


**PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING**  
**WESTERN RECORDER**

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**FOR THE RECORD**

# Politics from the pulpit

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## Americans wary of candidate support from churches, staff

By David Roach  
*LifeWay Christian Resources*

**Nashville**—As a hotly contested presidential election approaches, Americans strongly believe churches should tread lightly when it comes to political activity.

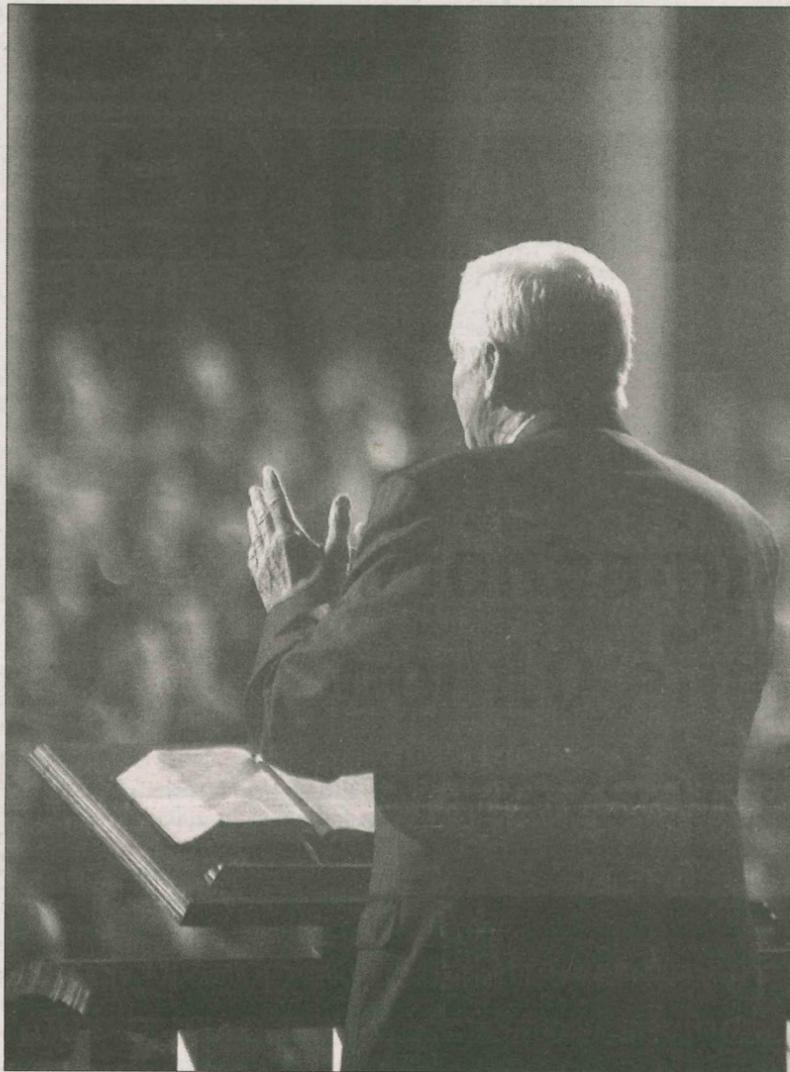
According to a recent survey released by LifeWay Research, Americans believe churches should not campaign for or endorse political candidates, and pastors should only endorse candidates as private citizens outside of a church service.

"There is a longstanding and publicly affirmed view that the pulpit is not the place for politics, particularly endorsements," said Ed Stetzer, director of LifeWay Research. "It would appear this view is still widely held in most sectors of society."

When asked for their level of agreement with the statement, "I believe it is appropriate for churches to publicly endorse candidates for public office," 59 percent said they strongly disagree while 16 percent somewhat disagree.

Young adults are much less likely than older adults to strongly oppose church endorsements. Thirty-seven percent of adults ages 18 to 29

□ See Survey: Americans ... *Page 8*



## KBC leader reflects on overseas refugee ministry

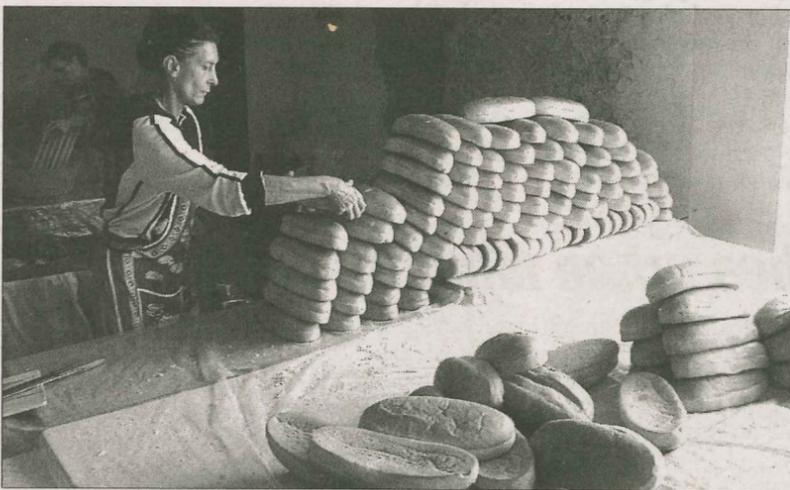
By Mark Kelly  
*Baptist Press*

**Gori, Georgia (BP)**—The refugees' despair troubled Coy Webb the most.

Webb served on a six-member team of Southern Baptist disaster relief specialists who worked in Gori, Georgia, earlier this month, helping refugees driven from their homes a month earlier by fighting between Russian and Georgian troops.

"It's just unbelievable the conditions they are living in," said Webb, Kentucky Baptist Convention's disaster relief associate. "One of the elderly ladies who had come back to their homes, the whole side of her apartment had been knocked out by shelling. Here's an elderly lady in her 80s, sleeping on the floor with nothing protecting her from the outside."

An estimated 20,000 to 30,000 displaced people have taken refuge in Gori, with many of them housed in tent cities, others settled into government kindergarten buildings and about 2,000 taken into personal homes by local families. Southern Baptist volunteers, working in cooperation with Baptists in Gori, provided hot meals to about 2,000 people a day, using money provided by the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund.



**FOOD MINISTRY** A Georgian woman stacks loaves of bread at a Southern Baptist refugee feeding center in Gori, Georgia. A six-member team from Kentucky served meals at the center earlier this month. (BGR photo)

"Even before the conflict, this area was very poverty stricken. I think they told us unemployment was somewhere between 40 percent and 50 percent in the area," Webb noted. "We could tell immediately that it was really putting a lot of pressure on these folks who had taken refugees in to be able to care for, not only their own families, but those they were taking in."

"We were able to see that it was a very important ministry that we

were able to provide some food relief for these folks."

Families in Gori were deeply moved that Southern Baptists cared enough to help them in their distress, he said.

"One of the most moving things for me was when we had delivered food to a daughter and mother. The mother was 100 years old and bed-bound; the daughter was in her 70s, caring for her mother in a little one-

□ See Webb: Georgia ... *Page 3*

## Study finds belief that heaven open to nearly everyone

**Waco, Texas (RNS)**—Heaven is no longer viewed as an exclusive place by many Americans, according to a new survey from Baylor University.

When researchers polled U.S. adults about who (and how many) will get into heaven, 54 percent of respondents said at least half of average Americans will make it through the Pearly Gates.

More than a quarter of those surveyed—29 percent—said they had no opinion about the fate of the average American, a figure that mirrored those who thought "half or more" of non-religious people would make it into heaven.

Rodney Stark, co-director of Baylor's Institute for Studies of Religion in Waco, Texas, said the findings represent a marked difference from earlier studies.

"I think that it's really just a ... broadening because of the cultural experiences of diversity," Stark noted. "I know that when we did studies like this back in the '60s, the notion that only Christians could go to heaven, for example, was much more extensive than it is now."

The finding that many are not sure about other people's eternal destination is particularly meaningful, the scholars reported.

"It's kind of a good, American middle ground," Stark added. "Two generations ago, it would have been 'definitely not.'"

Researchers found that while 72 percent of respondents said at least half of Christians will make it into heaven, the figures were lower for other faiths: Jews (46 percent), Buddhists (37 percent) and Muslims (34 percent).

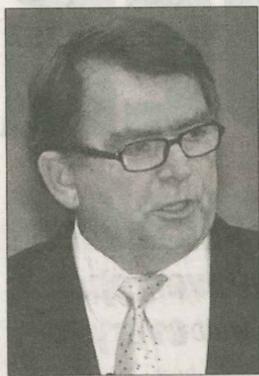
The study also revealed that while 11 percent of the national sample said they had "no religion," they may not correctly be termed "irreligious."

Researchers found that 20 percent of those reporting "no religion" said they have attended church, 56 percent said they had prayed, and 32 percent said they prayed "several times a week or more."

The survey's findings, like some from a recent (and larger) Religious Landscape Survey by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, indicate a variegated religious picture of the United States that may challenge popular stereotypes and demonstrate openness to people of other faiths.

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, October 1.

## Chapman: Southern Baptists making excellent progress



**"We don't have very far to go to understand why baptisms in the Southern Baptist Convention decline year on end. It's simply because the people sitting in the pews ... are in bondage to debt and because of it they have a hard time going out and sharing God's Word or doing the ministry God called them to do."**

Bob Rodgers, SBC Executive Committee's vice president for Cooperative Program and stewardship

Nashville (BP)—Southern Baptists are making excellent progress, both at home and abroad in special emphases that encourage congregational vitality and promote partnership with like-minded believers around the world, Morris Chapman told the SBC's Executive Committee during the group's meeting last week in Nashville.

During his report, Chapman, the committee's president, called on three staff executives to give updates on the progress of Executive Committee initiatives: Empowering Kingdom Growth, It's a New Day and Global Evangelical Relations.

Ken Hemphill, national strategist for the Empowering Kingdom Growth emphasis, told committee members he had been involved in about 650 EKG events in the five years since the emphasis was launched. He described its three-step strategy and focused on resources created to help churches take initiative for renewal.

The first stage—spiritual ignition—focuses on helping a congregation capture a passion for God's agenda of all the world's people coming to know Him as their rightful King, Hemphill noted. The second stage—renewed thinking—is conveyed by the "Eternal Impact" book released this past summer. The third stage—holistic stewardship—is a transformational approach to scriptural money management discussed in the book "Making Change."

The goal of the Empowering Kingdom Growth strategy, Hemphill explained, is epitomized in the experience of a church in North Carolina that conducted the emphasis and saw a renewal that multiplied congregational giving, erected a new building and donated the historic building to an international congregation that now has a larger attendance than the original church.

One explanation for so many Southern Baptist congregations being plateaued or declining in membership is that the members are not being obedient to God's plan for the stewardship of His gifts, according to Bob Rodgers, the Executive Committee's vice president for Cooperative Program and stewardship.

Ranging through the Scriptures from Genesis to Acts, Rodgers drew out the biblical principle that everything a Christian has comes from God, who has given very clear instructions about how His people are to manage the resources He entrusts to them. Failure to obey God's instructions always was accompanied by God's punishment, Rodgers pointed out.

"We don't have very far to go to understand why baptisms in the Southern Baptist Convention decline year on end," he said. "It's simply because the people sitting in the pews ... are in bondage to debt and because of it they have a hard time going out and sharing God's Word or doing the ministry God called them to do."

"You don't have to go very far to find out why homes of Southern Baptists are being foreclosed. God is doing exactly what He said He would do," Rodgers added.

The It's a New Day stewardship emphasis focuses on freeing Christians from the financial bondage that separates them from a right relationship with God so they can be free to serve Him, Rodgers noted.

Meanwhile, Bobby Welch, national strategist for the Executive Committee's Global Evangelical Relations emphasis, told the group he has received an enthusiastic reception as he crisscrosses the United States and travels overseas.

The Global Evangelical Relations initiative was launched in 2005, a year after Southern Baptists voted to withdraw from the Baptist World Alliance. Welch said he focuses on strengthening and enriching relationships already established with evangelicals overseas and starting relationships with Baptists and other like-minded evangelicals "who see the world and the Kingdom as we do."

"I have found a tremendous interest in the success (of this initiative) because Southern Baptists have sought to find another way to say, 'We love you. We're with you. We're on your side, and we're all trying to see the Great Commission accomplished'" he added.

Welch reported that he expect-

## Hawkins: 'Stay the course' when market drops

Nashville (BP)—Even though sharp drops in the stock market have many Southern Baptist pastors worried about their retirement funds, making an emotional decision to get out of the market is unwise, the president of Guidestone Financial Resources told members of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

"When I was a pastor in Fort Lauderdale, we had just started a big capital campaign in the late '80s when Black Monday hit and the stock market fell over 22 percent in one day," O.S. Hawkins recalled. "That would be like the stock market dropping 2,500 points in one day today. But we got through that. We got through the '80s and '90s and the tech bubble and the dot.com issues and 9/11 and the volatility in the oil and gold markets that we still see."

Investors who bail out of the stock market after a sharp downturn wind up missing out on the rebound that will help them recover their losses, Hawkins noted. A successful retirement savings strategy requires an investor to stay the course even when the stock market becomes volatile, he insisted.

Hawkins referred to a recent analysis that showed an investor who parked his money in an index fund 20 years ago and left it there would have seen an annual increase of more than 12 percent. On the other hand, an investor who got jittery and moved his money every time the market sank, would have seen only a 3.7

percent annual average return because he missed the 50 best days of market performance.

Markets are cyclical, with both down and up times, but over the long haul, they make money, Hawkins said. A long-term commitment to a diversified investment portfolio, like the ones Guidestone offers Southern Baptist church and denominational employees, limits the impact of a market downturn and allows investors to maximize the benefits of the stock market's money-making ability.

"Guidestone's strength and stability across these 90 years has helped us weather a lot of market storms," Hawkins told the group.

He also encouraged the group to think of retirement planning like running a marathon. "That's the way it is," he noted. "You've got to get a good start. Then you determine your time horizon and set your pace. Then when your kids get grown and you don't have any more college bills, you got some expendable income, then you put the kick in there and maximize all your 403(b) and use other vehicles to do that. Then when you get near (retirement) you put as much as you can in there for tax purposes and save that way."

A look at the history of the stock market reveals there has never been a 10-year period in which investors who stayed the course failed to make money, Hawkins pointed out. A wise investor plots a strategy that anticipates market turbulence and then lets his strategy work for him.

ed to visit several countries before Christmas. He also said that in 2009 he expects at least 12 three-day "Encouragement Conferences" to be held overseas, in which an American pastor and members of his church gather with Baptists from another country to encourage each other and improve mutual understanding.

Welch also told the committee

about a recent trip to South Korea, where he had an opportunity to meet with key leaders of several evangelical groups, including a group of about 1,000 young Baptist leaders. "I am really expectant about our relationship with that group of young men who are going to be calling the shots in that part of the world in the days ahead," Welch declared.

## Southern launches urban ministry center

Louisville (BP)—Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville has launched a center to help reach people for Christ in urban areas.

The Wayne and LeAlice Dehoney Center for Urban Ministry will conduct Great Commission research on church growth in the city and provide training and resources for urban ministers.

"More than half of the world now lives in urban settings—including cities in North America to which much of the world has come," said Chuck Lawless, dean of Southern Seminary's Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth. "If the church does not invest in the cities, we will miss primary opportunities to touch the world."

Among the center's main activities will be hosting conferences and offering continuing education for pastors. The center also plans to produce an online journal for urban ministry practitioners and scholars.

"We want to offer internships and training opportunities for students who want to serve in

urban settings," Lawless noted. "Because Southern Seminary has extension center connections near Baltimore, New York, Boston, Cleveland and Chicago, we already have open doors to begin this process."

Wayne Dehoney, the center's namesake, was pastor of Louisville's Walnut Street Baptist Church from 1967-85. In 1968, he ministered to those participating in race riots within two blocks of the church and urged his congregation to be compassionate and loving. Prior to his tenure at Walnut Street he served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of First Baptist Church of Jackson, Tenn.

"Through his leadership, Walnut Street Baptist stayed in the city when members and others were fleeing to the suburbs," Lawless said of Dehoney, who died last November. "He led the church to influence the urban community around the church. Mrs. Dehoney served alongside her husband for many years. The Dehoney family has graciously supported this center through their giving and prayers."

## Former Baptist World Alliance president David Wong dies at 97

Alhambra, Calif. (ABP)—David Wong, former president of the Baptist World Alliance, died Sept. 16 in Alhambra, Calif. He was 97.

Born in Wuzhou, China, Wong moved to Hong Kong in 1949. He was the first layman and the first Asian to be elected president of the worldwide umbrella group for national and regional Baptist denominations. He held the post from 1975 to 1980.

An architectural engineer, he chaired the BWA men's department and served as president of the Asian Baptist Federation before becoming BWA president.

Wong was deeply committed to laymen's ministry, and presided at the first World Conference of Baptist Men, held in Hong Kong in 1974.

As president, he helped imple-

ment organizational changes, including the creation of the BWA General Council and the division of evangelism and education. Under his leadership, the BWA granted newer and younger member bodies equal standing with older conventions and unions.

Wong traveled widely as BWA president, visiting approximately 70 countries during his tenure. He also wrote a memoir, "By the Grace of God: Memoirs of David Y.K. Wong."

Wong "distinguished himself as a good man who served the BWA with faithfulness and loyalty," current president David Coffey said, according to a BWA news release. "We express our gratitude to God for David Wong's service and send our loving sympathy to his wife, Lillian, and family."

## Skip Alexander to be nominated as KBC first VP

Campbellsville—Skip Alexander, pastor of Campbellsville Baptist Church, will be nominated as Kentucky Baptist Convention first vice president during the Nov. 11 KBC annual meeting in Lexington.



Skip Alexander

Alexander, 42, who served as KBC second vice president in 2003-04, also was a nominee for first vice president in 2006-07. He will be nominated by James Jones, pastor of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Campbellsville.

Jones described Alexander as "an up-and-coming leader in our convention," adding that he is a strong advocate for evangelism and missions.

Alexander is "a strong believer in people becoming involved in the work of the church," noted Jones, who served as KBC president in 1988-89 and preceded Alexander as pastor at Campbellsville Baptist. "He knows how to organize in such a way that people want to get involved, and I think he would get that across to all churches."

Among the concerns he would like to highlight as first vice president, Alexander said he wants help the convention reach the baptism goals set forth with the Kentucky Baptists Connect initiative, which ends in 2010.

He also expressed a desire to "give back" to Kentucky Baptists by involving young pastors in the convention's work and to "tell the story of Kentucky Baptists."

"I want to work to support our larger work as Baptists and our great of family of faith that we have in this state," Alexander noted.

Campbellsville Baptist Church, which Alexander has served since 2002, gave 12.8 percent of undesignated receipts to the Cooperative Program and reported 37 baptisms last year, according to the KBC's 2007 Annual Church Profile statistics.

Alexander currently is vice chairman of the Western Recorder's board of directors and is heading up the board's editor search committee. He also has served on the KBC's Mission Board and preached the 2003 KBC annual sermon. This year, Alexander served on the Southern Baptist Convention's Committee on Nominations.

Alexander previously was pastor of West Broadway Baptist Church in Louisville and Salem Baptist Church in Shelbyville. He is a graduate of Georgetown College, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and received a D.Min. degree from Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in 2007.

## Webb: Georgia conditions 'broke my heart'

Continued from page 1

room apartment," Webb recalled. "They weren't able physically to get where we were feeding so we delivered meals."

"On the last day, they were sharing their gratitude for what it had meant to them for us to deliver the meals and pray with them and minister to them," he continued. "The daughter tried to give me (the deed to) a piece of property outside Georgia as an expression of gratitude. Of course, that's not why we were there and we shared that with her, but I was amazed at that beyond-overflowing expression of gratitude she was trying to share with us."

Serving among the displaced families, Webb said, reminded him that Psalm 68:5 describes God as "a father of the fatherless, a defender of widows."

"Watching the folks come in through the lines, it reminded me that if we're going to be God's people, we need to be people who minister to the fatherless and the widows. Many, many elderly widows were coming through the line," he explained. "It broke my heart. It was obvious they dug plastic containers and cans out of the garbage, just to have something to take food away in."

"The other thing that struck me was the hopelessness and weariness you saw in so many faces," Webb added. "For us to be able to help with food—but even greater, just to minister in the name of Christ—hopefully we began opening the folks to the hope of Christ."

To date, Southern Baptists have contributed close to \$100,000 for the relief operation in Georgia, according to Abraham Shepherd, who directs work in Europe and the Middle East for Baptist Global Response.

"The Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund is crucial for sustaining people in a desperate situation, in order for them not only to sur-



**HELPING HAND** A group of Georgian women help prepare food as part of the Southern Baptist feeding unit in Gori, Georgia. Workers at the feeding center, coordinated by Baptist Global Response, have served tens of thousands of meals to Georgian refugees. (BGR photo)

vive, but to have a glimpse of hope," Shepherd said. "And we witnessed that glimpse of hope in the smiles on many faces of refugees and internally displaced people as they were cared for holistically."

It was exciting to watch as the Baptist congregation in Gori made plans to hold the first worship service in a building the volunteers helped refurbish, Webb noted.

"It was just a shell of a building. Through the volunteers who have come, along with the nationals we were working with, it was just unbelievable the transformation that has taken place in the building," he recalled. "Putting windows and doors in. Putting some floors down. It was

all dirt or gravel floor.

The building "will be a tremendous opportunity to impact this community, particularly with the number of people who are coming through now, eating," he added. The church has been meeting in an area dominated by businesses. The location where the feeding ministry was conducted is on a main street, surrounded by apartment buildings.

Webb said he hopes Southern Baptists will pray that Georgians will find true peace and hope through the feeding ministry in Gori.

"I think there is still a great fear that the conflict will erupt again, that this is just a momentary peace. Pray that they would have peace."

*"Watching the folks come in through the lines, it reminded me that if we're going to be God's people, we need to be people who minister to the fatherless and the widows."*

KBC disaster relief associate Coy Webb

## Oct. 11 is deadline to propose resolutions for annual meeting

Louisville—The Kentucky Baptist Convention's Committee on Resolutions is accepting proposed resolutions to be considered at the 2008 annual meeting through Oct. 11.

KBC procedures specify that submissions can be received as early as June 1, but no later than 30 days prior to the next KBC annual meeting. This year's meeting will be held Nov. 11 at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington.

Resolutions must be accompanied by a letter or e-mail from a church qualified to send a messenger to the annual meeting stating that the person submitting the resolution is in good membership standing. No more than three resolutions per person will be considered.

Other rules for submission are:

- Resolutions must be typewritten, titled and dated.
- Resolutions must include complete contact information for both the person submitting it and his or her church.
- Resolutions must be addressed to the Committee on Resolutions in care of the KBC Executive Office

at its registered or e-mail address. Electronic copies of resolutions are preferred.

The Committee on Resolutions will review all properly submitted proposals and submit only the resolutions the committee recommends for adoption at the annual meeting. Resolutions may be based on proposals received by the convention. By a simple majority, the convention also may consider any other resolution properly submitted to the committee.

A list of the titles and dispositions of all properly submitted proposed resolutions will be distributed to messengers at the convention. The list will include the name and city of the person who proposed each resolution.

Proposed resolutions should be sent to the Committee on Resolutions in care of the KBC Executive Office at P.O. Box 43433, Louisville, KY 40253-0433, or e-mailed to executive@kybaptist.org.

For more information, call (502) 489-3577, or toll free in Kentucky at (866) 489-3577.

## Corbin church treats emergency personnel to night at the movies

Corbin—An Eastern Kentucky church is treating local emergency responders to a night out at the movies. Central Baptist Church in Corbin is providing free admission to the new movie "Fireproof" at two area theaters. The offer is open to all firefighters, law enforcement officers and emergency medical technicians in Knox, Laurel and Whitley counties.

"We are truly thankful for the emergency responders who serve the citizens of the tri-county area," said Central Baptist Pastor Darren Gaddis. "Every day, they risk their lives and sacrifice personal time to meet the needs of our community. This is our way of saying, 'Thank you.'"

"Fireproof," which opened in theaters nationwide last week, is the latest release from Sherwood Pictures, the production company behind the 2006 film, "Facing the Giants." The movie stars Kirk Cameron, who plays Capt. Caleb Holt, a firefighter who lives by the old adage, "Never leave your partner behind." It chronicles the pressures commonly faced in many marriages, but especially those faced by families of emergency personnel.

"Emergency responders face enormous stress from the danger of their work to shift work to being on call 24 hours a day," noted Gaddis, who served as Kentucky Baptist Convention president in 2006-07. "By offering a night at the movies, our hope is that our local firefighters, police officers and EMTs will know that we care about them and are praying for them."

Emergency response personnel can see "Fireproof" for free at the Regency 8 Cinema in London and the Tri-County Cineplex in Corbin for as long as the movie runs.

## 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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## Jesus didn't come to take sides

By Tony Evans

Dallas (RNS)—As the pastor of a large church, one question I hear a lot is some version of the following: "I'm a Christian. How should I vote in the presidential election?"

"I like some things about Barack Obama, and I like some things about John McCain," they tell me. "Is God a Republican or a Democrat? What does he think about politics?"

Other people even wonder if we should be talking about the subject in church. I'm a pastor, not a politician, but I do know this: God's involvement with politics and government is inescapable—even from a casual reading of the Bible.

Two books, 1 Kings and 2 Kings, cover the rule and reign of government leaders. Nehemiah rebuilt communities with government support. Daniel rose high in the governments of Babylon and Persia. John the Baptist interacted with Herod. Jesus navigated political tensions with Pilate. The Bible is full of politics.

Yet when people talk about elections, candidates, parties and platforms, it's amazing how theology

either doesn't come up at all or is the last thing mentioned. God's relationship to the election is rarely discussed, and when it is, it's on the margins of conversations. People will talk about racial preferences, they'll talk about certain issues, and they may mention God's name every now and then.

But God is more involved in this election than people think. The Bible says that God raises up kings and puts them down. Proverbs tells that the "king's heart is in the hand of the Lord. ... He turns it wherever He wants."

So the question is not, "Do religion and politics mix?", but rather, "How should religion and politics mix?"

Most African-American Christians vote Democratic. They believe the Democratic Party is more sensitive to the social and justice needs of minorities, the poor and the disenfranchised.

Most white Christians, meanwhile, vote Republican. They believe the Republican Party is committed to the moral issues of the day—abortion, gay rights and the definition of the family.

## COMMENTARY

## Worship debate

A letter writer took exception to my letter from Sept. 2 regarding the "Church Comeback" article from Aug. 19 in which the "greatest

emphasis was placed on a pastor taking the risk attached to a complete re-configuration of worship style, specifically trading the traditional for the so-called contemporary." The point to be made was that church-or-denominational-membership expansion might be achieved if pastors would simply embrace this tradeoff, principally using the pop/rock cultural approach.

The thrust of my letter had to do with this proposition in light of the fact that SBC membership increased

27 percent from 1965 to 1980 (essentially traditional worship); 16 percent from 1980 to 2000 (beginning and expansion of contemporary); and 2.5 percent from 2000 to 2007 (contemporary worship greatly intensified). Membership currently is stagnant and demonstrably headed for negative statistics as the contemporary style is at a peak. From a statistical standpoint, the tradeoff of the traditional for the contemporary has been a total failure with respect to worship as a tool for membership expansion.

The "Church Comeback" effort needs to be revisited with respect to worship, though other factors are at play as well. Virtually all denominations are experiencing



## Revival in Taylor County

God blessed in an incredible way during the recent Taylor County "Go Tell" crusade. James Jones, pastor of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church and chairman for the crusade, reported 393 professions of faith and 170 rededications.

The report included 160 professions of faith from the Campbellsville University campus. President Michael Carter reported that 120 first-time decisions came during a special freshman orientation program called "First Class" and that another 40 came during a chapel service on Wednesday.

Carter said about half of Campbellsville's students are not Christians when they arrive on campus. Praise God that the percentage has changed dramatically for the current freshman class.

It has been my observation that when God moves in this kind of dramatic way, the participants are impacted for a lifetime. There is a new

spiritual benchmark in their lives and they continue to pray for God to keep bringing revival.

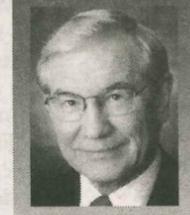
I also believe that God has only just begun to work in the lives of these participants. If revival history is repeated, a significant number of these students will respond to the call of God to vocational Christian ministry and missions.

During Wednesday youth night, there were 132 professions of faith. Attendance exceeded 3,500, marking the largest Christian gathering in the history of Taylor County.

In the past when God has provided revival, participants have shared their testimonies and the revival has spread to churches and youth groups. I pray that will be true in this case as well.

Crusade co-chair Skip Alexander, pastor of Campbellsville Baptist Church, was mindful of the fact that Kentucky Baptists had just gathered in churches all over Kentucky to pray

## PARTNERS IN THE MISSION



Bill Mackey

But God is not a Republican, nor a Democrat. In fact, God is the consummate independent. So it's not my job to tell Christians whom to vote for, but it is my job to tell Christians how to vote.

They should vote for the candidate, the platform and the party that is going to best represent the values of the Kingdom of God. It's as simple as that—and as complicated as that. Neither party fully represents those Kingdom values—I can show you pluses and minuses on both sides—so Christians shouldn't fully give themselves to either party.

But because God is involved politically, we must choose. And since neither party fully represents the interests of the Kingdom of God, you are free to choose based on your opinion.

That's why people have to decide for themselves. That's why I can't say folks should vote for Obama or McCain because no one person, no one party, no one platform, fully reflects the values of the Kingdom of God.

Our God is not the God of Democrats, nor is He the God of Republicans. He did not come to take sides; He came to take over.

Tony Evans is senior pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas and president of The Urban Alternative

slowed growth or outright decline. Contemporary worship is designed with the individual at its center, i.e., personal gratification. It is noteworthy in this regard that sermons are rarely, if ever, applauded. Traditional worship has God at its center (meditative, decorous, deferential). This doesn't mean that worshippers should have no emotions, even lighthearted ones; rather, the emotions should be triggered for the right reasons. The contemporary approach is essentially designed to make worship attractive to the young; it should be designed to make the young attracted to worship. In any case, applause is virtual blasphemy, adoration accorded to people, not God.

Jim Clark  
Lexington

"With One Voice" for God to send revival and spiritual awakening. We should not be surprised that God has blessed.

As Kentucky Baptists, let us be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and pray especially for the new believers at Campbellsville University and in the rest of Taylor County. Pray also for those who are following up to disciple these new and renewed Christians.

Many believe that God may send revival through a younger generation that is desperate for Him. If the economic environment continues to decline, it may be that other generations will become desperate for God as well.

During this very critical time in the history of our nation, we all have an opportunity to seek the Lord in the spirit of 2 Chronicles 7:14, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

## STEWARDSHIP

## There are simple ways to weather financial storms

By Jeremy White

After Hurricane Ike hit the Texas coast, some houses stood the test while others were wiped out.



The builders of the surviving houses chose to use concrete, reinforced steel and other sturdier materials.

The builders of the destroyed homes did not plan on hurricane-force winds. Their houses were made of wood or cheaper materials.

The wise person prepares for possible disaster before it happens. As the old saying goes, "The best time to fix the leak in the roof is while the sun is still shining."

Our economy has struggled recently; it's an economic storm for many people. The best time to apply wise financial principles—spending less than you earn, minimizing debt, having emergency savings and investing long term—is before the financial storms come.

You may be thinking, "Well, it's too late for that. I'm in the midst of a financial crisis. Now what do I do?" Here's hope: You start with the same principles.

Perhaps your financial crisis already has happened. You are now picking up the pieces and trying to rebuild. What do you do? Same answer: You start with these principles.

A standing house in Galveston, Texas, provides a great illustration for motivating you to prepare in advance. Like many illustrations, though, it does not apply to all situations. Thankfully so in the case of financial crises. You can take great comfort that applying the same principles that applied before, during and after the storm.

People ask me, "Now that (blank) is happening ... ?" You can fill in the blank with just about anything: the stock market declining, interest rates rising or the price of eggs in China changing. I give the same advice: Follow these four principles. If you spend less than your income, eliminate debt, have available savings, set long-term goals and invest accordingly, then you'll be as prepared as possible.

An even better and older saying is, "Build your house upon the rock." Jesus said that anyone who comes to Him and hears His words and puts them into practice is like a wise builder. Not just a builder of a good financial portfolio, but of a good life.

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

## Couples must 'clean out' lives to maintain healthy marriages

**Q: How can couples keep marriages from starting out as a love affair and becoming a business?**

Most couples begin the journey of marriage with light hearts and backpacks, bright-eyed and jaunty of step as they anticipate a trail filled with beauty, love and delight around every bend. Collecting experiences and responsibilities as they go, they do not even notice the weight of the pack until the point at which they begin to realize the joy of the journey has been replaced by the struggle to survive.

Whether cleaning out a backpack of irrelevant routine or declaring a yard sale to purge one's marital home of "stuff-itis," every couple needs to periodically prune their schedules, responsibilities, routines and material entrapments. Because achieving the simple life is anything but simple, couples should periodically position themselves for pruning.

Perhaps some of the following questions might help:

- What would give us greater joy as a couple if we did more of it?
- What would give us greater joy as a couple if we did less of it?
- What stands in the way of making either of these happen?
- How do our desires to please people and get ahead get in the way of our marital satisfaction?

In any yard sale, there always is a degree of "seller's remorse"—the temptation to keep that which needs to be sold or given away. Just because we are used to something does not mean it is useful. Resist the urge to make an idol out of the status quo. Remember what love was like before it became a business. Repent of the practices that keep your marriage feeling barren and rut-bound. Return to the things that helped love come alive.—*Scott Wigginton*

**Q: My husband is incredibly independent. Having come from a terrible family growing up, he has come a long way, but sometimes this gets in the way. Instead of feeling close, he sometimes seems so far away. It can be as if he is encased in stone and completely inaccessible. How do I get through that?**

American culture promotes a strong attitude of independence. As a country, we often celebrate the strength of character of those who make their own way in the world, especially through hardship. We can think that it is not a good thing to need something or someone and imagine it is better to be independent. We can equate need with weakness or pain if our families hurt and neglected us during our youth.

Why do we seek to deny we have needs? We can do this to avoid feeling vulnerable or acknowledging we are vulnerable. To face our needs is to admit we are incomplete. We want to be whole, but we are not. People seek wealth, fame, power and status to avoid the truth of their neediness. This can be a form of denying our humanity—to be human is to need. Only with the full revelation of God's Kingdom will there be wholeness.

Consider what God might have for us to learn and how we are meant to grow by admitting we need. Study these questions.

- Where are you vulnerable?
- How might your relationships become deeper and stronger by your expression of need?
- How might the mutual expression of need in earthly relationships be part of God's design for the Kingdom?
- Do you know what you need from your relationships?

Try talking with your husband about his needs. Ask him what he needs from you and his family. Share with him the needs you have. God has a powerful way of using others to meet our needs that teach us great truths about His Kingdom.—*Valerie Vincent*

Family Forum writers are:

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



## Recorder's history defined by cooperation

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, before the dramatic impact of the radio, the even more dramatic impact of television, and the further dramatic impact of the computer, Kentuckians and the rest of the nation relied on newspapers for information and inspiration. Baptists were no different. Baptist newspapers with varying perspectives on a dizzying assortment of issues inundated Kentucky Baptist clergy and laymen and women alike.

News and Truths, published by H. Boyce Taylor in far Western Kentucky, and Kentucky Mission Monthly, published by the Executive Board of the General Association and edited by the corresponding secretary, reached large numbers of Kentucky Baptists across the state. Two other newspapers published in Louisville offered contrasting views of Baptist belief in the early years of the 20th century.

The Western Recorder, privately published by the Baptist Book Concern, had been edited by J.W. Porter since 1909. Following the example of T.T. Eaton, his editorial predecessor, Porter continued to level attacks on E.Y. Mullins and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary over issues such as Landmarkism, "alien immersion" and "unionism."

Even before Porter, Eaton's criticisms were so intense that in 1908, Mullins—with the help of seminary faculty—raised the necessary capital for a new concern, the Baptist World Publishing Company, which was responsible for publishing books written by faculty scholars as well as a new newspaper, the Baptist World. The World offered a decidedly different perspective, sympathetic and supportive of the seminary, its president and faculty.

By 1919, with the enormous challenge of the 75 Million Campaign before them, Kentucky Baptist leaders determined that a united voice would be necessary to

promote the campaign and other Baptist causes. A Texan actually suggested the course that Kentucky Baptists would choose to follow. In a letter to Mullins, J.B. Gambrell, the president of the Southern Baptist Convention and a former corresponding secretary of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, advised the embattled seminary president that "Kentucky Baptists merge the two papers for the sake of denominational efficiency."

In 1919, O.E. Bryan, Kentucky's corresponding secretary, concluded as well that Kentucky Baptists "could only reach their financial goals" through a merger of the state's denominational papers. Bryan eventually presented a resolution at a called meeting of the state's Board of Missions at Broadway Baptist Church in Louisville, asking for the board to purchase the state's Baptist papers and operate them under the board's direct control.

The purchase was effected in 1919 when owners of the Western Recorder and the Baptist World sold those papers—\$20,000 for the Recorder and \$15,000 for the World—to the state board. The Kentucky Mission Monthly merged as well, but the recalcitrant Taylor held out and continued to publish his News and Truths independently. The newly merged paper, an example of Kentucky Baptist cooperation, retained the name Western Recorder and Porter remained as managing editor. The former editor of the World, E.B. Hatcher remained as news editor, and Bryan agreed to serve as business manager. To their credit, Porter and Mullins—along with other mainstream Kentucky Baptist leaders—put aside old animosities for the good of Kentucky Baptists. What a wonderful model for us to follow today.

*Duane Bolin is a professor of history at Murray State University. He also is the author of "Kentucky Baptists, 1925-2000: A Story of Cooperation."*

### GUEST EDITORIAL



Duane Bolin

## Did God create Ray Boltz gay?

By Bob Stith

**Southlake, Texas (BP)**—"If this is the way God made me, then this is the way I'm going to live," Christian singer Ray Boltz said in a recent article disclosing his decision to divorce his wife and live as a homosexual.

But did God really create Ray Boltz as a homosexual? The media certainly would have us think so.

Time Magazine recently ran an article ("What the Gay Brain Looks Like," Jun. 17, 2008) attempting to demonstrate the science supporting a "gay gene." Interestingly, the article referenced a study done by Simon LeVay in 1991. The study had major gaps in its methodology, and even LeVay, a homosexual neuroscientist, has said that it didn't prove what he hoped it would.

An article such as this demonstrates the difficulty of speaking truth into our culture today. Studies attempting to normalize homosexual behavior are introduced with much fanfare, and we hear about "important" new discoveries that are accepted as facts. We don't hear, however, about the scientists who strongly disagree and the studies that reach a different conclusion.

For example, in 2003, the International Human Genome Consortium announced the successful completion of the Human Genome Project, which, among other things, identified each of the approximately 20,000-25,000 genes in human DNA.

While this accomplishment was widely reported, almost no one reported the words of Francis Collins, the head of the project. Collins, ar-

guably the nation's most influential geneticist, said, "Homosexuality is not hardwired. There is no gay gene. We mapped the human genome. We now know there is no genetic cause for homosexuality."

Somehow the major media missed that little tidbit. Collins and others acknowledge that genetics can predispose but not predetermine. This supports other studies that clearly document the possibility of change for people who struggle with unwanted homosexual desire.

The need for Christians to be prepared to deal with this issue is shown in another comment by Boltz: "I guess I felt that the church, that they had it wrong about how I felt with being gay all these years, so maybe they had it wrong about a lot of other things."

Notice the emphasis on "how I felt." Far too often we allow "feelings" and the validity of each person's "story" to trump the authority of Scripture. In Boltz's case, his struggle with homosexuality apparently caused him to doubt other tenets of the faith. Beliefs to which he had held all his life were reconsidered. This is not uncommon among strugglers from Christian backgrounds. When we fail to help them deal with this issue, other fundamental beliefs are questioned.

Another sad byproduct is that his former wife has joined a pro-gay advocacy group. I've often thought that many people turn to various pro-gay groups because the church was not there at the time of their crisis. The end result is that not only is the struggler lost, but family mem-

bers as well. Tragically, they often become very effective instruments in the hands of homosexual activists.

I grieve for the loss of the testimony of Ray Boltz. I grieve for those who will follow his example. I grieve for his family. I pray that one day Ray will realize that God did not create him as a homosexual and that there is a way out.

We are in desperate need of children of Issachar, who understand the times and know what to do (1 Chronicles 12:32). Far too many in Southern Baptist churches are struggling with a temptation they neither seek nor understand, but they are terrified to ask for help. Ray Boltz said, "I read every book, I read all the scriptures they use, I did everything to try and change." Scripture (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) tells us that people can leave homosexuality.

Those with long experience in this ministry will tell you that very few people have left homosexuality without the support and involvement of others. But the fear of being found out keeps many in bondage, and that bondage is intensified when the world continually trumpets, "You're born that way. Just accept it."

I pray for the day when all of our churches take seriously the need to train their leadership to redemptively provide the tools needed for the people like Ray Boltz in their midst. I long for the day when every community has Christians who are prepared to present a positive, joy-filled alternative to the lifelong struggle he has endured.

Are your church and community prepared? Are you?

*Bob Stith is the Southern Baptist Convention's national strategist for gender issues*

## Students unite in prayer at 'See You at the Pole' rallies

Modesto, Calif. (BP)—Across the nation thousands of students gathered around flagpoles to pray for such things as their schools, families and the government Sept. 24, marking the annual observance of See You at the Pole, a student-initiated prayer movement.

At Downey High School in Modesto, Calif., about 50 students met in front of the building for small group prayer and then formed a large circle to sing songs and intercede collectively.

"I do it because I love Jesus with all my heart," Senior Colin Horne told The Modesto Bee newspaper. "We want people to see that God loves them."

The reporter asked Horne what he would say to people who object to religion on campus. "God's in our lives all the time," Horne replied. "We can separate Him from our curriculum, but He's still in our hearts."

Meaghan Jones, a sophomore,

told The Bee she took her spot at the flagpole because she wanted to change the way people at her school think about Jesus, while Jonathan Beckman said, "I believe God wants to change our school and I wanted to be part of it."

See You at the Pole began with a group of youth in Burleson, Texas, in 1990. This year's theme was "Connect" and was based on the story of 1 Samuel 3. Samuel, organizers noted, began his relationship with the Lord as a young person.

"1 Samuel 3:10 ('Speak, for your servant is listening') is the theme of See You at the Pole," Jonathan Falwell wrote Sept. 19. "I believe it is a fitting verse for young Christians seeking to hear from God while they exist in a culture that increasingly promotes immorality, sexual ambivalence and situational ethics."

"I'm sure there are young people who think, I'd like to participate at my school's See You at the Pole meeting, but some kids in my classes will make fun of me," Falwell added. "So what. Seriously, there is no greater privilege than being hassled or made fun of because of your relationship with Jesus Christ. Plus, See You at the Pole is a great way to get to know other Christian kids and become united with them."

Last year more than 2 million American teenagers in all 50 states participated in See You at the Pole gatherings, along with students in Australia and Canada.

## Officials suspect arson to blame for fire at historic Iowa church

By Richard Nations  
Iowa Baptist

Keokuk, Iowa (BP)—Investigators have not ruled out arson in an early morning fire that destroyed the educational wing and pastor's office of Bethany Baptist Church in Keokuk, Iowa.

The Keokuk Fire Department was called to the historic 151-year-old structure at around 1:30 a.m. Sept. 19. The structure was heavily damaged before firefighters brought the blaze under control hours later. The roof of the educational wing collapsed and smoke and water damage was extensive throughout the sanctuary. The pastor's study was destroyed and his library was deemed unsalvageable.

The state fire marshal's office is investigating the blaze as suspicious and has not ruled out arson as the cause. Keokuk Fire Chief Mark Wessel said the fire was similar to a blaze in May at First Baptist Church of Keokuk that was determined to be arson. Fire officials were cooperating with the state officials and the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, which automatically is called in for cases of church fires.

Bethany Baptist's pastor, Ronnie McLain, said the congrega-

tion is holding up but was shaken by the fire. "You don't understand the end of the matter until you get to the end of the matter," he noted. "It may yet turn out to be a blessing."

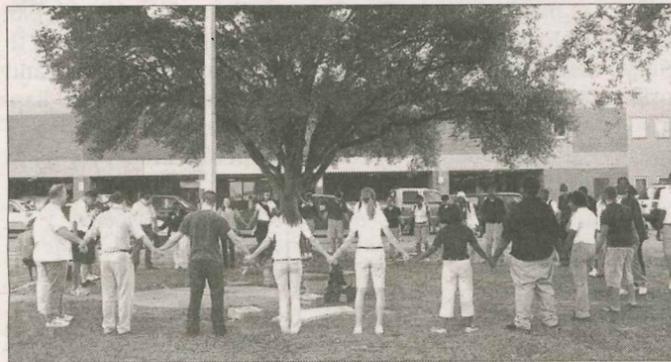
The pastor said church members showed up for services in the parking lot Sept. 21 with tears in their eyes and hugs for each other. He preached on the building of two Israelite temples, pointing out that in both cases there was a congregation before the temple was built and after it was destroyed.

The Baptist congregation received the historic church building as a gift from Keokuk's First Congregational Church when it disbanded in 1994.

The pastor and key church leaders met with leaders of other churches in town to determine where the church will meet until repairs can be made. Members of First Baptist, Keokuk, have offered the use of their facilities, while a local bank offered the use of a nearby vacant church building.

Baptist Convention of Iowa officials are working with the Great Rivers Baptist Association to help replace hymnals, Sunday school curriculum and other church supplies lost in the fire.

**ONE VOICE** Students at San Diego's Oak Valley Middle School join thousands of others across the country in this year's See You at the Pole gatherings nationwide Sept. 24. (BP photo courtesy of See You at the Pole)



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For Information, Reservations, Brochure  
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## CALL FOR RESOLUTIONS

The Kentucky Baptist Convention Committee on Resolutions will be receiving resolutions to be considered at this year's annual meeting until October 11.

This year's meeting is to be held Nov. 11 at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington

IF YOU HAVE A RESOLUTION TO BE CONSIDERED:

E-mail it to: [executive@kybaptist.org](mailto:executive@kybaptist.org) (preferred method)

or  
Mail it to: Committee on Resolutions  
c/o KBC Executive Office  
P.O. Box 43433  
Louisville, KY 40253

### All Resolutions Must:

- Be typewritten, titled and dated
  - Be accompanied by a letter or e-mail from a church qualified to send a messenger to the annual meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Convention certifying that the person submitting the resolution is a member in good standing
  - Include complete contact information for the person submitting the resolution and his or her church
- No person may submit more than three resolutions in a single year.



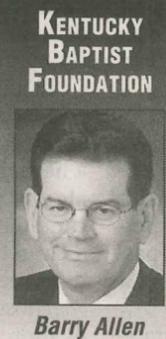
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### Leaving a legacy through churches

#### Endowments allow families to honor their church homes

Over the years, we have assisted individuals and families who wanted to leave a legacy to advance the Kingdom during and beyond their lifetimes through the ministries of all the churches of which they were members. What a wonderful testimony to the impact these churches made in their lives, and what a wonderful way to perpetuate and enhance the effectiveness of those ministries until Jesus comes again.



Barry Allen

One couple established a separate endowment for each of their churches. Although the sizes of the endowments differed due to the churches' different membership sizes, the purpose for which the funds are to be used by each church is the same. In this case, the purpose is the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the physical facilities. This family expressed not only a disappointment at the lack of proper care of the facilities of certain churches, but also a concern that such insufficient care was a hindrance to an effective witness of Christ to the communities where these churches were located. As a result, this family wanted to make a differ-

ence by providing perpetual funds to help ensure the proper care of the Lord's house.

Another couple established a single endowment and divided the beneficial interest among the various churches of which they had been members; except they established a separate endowment for the church of which they currently were members. The earnings from the multi-church endowment are available to those churches in perpetuity for whatever purposes the churches determine in fulfilling their ministries from time to time.

Half of the earnings from the single church endowment are available in perpetuity for whatever purposes the church determines, and the other half has a restricted use related to ministry to the physically handicapped.

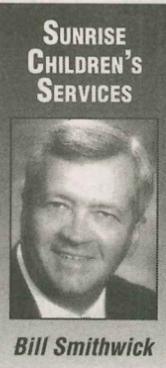
Call KBF Trust Counsel Laurie Valentine or me toll free to discover the most effective way for you to leave a legacy through a single and/or multi-church endowment.

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

### Success 101

#### Ky. colleges are full of many of Sunrise's success stories

College students have settled into their dorm rooms for another school year. Among them are young adults who never would have made it to college without Sunrise Children's Services.



Bill Smithwick

Teresa came to our Dixon Center in Webster County because she had been physically abused by her father, who is an alcoholic. She tested positive for marijuana and amphetamine use when she arrived at the center. Teresa started fights with other girls during her first week and ran away from the program. When she returned safely, Teresa continued with her angry outbursts.

The Dixon staff knew that Teresa's behavioral problems stemmed from pain over her relationship with her father. In time, she began to understand that her drug use was negatively affecting her and her future.

Thanks to persistent encouragement over the course of a year, Teresa was able to overcome her past. During family counseling, Teresa learned that her father loved her despite how he treated her while under the influence of alcohol.

In school, Teresa became an honor roll student who graduated with plans to attend Western Kentucky University. Teresa also made a profession of faith in Christ.

She left the Dixon Center to move into her room at WKU and begin her new life.

Many of Sunrise's high school graduates are attending community colleges, trade schools and universities this fall. Their achievements would have been impossible without the opportunity they had to heal from their hurts in Sunrise's programs.

Teenagers who not long ago were trapped in a life of abuse, neglect, disappointment, loneliness and failure are now on track toward a successful future.

When you support Sunrise with your prayers and financial gifts, you are making higher education possible for kids who would have been stuck in the past, but are instead embracing a better life.

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

### For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan



### Church of the Covered Dish

Thom Tapp



### Bible Crosswords

By Janet Adkins

#### Across

- 1 Don't just sit there
- 4 "I do \_\_\_ my bow in the cloud" (Genesis 9:13)
- 7 Mightier than a machete?
- 10 Vast desert region (abbr.)
- 11 Of a certain Indochinese kingdom
- 12 Enthusiasm
- 13 "For whom he did foreknow, he also did \_\_\_" (Romans 8:29)
- 16 "Wound for wound, \_\_\_ for \_\_\_" (clue repeated) (Exodus 21:25)
- 17 Drunkard
- 18 Shows or does (suffix)
- 19 Epitome of wisdom
- 23 \_\_\_ au lait
- 25 Chums
- 26 Corrida cheer
- 27 "They lavish gold ... hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it \_\_\_" (2 words, Isaiah 46:6)
- 28 "They of Persia and of \_\_\_ ... were in thine army" (Ezekiel 27:10)
- 29 \_\_\_ code
- 30 "Lest I \_\_\_ mine own inheritance" (Ruth 4:6)
- 31 Ancient meeting place, in a city
- 32 Organ component
- 33 Omen
- 35 The Great \_\_\_
- 36 Half of 104, to Hadrian
- 37 "Ye were \_\_\_ with that holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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					44		45	
					47		48	

- 40 "Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all \_\_\_ and power" (Colossians 2:10)
- 43 Helps
- 44 College entrance requirement (abbr.)
- 45 Three, in Turin
- 46 Not (Scot.)
- 47 Atlas, for one (abbr., pl.)
- 48 Well-spoken affirmative
- 15 Tristran and \_\_\_\_, of the medieval legend
- 19 Prepare certain dishes
- 20 "For we ... do groan ... that \_\_\_ might be swallowed up of life" (2 Corinthians 5:4)
- 21 Oil (comb. form)
- 22 \_\_\_ tide
- 23 Become one with nature?
- 24 "For this \_\_\_ is mount Sinai in Arabia" (Galatians 4:25)
- 25 Of a sandy beach
- 29 "Set me as \_\_\_ upon thine heart" (2 words, Song of Solomon 8:6)
- 31 "When her masters saw that the hope of their \_\_\_ was gone" (Acts 16:19)
- 34 Playground perennial
- 35 "Ye love the uppermost \_\_\_ in the synagogues" (Luke 11:43)
- 37 "He \_\_\_ on the ground, and made clay" (John 9:6)
- 38 To be (Fr.)
- 39 Colors
- 40 \_\_\_ fried
- 41 Long, narrow inlet
- 42 Doctrine or theory

### Last week's solution

1	A	L	A	S	5	P	P	D	8	N	O	A	H
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15	A	M	A	T	16	O	S	17	B	A	T	S	
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22	S	O	D	23	A	L	L						
24	S	W	I	F	27	M	I	L	28	S	O	R	
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37	P	S	I	38	S	E	A						
39	I	N	H	40	A	B	I	41	T	A	N	T	
44	I	D	E	45	E	R	A	46	I	O	T	A	
48	L	O	R	49	R	A	Y	50	A	L	A	N	
51	A	L	O	52	Y	E	S	53	S	A	Y	S	

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## Survey: Americans wary of church political endorsements

Continued from page 1

strongly disagreed that it is appropriate for churches to publicly endorse candidates, whereas 72 percent of adults above age 49 strongly disagreed.

When it comes to how churches use their resources, Americans overwhelmingly feel that churches should not use those resources to campaign for candidates.

When asked to respond to the statement, "I believe it is appropriate for churches to use their resources to campaign for candidates for public office," 85 percent disagreed; 73 percent of those did so strongly.

Region of the country, marital status and age were among the factors that most sharply divided Americans' opinions on whether churches should use their resources to campaign for candidates. In the East, 81 percent of respondents strongly disagreed with the practice. Only 66 percent in the South strongly disagreed compared with 71 percent in the West and 75 percent in the Central region of the United States.

Single individuals strongly disagreed with churches campaigning for candidates at a lower rate (54 percent) than married people (79 percent) or divorced, widowed and separated people (77 percent).

Young adults also are less likely to strongly disagree with churches using their resources to campaign for candidates. Forty-seven percent of 18-24 year olds strongly disagreed compared to 84 percent of adults age 55 and older.

Significant differences exist among Christians as well, with 81 percent of Catholics strongly dis-

agreeing with churches campaigning for candidates. Protestants who consider themselves born-again, evangelical or fundamentalist are less likely to strongly disagree with the practice (62 percent) than Protestants who do not claim those labels (74 percent).

### Tax-exempt debate

When the topic turned to whether churches that publicly endorse candidates should lose their tax-exempt status, a slim majority agreed and differences appeared along many of the same lines.

Thirty-eight percent strongly agreed and 14 percent somewhat agreed "that churches who publicly endorse candidates for public office should lose their tax exemption." Twenty-five percent strongly disagreed.

The South was by far the region most open to allowing churches to endorse candidates without losing tax exemptions. Southerners agreed at a rate of 41 percent that candidate-endorsing churches should lose their tax exemptions compared with 58 percent in the East, 56 percent in the Central region and 56 percent in the West.

Protestants who consider themselves born-again, evangelical or fundamentalist (26 percent) were less likely than Protestants not claiming the born-again label (39 percent) to strongly agree with removing the tax-exempt status of churches that publicly endorse candidates.

"Americans overwhelmingly want pastors to stick to faith and not political endorsements," Stetzer noted. "However, they are less certain

that they want the government to strip them of their tax exemption. ... Americans don't want churches in politics but they are not as certain they want the government in the churches."

When the question centered on pastors rather than churches, Americans were slightly more open to endorsement of candidates, but not if the endorsement comes during a church service.

Although more than half believe it is appropriate for pastors to endorse candidates for public office outside of the church, only 13 percent believe it is acceptable for pastors to endorse candidates during a service.

Asked to respond to the statement, "I believe it is appropriate for pastors to personally endorse candidates for public office, but only outside of their church role," 31 percent of respondents strongly agreed and 23 percent somewhat agreed.

Regular attendance at religious

services is perhaps the greatest distinguishing factor between those who support and oppose pastoral endorsement of candidates outside the church. While 61 percent of those who attend religious services more than once a week approve of such endorsements, only 38 percent of those who never attend said the practice was acceptable.

Regarding candidate endorsements by a pastor during a church service, respondents were asked whether they "believe it is appropriate for pastors to publicly endorse candidates for public office during a church service." Nearly 90 percent disagreed.

Those attending religious services more than once a week are four times as likely to favor pastoral endorsements during a church service as those who never attend. Twenty-three percent of more-than-weekly participants agreed with the practice compared with five percent of those who never attend.

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## Always room for improvement

### OBI's improved student award recipients prove it's never too late to get on track

By Denise Spencer and Tamara Cochran, OBI publications

Every spring our faculty, school administrators and houseparents meet to select the recipients of our "Most Improved" awards. These may be youngsters who have done better in attitude, character, study habits, academics or self-esteem. Space does not permit us to tell you about all of our award winners, but we would like to share some examples with you.

John was voted Most Improved Seventh-Grade Boy. He came to OBI near the end of sixth grade from Western Kentucky. John had made "straight F's" at home. "I had a rebellious attitude," he said. "The public school was ready to ... send me to an alternative school. My dad looked for a school that was cheap and would help me with my grades."

At Oneida, John took his math class in the tutoring lab. He said, "The tutoring lab ... slowed it down and went over it step by step until I got it. ... My grades have improved dramatically."

Emily was our Most Improved Junior Girl. Emily came to OBI from Tennessee in the sixth grade. Her father had remarried and Emily was struggling to find her place in the newly blended family. After one year at Oneida, Emily's father thought she could do well at home, so she returned to the family. However, conflict between Emily and her stepmother resumed. She came back to OBI for the eighth grade and stayed.

Her most improved status comes after years of negative behavior with numerous incidents at school and in the dormitory. The turning point came last year when several of her peers were ex-

pelled for a group offense involving Emily. The administration let Emily stay, but put her on strict probation. "I knew if I did one more thing it wouldn't be a joke this time," she recalled.

Emily did not find it difficult to alter her behavior once she really began trying. A benefit of her changed attitude has been a much better relationship with her family. "I've always had a good relationship with my dad," she said. "It's a lot better with my stepmom now. We can talk."

Emily has specific goals for this year. "I'm going to get on the honor roll," she promised. "I'm not going to try; I'm going to do it. This is my senior year. I've got to step up to the plate."

A.J. is from Maryland and has been at Oneida since the eighth grade. He estimated that before he came to OBI he had only attended classes approximately half of the days during the school year. "The rest of the time I was suspended," he said.

When A.J. arrived at Oneida, "I had an anger problem," he explained. "I fought whenever I was picked on. I got mad at little things." At school, A.J. liked being the center of attention and was disruptive in class. Excessive tardies and defiance toward adults added to the trouble.

One day, A.J. was campused (or grounded) and was sitting in his dorm room. "It just came to me," he said. "I realized I was getting in trouble for dumb stuff and I needed to change." Last year, A.J. was named Most Improved Sophomore Boy. This year he hopes to make the honor roll. "All the time I've been in school I've never made the honor roll," he noted.

W.F. Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, Box 67, Oneida, KY 40972; [www.oneidaschool.org](http://www.oneidaschool.org); e-mail: [president@oneidaschool.org](mailto:president@oneidaschool.org)

### THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

### CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Donnie Fox

## Meet the Clear Creek family

### Howell serves as "front door" in CCBC's admissions office

When you ask Director of Admissions Billy Howell what he does at Clear Creek he responds with, "I serve as the front door."

"I am usually the first person that prospective students speak to when they are looking for information about Clear Creek," Howell said.

"This 'front door' position is very important to me because I know I am dealing with a unique kind of college student here at Clear Creek." The school's average students are "32 years old (and) have received their calling from God later in life," Howell explained. "The

majority are married with kids who leave a good job and sell their home to follow God's call here to study and prepare for full-time ministry.

"I want to try my best to help them understand if they have a true call from God to this place. It may be hard at times, but in the midst of it all, the peace of God makes it work when they follow His call here.

"I try to get all prospective students to visit our campus," Howell continued. "I know from personal experience that if I can at least get them to visit, they tend to get an idea of whether God truly wants

them here. So I spend a lot of time trying to get each prospective student to at least visit our campus and then I let God lead them in the decision they need to make."

Billy knows from personal experience how important that initial visit to our campus can be."

"I first heard about Clear Creek in 1989 in a small church in North

Carolina when I announced my call to ministry," Howell recalled. "A gentleman in our church came to me and asked if I had ever heard of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. He had graduated from here in 1953. ... He said he was going to call and ask them to send me a catalog. Through that catalog, I came to vis-

it the college and the Lord led me to attend as a student in the fall of 1989. I graduated in 1993 and served as a pastor for 10 years. Then God called me back to Clear Creek in 2003 to serve in my present position."

If you or someone you know would like to schedule a visit to our campus, send an e-mail to Billy at [bhowell@cbbc.edu](mailto:bhowell@cbbc.edu).

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.cbbc.edu](http://www.cbbc.edu); e-mail: [dfox@cbbc.edu](mailto:dfox@cbbc.edu)

## Baptists surpass 2 million meals in hurricane relief

Alpharetta, Ga. (BP)—As the weeks of relief work mount in the Gulf region of Texas and Louisiana, Southern Baptists disaster relief volunteers recently surpassed the milestone of preparing more than 2 million hot meals in the wake of Hurricanes Ike and Gustav.

More than 100 units from 19 state Baptist conventions continue serving in Texas in response to the needs created by Hurricane Ike which struck the Texas and Louisiana Gulf Coast on Sept. 13. In Louisiana, meanwhile, 97 Southern Baptist disaster relief units and/or teams serving with the Red Cross and Salvation Army continue to be deployed.

Last week, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention closed a feeding site in Huntsville, Texas, 70 miles north of Houston, and opened a site in Galveston. The site will be manned by volunteers from the Texas convention, Illinois, Arizona and Oklahoma and will include three feeding units.

Southern Baptist disaster relief leaders said sites north of Houston will begin closing soon as power returns to the area and victims have the ability to obtain food elsewhere. Local officials in Houston have contacted SBC disaster relief leaders to request shower units for an evacuee site they are establishing in Houston.

In addition to preparing more than 2.8 million hot meals, Southern Baptists also have purified 7,008 gallons of water and washed 4,960 loads of laundry.

## Ike's impact was felt far beyond Texas, La.

### Kentucky, Midwest blasted by storm's destructive winds

By Mickey Noah  
SBC North American Mission Board

Cincinnati (BP)—Besides the mammoth Southern Baptist disaster relief response mounted in Louisiana and Texas after Hurricane Ike, several Baptist state conventions also have deployed volunteers in their own backyards.

"It was the perfect storm here in the Cincinnati area," recalled Dennis Holmes, associational missionary for Baptist Association of Greater Cincinnati. "When the remnants of Hurricane Ike met up with a cold front, it was the perfect condition. It was worse than any ice storm."

Holmes said winds spiked at 84 mph, felling trees by the dozens and knocking power out for more than 1 million people—800,000 of them in Cincinnati alone.

"Most of the wind came through Cincinnati, Columbus, Lebanon and into the Dayton area," noted Duane Floro, ministry evangelism strategist for the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio. "Some are still without power."

Floro said disaster relief chainsaw teams were activated east of Cincinnati and, because recovery is not complete, two chainsaw units in Ohio still are working. In addition to local needs, Ohio Baptists also deployed feeding and shower units to Louisiana and later to Texas. In all, the state convention has more than 500 trained disaster relief volunteers at work.

Although heavy rain was not a factor in Ohio, it was in Illinois, where most of the state, including Chicago, saw rainfall amounts of seven to nine inches. The Illinois River reached near-record flood levels at Utica, Ill., according to Jack Shelby,

disaster relief director for the Illinois Baptist State Association.

"There was heavy, sustained wind of 65 mph in southern Illinois and widespread tree damage in Massac County," Shelby explained. Massac, Jackson, Johnson and Union counties in southern Illinois were hit particularly hard.

After Ike struck the Galveston-Houston area on Sept. 13, Shelby mobilized Illinois feeding, shower, communications, chaplains and chainsaw crews to Texas. Four chainsaw units were sent to Louisiana when Hurricane Gustav hit there Sept. 1.

"We anticipate having to send mud-out crews—when they return from Texas—to areas along the Illinois River," said Shelby, who himself is serving at an incident command center in Fort Worth, Texas.

An Illinois Baptist feeding unit is returned home from Cold Springs, Texas, last week but the personnel who staffed it were redeployed to Galveston, where they are helping to run a new feeding operation on Galveston Island.

### Kentucky clean up

Coy Webb, disaster relief associate for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, said straight-line winds as high as 80 mph raked across Kentucky from west to east.

"Our chainsaw crews, 35 to 50 people, first responded in Fulton, partnering with disaster relief volunteers from Tennessee along the border," Webb noted. The crews then followed Ike's path through Livermore, Louisville and into Bracken County and Alcorn in Eastern Kentucky, he added.

While Kentucky Baptists were tackling downed trees here, others from the state convention were operating feeding units in Thibodeaux, La., and Beaumont and Angleton, Texas, near Galveston. Other Kentucky disaster relief volunteers were flown directly to Baytown, Texas, to

work in the "mega" feeding operation there.

For the second time in only three months, Southern Indiana was again hit hard by major storms. Back in June, many towns in that region were inundated by historic flooding. Homeowners were just finishing repairs from the June floods when Ike stormed through.

"Our bad weather came in on the Sunday after Ike hit Texas," said Allen Haynes, state disaster relief coordinator in Indiana. "The wind damage knocked 500,000 out of power in southern Indiana, and another 300,000 out in the Gary-Hammond areas."

Ike gave Indiana a full dose of wind and rain. Haynes said winds upward of 60 mph were recorded, and the Gary-Hammond area received 10 inches of rain. That meant chainsaw and mud-out work were required.

"In all, we dispatched five different teams of about 100 people to work north and south Indiana," he said. "Because of the work here at home and in Texas and Louisiana, we've been stretched pretty thin. We're still working on 35 to 40 homes for mud-out and tear-out in the Gary and Hammond areas. This year has been unusually rough on us because of everything we've had to respond to."

Indiana Baptist disaster relief teams also were deployed to Texas and Louisiana, supporting a Kentucky feeding unit north of Houma, La.

Overall, since Gustav struck Louisiana on Sept. 1 and Ike hit Texas on Sept. 13, Southern Baptist disaster relief crews have recorded 22,370 volunteer days; more than 2.8 million meals prepared; 42 mud-out jobs; almost 1,600 chainsaw jobs; 28,000 showers provided; and more than 15,000 ministry contacts, including 713 gospel presentations and 128 professions of faith.

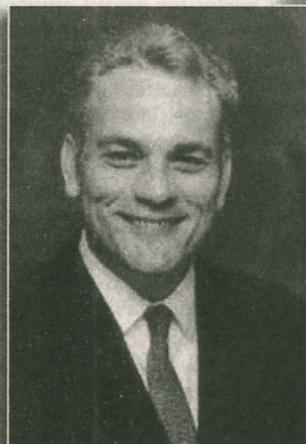
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## Power restored, classes resume at Baptist university in Houston

Houston (BP)—Classes resumed last week at Houston Baptist University, eight days after Hurricane Ike caused an estimated \$10 million worth of damage to the campus.

The university's student center and administrative complex suffered significant wind, water and structural damage during the storm, but student residences were undamaged and classroom buildings were largely unaffected as well, university President Robert Sloan Jr. said in a statement.

Although the campus was without power for a week, emergency generators provided crucial support for staff and students who weathered the storm on campus, Sloan noted. Cool, clear weather allowed cleanup crews to make good progress on recovery efforts.

In the statement posted Sept. 19, Sloan praised students and staff for the patience and good spirit they demonstrated during the chaotic week following the storm.

"As we see more images from the storm's destruction, we realize more and more how many are suffering in our area," Sloan said. "We know that nothing happens outside the love of Christ, and it is that belief that keeps us strong. We pray for God's peace for those who have lost loved ones, homes, pets and that sense of normalcy that we all take for granted."

Students who remained on campus helped other storm victims by volunteering with Houston's End Hunger Network and Neighborhood Centers. The university has established a "Student Success Fund" for donations to help students and their families who suffered losses.

## PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for the following requests associated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention's partnership missions efforts:

■ Pray that Kentucky Baptist churches will respond to the many missions projects available through the Maryland/Delaware partnership.

■ Pray for the the celebration service in Teresina, Brazil, next month which will officially bring the Kentucky-Brazil missions partnership to a close.

■ Pray that KBC churches and associations will answer the call to actively participate in partnerships around the world.

■ Pray that state congregations will learn about and respond to the North American Mission Board's Acts 1:8 Challenge.

■ Pray for Kentucky's International Mission Board missionaries serving in areas around the world.

For more information about partnership missions opportunities, contact the KBC partnership missions department at (502) 489-3529 or toll free in Kentucky at (866) 489-3529.

## MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **GUTHRIE**—Tiny Town Church will celebrate its 60th anniversary Oct. 5, 10 a.m. A meal and special music by **Living by Faith** will follow the service. **Larry Baker** is pastor.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Porter Memorial Church will celebrate its 100th anniversary Oct. 4, 4:30 p.m., and Oct. 5, 10 a.m. Past members of the church's choirs are invited to be part of the anniversary choir. To RSVP for the meal following the Oct. 4 services, call (859) 272-3441. **Bill Henard** is pastor.

Southern Heights Church recently called **Terry Leap** as pastor.

■ **SALYERSVILLE**—First Church will hold revival services Sundays and Mondays during October, 7 p.m. Evangelists include: Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Director **Bill Mackey**, Oct. 5; **Richard Gaines**, pastor of Consolidated Church in Lexington, Oct. 6; **Bert Jones**, president of Go International in Wilmore, Oct. 12; **Paul Badgett**, pastor of First Church of Pikeville, Oct. 19; **Herschel York**, pastor of Buck Run Church in Frankfort, Oct. 20; **Mike Caudill**, pastor of First Church of Hindman, Oct. 26; **Don Pinson**, founder of Heritage Ministries of Kentucky, Oct. 27.

### Spotlight on ...

#### Morehead



Slaty Point Church will hold homecoming services Oct. 3, 7 p.m., with **Gary Boyd**, pastor of Greater Church in Lexington, as guest speaker; Oct. 4, 7 p.m., with **Alan Dodson**, pastor of Cornerstone Church, as guest speaker; Oct. 5, 11 a.m., with **Jimmy Overbee**, pastor of Beatyville Church, as guest speaker. **Rusty Hedrick** is pastor.

■ **WILLIAMSBURG**—University of the Cumberlands presented **Bill Henard**, pastor of Porter Memorial Baptist Church in Lexington, with an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree Sept. 15. Henard, a University of the Cumberlands graduate, is Kentucky Baptist Convention president and Southern Baptist Convention first vice president.

## Korean Children's Choir performs at University of the Cumberlands



**SONG AND DANCE** The Far East Broadcasting Company's Korean Children's Choir performed for faculty, staff and students at University of the Cumberlands on Sept. 22. (Photo courtesy of University of the Cumberlands)

**Williamsburg**—The Far East Broadcasting Company's Korean Children's Choir performed for students, faculty and staff at University of the Cumberlands Sept. 22.

Choir members, ranging in age from 7 to 13, performed numerous songs, most featuring choreographed dance routines. During the performance, Korean and American flags were presented as the audience stood while the choir sang "The Star Spangled Banner" and "God Bless America." Toward the end of the performance, the children sang "Jesus Loves Me" as they strolled through the audience handing out cross necklaces they had been wearing and hugging audience members.

The Korean Children's Choir is a ministry of the Far East Broadcasting Company in Korea. Choir members are selected through a rigorous audition process and each child receives training from a voice teacher, choreographer and conductor.

Founded in 1945, the FEBC is a non-denominational, international radio network that delivers the Christian message through 41 radio stations worldwide. It broadcasts more than 650 hours each day in 149 languages. Billy Kim, former president of the Baptist World Alliance, serves as president of FEBC, Korea. He received an Honorary Doctorate of Divinity degree from University of the Cumberlands in 2006.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**FOR SALE:** Church buses and vans—new and used. Call American Bus and Accessories, Inc., (800) 582-7118.

**SEEKING:** Full-time senior pastor for Jamestown First Baptist Church, located in south-central Kentucky near Lake Cumberland and Wolf Creek Dam. All correspondence should be mailed to Norma Wheat, Jamestown Baptist, PO Box 308, Jamestown, KY 42629-0308.

**SEEKING:** Minister of music/director of music for North Fork Baptist Church of Switzer, Ky. Interested parties: Please submit resumés to the Music Search Committee, North Fork Baptist Church, 3660 Rocky Branch Road, Frankfort, KY 40601 by Oct. 31, 2008.

**SEEKING:** Christian school headmaster (or interim). Requirements: Masters in Education degree; administrative experience or certificate; Christian school philosophy. Send resumé by Oct. 10 to Danville Christian Academy, 401 Waveland Ave., Danville, KY 40422; or stomberger@kywimax.com.

**SEEKING:** Part-time minister of music to lead blended worship at Gethsemane Baptist Church, a conservative Southern Baptist church in Danville. For more information, please call the church office at (859) 236-2581; or Mike Gordon at (859) 516-5169. All resumés may be sent to 123 Quisenberry Ave., Danville, KY 40422.

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for East Hickman Baptist Church, an historic church located 4 miles from Lexington, Ky. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, 2125 Azalea Drive, Lexington, KY 40504.

**SEEKING:** One full-time or two part-time positions: Student minister (grades 7-12) and minister of music. Each position requires 20 hours. If interested in either or both, please send resumé, DVD or CD to Ferguson Baptist Church, PO Box 247, Ferguson, KY 42533.

**SEEKING:** Mystery shopper. Earn up to \$150 per day. Undercover shoppers needed to evaluate retail and dining establishments. Experience not required. Call (877) 581-1854.

**SEEKING:** Part-time children's minister. Send resumé and references to: Friendship Baptist, 5411 Bengal Road, Campbellsville, KY 42718.

**SEEKING:** Full-time, enthusiastic, God-called children's/recreation minister to serve an energetic, loving, growing church with exceptional support from dedicated parents and congregation. Full job description available upon request. Please send resumés to FLC Search Committee, Marion Baptist Church, PO Box 384, Marion, KY 42064; or searchcommittee@marionbaptistchurch.com. Deadline is Oct. 31.

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for Gap Creek Baptist Church, a conservative member of Cumberland Gap Baptist Association in Claiborne County, Tenn. Experience is preferred. Gap Creek has an active membership of over 300 and is growing. If possible, send a CD or DVD of sermons along with a resumé to Gap Creek Baptist Church, PO Box 177, Arthur, TN 37707, Attn: Troy Poore. You may e-mail resumé to tpoore@hotmail.com; or fax to (423) 869-8777.

**SEEKING:** Part-time minister of music. Responsible for overall supervision of music ministry of Green Acres Baptist Church. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee Chairperson, 1220 Kremer Ave., Louisville, KY 40213; or call (502) 969-5975, or the church: (502) 964-8165.

**SEEKING:** Full-time Southern Baptist pastor for rural Campbell County, Ky., church. Requires at least a college or Bible school degree with 10+ years experience and is at least 50 years of age. Please send resumé to the Pastor Search Committee, Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, 11212 Lees Road, Alexandria, KY 41001.

**SEEKING:** Piano player for Baptist church in Shepherdsville, Ky.; Thursday nights and Sunday mornings. Paid position—salary negotiable. Call (502) 802-9535.

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for a loving and growing church in Russell Springs, Ky. Please send resumé and DVD, CD or tape of recent sermon to: Pulpit Committee, Liberty Baptist Church, 215 Wilson St., Russell Springs, KY 42642.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### October

- 3-4 Celebrate the Mission, First Baptist Church, Morehead.
- 7 Understanding Other Beliefs, Beacon Hill Baptist Church, Somerset.
- 9-11 Basic Training for Church Planters, Baptist Building, Louisville.
- 10-11 Women on Mission/Baptist Nursing Fellowship Fall Retreat, Cedarmore.
- 18 Christian Women in Ministry State Leaders Forum, Baptist Building, Louisville.
- 23-24 Quarterly Prayer Meeting for Spiritual Awakening, Haven of Rest, Inez.
- 25 101 Workshop, Hillcrest Baptist Church, Hopkinsville.
- 25 Reclaiming Our Communities, First Baptist Church, Madisonville; Ashland Avenue, Lexington.
- 31-11/2 International Student Conference, Cave City Convention Center.

### November

- 1 101 Workshop, First Baptist Church, Somerset.
- 8 Girls in Action Missions Event, Rich Pond Baptist Church, Bowling Green.
- 10 J.H. Spencer Historical Society Inaugural Meeting, Heritage Baptist Church, Lexington.
- 10 Kentucky Baptist Youth Ministers Association Fall Meeting, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington.
- 10 Kentucky Baptist Music Conference, First Baptist Church, Brandenburg.
- 10 KBC Mission Board, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington.
- 11 KBC Annual Meeting, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington.
- 14-16 All-State Junior High Choir, Hurstbourne Baptist Church, Louisville.

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

# In the line of duty

*Pennsylvania pastor organizes chaplains to ride along with emergency responders*

By Matt Miller  
Harrisburg (Pa.) Patriot-News

**Carlisle, Pa.** (RNS)—Chuck Kish was driving near Carlisle, Pa., a few months ago when he came upon a traffic accident scene.

When Kish, pastor of Bethel Assembly of God Church, saw the tarps covering the bodies, he knew it was a fatal crash.

"I saw an emergency medical technician walk over to one of the bodies. They lifted the corner of the tarp and he turned away," Kish recalled. "I'll forever remember the look on his face. I thought, 'He needs a chaplain.'"

That traumatic moment planted a seed that began bearing fruit last month when four volunteer chaplains from his church in South Middleton Township, Pa., began riding with crews from Carlisle's Cumberland Goodwill Ambulance company.

It might be the first such program in Pennsylvania, and perhaps in the country.

The chaplains, including Kish, are at the elbows of the emergency medical technicians to help the crews, patients and families deal with the physical and emotional pain ambulance workers encounter on a daily basis.

"At some point, I think, every person of faith has to take stock of their lives and ask, 'Are we giving back enough?'" noted Jack Rau, one of the

volunteer chaplains. "I can't think of a more perfect place to serve people in need."

Janette Kearney, the executive director of the Pennsylvania Emergency Health Services Council, which advises the state Department of Health on ambulance issues, said she knows of no other unit in the state that has chaplains riding with crews.

Rau and the other chaplains, Amy Jones and Frank Poley, are commissioned ministers with Bethel. Rau has undergone first-responder training in basic ambulance procedures. Jones is a nurse.

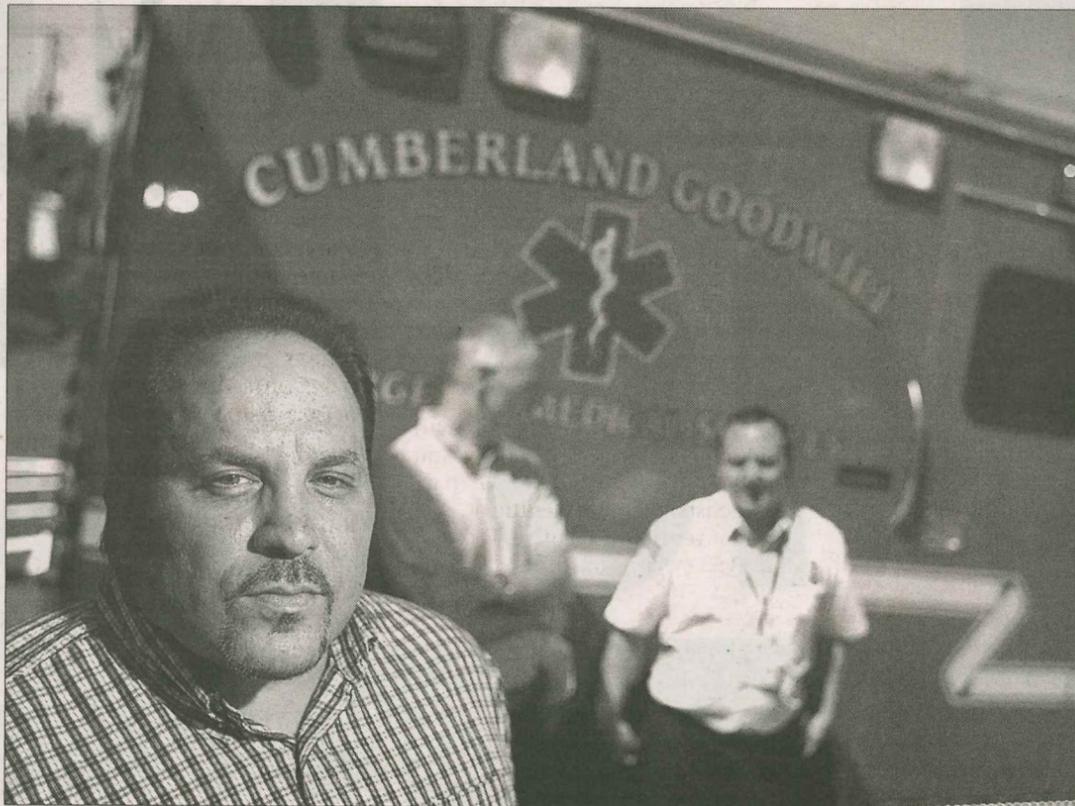
Robert Pine, Cumberland Goodwill's EMS chief, said that his crews have welcomed them. "I don't sense any reluctance," he added.

Before the program, crews already could seek counseling after stressful calls, but this is different because the chaplains, in many cases, have been through the same experiences and will be able to relate, Pine pointed out.

"There is a benefit in talking to someone who has been there, someone who understands," he said.

Such understanding is most needed after calls involving children, Pine acknowledged.

"When kids are involved, it's always very, very hard," he noted. "Most of our people have kids of their own. When they come back from one of those calls, you see the



looks on their faces and know they need someone to talk to."

During the height of a call, the chaplains mostly stand back. They are expected to get equipment, Kish said, and to help calm patients, inform and counsel families and pray with them if asked. "There is no expectation that they'll be providing (medical) care," Pine insisted.

Chaplains, who have special uniforms, ride with crews in the eve-

nings, which Pine said are among the busiest times for calls.

The ambulance effort marks the second time Kish and Rau have donned uniforms for community service; both are veterans of a police chaplaincy program Kish organized that operates with two local police departments.

"It seems that God has put us at all the points of pain in the community," he said.

**URGENT NEED** Pastor Chuck Kish (left) of Bethel Assembly of God in South Middleton Township, Pa., has organized a program that places chaplains in ambulances alongside emergency responders. (RNS photo by Dan Gleitter/The Patriot-News)

## Hispanic church plant in Las Vegas sees growth among hardships

By Erin Roach  
Baptist Press

**Las Vegas** (BP)—Four months ago, Iglesia Bautista Hispana de West Las Vegas, a Nevada church plant, had about 40 people in attendance most Sundays. Now about 300 folks pack the church each week—and the vast majority of them do not yet know Christ as their Savior.

"I think the uniqueness is they are ministering on a needs basis instead of a 'you all come' basis," noted Harry Watson, director of missions for Southern Nevada Baptist Association. "They have defined needs in the community and are trying to reach those needs as part of their Sunday worship service. The uniqueness of the results is that we have a church that is filled with lost people consistently."

What has attracted people to the church is a distribution program initiated by one of the church members, Jaime Flores, who worked out a deal with Wal-Mart to utilize unsold merchandise such as toiletries, household goods and baby items.

"We tell people that if they want a package, they need to come to church, especially Sunday school," Pastor Jesse Calleros told Baptist Press. "So they come to church, and when Jaime gets there, they receive a numbered coupon. After the church service, they go outside to the truck and receive their packages."

"After a while, people just started staying," the pastor recalled.

"Some people were telling me, 'We don't always come for the packages anymore. We just want to come to church.'"

More than 180 people have made decisions for Christ since the program started and about 15 of those have followed in believer's baptism. The church has collected contact information for 600 people and is attempting a massive follow-up effort.

### Humble beginnings

Church planter Lalo Pedilla started Iglesia Bautista Hispana in 2002 in a rented storefront, Calleros noted. Along the way, the church moved to a room at Redrock Baptist Church in Las Vegas, usually with about 10 to 15 people on Sundays.

Calleros, a graduate of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, had planted a few other churches, but his last attempt failed around the same time Pedilla asked him to be associate pastor at Iglesia Bautista Hispana.

"After a year of that, in about 2004, he went to start another church. He left me in Vegas to continue that one," Calleros recalled, adding that the church grew to about 40 people.

"We were just praying that the Lord would lead us into reaching more people, and it just took off," Calleros indicated. "The Lord did all of it. He brought the people and the people have been reached. Every Sunday at the very least there are eight to 10 decisions."

The Hispanic church moved into Redrock's fellowship hall but soon outgrew it, and now it has met the capacity of the sanctuary. With such explosive growth has come a number of challenges, Calleros explained. Chief among them is the church only has about 30 members among 300 regular attendees, many of whom are new Christians. "It has been babies teaching babies from the start," he said.

Also, since most of those attending are poor, they do not have adequate means to support the church financially.

"The fear is that we'll grow so much that we won't have anywhere to go and there's just no real money coming in," Calleros said. "Everybody sees us grow and they see so many people, and they think, 'Wow. They must receive a lot of money at offering times.' But no, we're almost at the same budget as we were when we had just 27 or 40 people."

### Leaders stepping up

The local Baptist association has stepped in to assist in leadership training, Watson said, and also helps the church plant pay its rent each month.

Calleros said he could relay several stories of lives changed, though, including a pregnant woman with a negligent husband and four children who accepted Christ on the first Sunday she attended. She soon became a faithful worker in the church's overcrowded nursery and

influenced her friends to start attending church as well.

The pastor also told of a young man who recently had been through the Alcoholics Anonymous program.

"He also gave his life to the Lord and got baptized. He thought he was no good and that it was impossible for him to change, but he soon found out that he was the pastor of his own home," Calleros recalled. "He has become a better father and a better husband, and now his whole family has started coming to church."

"People call Las Vegas 'Sin City,' but there's so much hardship and problems. You just can't believe how a city so bright ... could have so much darkness and downfall and heartbreaks behind it," he said. "That's what's happening here. A lot of people are losing their jobs, their homes, their families and their lives. The answer is still Jesus."

Thane Barnes, executive director of the Nevada Baptist Convention, expressed excitement over what God has done in a short time at the Las Vegas church.

"I think that probably the key is ministry evangelism where they first met a need that was obvious in the life of the people living close to the church," Barnes told BP. "Through that they walked across a bridge to earn the right to share the gospel. I truly believe this is a mighty movement of the Holy Spirit, and we're trying to replicate this with some of our other Hispanic works."



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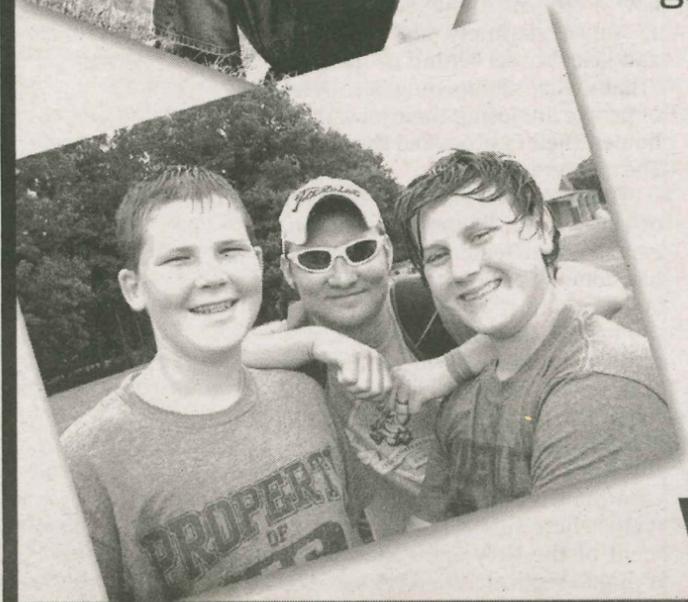
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