long-time friend and colleague.

"Teri's main desire for our Russian field was twofold," said Buck Burch, another colleague, "a burning desire to see the lost come to Christ, and an unwavering belief in the witness of a godly family."

"To Teri, we weren't just missionaries; we were a missionary family." An accomplished bassoonist, Tarleton graduated from Oklahoma Baptist University with a music degree.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by a son, Adam, 21; daughters, Anna, 19, and twins, Rachel and Rebecca, 17; and her parents, Russell and Betty Halliger of Park Hill, Okla.

Tarleton's funeral is today, Aug. 5, at First Baptist Church of Nicoma Park, Okla. The family asked that in lieu of flowers, donations be made in memory of Teri Tarleton to the International Mission Board, PO Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230-0767.

*Compiled from reporting by the IMB and Partnerships Editor Dannah Prather*



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### August

16 Super Saturday, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington.

21 Understanding Other Beliefs, First Baptist Church, Pikeville.

23 Super Saturday, St. Matthews Baptist Church, Louisville.

30-9/1 Wrangler Trail Ride, Land Between the Lakes.

### September

6 Super Saturday, First Baptist Church, Somerset, and Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah.

11 Retired Director of Missions/Spouse Luncheon, Severns Valley Associational Office, Elizabethtown.

12-13 Women on Mission Fall Retreat, Jonathan Creek.

13 Punt, Pass & Kick, Campbellsville University.

13 Super Saturday, First Baptist Church, Pikeville, and First Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

15 Preparing for Retirement, Buena Vista Baptist Church, Owensboro.

16 Preparing for Retirement, Baptist Building, Louisville.

17 Preparing for Retirement, First Baptist Church, Somerset.

18 Preparing for Retirement, Unity Baptist Church, Ashland.

19-21 FOCUS 2008, Jonathan Creek.

22-23 Kentucky Baptist Ministers' Golf Tournament, Cherry Blossom Golf & Country Club, Georgetown.

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

with a homecoming service Aug. 10, 10:45 a.m. There will be a meal and activities following the morning worship service. **Gary Kasey** is pastor.

Cloverleaf Church will host **Carry On** in concert Aug. 10, 7 p.m. For more information, call (502) 367-0218. **Geoffrey Lacefield** is pastor.

■ **MAYFIELD**—Graves County Association recently called **Glynn Copeland** as director of missions. He previous-

ly served as interim director of missions for the association.

■ **ORLANDO**—Flat Rock Church recently called **Steve Lewis** as associate pastor. **Larry Burton** is pastor.

■ **SOMERSET**—Mount Pleasant Church ordained **Ray Stigall** and **Allen Stringer** as deacons July 20. **Kyle Rader** is pastor.

■ **WINCHESTER**—**Bobby Sharp** recently resigned as pastor of Providence Church.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**FOR SALE:** New and used church buses/vans. Call American Bus and Accessories, Inc., at (800) 582-7118.

**FOR SALE:** Covermaster gym floor protective covering system. \$1,200 or best offer. Westport Road Baptist, (502) 425-2350.

**FOR SALE:** Allen ADC3160A Church Organ. Two-manual, draw-knob, full pedals, midi, 4 external speakers. Excellent condition. Best Offer. (270) 351-3524.

**FREE:** Two sections of lockers—18-box type in each section. Westport Road Baptist Church, (502) 425-2350.

**RETREAT:** Respite for ministers. Mountain condo in Pigeon Forge, Tenn., or townhouse at Myrtle Beach, S.C. E-mail: [oasisattheocean@hotmail.com](mailto:oasisattheocean@hotmail.com).

**RETREAT:** Ski Youth Retreat Package. Timberline Four Seasons Resort, W.V. Starting at \$99/night (plus tax). Includes: lodging, meals, skis, lifts, lesson. Info: [www.timberlineresort.com](http://www.timberlineresort.com); (800) 392-0152. West Virginia Wild & Wonderful.

**SEEKING:** Minister of intergenerational education. Main Street Church in Alexandria, Ky. (Cincinnati metro), is seeking a strategic leader to direct our church in ministering to families with children. The candidate will seek to build bridges between our adult and children's educational areas with additional responsibilities in teacher training, curriculum review, parenting courses and communication. Main Street is a progressive, contemporary church with a mission philosophy averaging about 500 in worship. Interested individuals can view the service description at [www.sievechurch.org/staff.htm](http://www.sievechurch.org/staff.htm). Resumes may be sent to Main Street Baptist Church, 11093 Alexandria Pike, Alexandria, KY 41001.

**SEEKING:** Part-time minister of music. Responsible for planning and directing church music. Send resumé to Gamaliel Baptist Church, PO Box 148, Gamaliel, KY 42140; or [carder@scrtc.com](mailto:carder@scrtc.com).

**SEEKING:** Part-time youth minister for Clarkson (Ky.) Baptist Church. If interested, please visit our Web site at [www.clarksonbaptist.org](http://www.clarksonbaptist.org) for details and contact information.

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for Oak Hill Baptist Church, Sonora, Ky. Please send resumé to Arleight Durham, 3153 Oak Hill Road, Sonora, KY 42776; or e-mail to [ardurham@scrtc.com](mailto:ardurham@scrtc.com).

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for First Baptist Church, Mayfield, Ky. Degree from a Southern Baptist seminary. Please send resumé and non-returnable video or DVD to Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church Mayfield, 118 West South St., Mayfield, KY 42066.

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for Smithsboro Baptist Church, Sassafras (near Hazard). Send resumé and other material to Dr. Ken Slone, PO Box 70, Mallie, KY 41836.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister to preschoolers to plan and coordinate a comprehensive ministry to preschool children and their families at First Baptist Church, Clarksville, Tenn. Send resumé to Ron Moore, 435 Madison St., Clarksville, TN 37040.

**SEEKING:** Full-time general secretary competent in MS Word, Excel, Publisher, and administrative module of Church Windows. Salary and benefits; 35 hours, five days a week. Broadway Baptist Church, (502) 895-2459. [Phyllis@broadwaybaptist.org](mailto:Phyllis@broadwaybaptist.org).

**WANTED:** Louisville church possibly interested in purchasing used handbells. Please call (502) 425-0050.

# Truth's prisoner

*As a tattooed neo-Nazi, future Texas pastor met Jesus behind penitentiary's bars*

By Russ Rankin  
LifeWay Christian Resources

Mineral Wells, Texas—Seventeen years of prison and a lifetime of hate, violence and racism is mapped on Steven Neill's body. Druids, swastikas, skulls and symbols of the occult circle and mesh darkly up his arms and disappear into his shirt. The letters "skinhead" are tattooed across the knuckles of both fists. Friedrich Nietzsche's famous phrase—"God is dead"—stands defiantly in black, inked into his wrist.

But God is very much alive to Neill, pastor of Northside Baptist Church in Mineral Wells, Texas, and the tattoos weave a visible testimony of a life transformed.

"These are the roadmap of my life story," Neill said unashamedly, running a rough hand up his arm. The tattoos also are an easy way to share Jesus.

The hate and resentment came at a young age for Neill, festered in a broken, abusive home and reinforced in Houston's dangerous 4th Ward. After a violent conflict with Hispanic gangs at 13, Neill found brotherhood with a group of American neo-Nazis.

"We wanted to wage the racial holy war Nietzsche spoke about," Neill recalled.

Needing paramilitary training to advance in leadership, Neill joined the Army. The white supremacist attachments weakened in the discipline of the military until another altercation changed Neill's life.

The fight started as an argument, but "I stabbed him," Neill said. "He died four hours later. 'Aggravated murder with a deadly weapon' gave me a 40-year sentence." In prison, "I fully embraced my past and became violently racist."

Following the teachings of Nietzsche, who blamed Christianity and Christians as the cause of all ills, "I was going to do anything I could do to eradicate Christianity," Neill declared.

## Life behind bars

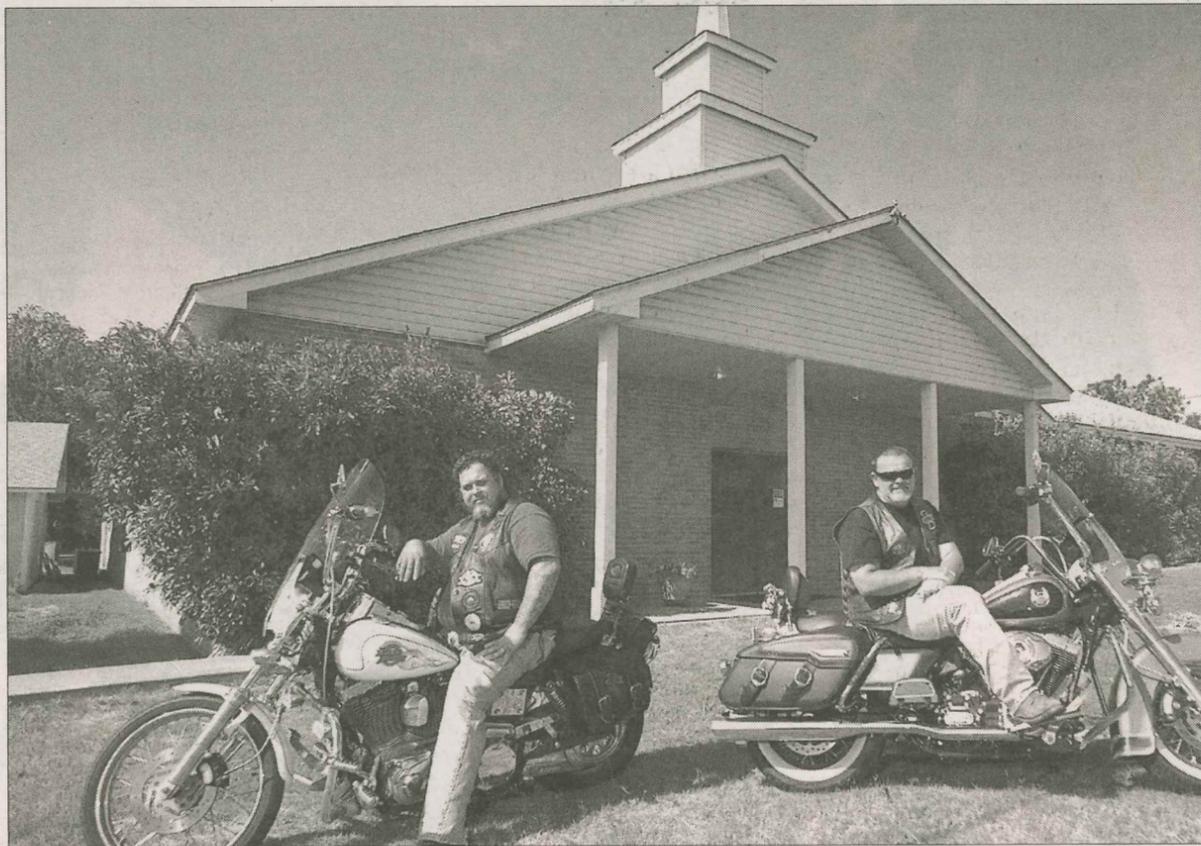
A self-described predator behind bars, Neill said he relished the opportunity to prey on believers bold enough to try to share their faith with him.

"If I couldn't verbally convince them their faith was wrong, I'd beat them up," he recalled. "But I didn't have to do that very much because I knew every bit of anti-Christian philosophy—and I enjoyed a good argument—so I would utterly crush them."

Against his will, Neill was enrolled for a prison ministry weekend. With attendance now mandatory, he decided to be as offensive as possible.

"I'm rude, belligerent and I go off on how hypocritical everyone is at this thing," Neill recalled. "I cussed everyone out and stormed off the stage. Then this guy jumps up into the aisle and jabs a finger in my chest."

Until that moment, Paul Harris had endured the prison out-



**WITNESSES ON WHEELS** Steven Neill (left), pastor of Northside Baptist Church in Mineral Wells, Texas, and associate pastor Paul Harris use their love of motorcycles to reach many bikers in the area. (Photos by Guy Lyons)

reach begrudgingly because his pastor asked him to attend. Harris had only recently recommitted his life to God after years of charting his own course. But sitting in the prison yard listening to men speak about how much they loved God, feelings of condemnation and hypocrisy overwhelmed him.

"And all of a sudden I'm hearing this guy on stage calling us all hypocrites," Harris recalled. "As he's stomping out, I jump out of my seat and stick my finger right in his chest and say, 'You're the reason I'm here.'"

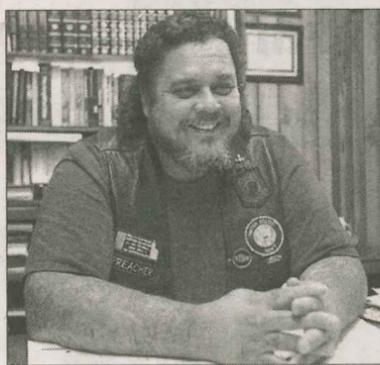
"As a former atheist, I had dabbled in everything he'd been in," Harris said. "We locked horns that first night."

"It was intense," Neill acknowledged, grinning. "Everything he threw at me I had an argument for."

After an entire day of arguing, Randy Wilson, Harris' pastor, stepped in and changed the game plan. "They sat there arguing and contradicting each other with humanistic philosophy. I told Paul it was time to present the Word."

Wilson said he is a longtime fan of "Share Jesus Without Fear" gospel-sharing method. The resource offers three steps for sharing the gospel: Five questions to determine where God is working, seven verses to let the Bible speak for itself—which the unbeliever reads himself—and five questions that lead to the point of discussion.

"What's so appealing is that it's not about memorizing a thousand verses and quoting them all," said Wilson, pastor of Carey Baptist Church, located outside Childress, Texas. "It's easy. You ask five simple questions; the last is a 'yes' or 'no' answer. Steven Neill could argue all day against (the Bible), but he'd never read it. And so we walked him



Steven Neill

through this simple process. At the end, it's a simple question: according to what you've read, are you a sinner? Steven wouldn't answer."

That night back in lockdown, Neill said his life came into view. "I saw my life as it really was. But I saw everything as God would see it. I saw that I had gloried in active rebellion against God."

"There was no relief that night," he added. "There was no hope. If I was prone to suicide, I would've done it that night."

Neill said he walked back into the meeting the next morning a broken man. Harris and Wilson could only stare at what they described as a literal physical transformation. "The darkness was dropping from his face," Wilson recalled.

"Randy pulled out his ... Bible and had me read the Scriptures," Neill said. "By the end, I was bawling like a baby."

"We didn't lead Steven to the Lord. We just witnessed to him," Harris acknowledged.

Neill said he knows it was the Holy Spirit that opened his eyes that day, but "I think the Share Jesus Without Fear method is the only way I would've gotten there," he emphasized. "Instead of arguing,

I was sitting there reading the Scripture. I'm honest enough with myself to reach for the truth."

Unable to counter the truth, Neill gave his life to Christ and immediately began a journey of growth. He started a Bible study with two other prisoners that grew to 26.

## Radical transformation

"God wanted something more from me than just going to church," he said. "I was studying Scripture 14-16 hours a day and some amazing things happened. I would dream Scripture passages rolling through my head. I would wake up refreshed, often praying even as I woke up."

Neill earned a diploma in pastoral ministry through the Southern Baptist Convention's Seminary Extension program and a diploma in biblical studies through Amherst (Mass.) College.

After 17 years in prison, he was paroled. Wilson became his mentor. Eventually Neill was ordained into the ministry.

"I want to see this church walk in freedom," he said, speaking of Northside Baptist, the small West Texas congregation that accepted him with open arms. "I want them to know they can walk with the vilest of sinners because they have in them He who is stronger than the world. Then, lives will change."

On June 29, Neill and Wilson, ordained Harris as associate pastor of Northside to serve alongside the former prisoner he introduced to the Lord. The foundation of their ministry is grounded in their mandate to share Jesus with boldness.

"The radical power of God to transform lives is what amazes me," Harris noted. "Jesus was a radical man. And that's why I love to share the gospel."

**"Jesus was a radical man. And that's why I love to share the gospel."**

Steven Neill, pastor of Northside Baptist Church in Mineral Wells, Texas

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