



WESTERN RECORDER

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FOR THE RECORD

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Bush: U.S. ahead of goal to treat global HIV/AIDS epidemic

Washington (BP)—The United States has achieved a goal ahead of schedule established by the Bush administration to provide treatment to 2 million HIV-infected people globally, the president said during last week's World AIDS Day.

"When we got started, there were 50,000 people getting antiretrovirals in all sub-Saharan Africa," Bush told megachurch pastor Rick Warren during a special forum in Washington. "And we set a goal of 2 million by five years to get antiretrovirals. ... Today we're able to announce that we're over 2 million in less than five years."

The president received an award from Warren for his efforts in leading the United States to combat HIV/AIDS around the world. Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church in Southern California, presented the first International Medal of PEACE to Bush Dec. 1 on the 20th anniversary of World AIDS Day.

"No world leader has ever done more for global health than President George W. Bush, and I think we need to recognize that," Warren announced at the Saddleback Civil Forum on Global Health.

Saddleback's PEACE Plan initiative seeks to gather millions of Christians to promote reconciliation; equip servant leaders; assist the poor; care for the sick; and educate the next generation. The faith-based effort is conducted in cooperation with governments and business leaders.

The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief—announced in 2003—was a pledge of \$15 billion over five years to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic, especially in Africa. The largest international health initiative ever instituted by a country, PEPFAR set goals of treating 2 million HIV-infected people, preventing 7 million new infections and supporting care for 10 million people.

On World AIDS Day, the White House cited the following achievements in the effort:

■ Antiretroviral treatment for more than 2.1 million people globally, more than 2 million of that total in sub-Saharan Africa. (Antiretrovirals are drugs used to treat infection by HIV and other retroviruses.)

■ Support care for more than 10.1 million people, including more than 4 million orphans and vulnerable children.

■ Assistance that resulted in the births of almost 240,000 HIV-free babies whose infected mothers utilized programs that prevented them from passing on the virus.

Accountability in achieving measurable goals, along with authority and responsibility by local leaders and participation by faith-based organizations, were important parts of the PEPFAR approach, Bush noted.

Microphone check

A recent FCC ruling could have churches singing a new tune.

By David Winfrey
State Correspondent

Louisville—Church leaders and technical specialists who use wireless microphones should prepare now for changes that might render their gear useless by early next year.

That's the advice from manufacturers and other observers, who say recent actions by the Federal Communications Commission might have churches, concert halls and other groups shelling out bucks for new sound equipment.

"The sky is falling, but just not yet," said Larry Brannin, an audio-video specialist with the Kentucky Baptist Convention, who has been researching this issue for several months.

The issue is a complex one involving access to the broadcast channels used by TV stations and others to deliver their signal. When signals from two or more TV stations, wireless microphones or other devices compete for the same channel, interference results in static sound or a dropped signal. The result is someone does not hear the sermon, solo or soap opera.

Three interrelated actions by the FCC have a variety of groups scrambling to respond.

Auction and eviction. Earlier



this year, the FCC auctioned off channels 52-69 to wireless carriers for \$19.6 billion. (These channels also are known as the 700 MHz channels of the spectrum.) Wireless carriers will introduce products that use these channels to deliver broadband Internet and other data service to their customers. As a result, any device, including wireless microphones, currently using those channels run a real risk of conflicting with these new devices.

DTV transition. As you probably have learned from the recent barrage of announcements, the FCC has mandated that all broadcast television channels complete their transition to digital television signals on Feb. 17. Currently, many stations occupy two channels on the spectrum to transmit the new digital signal and the older analog

signal. On the day your rabbit ears antenna becomes obsolete, the channel spectrum will be freed up for use by other devices.

Crowding airwaves. A variety of companies are beginning to develop commercial devices that will use these open (also known as "white space") channels. The FCC is instituting rules regarding their use, but some technicians and other observers question whether what is being mandated now is how these devices will work in the future.

Brannin said the initial concern is for churches whose current microphones operate in channels 52-69. "At some point it's going to happen that they're going to have problems if they're operating in that 700 band," he explained.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention
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In Brazil, Kesler's fluency is missions catalyst

By Emilee Brandon
SBC International Mission Board

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (BP)—When Phil and Donya Kesler started the language school in Campinas, Brazil, in the late 1990s, neither knew a word of Portuguese. After the first few months of study, Phil was fluent, Donya recalled.

So he headed to the favelas (slums) of the city with one of their daughters, Anna, then 9, to start a Portuguese-speaking church. They began a Bible study in a home before moving to a school. Anna taught children not much younger than herself Bible stories, while her dad shared the gospel with adults.

Soon Phil began inviting fellow language school students to practice their language skills by teaching Bible studies to the congregation.

Two years later when the Keslers returned to Campinas to visit, the church was still thriving with an attendance of 150 people.

For more than a decade, Phil Kesler's gift for learning languages has contributed to his success in train-

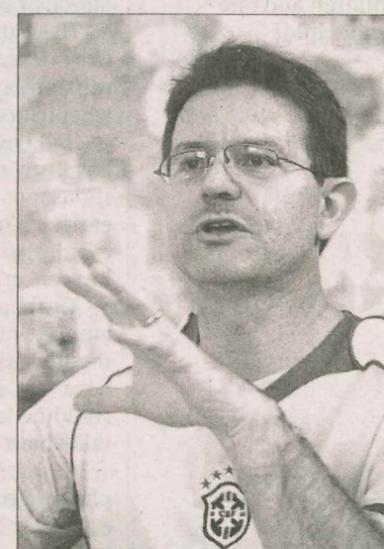
ing Brazilian missionaries in cross-cultural outreach. He can read, write and speak Portuguese, Arabic, French, Chinese and Spanish as well as read and write Greek and Hebrew.

This year, Kesler began serving as the Brazilian Home Mission Board's ethnic ministries coordinator, leading evangelism courses at Wake Up Brazil home missions conferences throughout the country.

"We have (ethnic ministries) going on all over the country, but not as much as I would like," said Kesler, a Virginia native. "This is why I am going around the country teaching."

"I am working on a five-year plan to select, train and supervise up to 20 new Brazilian missionaries that will work with ethnic and immigrant groups—Chinese, Japanese, Arabs—in the nation."

His love for reaching these groups grew, he recalled, over the seven years he and his family lived in Foz do Iguaçu—home to not only some of the largest waterfalls in the world
□ See *Keslers bridge culture ... Page 6*



GREAT MOBILIZER Southern Baptist missionary Phil Kesler is the strategy mobilizer for Brazil. He shares his passion for missions with almost everyone he meets. His primary duty is to get Brazilians, Americans and other Great Commission Christians involved in mission work in Brazil and South America. (IMB photo)

Former seminary president Pollard dies at age 74

San Anselmo, Calif. (BP)—Frank Pollard, longtime preacher on the former "Baptist Hour" radio broadcast and president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary from 1983-86, died Nov. 30 at his home in San Anselmo, Calif. He was 74.

Pollard had suffered from Parkinson's disease in recent years, according to news reports.

As Golden Gate's fifth president, Pollard led in the redevelopment of the Northern California campus and in the seminary's enrollment gains. He left GGBTS in 1986 to return as pastor of First Baptist Church of Jackson, Miss., where he previously had served from 1974-80. Pollard retired in 2002.

During his 40-plus years in the ministry, he served as Mississippi Baptist Convention president from 2002-04 and was selected by Time magazine in 1979 as one of the seven leading Protestant preachers in America.

He was the weekly voice of "The Baptist Hour" for more than 20 years, beginning in 1976, and also was featured on a TV version of the program.

Pollard was a graduate of Texas A&M University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Pollard is survived by his wife, Jane, two children and one grandchild.

Study shows WMU increases SBC support

By Bob Allen
Associated Baptist Press

Birmingham, Ala. (ABP)—Southern Baptist churches that have Woman's Missionary Union organizations support the denomination's missions programs at significantly higher levels than congregations without WMU, according to an analysis of reported church giving.

Tensions over several issues surfaced in recent years between some Southern Baptist Convention leaders and leaders of the independently governed auxiliary group, founded in 1888 to promote SBC missions. They included WMU's refusal to submit to direct oversight by the denomination and the group's decision to remain part of the Baptist World Alliance women's department after the SBC severed ties with the global Baptist group in 2004.

Despite those differences, a new breakdown of giving patterns suggests missions education by WMU continues to play an important role in inspiring local churches to give more money to SBC missions.

A review of annual statistics collected by LifeWay Christian Resources found that churches that have age-level WMU organizations like Girls in Action and Women on Mission support the SBC's unified budget and two annual special missions offerings at higher per-capita levels than those without ongoing mis-

sions education.

The study, conducted jointly by WMU and the SBC North American Mission Board, found that churches with missions-education programs supported by one or both of the organizations gave \$43.28 per member to the Cooperative Program. That compared to \$23.65 per capita by churches without such programs.

Giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions was \$3.29 per capita from churches without missions education, compared to \$9.05 from those with missions education. Per-member giving for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions was \$5.34 for churches with missions education, compared to \$1.54 for those without (see story on page 11).

Working together for missions

Wanda Lee, WMU's executive director, acknowledged to a group of Baptist state convention executive directors and editors that "there have been some rocky times" with recent years' leadership transitions at WMU and the SBC's two mission boards, "but we are learning how to work together for missions."

Lee, meeting with Baptist leaders at a Dec. 2-3 briefing at WMU headquarters in Birmingham, Ala., said that communication between the auxiliary and the SBC agencies has improved in the last year.

Former SBC missionary is primary suspect in insurance scam in Ala.

Gulf Shores, Ala. (ABP)—The Southern Baptist International Mission Board declined to press criminal embezzlement charges in 2005 against a man now accused of stealing hundreds of thousands of dollars in an Alabama insurance scam.

Benton Gray Harvey and an accomplice are suspected of scamming hundreds of thousands of dollars from residents of the Alabama Gulf Coast.

According to legal documents obtained by the Mobile (Ala.) Press-Register, the IMB won a judgment of nearly \$359,500 against Harvey in March of 2005.

The suspect, under the name Gray Harvey, served through the mission board as an accountant for a Baptist outpost in Istanbul.

IMB trustees fired Harvey over allegations that he stole hundreds of thousands of dollars earmarked for earthquake relief and reportedly decided against pressing charges, citing concerns for missionary safety.

The board settled the case for the amount of loss that could be documented—though some observers believe the amount actually missing could be larger—and pledged not to talk about the settlement.

A receptionist answering the phone Dec. 1 at Starfish Insurance Agency in Gulf Shores, Ala., said the business owner had no idea about the IMB's judgment against Harvey when she hired him about two years ago, and that if prosecuted he probably would not have been employed because he would be in jail.

According to newspaper reports, Harvey and his alleged partner-in-crime, Jonathan Adams, cannot be

located and may be out of the country. The two former Starfish employees vanished last summer from a condo they shared as roommates.

Police say the duo swindled coastal residents by selling fake insurance policies for homes that most insurance companies do not want to cover because they are susceptible to hurricane damage. Police believe Harvey was the mastermind, forging documents that he downloaded from the Internet.

Wendy Norvelle, an IMB spokesperson, said Dec. 1 that Gray Harvey worked with the mission board from November 1998 until September 2003, but she would have to speak with legal counsel and/or administrators before discussing details of the case.

At the 2006 SBC annual meeting in Greensboro, N.C., Ron McGowin, at the time youth minister at First Baptist Church of Fairfield, Texas, made a motion seeking an "external comprehensive audit" of funds handled by the IMB's Central Asia region between 1995 and 2005 because he had been told the IMB "at best could only account for \$372,831.62 of embezzled monies."

The following year the IMB responded to his referred motion by confirming "there was both an audit as well as supplemental procedures accomplished by a qualified certified public accountant regarding Central Asia finances."

"The results of these audit procedures were fully disclosed to the board of trustees of the IMB in November 2004, and appropriate action was taken," the official response stated.

"Do we always agree about everything?" she asked. "No, but we seek to have healthy communication." She reported on both recent visits and planned future visits from NAMB President Geoff Hammond and Jerry Rankin, president of the SBC's International Mission Board.

WMU recently appointed a full-time liaison to coordinate communication with the two mission boards. WMU staffer Steve Heartsill said he received 7,000 e-mails from IMB personnel in the past year and a comparable number from NAMB workers.

The briefing was scheduled midway through WMU's Nov. 30-Dec. 7 Week of Prayer for International Missions. The national goal for this year's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is \$170 million.

Over 120 years, WMU has helped raise more than \$3 billion for international missions by promoting the Lottie Moon offering, and \$1.1 billion for home missions through the Annie Armstrong offering.

This year, WMU produced nearly 4.2 million Christmas prayer guides in six languages, distributed by state WMU organizations to churches in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and Canada. About 174,000 Week of Prayer posters were sent to churches, and 4.8 million Lottie Moon Christmas Offering envelopes were placed in pews in Southern Baptist churches.

Southern Seminary professor elected society president

Providence, R.I. (BP)—Bruce Ware became the first faculty member from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to serve as president of the Evangelical Theological Society during the organization's annual meeting last month in Providence, R.I.

"It is a tremendous honor and privilege to serve in a role of leadership in such a wonderful organization as ETS," said Ware, who has served as professor of Christian theology at Southern Seminary since 1998.

In 2006, Ware was elected ETS vice president. After that one-year term and a year as president-elect, Ware began his term as ETS president during the group's 60th annual meeting at the Rhode Island Convention Center in Providence.

Ware joined ETS in 1984 during his first year of teaching at Bethel Seminary. In 2000, he authored "God's Lesser Glory," a work defending the historic orthodox doctrine of God in the face of attacks by open theism—a position which argues, among other things, that God does not know perfectly what will happen in the future.

Celebrating partnerships



Debbie Hammond, wife of North American Mission Board President Geoff Hammond, hangs an ornament on a special Christmas tree in the lobby of NAMB's offices in Alpharetta, Ga. Some 60 unique ornaments from each of the 42 Baptist conventions and associations partnering with NAMB—from Alaska to Puerto Rico—adorn one of three Christmas trees. "When I began thinking how we can decorate our Christmas trees to show what NAMB stands for, reflect our partnerships with the state conventions and display what we do here at NAMB, I thought it would be great if each state convention would send one ornament symbolic of their state," Debbie Hammond said. In addition to the "state tree," there is the "Jesus tree," which is topped with a crown and is decorated with many of the biblical names of Jesus. The third Christmas tree is decorated with special, hand-crafted ornaments featuring the names and photos of all 340 new NAMB missionaries commissioned during 2008. (NAMB photo by John Swain)

New wireless regulations could have churches scrambling

Continued from page 1

tion falls into that category. The KBC uses wireless microphones for its annual meeting and other events, and Brannin said some of those use channels 68-69. "Now, I'm faced with the reality of having to go out and purchase new wireless systems because the microphones I have are no longer available to use," he indicated.

While migration from the 700 MHz band of channels is a straightforward issue for all parties involved, manufacturers, technicians and the FCC agree less when it comes to equipment using other "white space" channels.

If unchecked, these devices could interfere with the wireless microphone signals at churches, plays or sporting events. For example, everyone in the congregation might hear static instead of the pastor or soloist if a bored church visitor decided to discretely check her e-mail using one of these new handheld devices.

An FCC spokesman said most churches should receive minimal to no interference and need to do nothing at this time. In addition, FCC regulations are requiring manufacturers to build two safeguards into any equipment they produce:

On the Web ...

To learn more about "white space" and how it might affect your church, visit WesternRecorder.org to access several links with more resources on this topic, including:

ChurchSoundCheck.com

A Web site dedicated to church audio issues that has been following this topic.

TVFool.com

Plug in your address and get a list of occupied and open channels in your area.

FCC.gov

Go straight to the source for all the new regulations.

- Equipment must be able to determine its location and access an Internet database that lists who has registered to use broadcast channels in that area. Churches, sports facilities and other wireless microphone users can register a channel.

- Equipment must be able to scan the airwaves for signals and avoid interference.

But Brannin and others con-

tend these FCC requirements are unproven.

So far, an instrument made by Philips Electronics NV is the only product that senses nearby wireless microphones. It was tested alongside wireless microphones at a Washington Redskins game and at a Broadway performance of "The Phantom of the Opera." Wireless microphone sellers insist they failed at both, while device advocates say the opposite. The FCC has yet to weigh in.

"No determination has yet been made," noted Rob Kenny, an FCC spokesman. "We are building a record to decide how best to proceed."

Brannin said churches should proceed by being aware of the issue and preparing for the possibility that they might need to replace equipment.

"It's going to take some homework," he noted. "There is an issue that churches are going to have to deal with. It's just a matter of where they're located as to when they're going to have to deal with it."

Churches whose microphones broadcast in channels 52-69 should take action now. Brannin suggested that churches purchase "frequency agile" equipment, which can be programmed to use one of several channels. That will help avoid further in-

terference in the future. Of course, the wider range of the system, the more it costs, he added.

"I think churches should be prepared to spend \$300-400 minimum, and that's for each microphone and receiver," Brannin said. "Therein is the problem for small churches, it's affecting those who can least afford it."

For churches that do not have to take immediate action, Brannin recommended setting aside money in their budgets now for new equipment purchases in the future. "They might stick with what they've got, but start saving for it so that when the time comes they can go get what they need," he advised.

And churches should be cautious when buying used equipment, Brannin added. "Don't be buying used microphones on eBay without checking what frequencies they're on."

As for current equipment that a church discovers causes interference, Brannin recommended considering donating it to a partner congregation in another country where the interference might not occur.

"I don't know that those frequencies would work there, but it's worth a shot."

With additional reporting by Religion News Service

"I think churches should be prepared to spend \$300-400 minimum, and that's for each microphone and receiver. Therein is the problem for small churches, it's affecting those who can least afford it."

Larry Brannin, Kentucky Baptist Convention's media production associate

Atheist group files suit over wording of Kentucky law

Frankfort (RNS)—The American Atheists have sued the Commonwealth of Kentucky after learning that a law requires the state's Office of Homeland Security to declare its reliance on God for safety.

The New Jersey-based atheist group filed suit Dec. 2 in a Kentucky court seeking a ruling that a 2002 law stating that "the safety and security of the Commonwealth cannot be achieved apart from reliance on God" is unconstitutional.

The atheists are particularly concerned about a 2006 law that calls for the divine-reliance wording to be spelled out on a plaque at the entrance of the state's Emergency Operations Center.

The laws were both sponsored by Democratic delegate Tom Riner of Louisville, who also is a Southern Baptist minister.

"It's a frivolous lawsuit that American Atheists has launched to attempt to censor and suppress the publication of a key law that acknowledges divine providence," said Riner, pastor of Christ is King Baptist Church in Louisville.

He said the laws did not get much attention when he sponsored them.

Jay Blanton, a spokesman for Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear, said he could not comment on the specifics of the lawsuit but added: "There's a law in place and it's our intent to follow the law."

DOM Shelton honored for work in Ohio County

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

Hartford—Although Kentucky's DOM of the Year comes from an association of small churches, Tom Shelton has made a major impact in Kentucky Baptist life.

A past president of the Kentucky Fellowship of Directors of Missions, after taking office in 1983 Shelton became the first DOM in the state to computerize operations. He later developed a comprehensive Web site for Ohio County Baptist Association.

He also led the association to pay off Baptist Center debt during a declining economy, while helping raise finances by promoting an annual associational offering among its 40 churches.

When it comes to crowning achievements, though, Shelton is happiest with the opportunity to play peacemaker during six church disputes. Four avoided splits after he intervened.

"I helped them to stop fighting and work together," recalled Shelton, an evangelist and pastor for 14 years before coming to Hartford. "If I can help, I will, but I don't go sticking my nose in it. Every church has a right to be wrong."

Larry Baker, KBC's director of new work and associational missions, noted that Shelton's 25-year tenure is second longest among Kentucky's DOMs.

Baker said three factors were behind the award, given during the fellowship's annual meeting just prior to the state convention's annual meeting last month in Lexington:

- Family heritage, which included his father, R.G. Shelton, receiving the same honor in 1982.

- Active involvement with the state DOM group.

- Shelton's work in releasing a pictorial directory of DOMs in the mid-1990s.

The state office appreciated the directory so much it created an updated version this year, Baker said.

"When you've got 71 associations, you don't necessarily see these guys all the time," noted Baker, previously DOM for Christian County Baptist Association. "When we had to contact another DOM we could look it up and see who he is; when you picked up the phone it was like you were calling a friend."

Three pastors who have worked with Shelton described him as a mentor, a friend and someone always willing to give of his time to help them.

Truman Johnson, pastor of Slaty Creek Baptist Church in Beaver Dam, called Shelton personable and easy to work with. And, since the pastor knew Shelton's uncle—a former secretary of evangelism for the KBC—Johnson said getting acquainted with Tom was like completing a link in the chain.

"I don't think there's any question about that," Johnson said of the DOM's role in making the association a key element of Baptist life in Ohio County. "It has been his life. He likes the churches, likes the people and likes what he does."

One of Shelton's strong qualities is his ability to organize, according to Pete Leach, pastor of Second Baptist Church of Hartford.

"He can take hold of something, get it organized and get it going," said Leach, who twice has served as associational moderator.



Tom Shelton

Eddie Harpole, a pastor and pulpit supply preacher for 20 years, expressed appreciation for Shelton's encouragement, advice and advocacy of missions.

"He tries to make people aware of the need for missions, foreign as well as local," Harpole added.

Married to his wife, Jo Anne, for 48 years, Shelton's example also has inspired their two children. The most active is son, Tom, chairman of deacons at Owensboro Baptist Church who has served on various KBC committees.

Shelton almost did not become a sixth-generation preacher, though. A veteran of the U.S. Navy, after active duty he settled in Missouri and went to work for McDonnell Douglas. A gung-ho military man, Shelton was helping build F-14 fighter jets during the Vietnam War.

After several years, it struck him that instead of fulfilling his Christian duty as a peacemaker, he was making machines that killed people.

"I felt I was doing wrong and just quit and surrendered to ministry," he recalled.

Although Shelton has utilized skills learned as a pastor to carry out associational duties, he said there is no comparison between the two positions.

Calling a DOM the "top of the line," Shelton expressed a need for mature people with pastoral experience to serve as an influential resource for pastors, churches and convention ministries.

And, though he reached his 70th birthday two weeks after receiving his award, Shelton insisted he has no plans to retire soon.

"I feel like I cheated the Lord on the front end of my ministry, so I'm going to do it as long as I can," he said.

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

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DVDs to watch during Christmas

By Phil Boatwright

Kansas City, Kan. (BP)—Grab some popcorn balls and enjoy these fun, festive holiday features.

"A Charlie Brown Christmas" (1965). The Peanuts gang searches for the true meaning of Christmas in this half-hour animated treasure. Funny dialogue, charismatic voice performances and an award-winning jazzy score by Vince Guaraldi. And how often do you hear cartoon heroes quoting from the Gospel of Luke, proclaiming the Christ child as the Messiah?

"The Little Drummer Boy" (1968). The moving seasonal song comes to animated life in this 30-minute clay-mation parable with the capable voices of Greer Garson, Jose Ferrer and Teddy Eccles. Puts present-giving in perspective.

"The Nativity Story" (2006). Keisha Castle-Hughes and Oscar Isaac star as Mary and Joseph in the retelling of the birth of Christ. The filmmakers worked hard to ensure that The Nativity Story was both historically and biblically accurate: There were several Christians involved, such as screenwriter Mike Rich and producer Wyck Godfrey. A wide spectrum of Christian New Testament scholars and historians were involved in the pre-production process as well. Rated PG (for some violent content).

"Three Godfathers" (1948). John Wayne stars in this western morality tale about three outlaws who come across a dying woman and her newborn baby. The symbolism between the Christ child and this new baby has a redemptive effect on the three bandits. Unrated.

"The Gathering" (1977). Ed Asner and Maureen Stapleton. This Emmy-winning TV movie that focuses on a dying man's efforts to reunite his family. It reinforces the importance of family and presents positive Christian images including a believable prayer and the Scripture reading of

Jesus' birth. Unrated.

"The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey" (2007). Tom Berenger, Joely Richardson. A mysterious recluse also happens to be the best woodcarver in the valley. Slowly the woodcarver finds his world transformed by a young boy and his mother, who have asked him to carve a yuletide scene. Positive messages, including a respect for God and Christ (prayers are spoken, church is attended and the main characters acknowledge the birth of Christ). Unrated.

"The Fourth Wiseman" (1985). Martin Sheen stars as a devout man searching for the Messiah in order to give valuable treasures. But one by one he sells his priceless gifts to help the needy. Full of compassion and illustrations of how our Lord would have us treat our fellow man. Unrated.

"The Bishop's Wife" (1947). Cary Grant, Loretta Young. An angel aids a struggling minister. I marveled at the ending sermon given by the bishop, played by David Niven. Standing behind his pulpit, the reverend reminds his parishioners to focus their attention on Christ: "All the stockings are filled, except one. We've even forgotten to hang it up. The stocking for the child born in a manger. It's His birthday we're celebrating. Don't let us ever forget that. Let us each ask what He would wish for most. And then, let each put in his share." Unrated.

"Prancer" (1989). Sam Elliott, Rebecca Harrell, Cloris Leachman. A precocious 8-year-old cares for a wounded reindeer she believes is one of Santa's flying helpers. Not just another film promoting the existence of Santa Claus, its theme is

about believing in things unseen. Contains positive lessons about faith, family love (although the father is a bit of a grump—a no-nonsense farmer frustrated with financial problems and single parenting, but we see his love for the children by film's end), spiritual healing and doing what you believe is right. Rated G.

"It's a Wonderful Life" (1946). James Stewart's George Bailey is given the opportunity to see what his community would have been like if he had never been born. He reminds us that our compassion and responsibility make a difference in the lives of those with whom we come in contact. Unrated.

"Scrooge" (1970). Albert Finney is terrific in this musical version of the Dickens' classic. Warning: There are a couple of scary moments, which may be unsuitable for little ones. But this is a powerful and most entertaining parable about a man finding redemption. Rated G.

"Mr. Magoo's Christmas Carol" (1962). This hour-long animated musical version of "A Christmas Carol" works for the whole family.

"A Christmas Carol" (1951). Alastair Sim stars in this best of the Scrooge movies. Unrated.

"Elf" (2003). Having accidentally snuck into Santa's sleigh, a human baby is raised at the North Pole as an elf. After wreaking havoc in the elf community due to his 6-foot-2 size, Buddy (Will Ferrell) heads to New York City to find his place in the world and track down his father. Absolutely hysterical. Rated PG (mild rude humor and language).

Phil Boatwright reviews films from a Christian perspective for PreviewOnline.org

What are you thinking?

The Western Recorder considers letters on any subject for publication, provided they don't make a personal attack. The maximum length for a letter is 300 words. Submit by mail to Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253; fax, (502) 489-3565; or e-mail, wesrec@earthlink.net.

Church's 50th anniversary

My wife, Kay, and I recently visited Calvary Baptist Church in Princeton for its 50th anniversary celebration.

Rodney Wallace has been the pastor there since December of 1996 and has led the church to experience outstanding growth.

Annual church profile reports for the past 10 years indicate growth by 60 percent in average worship attendance (375 currently), 56 percent in average Sunday school attendance (235), 51 percent in resident membership (609) and 89 percent in undesignated receipts (\$219,638). Baptisms have averaged 30 and other additions 29 during the last 10 years, which is outstanding.

During the same years, support of world missions through the Co-operative Program has averaged 12 percent and support of Caldwell-Lyon Baptist Association has been strong. The pastor has served as moderator of the local association.

It is gratifying to see the strong

emphasis on reaching children and youth at this church. There were 375 enrolled in vacation Bible school and 81 children and youth enrolled in Sunday school. The church utilizes two vans and two buses for reaching boys and girls in neighborhoods where parents are unreached.

The church also has a strong music ministry under the direction of Mark Caffee and many volunteers.

The pastor attributed the growth in the church to several key factors:

- A focus on reaching children and youth. G-force is an after-school ministry for children in kindergarten through sixth grade. Vans and buses bring students to the church where they are trained in music and Bible study. On Wednesday nights, about 55 children gather for AWANA. During worship on Sunday mornings, there are four different services for about 98 children and teenagers. Fifteen volunteers lead these services and follow

up with visits in the homes. A part-time children's director, Jeff Harper, provides great leadership for all the children's ministries.

- Strong community ministries. The church reaches out to the community through a weekly radio program, nursing home ministry and food pantry. Each Monday, Bruce and Becky Hillard conduct worship at the nursing home and teach the Sunday school lesson in homes. Senior adults also meet each Monday for music and lunch, and sing for special occasions as a ministry to the community.

- Emphasis on prayer. The church has a special prayer time each Monday at 9 a.m., and has done so for 12 years. Members know they must depend on God.

- Intentional training. The pastor conducts special doctrinal studies on Sunday nights as well as training in soul winning.

Pray for all who are providing leadership in the churches and for members to be inspirational examples to one another in the church family.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

STEWARDSHIP

Which charitable 'gifts' count as tax-deductible?

By Laurie Valentine

Here is a quick review of the basic rules regarding the deductibility of gifts made to charity:



First, to be deductible, the transfer must be a gift to charity. That means

what you give must have a value that exceeds any benefit you receive in return. If you receive a benefit when you make your charitable gift, your deduction is limited to the difference between the value of what you give and the value of what you receive.

A gift to charity earmarked for a particular individual is not deductible if the giver's primary intention was to benefit a particular individual, rather than advance the mission of the charity.

Gifts must be completed by Dec. 31 to be deductible in that tax year.

Cash gifts are completed if the check is dated Dec. 31 or earlier and delivered to the charity, or placed in the mail with appropriate postage by Dec. 31. Gifts of securities are completed when properly endorsed stock or bond certificates are delivered to the charity (or placed in the mail with appropriate postage), or when the securities are received into the charity's brokerage account, or when the security is retitled on the books of the issuing company, whichever occurs first. Real estate gifts are completed when a properly executed deed is delivered to the charity.

There are percentage limitations on the amount of lifetime gifts you can deduct in a single year.

The maximum allowable deduction—50 percent of adjusted gross income—is available for cash gifts and gifts of ordinary income property made to "public charities" such as your church or other religious organizations, educational institutions, benevolent organizations and hospitals.

A 30 percent of adjusted gross income deduction limitation applies to gifts to public charities of long-term appreciated assets such as stocks, bonds and real estate.

If the amount of your charitable gifts in one tax year exceeds the percentage limits, you are permitted to carry the unused portion of the deduction forward and use the balance over the next five tax years.

Contributions of services to charity and allowing a charity to use your property rent free are not deductible "gifts."

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation

Christ's love is key to helping family members deal with grief

Q: Last year my sister lost her husband to cancer ten days before Christmas. It has been almost a year and she doesn't seem to be doing any better than when it happened. What should I do to help her?

The handbook "Working Through Grief" lists several myths and facts about grief.

Myth: Grief should last about a year.

Fact: There is no correct time frame for grieving. How long it takes to recover from loss can differ widely from person to person.

GRIEF

Grief is a unique experience managed in many different ways. With it comes intense sadness and feelings of depression. There are some warning signs to consider if the depression lasts longer than two months:

- Feeling empty, hopeless, helpless or worthless.
- Being preoccupied with feelings of guilt.
- Loss of interest in pleasurable activities.
- No interest in eating.
- Trouble sleeping.
- Trouble remembering, concentrating or making decisions.
- Withdrawing from friends and family.

It is important for your sister to process her grief in ways she feels comfortable and with people she trusts. She can do this by talking about her feelings and thoughts; journaling; praying; meeting with others who are grieving; visiting regularly with a minister or counselor; drawing; singing; and exercising.

There are many ways to express grief. You can show support for your sister through your presence, prayers and compassion. Let her know you want to help and ask how you might do so. Ask her how you can pray for her and pray with her if she is open to that.

Only Christ has the full knowledge and understanding of your sister's pain, but He offers hope and healing. He did this in Scripture through touch, compassion and His physical presence. You can offer your sister these gifts as the body of Christ in this world. She will continue to need Him and to experience Him through you.—Valerie Vincent

Q: What can we do this year with our teenagers to keep Christmas from being the "same old, same old?"

The glory of Christmas is all about ascribing to God the glory due to Him. This should be no more rehearsed than applause at a football game. The best fans remain loyal to their teams year in and year out. They faithfully attend the games, support the players and coaches, and applaud not just the tradition, but also the freshness of each new game.

While Christmas is a fixed event, it is ever new in the sense that we are reminded of the magnificence of God's activity. We faithfully worship daily through good times and bad, rehearsing His glory in the past and present, and exulting in His grand future return. To paraphrase Soren Kierkegaard, we must remember that we are performing for Him, not Him for us. God is our "audience" and we are the actors as we sincerely pause to celebrate His freshness as Christmas morning children.

Involve your teens in old rituals while encouraging them to find new ones. Challenge them to find a passage of Scripture that best represents God's special word to them this December. Encourage them to organize some friends to ring bells for the Salvation Army. Perhaps they can volunteer to rake leaves for an elderly neighbor while singing carols. Create a weekly Christmas movie night for your family. Invite your teens to brainstorm with you as you consider how to make your applause fresh for the Savior this year.—Scott Wigginton

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Christ transcends our human limitations

A while ago, I played golf with a friend who brought along his pastor whom I did not know. After completing the first nine holes, I had shot a 43; the other pastor, a 46. Before teeing off on the back nine, I looked at him and asked, "How does it feel to have been beaten by a man with Parkinson's disease?" He didn't know what to say.

Are you uncomfortable when dealing with people with limitations?

We need to have a right understanding of God if we are to come to any peace about life and our limitations. We must remember Jesus' words in John 16:33, "I have told you these things so that in Me you may have (perfect) peace and confidence. In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer (take courage; be confident, certain, undaunted)! For I have overcome the world. (I have deprived it of power to harm you.)"

We must never forget that God loves us and wants what is best for us. We have placed all our emphasis on this world, but we must learn to deal with limitations because we all have them. Jesus taught us that we are not to love the world but love Christ and our neighbor.

I am 5 feet 7 inches tall, but I used to tell people that I gave up basketball because my wrist got so sore from hitting the rim of the goal. I stopped saying this one day after someone said to me, "You've been down in the preschool area again." We must not allow ourselves to wallow in pity or give up on our fellowship with God and other believers. Sometimes we allow ourselves to be paralyzed from God's grace and love by our frustrations and limitations.

God is able to deliver us. I try to see my limita-

tions as a challenge that I face every day. I have chosen to see and believe that God has allowed this because I needed to learn more about His sovereignty and power in order to better serve Him.

Do you remember these Bible characters? Moses was tongue-tied; David was untrained and unprotected as he challenged Goliath; and Caleb was 85 years old when he asked God to give him the mountain. Our limitations become challenges that we all face as we learn to walk by faith and not by sight.

Henry Blackaby said, "We should attempt things so great that they are doomed of failure unless God intercedes." An unknown author wrote, "I asked God for strength that I might do greater things; I was given infirmity that I might do better things. ... I asked for all things that I might enjoy life, I was given life that I might enjoy all things. I got nothing I asked for—but everything I had hoped for. Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered. I am among all men most richly blessed."

Limitations can remind us of the little things we should be thankful for each day: the ability to laugh; the outstretched arms of my granddaughter wanting a hug; the blessing of answered prayer; the smell of freshly cut hay; the feel of clean sheets when I crawl into bed; telling a joke my friends haven't heard; a handwritten note from a caring person; discovering a new truth from a familiar passage of Scripture; and for those caring ladies who baked those great pies for me which made me a "big" pastor.

I don't have all the answers, but I do know where to look and Whom to follow. Jesus' coming is the hope of the world.

Rodney Travis is former pastor of First Baptist Church of Hopkinsville

GUEST EDITORIAL



Rodney Travis

History suggests sacrifice is needed

By Paul Chitwood

Mount Washington (BP)—In my seventh year as a trustee of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, I continue to stand in awe of the incredible things God has done by bringing together Southern Baptist churches.

The largest missionary-sending organization in the world is not our invention. It is an act of His grace. This work, however, has required the enthusiastic and sacrificial support of Southern Baptist churches from day one. With very few exceptions, Southern Baptists have provided all the resources needed for every called, qualified and willing Southern Baptist missionary candidate to be appointed.

The only recent exception to that fine record occurred about seven years ago. After Sept. 11, the downturn in our nation's economy and the resulting drop in charitable giving caused us to restrict the number of new missionary appointments. When Southern Baptists received that news they responded as never before. Within one year, all restrictions were lifted and workers once again began to flow to the harvest fields. Still, the fallout of that financial crisis continued for several

years. What did we learn? Two lessons stand out.

First, we learned that restricting missionary appointments is not a temporary move with temporary consequences. It takes years to regain lost ground. The seriousness of the decision to restrict appointments cannot be overstated. Every time a missionary is delayed, a witness among an unreached people group is delayed, new church starts are delayed, baptisms are delayed and salvations are delayed. For the sake of those dying without Christ, we cannot miss that lesson.

Second, we learned Southern Baptists respond to needs when they know about them. As reports of insufficient funding and delayed missionaries began to circulate among our churches, we witnessed an immediate and unprecedented response. Record gifts began to pour in from our churches. In one year's time, gifts received through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering increased by more than 18 percent.

Why do I share these lessons with you? Because we are on the verge of repeating history. With a record number of missionaries depending on Southern Baptists for financial support and the ongoing worldwide

financial crisis, the 2009 IMB budget now is under strain to support growth in our missionary force.

I am sounding the alarm. If nothing changes, we will do well to support our current missionaries and replace those who complete their service and choose not to return to the field. Growth will be restricted as new missionary appointments are slowed for want of funding. This news comes at a time when we are seeing record numbers of missionary candidates attend conferences to learn about opportunities to serve overseas.

In a step of faith, the IMB currently has placed no restrictions on new appointments. The dilemma is obvious. With more missionaries ready and willing to go than ever before, but no money readily available to send them, Southern Baptists have a decision to make. Either we will say "no" to the missionaries, "no" to the unreached, "no" to baptisms and salvations, or we will say "yes" to unprecedented, sacrificial giving to the 2008 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

The consequences of saying "no" are too great. Join me in saying "yes."

Paul Chitwood, pastor of First Baptist Church of Mount Washington, is chairman of the board of trustees for the Southern Baptist International Mission Board

COMMENTARY

Keslers bridge culture, language gap among Brazilians

Continued from page 1

but also the largest mosque outside the Middle East.

The city is located at the Tríplice Fronteira in south Brazil, an area susceptible to black market dealings where the borders of Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina meet.

Word quickly spread that Kesler was reaching out to different ethnicities there and starting churches among them.

"Many pastors ... knew someone who wanted to be trained," explained Donya, a native of Alabama. "That's how the whole (ministry) team was formed. God just did it."

Phil began taking other believers with him when he spoke in house churches. The believers observed his preaching, then gradually began to lead the churches. A national believer guided the established church while Phil started another one, in a strategy called Churches Multiplying Churches (Igrejas Multiplicando Igrejas). The church-planting strategy encourages U.S.

and Brazilian conventions, associations and churches to adopt people groups and population segments in Brazil that are unreached or under-engaged with the gospel.

When the Keslers and their four children—Anna, Bethany, Carlos and Aline—moved to Rio de Janeiro in 2006, trained nationals were leading all the churches Phil had planted. One of the first things the Keslers noticed when they moved to the Brazilian capital was the international connections the city offered—produce shops managed by Chinese workers and Arabic mosques a short distance from their home. Kesler's hope is that churches and associations throughout Brazil will adopt the Churches Multiplying Churches strategy to spur a church-planting movement.

Brazil, as Phil puts it, "is the next major country, we believe, to send waves of missionaries to help (spread) the gospel from the unreached places in Brazil to the farthest nations on earth."



STORYING Missionary Phil Kesler teaches his class how to use a storying cloth at the *Wake Up, Brazil* missions conference in Rio de Janeiro. Kesler leads a breakout session on the challenge of reaching the many ethnic groups of Brazil with the gospel. (IMB photo)

Missionary children are not too young to share gospel

By Emilee Brandon
SBC International Mission Board

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (BP)—It's become a family affair.

Missionary Phil Kesler takes Brazilian believers with him when he shares the gospel, in a strategy called Churches Multiplying Churches (Igrejas Multiplicando Igrejas). They learn from him and gradually take the lead. Meanwhile, Phil mentors other leaders, resulting in a continual multiplication of the number of people spreading the gospel and training others to do the same.

That is what happened when Kesler's four children—Bethany, Anna, Carlos and Aline—started accompanying Phil and his wife, Donya, on church-planting endeavors. They learned from them, joined in the efforts, then gradually took the lead in accompanying and encouraging others to share the gospel.

At age 9, Anna went with her father into the favelas (slums) of Campinas to start a Bible study. She taught the children Bible stories while Phil taught the adults.

When the family moved to Foz do Iguaçu, Anna and her father planted another church together. It began meeting under a tree, then in a shack and finally a larger rented space.

"She has led countless people to the Lord," Donya said of Anna, now 19.

The Kesler family also led a backyard Bible club every Saturday at a Brazilian school in Foz do Iguaçu. Donya, dressed as Dizzy the clown—complete with 'Pippy Longstocking' hair and red nose—cruised around in her Ford Escort to carry children to the Bible club. The car always filled up quickly—one trip was never enough.

"Half (the children in the car) were speaking Arabic and the other half speaking Portuguese," Donya recalled.

Unknown to the Keslers at the time, their eldest daughter Bethany began going to Avenida Brasil, the busiest street in Foz, with some of the children from the Bible club to share the gospel with other kids. Bethany, who rarely left home without a notepad and pen, had written an evangelism guide for the children to use.

Phil soon learned of this and decided to drive them there himself.

"Phil would drive all the kids to Avenida Brasil, park the car and then sit there and wait," Donya said. "When the students ran out of Bibles and tracts, they were able to come back to the car to replenish their supplies."

Phil's travels throughout the country as an ethnic ministries coordinator in conjunction with the Brazilian Home Mission Board often take him away from home, which can be hard on the family. But Donya said the family knows they are doing exactly what they have been called to do.

"I know that ... no matter how tough it has gotten at times, I have never wanted to be anywhere else but where God put me," she insisted.

Baptist missionary awarded city's highest honor

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (BP)—Eric Reese, a Southern Baptist missionary serving in Brazil through the International Mission Board, has been awarded the Pedro Ernesto Medal of Merit by the city of Rio de Janeiro.

Also honored was Carlos Novaes, pastor of Barão de Taquara Baptist Church in Brazil.

Presented during a ceremony last month, the medal is the highest honor conferred by the city to its citizens and foreigners who have rendered meritorious services. The award is named for Pedro Ernesto Baptista, a former mayor of Rio de Janeiro who labored to improve conditions in the city's slums during the 1930s.

Reese and his wife, Ramona, work with the urban poor in the favelas (slums) of Rio de Janeiro.

Shootouts, prostitution and drug trafficking accelerate their urgency to share Jesus.

"My phone has been tapped before because I was having so many conversations with drug traffickers," Reese recalled. "Some people thought, 'This gringo is crazy, so we need to get rid of him.'"

"I might be crazy. About seven people die in the favelas every week. I put signs on the back of my truck that say, 'Jesus loves you' and, 'Smile.' But one thing I know. I know Jesus, and I'm gonna preach His name."

"Into the Favelas," a video produced by the IMB, helped garner public interest in Reese's work. While the Pedro Ernesto Medal is an encouragement, Reese said he was even more elated Sept. 6 when 51

city commissioners agreed to help turn Rio de Janeiro "from a place of terror to a place of peace."

"I feel like Brazilians have honored me as well," Reese said of their commitment. Many of them, he noted, "have become more bold in their faith."

A former pastor of Cedarcliff Baptist Church in Cedar Hill, Texas, Reese originally is from Albany, Ga., where he received a degree in political science from Albany State University.

He also earned a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

He and Ramona were appointed missionaries to South America in November 1999. They have two children.

Heart of Worship 2009

January 30-31, 2009

A Worship Conference for middle school and high school students

Information on the conference schedule, breakout sessions, and how to register is available at www.boycecollege.com/heartofworship

Mumbai people 'numbed' by terror attacks

By Erich Bridges
SBC International Mission Board

Mumbai, India (BP)—The smoke from days of terrorism has cleared. Nearly 200 people in India's largest city are dead; hundreds more wounded.

Yet world attention already is shifting from Mumbai itself to international fallout from the attacks: Whether the bloody assault on Mumbai will spark a retaliation from India against its bitter rival Pakistan, from which the terrorists reportedly came. Both powers possess nuclear arms and have come close to using them against each other in the past. And what would new India-Pakistan tensions mean for the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan and lawless northwest Pakistan?

While military and political analysts monitor those possibilities, Mumbai's people need prayer, said an American Christian worker based there.

Lasting effects

"Our city has been a scene of tragedy and terror over the past few days, but it's not over," the worker noted. "The effects will be deeply felt for months and years to come by the families of those who have lost loved ones—and for those who have felt their sense of security in this city slip away."

TV news reports may be showing Mumbai's people getting back to normal in the city of more than 18 million, or defiantly protesting the attacks and the politicians whom they believe failed to prevent them. But the trauma goes deep.

"The fact of the terrorist attacks

has numbed the city's population," the worker insisted. "People were indiscriminately murdered for reasons as yet only speculated about. Please pray for God to work in this horrible human tragedy to draw people of all religions to the end of themselves, of their own plans and dreams, and desire to know the real truth about the reason for their tenuous existence."

How does the worker feel personally?

"We have personally been shut out from the city because of security issues (related to the attacks) and are feeling probably as numb as any of the citizens here," he said.

"This has been a very sad week. Sad for the city's loss of life and sense of security. But worse, sad for the Kingdom's loss. For among the dead are Muslim terrorists, Hindus, a rabbi's family, hotel employees, socialites, businessmen from many countries and more. Perhaps there was a believer among them. Apart from that possibility, they all—terrorists and victims alike—right now face the same eternity before one God. We lift up our hearts and cry out to Him for this city's redemption.

"How do we feel? We feel an urgency that the gospel be shared among all of the lost."

The worker, who ministers among multiple people groups in the city, said he also has an urgent concern about potential backlash against minorities—particularly against Muslims.

"Please pray for ongoing communal harmony," he urged. "Pray that those who would incite hatred and repercussions here, not for ideolo-

gy as they purport but for personal gain, will not succeed. The city's populace is vulnerable."

The Mumbai attacks came in the wake of many violent incidents in India over the past year, including ongoing terrorism in Kashmir, bombings in multiple cities and extremist Hindu attacks on Christians in Orissa and other states. Even as India amplifies its international profile, increasing ethnic and religious tensions have led some Indian commentators to wonder if the nation will survive as a secular democracy.

India at risk

"All of these are signs of a simmering India," noted Bobby Gupta, president of the Christian ministry organization HCI Global Partners, in a call to prayer following the Mumbai attacks. "This is not why our (nation) was formed. It was intended to facilitate independence ... with human rights to all people providing freedom (and) justice for all mankind. But this is fast crumbling in the midst of a growing economy and modernization of the nation. The hope to become an economic influence could crumble and the opportunity for the church to have a global impact could be lost."

He called on Christians to pray for peace in India, for the nation's leaders, for courage among Indian believers and for a "value transformation" among young people so the next generation will live in peace and harmony.

India, he said, could become "an incredible global influence" to carry the gospel throughout the world. ... Only prayer can make this change."

New report shows global hunger crisis worsening

Washington (RNS)—The number of people living in extreme poverty has grown by 100 million, and the number of hungry people has increased by 75 million in the last two years, according to a report by the Bread for the World Institute.

The report by the Christian anti-hunger group calls on Congress and President-elect Barack Obama to strengthen United States foreign assistance programs, making them more effective in fighting global hunger and poverty.

"As we grapple with the economic crisis, we need to pay attention to the damage it's doing to the world's poorest people," said David Beckmann, president of the institute.

The organization's 19th annual report examines progress that has been made in reducing hunger and poverty worldwide and risks to the poor posed by rising food and fuel prices. It also analyzes successes and failures of U.S. foreign assistance policies and programs across the government.

The report calls for a series of reforms, including elevating global development as a specific goal of U.S. foreign policy, strengthening civilian leadership in U.S. development assistance and partnering with recipient countries to meet their long-term development goals.

God's 'special place'

Good things are happening at Oneida that make the school a unique place

Written by Michael Spencer, OBI Campus Minister

For some time now we've used the motto, "Oneida is a special place," as shorthand for an aspect of our school that is simple, but sometimes not obvious: Good things happen here, good things that don't happen all that often in this troubled world of ours.

I spend five hours each week studying the Bible with our seniors. How many church members spend five hours in Bible study weekly? And my students are interested, curious and a delight.

This month, friends of OBI's campus ministry donated nine English Standard Version study Bibles to be used by our chapel preachers and others involved in ministry to students. These Bibles are almost \$60 each. It was a generous gift and all who received Bibles were blessed and delighted. Friends of campus ministry also have purchased curriculum for a girls' Bible study and two complete sets of a DVD curriculum on Jesus developed just for high school students. These resources cost hundreds of dollars, but our friends make special things possible.

How many schools let a girl play basketball if she's never played before? OBI allows every student to be part of a team, regardless of skill or experience. We only require them to abide by all the rules laid out by the coach. This year saw OBI field one of its finest soccer teams in years. Not all of these boys would have played at large public schools.

Remember that girls' Bible study I men-

tioned? It is one of the biggest ministries on our campus. Many girls have found Christ through this ministry that finds ways to build community and encourage students. While most of our students were home for Thanksgiving, the ministry sponsored an overnight retreat for the girls who stayed here.

Teachers doing extra work as bus drivers, EMTs and coaches; tutoring in study hall and working an extra night to make the library and computer lab available; sponsoring extra activities like cooking clubs, hiking groups and chess nights—all of these things make Oneida special.

Our students have trips for good grades and good behavior in the dorm. The school year is punctuated by plays, holiday parties, festivals, Spiritual Emphasis Weeks and sporting events.

Of course, not everything that is special about a school can be seen or experienced in an activity or event. What makes Oneida special is the focus of all we do on the Good News of salvation in Jesus. In sharing that message every day in service and proclamation, we seek to make Oneida a special place where every student is invited to accept Jesus as Lord and master.

When memories of other special events and opportunities have faded, the gift of salvation, forgiveness and eternal life will remain. God's love shines out through the Oneida ministry, and all is made possible by your gifts, prayers and support.

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



W.F. Underwood

'For the rest of my life'

God's call to ministry takes Turner out of comfort zone

God's call on our lives usually means He will take us out of our comfort zones to a place that, left to ourselves, we would not choose. Dale Turner, a junior from Shelby, N.C., would agree.

"I was called to ministry when I was a young man," Dale said. "I realized then that God would use me to preach the gospel. Two years ago, God led me to Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute to begin preparations for my calling."

Dale is one of several of Clear Creek's "Fruitland connections." Many students now continue their education at Clear Creek after finishing their degree at the two-year school in North Carolina.

"I had not considered continuing on in school," Dale said, "but after Dr. Fox and some others from Clear Creek came to Fruitland, I felt like God was leading me to continue on with my education there."

"I wound up on Clear Creek's Web site checking out the school," he continued. "I spent hours on the site just learning about the school. Everything seemed so familiar—like it was where I needed to continue my education."

"One of the things that appealed

to me was the broad age range of students," Dale noted. "It was just like that at Fruitland. I knew I would be comfortable here. From that time, God began to direct me to Clear Creek."

"The greatest thing I like about Clear Creek is the way you feel welcomed here from the very first day you arrive," he continued. "Every-

one really reaches out to welcome you. Someone is always inviting you to something here. It's really nice to feel included in things here all the time."

So how has God's call changed Dale's life? "I know God has called me to preach, but not necessarily to pastor," he said. "I believe with all my heart that the rest of my

life will be spent traveling to different places preaching to people.

"That's what's amazing about God's call," he explained. "There are three things that I really have never liked to do in my life: public speaking, being in crowds of people, and traveling around by myself. Now I truly believe that's what I am going to be doing for the rest of my life."

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Donnie Fox

Proposition 8 rematch possible in 2010

Sacramento, Calif. (BP)—The political battle over Proposition 8 in California was the costliest race over a cultural issue in American history—and there may be a rematch in 2010.

The American Civil Liberties Union, the city of San Francisco and activist groups remain hopeful that the California Supreme Court will overturn Prop 8—a constitutional amendment that defines marriage between one man and one woman. If that doesn't happen, they have a Plan B.

The backup plan—already in the very early stages—is to place a constitutional amendment on the ballot to reverse Prop 8's effect. With Hollywood backing it, such a signature drive no doubt would be well-funded.

Supporters of Prop 8 needed 690,000 signatures to qualify the proposal for the ballot and turned in approximately 1.1 million. It passed, 52-48 percent.

Homosexual activists groups such as Equality California are gearing up for what would be another costly political battle.

"We can—and we will—overturn Prop 8 to win back marriage equality," Equality California said in a statement on its Web site. "It will take hard work, extensive engagement of all communities, outreach to people who voted yes, research to determine the best up-

coming election and exact ballot language and significant funding."

The statement ends by urging each reader to volunteer and gather 20 signatures once petitions are circulated.

San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom echoed that sentiment, telling the Los Angeles Times, "The question is not if this will be back on the ballot. The question is when this will be back on the ballot."

Getting a constitutional amendment on the ballot in California is far less difficult than in other states, although it is not easy. It requires gathering signatures equal to 8 percent of all the votes cast in the most recent gubernatorial election. Unlike some states, California law allows paid canvassers—people who are paid to gather signatures—making it easier for a well-funded campaign to qualify a proposal.

If supporters succeed in placing an amendment on the ballot legalizing gay marriage, it could put President-elect Barack Obama in a difficult position. Obama said he opposes gay marriage, although he also opposed Prop 8, calling it "divisive and discriminatory." The president-elect has said he supports civil unions, which grant same-sex couple all the legal benefits of marriage.

Bush administration leaves mark on faith-based funding

By Robert Marus
Associated Baptist Press

Washington (ABP)—President Bush's administration and a host of court rulings have indelibly altered the way that the federal government relates to religious charities, according to an analysis by experts.

"The heart—the core—of the faith-based and community initiative is a commitment to equal treatment of faith-based social-welfare providers," said George Washington University professor Bob Tuttle at a Dec. 2 briefing in Washington. "Now, eight years into this, it doesn't seem like such a radical proposition."

Tuttle and George Washington Law colleague Chip Lupu spoke to reporters at the release of their annual "State of the Law Report" for the Roundtable on Religion and Social Welfare Policy. The non-partisan educational organization—a cooperative effort between the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life and the Rockefeller Institute of Government—has been tracking Bush's effort to expand government funding for religious charities.

While the report has annually tracked changes in the legal status of government-religious partnerships, this year's report analyzed the cumulative changes in the status of such partnerships since Bush took office.

Tuttle said Bush's effort to boost government funding of religious groups has been largely successful. The success owes, he added, mainly to significant changes over the last 10-12 years in how the federal courts view direct government funding for ostensibly secular social services provided by churches and other deeply religious organizations.

"Because of the way that constitutional law developed in the 1970s and 1980s ... religious organizations were frequently—not always, but frequently—excluded from government aid programs," Tuttle noted. "But in the 1990s, that began to change."

A series of decisions began to lower the high wall that the courts had placed between church and state in regard to direct government fund-

ing for social services. Before the late 1990s, religious groups wishing to qualify for grants from most federal social-service programs had to incorporate separately from the churches that supported them and operate much as secular social-service agencies would.

The courts gradually altered that equation, and the welfare-reform legislation of the late 1990s further expanded government funding of churches.

However, Tuttle noted, "When the Supreme Court says something's permitted, there's a big gap between that permission and something actually happening. And I think when you look at the accomplishments of the faith-based initiative, you have to look at this gap."

Tuttle and Lupu's analysis found that, while the courts removed legal barriers to federal funding for religious groups, Bush and his lieutenants also removed many administrative and even cultural barriers that had existed within the executive-branch agencies.

"Measured against that standard, the initiative has been, I think, a success that really doesn't have a parallel in administrative law," Tuttle said.

Bush has contended that one of the essential aspects of the faith-based initiative is that religious groups should be able to compete for social-services funding on the same basis as secular agencies without having to alter their religious character.

Part of that character, Lupu noted, is the unique ability of churches to discriminate on the basis of religion in hiring decisions.

"The Bush administration has fought to preserve this aspect of religious character—the right of faith-based grantees to hire only those of their own faith," he said.

Lupu said the administration has done that through a combination of legislation, administrative decree and what he termed a "very aggressive interpretation" of a law guaranteeing strong protections for religious expression in federal settings.

Zoo drops plans to partner with Creation Museum after complaints

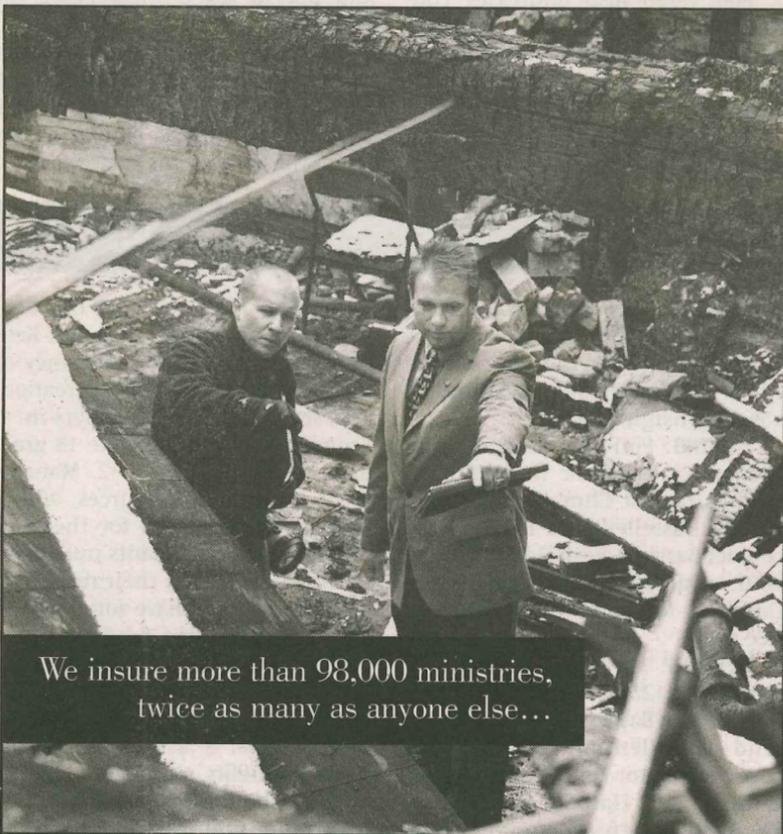
Cincinnati (RNS)—The Cincinnati Zoo has dropped a business arrangement with the nearby Creation Museum after it received numerous complaints about a joint Christmas promotion.

Officials at the museum expressed disappointment that their plans to offer a reduced price on a package of tickets to both attractions had ended after less than three days.

"I am personally saddened that this organization I esteem so highly would find it necessary to back out of this relationship," said Ken Ham, founder and president of the museum in Northern Kentucky. "At the same time, I have learned that the zoo received hundreds of complaints from what appear to be some very intolerant people, and so I understand the zoo's perspective."

The Cincinnati Enquirer said zoo officials found themselves embroiled in a debate between creationists who support the museum and evolutionists who oppose it after agreeing to a deal that would reduce entry to the zoo's "Festival of Lights" and the museum's "Bethlehem's Blessings."

"It's not about us endorsing them or them endorsing us," said Chad Yelton, a spokesman for the zoo, told the newspaper. "That's wasn't the intention of anything we were doing."



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Please pray for the following Kentucky Baptist missionaries and ministries:

Angel Food Ministry of Simpsonville Baptist Church. The Johnstons direct this discounted food ministry that enables families to stretch their food dollars each month. Providing quality food at economical prices allows the church to connect with its community and share the love of Christ through a hand up, not a handout. Pray that more churches would connect with their communities and share Christ though this simple and practical ministry. Pray that the Word of God will be spread through "blessings by the box."

MSC missionary Robin Reeves of Corbin.

Robin serves through Friends for Families, a ministry that provides physical and spiritual assistance to families of Appalachia through food and clothing distribution, home repair, backyard Bible clubs, vacation Bible schools, block parties and clowning. Pray that God will provide for current ministry needs that include a warehouse and additional volunteers to assist with ongoing projects and follow-up. Pray that God will grant unity among workers and their families during exhausting seasons of ministry.

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

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **BARDSTOWN**—Eddie Benton recently resigned as pastor of Parkway Church.
 ■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Saloma Church will host a Christmas candlelight communion service Dec. 17, 7 p.m. John Chowning is pastor.
 ■ **CLINTON**—Mount Moriah Church recently called Troy Dewese as pastor.
 ■ **FANCY FARM**—Beulah Church recently called Jon Allred as pastor.
 ■ **HOPKINSVILLE**—The First Church sanctuary choir and orchestra will present "Jesus, No Other Name" Dec. 14, 10:45 a.m.
 ■ **IRVINE**—Calvary Church recently ordained Jeff Barnes, Jeremiah Davis and Wes Hensley as deacons. Keith Sands is pastor.
 ■ **LANCASTER**—Freedom Church recently called James Hardin as pastor.
 ■ **LOUISVILLE**—St. Matthews Church will host a stage adaptation of the children's book "A Special Place for Santa" Dec. 13, 10 a.m. The cost is \$10 with all proceeds to benefit

Spotlight on ...

Mount Washington



First Church choir and orchestra will present "A Big Band Christmas" Dec. 13-14, 7 p.m.; Dec. 15, 2:30 & 7 p.m. For tickets or more information, call (502) 955-6539.

the St. Matthews Pastoral Counseling Center's benevolence fund. For more information, call (502) 814-4444.

■ **SHEPHERDSVILLE**—Mount Eden Church recently called Rick James as pastor.

■ **WINCHESTER**—Ephesus Church recently ordained Tim Christopher to the gospel ministry. Michael Todd Rader is pastor.

GuideStone video seeks to answer questions about market conditions

Dallas—While no one is certain when the current stock market malaise will end, history has shown that past market crises do end and the markets do recover. This is one of the messages available on a new GuideStone Financial Resources video answering questions about the market.

The video, featuring Chief Operating Officer John Jones answering commonly asked questions, was launched last week. In addition to the new video, GuideStone

has a full Web resource with another video featuring Jones, articles from GuideStone Capital Management staff and other resources, all available to answer participant questions about the recent market volatility.

In the new video, Jones emphasizes that a well-diversified and appropriately allocated portfolio is important for these market conditions.

"It is important to evaluate your current allocation based on your



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 2009

15-17 Shepherding the Shepherd, Lexington Downtown Hotel & Conference Center.
 22 Pastor/Staff Forum, Baptist Building, Louisville.
 22-23 Quarterly Prayer Meeting for Spiritual Awakening, Hope Community Church, Lawrenceburg.
 23-24 Region 1 Disaster Relief Recertification and Training, Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah.
 28-31 Southeast Conclave, Atlanta.
 30-31 Preschool/Children's Ministry Meeting, Baptist Building, Louisville.
 30-31 Regional Women on Mission Retreat, Laurel Lake Baptist Camp, Corbin.

February

6-7 Region 3 Disaster Relief Recertification and Training, Living Hope Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

6-7 Deacon/Pastor/Spouse Retreat, Griffin Gate Marriott Resort, Lexington.
 16 Church Retirement Plan "Reality Check" Conference, Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah; Lexington Avenue Baptist Church, Danville; Eagle Heights Baptist Church, Somerset.
 17 Church Retirement Plan "Reality Check" Conference, Second Baptist Church, Hopkinsville; First Baptist Church, Hindman; First Baptist Church, Madisonville.
 18 Church Retirement Plan "Reality Check" Conference, First Baptist Church, Bowling Green; First Baptist Church, Pikeville.
 20 Church Retirement Plan "Reality Check" Conference, Ninth & O Baptist Church, Louisville.
 23-24 Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference, Porter Memorial Baptist Church, Lexington.
 26 Church Retirement Plan "Reality Check" Conference, First Baptist Church, Mount Sterling.

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

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SEEKING: Full-time high school/college pastor for Valley View Church in Louisville. Candidates should have a verifiable track record (8-10 years) of successful student ministry experience (ministry growth and spiritual development) with a group of approximately 60 students within a larger church context. Candidates should possess skills in communicating God's Word in practical ways, a vision for building a team of volunteers, and an understanding of current student cultures. We seek candidates prepared for a long-term commitment. In addition, we prefer candidates to have formal youth ministry training, past focused concentration on high school ministry, experience with college students and experience in a church of approximately 700. Administrative and budget-conscious skill sets are a plus. More details are available upon request. Candidates should send a cover letter, resumé and message sample, along with a current photograph, to the following address or e-mail: Valley View Church, 8911 Third Street Road, Louisville, KY 40272, Attn: High School Position; studentpastorsearch@valleyviewchurch.org.

SEEKING: Part-time student minister (grades 7-12), central Pulaski County. Great congregation standing on God's Word with strong emphasis on youth. Seeking someone who is energetic and equipped to teach and reach youth for Christ. Send resumé to Ferguson Baptist Church, PO Box 247, Ferguson, KY 42533. Phone: (606) 679-1690.

SEEKING: Part-time music director for church in central Pulaski County. We are seeking someone who is energetic and equipped to lead our choir and be responsible for all musical arrangements for services. Send resumé to Ferguson Baptist Church, PO Box 247, Ferguson, KY 42533. Phone: (606) 679-1690.

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

SEEKING: Part-time music minister for South Jefferson Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky. Blended style worship. Send resumé to katmb@insightbb.com.

SEEKING: Full-time student minister/associate pastor for Southern Heights Baptist Church, 1400 Nashville St., Russellville, KY 42276. Please contact Barry McReynolds, (270) 847-0861, or barrymc3853@hotmail.com. Deadline for submitting resúmes: Dec. 30.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of recreation (25 hours per week) for Hall Street Baptist Church. Please send confidential resumé with cover letter to: Hall Street Baptist Church, 1102 Hall St., Owensboro, KY 42303, Attn: Personnel Committee.

SEEKING: Part-time music minister for Evergreen Baptist Church, Frankfort, Ky. EBC has 150-plus congregation, traditional and contemporary. Send to EBC, 2698 Evergreen Road, Frankfort, KY 40601, Attn: M. Hughes; or e-mail to office@evergreenbaptistchurch.us.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Petrey Memorial Baptist Church in Hazard, Ky. Please forward resúmes and, if possible, DVD, CD or tape, to Pastor Search Team, Petrey Memorial Baptist Church, 141 Alto St., Hazard, KY 41701. www.petreymemorial.org.

long-term goals and objectives," he said. "Your goals and objectives should reflect your risk tolerance, investment time horizon and age and should not be based solely on fear of where the market is going in the short term."

The video also addresses concerns by some retirees who opted to receive some of their retirement benefits as an installment payment.

"During times like these, it is a good idea to re-evaluate your retire-

ment income strategy," Jones pointed out. "Many retirees can look for ways to reduce their expenses, find ways to earn extra income, or delay large or discretionary expenses until market conditions improve. The important thing is to plan ahead and not to react solely based on emotion."

To access the volatile markets Web page, visit www.GuideStone.org/MarketWatch, or click on the "Turbulent Markets" banner at the top of the GuideStone home page.

SEEKING: Mid-Continent University, a Baptist institution in west Kentucky that teaches the inerrancy of the Scriptures and Biblical creationism, seeks full-time professors in: 1. Economics with a possible 18 graduate hours in Finance; 2. Management; 3. Human Resources; and 4. Nursing Management for the 2009 calendar year. Applicants must have terminal degrees in their respective fields and should have some experience in accelerated adult business programs. Major duties include teaching and related tasks such as curriculum development. Willingness to travel is also required. Salary and benefits are negotiable. Applicants should forward a cover letter, resumé and list of references to Dr. Stephen Wilson, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Mid-Continent University, 99 Powell Road East, Mayfield, KY 42066. Send official transcripts of all college work to the same address. No e-mail submissions or incomplete submissions will be considered. Mid-Continent University does not discriminate in the employment of individuals on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, disability, gender, or age. However, to the extent allowed by law, Mid-Continent reserves the right to give preference in employment based on religion. The application deadline is 12-31-2008.

Saddleback, LifeWay say small groups again on rise

By Chris Turner
LifeWay Christian Resources

Nashville—Some people who claim to be Christians haven't grown spiritually in 30-50 years despite sitting through countless sermons, and one church leader said he believes he knows why.

"They haven't been challenged in a community to grow spiritually," noted Steve Gladen, small groups pastor for Saddleback Community Church, during a recent Inside LifeWay podcast.

Many believers interpret church attendance as spiritual growth, he said, adding, "People are finding out that it is all about interfacing with God's Word, being in community."

"The last couple of decades we've been inundated (with) an idea of what church can be and I think we are seeing people say 'I could care less about big and flashy; I want confessional preaching, I want to see people where they're at,'" Gladen said.

"I think this is true even for (Baby) Boomers who say we know far more than we've put into practice and it's not so much about taking another (spiritual) nugget ... it's about helping people grow. That's why we've got people who have been believers 30, 40, 50 years and they don't ooze an ounce of the fruit of the Spirit."

A desire to see people grow in community and a desire to see churches strengthen that commu-

nity through small groups is one of the reasons Saddleback and LifeWay Christian Resources have joined together to offer conferences on small-group development during 2009 at four locations around the country.

The conferences are designed to help congregations start small-group ministries or improve existing efforts.

"We both have the same passion," Rick Howerton said during the same podcast. Howerton is director of events and training for Serendipity by LifeWay. "We believe the world can be changed by the power of the Holy Spirit in small groups of people coming together. LifeWay can bring event planning and Saddleback brings expertise and content."

Howerton and Gladen said without small group interaction it is difficult, if not impossible, for pastors to know if church members are growing spiritually—even pastors of small congregations.

Small groups offer the opportunity for more accountability and connection among members, creating a better environment for learning and maturity, the speakers explained.

"I think God is creating a movement," Howerton said. "It is no longer a program of the church. It is a movement that almost seems unstoppable. People who have never thought about small groups are asking how (to) get ... started. I believe they are sensing down in their spir-

it there is something miraculous when a group of honest, authentic believers are getting together and asking how the Bible speaks into my life and your life and they are embracing (small groups) in amazing ways."

Attendance on the rise

In most churches, an estimated 40 to 60 percent of people attending worship each week also participate in small groups. At Saddleback, Gladen said that percentage is 114 to 140 percent, and has been for three years.

"I don't want to get hung up on the numbers," he noted. "Our methodology has changed but our principles have stayed the same. ... I am more interested in delivering help to churches in a delivery system that is relevant to wherever they are."

Howerton said one of the most effective and strategic opportunities for small groups is the way the Bible can be studied intensely.

"One of the beauties of small groups is that whenever a person has a concern about their life ... they are surrounded by people who are also looking at the Bible and may know more about the Bible than they do," Howerton indicated.

"So they are drawn into God's Word and say, 'Hey, here is the answer to life's questions,'" he continued. "The Bible becomes not just a proposition for consideration and

an understanding of three or four things I didn't know when I came in here, but people embrac(ing) each other in the Word of God."

The four small-group ministry conferences will be held Feb. 19-21 at Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif.; March 26-28 at Fellowship of The Woodlands in The Woodlands, Texas; April 23-25 at Victory World Church in Norcross, Ga.; and May 14-16 at Vineyard Community Church in Cincinnati. For more information or to register, visit www.LifeWay.com/Next09, or call (800) 254-2022.

GETTING CLOSER Rick Howerton, national training coordinator for Serendipity House, leads a class on how churches can establish small groups to bring people to a greater intimacy with Christ. (Photo by Tara Patty)



Research reveals missions education increases missions giving

By Julie Walters
National Woman's Missionary Union

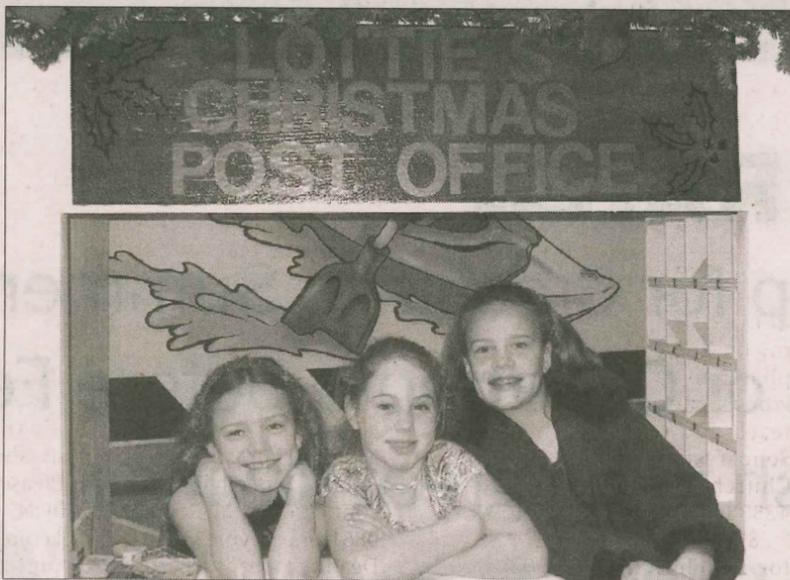
Birmingham, Ala. (BP)—Southern Baptist churches with ongoing missions education programs appear to be stronger supporters of the Cooperative Program and Southern Baptist missions offerings, according to the 2007 Annual Church Profile, a survey conducted by LifeWay Christian Resources.

The assessment of ACP data, conducted by Woman's Missionary Union and the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, examined levels of giving to the Cooperative Program, Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions from churches that have WMU age-level organizations, such as Girls in Action and Women on Mission, as compared with those that do not.

WMU and NAMB further examined giving levels among churches that reported having Baptist Men on Mission (formerly Brotherhood), Challengers and Royal Ambassador programs of the North American Mission Board and those that do not.

Regardless of church size, the data show that per capita giving to CP and missions offerings was greater in churches that provide ongoing missions education.

For example, when looking at a total of 40,056 congregations across the country, the average per capita giving to CP was \$23.65 in churches without WMU- or NAMB-supported missions education programs as compared to \$43.28 per capita giving in churches that have these pro-



SPECIAL DELIVERY Three Girls In Action at Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock, Ark., pause for a moment at a "post office" from which they deliver Christmas cards as a way of helping their church meet its Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal for international missions. (BP photo)

grams. Among total congregations, per capita giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering was \$3.29 from churches without missions education as compared to \$9.05 from those with missions education; per capita giving to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering was \$1.54 per capita compared to \$5.34.

"Southern Baptists have a rich missions legacy and the foundation of that has been mission education," said Jim Burton, NAMB's mission education team leader. "We believe that missions learning is the foundation for missions sending, and this data supports that conviction."

"When Southern Baptist church-

es drift away from mission education, they directly put future missions support from their church at risk," Burton continued. "Having no mission education, particularly in lieu of para-church options that will not reinforce our missions priorities, cuts short the shared vision of cooperative missions that has defined our denomination's missions efforts."

WMU Executive Director Wanda Lee also underscored the value of missions education for everyone in the church, from preschoolers to adults. "The heart of Southern Baptist missions efforts must be founded on our members' understanding

of three basic concepts—everything I have belongs to God; I am responsible for using whatever I have to honor God; and a world is waiting to hear the Good News and I am responsible for seeing that they hear.

"When these concepts are planted firmly in believers' lives as they are through ongoing missions education, tithing and cooperative giving follow," Lee noted.

NAMB President Geoff Hammond said these insights are particularly important in light of the increasingly challenging mission field NAMB missionaries face.

"The urgent need to reach North America with the gospel is apparent every day, and Southern Baptists who have a missions education foundation are better equipped to meet the challenges of fulfilling the Great Commission," he pointed out. "The work of our missions education team and the Woman's Missionary Union, along with other partners, is making a difference."

Burton, noting that 11,500-plus Southern Baptist missionaries are serving in 140-plus countries, said, "Each is counting on Southern Baptists to help keep them on the field and in the center of God's will for their life. Missions education undergirds that effort."

For information on missions education programs and resources offered by Woman's Missionary Union, visit www.wmu.com.

For details on Royal Ambassadors, Challengers, Baptist Men on Mission and other missions-learning resources from the North American Mission Board, visit www.sbcmissioneducation.com.



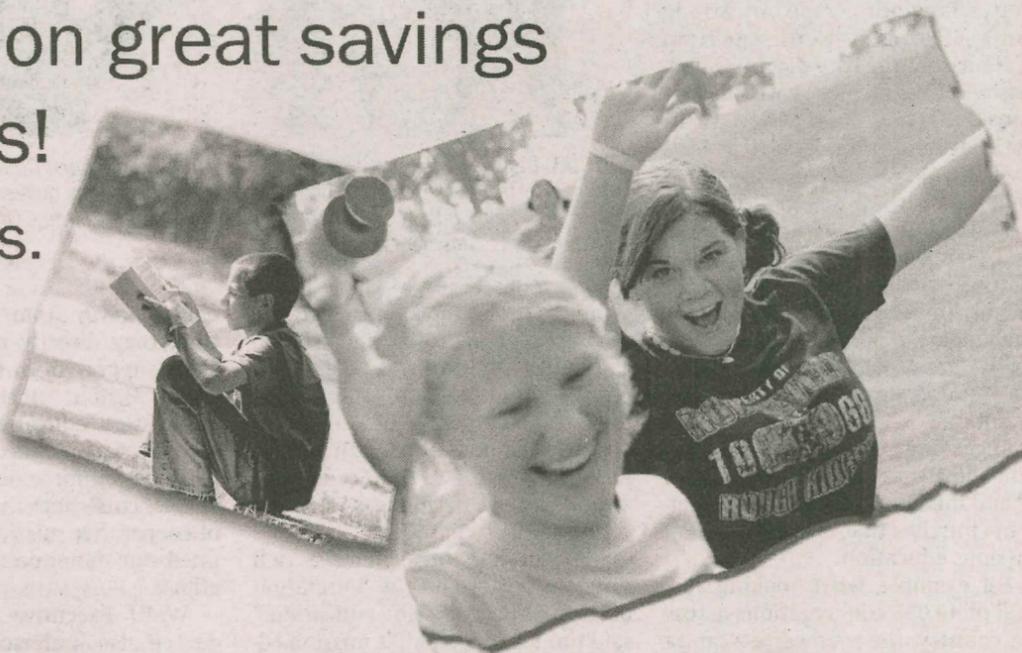
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