



# WESTERN RECORDER

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## 2008 in the rearview mirror

*Baptists play significant roles in the major news of a tumultuous, history-making year*

By Drew Nichter  
News Director

As the calendar page flipped from 2008 to 2009, it is safe to say Americans' general feeling was they were glad to see the tumultuous year end and get a fresh start.

An abundance of history—both good and bad—was witnessed in 2008: The United States elected its first African-American president, and at the same time, witnessed the economy sink to its lowest levels since the Great Depression.

Southern Baptists again dealt with their fair share of controversy in 2008. Protecting the convention's most vulnerable from sex offenders again was a hot topic. But in a chaotic year complicated by natural disasters, Southern Baptist disaster relief volunteers stepped up to show what the denomination is—and should be—known for: sharing the selfless love of Jesus Christ.

With 2008 safely in the rearview mirror, the Western Recorder takes a look back at the major stories from the past year:

**JANUARY:** Former Baptist pastor Mike Huckabee scored a surprisingly decisive win on the Republican side of the Iowa caucuses during the 2008 primary elections. Buoyed by the success of the victory, the former Arkansas governor outlasted all other GOP candidates before conceding the race to Arizona Sen. John McCain in early March.

Research conducted by Willow Creek Community Church, the suburban Chicago megachurch, revealed that worshippers' spiritual growth was not keeping pace with their involvement in church activities. "Reveal," a book documenting the research showed that church members desired to go deeper in their spiritual lives. The findings were significant not only for the church's 20,000 members, but also the 12,000 churches that are part of the Willow Creek Association.

Censured by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board in 2007 for critiquing the group's policies through his blog, Oklahoma pastor Wade Burleson resigned his position as IMB trustee.

Representatives from 30 U.S. Baptist organizations gathered in Atlanta for the inaugural New Baptist Covenant. An estimated 15,000 people heard from two former U.S. presidents and other prominent Baptists, delivering a message of unity among the racially diverse groups. The Southern Baptist Convention opted not to participate in the event.

**FEBRUARY:** Rare winter tornadoes swept through much of the Southeast, causing a wide path of destruction. The campus of Union University in Jackson, Tenn., was

hit particularly hard. The storm destroyed or damaged 80 percent of the Tennessee Baptist school's residence halls, and more than a dozen students were injured.

After announcing his nomination for SBC president in January, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President Albert Mohler pulled out of the race after revealing doctors had discovered a tumor on his colon. Mohler had successful surgery to remove the pre-cancerous tumor in March, and made a full recovery.

The Pew Forum on Religious & Public Life releases the U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, a massive analysis of Americans' religious affiliations. It revealed that while 78.4 percent of U.S. adults are Christian, Protestants are nearing minority status. Also, a growing number of people identified themselves as atheist or agnostic.

**MARCH:** A Franklin County circuit judge ruled that University of the Cumberlands should not receive a \$12 million state grant to build a pharmacy school at the Williamsburg campus. In his judgment,

Judge Roger Crittenden wrote that a grant for the private, Kentucky Baptist institution violated the state constitution. The university later appealed the ruling.

Kentucky Baptist churches saw a significant drop in baptisms during 2007, according to that year's Annual Church Profile statistics. Barely more than 15,500 people were baptized in Kentucky Baptist Convention churches, the fewest number since 1996.

For the first time in its history, giving to the Eliza Broadus Offering for State Missions topped \$1 million. Kentucky Baptists gave a total of \$1,105,722 to the offering in 2007-08.

Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear announced defeat of his proposed expanded gambling bill, which would have brought casinos to the state. Kentucky Baptists were outspoken in their opposition to the governor's plan. In addition to persistently contacting state legislators, groups such as the Kentucky Baptist African-American Pastors' Fellowship and Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union, organized rallies

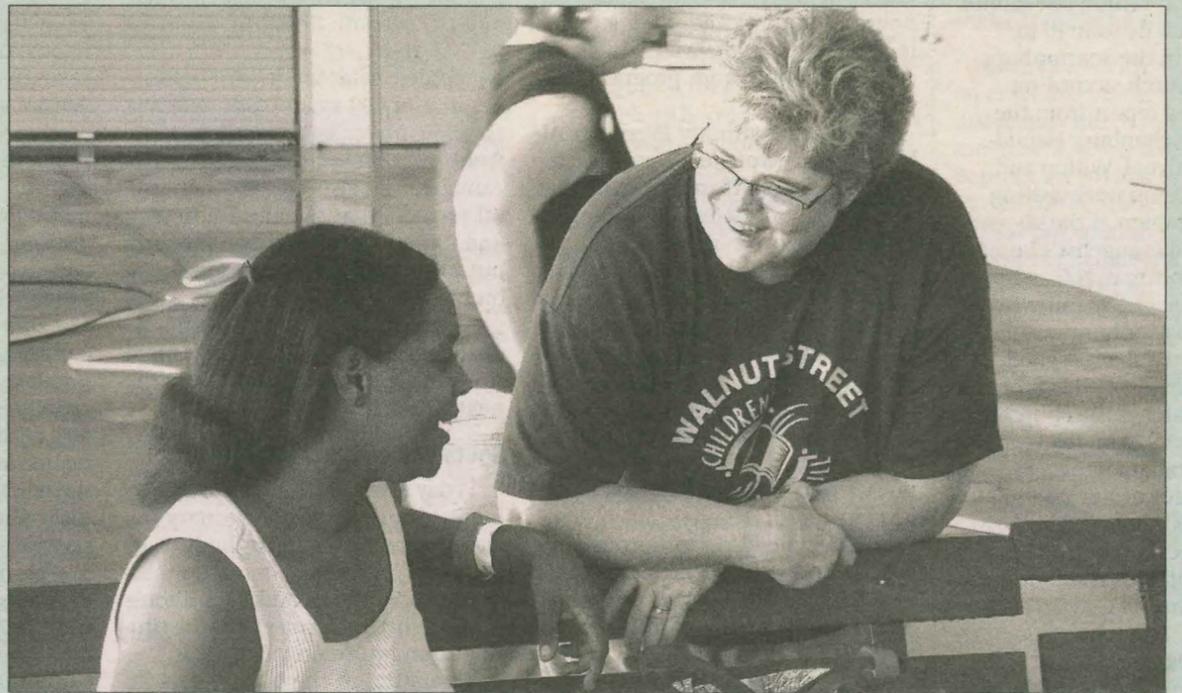
at the Capitol to speak out against expanded gambling.

After nearly 10 years of legal battles, a judge dismissed a lawsuit against Sunrise Children's Services, stemming from the 1998 firing of a lesbian employee. Alecia Pedreira filed suit against the Kentucky Baptist agency—then known as Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children—claiming that her dismissal because of her sexual orientation should preclude Sunrise from receiving state funds to provide foster care services for children. A pair of groups later appealed the suit's dismissal.

**APRIL:** The Southern Baptist Convention's 2007 Annual Church Profile statistics showed a dip in baptisms to their lowest level in 20 years. SBC churches baptized 345,941 in 2007, down 5.5 percent from the previous year.

National Woman's Missionary Union sponsored its MissionsFEST event throughout Eastern Kentucky's Boone's Creek Baptist Association. Hundreds of volunteers from Kentucky and several other states

See Year in review ... *Page 7*



**LOOKING BACK ON '08** Kentucky Baptist-related news in 2008 ranged from disaster relief volunteers helping feed displaced Gulf Coast residents in Louisville (top) to Kentucky Baptists' anti-expanded gambling rallies in Frankfort (left) to the successful Rick Gage crusade in Campbellsville.

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday

## Billy Graham moves church membership

Spartanburg, S.C. (BP)—Evangelist Billy Graham has moved his membership to First Baptist Church of Spartanburg, S.C., the church's pastor told the congregation Dec. 28.

A long-time member of First Baptist Church of Dallas, Graham told First Baptist, Spartanburg, Pastor Don Wilton last month that he wanted to join the Spartanburg church, according to a report from the Spartanburg Herald-Journal. Wilton and his son were visiting Graham at the 90-year-old evangelist's home in Montreat, N.C., which is about 90 miles from Spartanburg.

Graham is good friends with Wilton and watches the church's services on television. Graham wrote the foreword to Wilton's 2005 book, "Totally Secure: Finding Peace and Protection in the Arms of God."

"Our church is deeply humbled and deeply grateful to accept him as one of our own," Wilton told WSPA-TV in Spartanburg. "And it certainly gives us great joy to do that."

Graham turned 90 last November. In 60-plus years of ministry, he has preached the gospel in person to nearly 215 million people, according to statistics provided by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

## Seminaries announce drastic budget cuts

### Shortfalls force pair of SBC seminaries to institute changes

Louisville—With multi-million dollar budget shortfalls for the year, two Southern Baptist seminaries are feeling the pinch of the global economic crisis.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, announced significant budget cuts in the form of potential layoffs, increased tuition and program suspensions.

Southern Seminary President Albert Mohler wrote in a Dec. 15 letter to the faculty, staff and students that cost-saving measures—including a hiring freeze on non-essential positions and reduced travel—already have trimmed the school's budget by \$1.7 million.

That leaves a projected \$800,000 to \$1.5 million in further reductions projected over the next several months. Mohler said that likely would mean a reduction in the seminary's workforce and increasing tuition to boost revenue.

Mohler pledged "to do our very best to limit tuition increases" as a way to keep theological education affordable to as many ministers as possible.

The president attributed the shortfall to significant losses in the value of the seminary's endowed funds. He also said the school projects annual gift levels this year to be lower than usual and has been advised by denominational leaders to expect economic forces to eventually show up in reduced giving through the SBC.

Mohler emphasized that such practical planning did not reflect a poor opinion of Southern Baptist

supporters but was an acknowledgment of the financial strains negatively impacting households as well as congregations.

"The issue here is not donative intent," he noted, "but the ability of individuals and churches to give what they would want to give during a time of reduced income."

Prior to the shortfall, Southern Seminary's 2008-09 budget was \$36,947,000. Just less than 40 percent of the school's income comes from tuition and fees. Nine percent is drawn from endowment revenue and 27 percent from the Cooperative Program.

Mohler said work will continue on a 14,000 square-foot welcome pavilion under construction at the front entrance to the seminary's campus. He also noted other capital projects that already are funded and under contract will go forward, but all future building projects are on hold.

He said the current economic challenge likely will be measured not in months but instead over the next two to five years.

### Southwestern cuts programs

A day after Southern's announcement, Southwestern Seminary released plans to cut its budget by about 10 percent—a reduction between \$3.5 million and \$4 million—in an effort to "protect the institution from future financial crisis."

Casualties of the budget cuts include the seminary's child care center, its study program in England and most overseas travel. More cutbacks are anticipated.

"The administration is doing the best it can to find ways to cut spending that do not involve the release of existing faculty or the students employed by the school," Southwestern Seminary's President Paige Patterson said in a Dec. 16 news release.

Southwestern is suspending for

at least 18 months the work of its Naylor Children's Center, a laboratory school under the direction of the school of educational ministries that provides care and instruction for preschool age children from six weeks to age 5. The center posts a deficit annually, according to the seminary's new release.

Parents reportedly received about two weeks' notice that the child care center would be closing.

The seminary also has suspended its Oxford study program and all traveling scholar overseas on-site study trips, except for travel directly related to a missionary training program in the Roy Fish School of Evangelism and Missions.

"We anticipate that other cutbacks in the budget will be necessary to ensure that Southwestern maintains its debt-free operational position and to be certain that revenues cover expenditures," Patterson noted.

"This is a most regrettable circumstance and not of our own making, but as stewards before God, we are all responsible for handling matters with as much compassion and justice as we possibly can. The goal in the end is to have a strong seminary when the present financial crisis eases."

The news release noted that the cutbacks were being made in accord with recommendations by the seminary's board of trustees.

Similar to Southern Seminary, Southwestern's operating budget draws on four streams of income—endowment, tuition and fees, charitable gifts and funds from the Cooperative Program. The seminary's total budget for 2008-09, adopted at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in June, is just less than \$37 million.

Compiled from reporting by Associated Baptist Press, Baptist Press and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

## SBC makes year-end list of 'under-reported' news

By Bob Allen  
Associated Baptist Press

New York (ABP)—Time Magazine ranked the Southern Baptist Convention's refusal to establish a database of clergy sex offenders one of the most under-reported news stories in 2008.

A ranking of under-reported stories in Time's "Top 10 Everything of 2008" special feature placed the story at No. 6, behind a mix-up that accidentally sent U.S. nuclear-warhead fuses to Taiwan, the Congolese civil war, violence in Sri Lanka, and new guidelines for insurance coverage for mental health and regulation of food from animals that are genetically altered.

"Facing calls to curb child sex abuse within its churches, in June the Southern Baptist Convention—the largest U.S. religious body after the Catholic Church—urged local hiring committees to conduct federal background checks but rejected a proposal to create a central database of staff and clergy who have been either convicted of or indicted on charges of molesting minors," the magazine noted.

"The SBC decided against such a database in part because its princi-

ple of local autonomy means it cannot compel individual churches to report any information. And while the headlines regarding churches and pedophilia remain largely focused on Catholic parishes, the lack of hierarchical structure and systematized record-keeping in most Protestant churches makes it harder not only for church leaders to impose standards, but for interested parties to track allegations of abuse."

Christa Brown, Baptist outreach leader for the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, agreed the story was under-reported.

"It's such an extremely important story," she said. "The largest Protestant denomination in the land—a denomination that claims 16.2 million members—refused to even attempt to implement the sorts of proactive measures for routing out predators that other major faith groups have."

Brown, a survivor of clergy sex abuse, worked two years to draw attention to the problem of unreported sexual abuse in Southern Baptist churches before seeing denominational leaders recommend against her suggestion of a national database.

Two months ago, Brown and

SNAP National Director David Clohessy wrote SBC President Johnny Hunt asking for a meeting about establishing a system to report abusive staff members.

"As president of the Southern Baptist Convention, you now have the opportunity to show genuine leadership on the issue of clergy sex abuse and cover-ups," the letter read. "This may be one of the greatest leadership challenges in the history of Southern Baptists."

The SNAP leaders said Southern Baptists' local-church autonomy makes it all-the-more imperative that congregations have enough information to make responsible decisions about whom they call as ministers.

"The only way people in the pews will find out about clergy child molesters is if victims feel safe in reporting them," they noted. "And victims are never going to feel safe if they have to report abuse by going to the church of the accused minister."

"Telling clergy victims to 'go to the church' is like telling them to go to the den of the wolf who savaged them," the letter said. "It is cruel to the victim and unproductive toward the end of protecting others."

## NAMB to roll out survey campaign to aid 'GPS' plan

Alpharetta, Ga. (BP)—In advance support of the "God's Plan for Sharing" evangelistic campaign set to roll out in 2010, the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board is collaborating with LifeWay Research to explore the most effective methods for sharing Christ with the people of North America.

A minimum of 15,000 people across the United States will be polled on how they prefer to receive spiritually related messages—whether by direct mail, TV, radio, Internet Web sites, e-mail, personal contact, newspaper or magazine advertising, billboards, door-to-door, etc.

Because of the survey's large sample, data will be available across many demographics—for instance, the different preferences of those living in the United States or Canada; different regions of the U.S.; Anglos, African Americans or Hispanics; Christians and non-believers; or across various denominations.

"People see national ad campaigns from the Mormons and the Methodists and they wonder about their effectiveness since the Mormon Church is growing and the Methodists are declining," noted Ed Stetzer, director of LifeWay Research.

In addition to polling people about their openness to outreach by various methodologies, Stetzer said the research also will ask respondents if it makes a difference who or what denomination the spiritual message is from.

When NAMB launches the multi-year GPS evangelistic campaign with five state pilots in 2009, the data gleaned from the research will maximize the effectiveness for undergirding media placement efforts in those states.

"This research demonstrates that GPS is a high priority for NAMB," said Brandon Pickett, NAMB's communications team leader. "The data will be shared with the state executives and associations as part of GPS. We hope to assist them as they reach out to their local communities by 2020."

"But we're also trying to be good stewards with God's money," Pickett said. "We're taking our time to learn about our audience. We're taking our time before we spend. We want to make sure we're going to get the best return for our investment."

Pickett said he knows Southern Baptists are asking how much money will be spent for a GPS media campaign starting in 2010.

"My answer is to wait and ask us that question after we get the results back from the research. We can't know how much we need to spend and where until after the research is done," he noted.

## Kentucky's Revive group brings prayer back into school

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

**Lake City**—After working with two ministries in Houston, Brandy Nelson has returned home to publicize the prayerwalking initiative that she helped start nearly two years ago.

The May 2008 graduate of Livingston County High School plans to spend the next six months speaking to churches and other groups about Revive.

Since Revive's first prayerwalk in January of 2007, by Thanksgiving the grassroots effort had spread across Kentucky to nearly 70 elementary, middle and high schools, and four colleges and universities.

There are a dozen groups in six other states and two nations, including West Africa. The latter signed up in November and is the first based on another continent.

Although each one is autonomous, Revive founder and coordinator Wade White said he encourages groups to hold prayerwalks the third Sunday of each month.

While answers to prayer include less fighting in schools, better relationships with teachers and strength to deal with adversity, perhaps none is more notable than what happened to Nelson.

Once a shy student with a learning disability, today she said she plans to enroll in Bible college with an eye on becoming a public speaker or evangelist.

"It seems when I'm in front of people God takes over," noted Nelson, who attends Ohio Valley Baptist Church in Ledbetter. "My passion is speaking to youth about salvation and staying pure—mentally, emotionally and physically."

Equally stirring is the fact the prayerwalks are spreading after the youth pastor who helped organize them thought they would end quickly.

"We wanted to set them up for people in Livingston and Crittenden counties, do it for four months and we'd be done," recalled White,



**PRAYER CHAIN** A large group from Revive circles up for prayer outside of South Middle School in Henderson. Started nearly two years ago, the Revive prayerwalking groups have expanded beyond Kentucky into six other state and two countries. (Photo courtesy of Wade White)

who was youth pastor at Grand Rivers Baptist Church when the walks started. "But God keeps opening doors."

The prayerwalks' influence is growing in a number of places, he added, with a number of Kentucky counties seeing schools at each grade level participate.

"I'm looking forward to the day when we have prayerwalks in every county," said White, also a claims adjuster for an insurance company and interim youth pastor of First Baptist Church of Princeton.

"God is calling us to do this. People contact us who we don't know anything about. I got a call (recently) from a guy in California who wants to do this out there."

The Web site, RevivePrayerwalk.com, word of mouth and a half-page article in the November issue of Pray! magazine have helped spread the word.

So have booths volunteers have set up at various concerts, festivals and conferences. At those events, people approach White or others to say, "I feel God wants me to do this."

"It's amazing how often I hear that," White explained.

Bekah Brewer, a senior at Pleasure Ridge Park High School in suburban Louisville, learned about Revive last year at a regional Fellowship of Christian Athletes conference in Mount Sterling.

Since then she has started a group at PRP and encouraged members of her youth group at Louisville's Valley View Church to start prayerwalks at three other area high schools.

Although 143 people attended PRP's first walk last January, turnouts have since dropped to between 20 and 30. However, Brewer said the numbers are not as significant as the spiritual activities they spark.

She said prayerwalks have given Christians opportunities to talk to other students about Christ, as well as tell them, "God loves you."

"If you weren't a Christian I don't think you could understand it," Brewer noted. "You see a difference in yourself and the way you treat other people. It gives you a different perspective. You know God is in your school."

In Mount Sterling, the prayerwalks had a significant impact last year after two students committed suicide.

"I knew God carried us through that," recalled Michael Short, a special education math teacher who coordinates the prayerwalks at Mountgomery County High School. "It helped us cope and get past that."

Revive began at the school in October of 2007, several months after Short began prayerwalking at the school with his family. After learning about the initiative from a Christian concert promoter, Short said he quickly registered.

Soon after the walks began, Montgomery County High School's principal remarked, "This is the easiest start to school I've ever seen."

"Through our prayers, it's opened many doors to share the gospel," Short said. "I think there's many things happening as a result of prayer that we don't know about."

One of the newest groups is based at Swainsboro High School in South Georgia. Coordinator Rob Gray learned about Revive through the youth pastor at his church, Hawhammock Baptist Church in Swainsboro.

The high school saw nearly 35 people at its first event the Sunday before Thanksgiving. After a break for Christmas, it plans to resume Jan. 18.

Gray, a teacher and coach, said he hopes to see the same results that he has heard about elsewhere.

"I think it's going to explode," noted Gray, who plans to increase promotion now that the new year has begun. "The students are the ones leading it. These kids are on fire. ... It's amazing to watch."

Revive's growth has surprised even White. When the prayerwalks began, he admitted he never imagined they would extend outside the state.

"There's no way I could spread it over Kentucky," he said. "I didn't have the time or the resources. It hasn't been money, because we don't have any. It's not me. It's God."



### Reggie McNeal to lead annual KBC Pastor/Staff Forum

**Louisville**—With an emphasis on the missional church movement, Kentucky Baptists are invited to attend the Kentucky Baptist Convention's "Missional Renaissance" Pastor/Staff Forum Jan. 22 at the KBC's headquarters in Louisville.

The event will be led by Reggie McNeal, a missional leadership specialist for Leadership Network in Dallas. The seminar is based on concepts presented in his latest book, "Missional Renaissance."

According to KBC Evangelism Growth Team Leader Ross Bauscher, the event is open to everyone and is "ideal for a one-day retreat for pastors and their staffs."

"This important topic is one that will challenge and equip those who want to reach out to their communities," he said.

Participants will explore the missional church model, as well as the three shifts McNeal recommends to churches that are attempting to adapt the model, Bauscher noted.

The Missional Renaissance forum will run from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Registration is \$8 per person and includes lunch.

For more information or to register, visit [www.KyBaptist.org/Forum](http://www.KyBaptist.org/Forum), or call (502) 489-3530, or toll-free in Kentucky at (866) 489-3530.

## Campbellsville Univ. program aims to help those hurt by economy

By Joan McKinney  
Campbellsville University

**Campbellsville**—Through its new ACCEL Program, Campbellsville University is stepping forward and helping those who have recently lost their jobs.

"The university will discount tuition and related fees, not covered by state and federal financial, or other publicly funded programs, for up to two classes for any dislocated, or recently unemployed, adult who enrolls in the ACCEL Program," Campbellsville University President Michael Carter announced recently.

According to Dave Walters, vice president for admissions and student services, the ACCEL (Adult College Choice for Evening Learners) Program is an adult education curriculum designed to be affordable, accelerated and convenient.

ACCEL provides adult learners the opportunity to earn a degree in a convenient and accelerated manner at a significant tuition discount, Walters said.

The program's discounted rate of \$265 per credit hour will be offered to all eligible adult students.

"We want to provide those who have lost their jobs with renewed hope and opportunity," Carter noted.

He said the discounted tuition program will be made available for those who have become unemployed since Sept. 1, 2008.

"Campbellsville University is committed to ongoing efforts to provide affordable and quality higher education to the citizens of South Central Kentucky as well as the entire commonwealth," Carter added. "We are very much committed to responding to the current economic crisis in every manner possible and reaching out to those who have lost their jobs during this very serious recessionary period."

"This is another example of Campbellsville University's desire to invest in the lives of people from this area," Walters noted. "While we extend our services across the state, nation and around the world, we

also deeply value the people in this region. This is an investment into the future of our community."

Campbellsville University previously provided education to those who lost their jobs with the closing of Campbellsville's Fruit of the Loom factory and Batesville Casket Company in the late 1990s. At that time, nearly 3,500 jobs were eliminated from the local economy.

The school's Technology Training Center was developed during the economic recovery period that followed as a means to provide affordable short-term workforce development training for non-traditional learners.

Since its opening, the center has trained more than 8,500 people in the region.

Carter said the technology center's programs are available at a low cost and an ongoing basis, and feature a number of areas focusing on employable skills and certifications.

Carter pointed out that, since the late '90s, Campbellsville has

provided similar educational opportunities to numerous dislocated and unemployed workers, including those from Albany and Clinton County after the closure of a couple of textile plants a few years ago.

He added that the university's overall commitment to providing an affordable education is further illustrated by the more than \$10.2 in institutional financial aid being provided to its more than 2,600 students during the 2008-09 academic year. CU students also are securing an additional \$19 million in state, federal and private financial aid dollars.

For more information about the ACCEL Program, contact Campbellsville University's Office of Admissions at (270) 789-5220, or via e-mail at [admissions@campbellsville.edu](mailto:admissions@campbellsville.edu).

The Office of Financial Aid staff also can provide information regarding the financial aid application process or answer any questions. The office can be reached at (270) 789-5013, or via e-mail at [finaid@campbellsville.edu](mailto:finaid@campbellsville.edu).

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

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## Time for some New Year's resolutions

By Tom Ehrich

**New York (RNS)**—In this winter of financial, political and ethical discontent, our nation needs to make a slew of resolutions for the new year. If we had made them earlier, our transition into 2009 might not be so bleak.

Be that as it may, it is essential that we learn from this trying time. Here are a few ways to start:

■ Don't believe in "something for nothing." We cannot continue to suspend skepticism and careful evaluation just because we want things to be a certain way.

■ Don't trust the banker who hawked you a home equity loan. In their headlong pursuit of bonuses, many financial workers broke faith with their customers, sold us inappropriate products, gambled recklessly with our money, and now want us to bear the burden.

■ Don't shop on credit. This is the year to cut up credit cards, stop drawing down home equity loans, and stop using debt to finance our lifestyles. Even if it has short-term impact on retailers, we need to get our personal finances in order.

■ Don't let your job define you. We grow up believing that career

defines our worth and identity. Then, when we make necessary career changes, and especially when we have changes thrust upon us, we don't just sputter financially. We descend into a pit of self-doubt and self-destructive behavior.

■ Be generous even when you feel strapped. True community depends on people looking out for each other, especially when danger or distress looms.

■ Learn to can vegetables and to make repairs. It isn't about saving money, but about self-reliance and making do. As we stagger into the second year of a worsening recession, it is important that we each feel capable and not rendered powerless by a complex world.

■ Learn from failure. The greatest shortcoming among recent leaders hasn't been their mistakes, bad guesses and faulty information, but their refusal to admit failure, to accept accountability for failure, and to learn from failure. We the people, in turn, need to stop pouncing on failure.

■ Rethink how you raise your children. We seem to be engaged in an epic experiment in non-parenting, with too many children raised by

## COMMENTARY

## Baptist affiliation

The Georgia Baptist Convention declines to accept money from the First Baptist Church of Decatur, Ga., (WR, Nov. 25) is a story line of interest. It was said that in the economic downturn it is unwise for the convention to turn down thousands of dollars. However, there appears to be more to this than dollars, although hard times or any other expedient should not determine right and wrong. This brings to light the important relations of Baptist bodies, which gives us readers an opportunity for a timely review.

Each Baptist entity is autonomous and separate from other Baptist

entities. Churches do not "affiliate" (in the sense of being a member) with an association, state convention or the Southern Baptist Convention.

With the exception of the church, each of these entities is composed of seated persons called messengers from the churches. These messengers have no authority to bind action on the churches or other entities—they can cooperate or participate with each other, but that is all.

The Georgia Baptist Convention can set the boundaries of their playing field and so can First Baptist, Decatur. It so happens that the convention feels that to "participate" in receiving money from the church



## Upcoming opportunities

During the next two years, Kentucky Baptists will have some incredible evangelism opportunities: Crossover Louisville this year and Across Kentucky and the World Equestrian Games in 2010.

Crossover Louisville is a series of evangelistic events leading up to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Louisville, June 23-24. This is an opportunity for us to:

■ Pray intensely for the city of Louisville.

■ Rally cooperation between churches, Long Run Baptist Association, the North American Mission Board, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Kentucky Baptist Convention and SBC teams to intentionally touch Louisville for Christ.

■ Use compassion ministries to prayerfully soften hearts.

■ Witness door to door and to share Christ through block parties.

■ Plant new churches.

Every Kentucky Baptist can get involved by visiting [www.Crossover](http://www.Crossover)

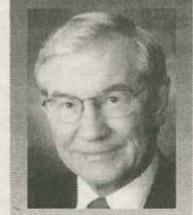
Louisville.com, or by calling Long Run Association at (502) 635-2601.

Plans also are underway for Across Kentucky, a second major evangelistic initiative designed to deliver the gospel to 1.5 million Kentucky homes in the spring of 2010.

Affirmed by the KBC Mission Board in December, the initiative also has received united support and enthusiasm from KBC staff and directors of missions. Across Kentucky will be coordinated through local Baptist associations and will involve extensive preparation and enlistment efforts throughout 2009.

Preparation leading up to the 2010 deliveries will include prayer-walking and evangelism training. Participants will then deliver bags containing gospel literature and invitations to Easter services on April 4, 2010. During the five weeks of follow-up, booklets will be mailed to those who return a response card. We are estimating that more

## PARTNERS IN THE MISSION



Bill Mackey

minimum-wage employees, television and over-involved parents living through their children. The results are sobering: children who cannot think for themselves, who have a high sense of entitlement, who plagiarize without compunction, and who are intellectually and motivationally unprepared to learn. Who, then, will make the hard decisions and do the hard work that freedom and economic vitality require?

■ Help your faith community to grow by accepting changes. Now more than ever, our society needs faith communities that are able to heal at the margins, speak forcefully at the center and help a distracted and floundering people find solid ground. Too many congregations are paralyzed by conflict and resistance to change.

■ Spend more time at home with loved ones. Even if we could still afford the parallel lives that many families lead (and we can't), this is the year to spend more time together. Living overly busy, career-centered and separate lives hasn't worked.

■ Stop living vicariously through a celebrity culture. We need to look into our mirrors and stop seeing what we wish we were and, instead, find peace in who we are.

Tom Ehrich is a writer, church consultant and founder of the Church Wellness Project

would compromise its biblical witness. The convention's action belongs to its jurisdiction.

And the Bible, poor thing. It is the Rodney Dangerfield of books; it gets no respect in places. Columnist David Gushee mentioned what Baptists once believed—at one time Baptists accepted the Bible "as the rule for faith and practice." Now the revisionists dance in the white light of omniscience and claim ability to decipher between the inspired Word and that which was thrown in merely to puff the text. When we read the Bible in our church and the pastor holds the Bible aloft and says, "The Word of God for the people of God," I assume he means all of it.

John Huffman  
Louisville

than 50,000 volunteers will be needed to make the 1.5 million deliveries. KBC Cooperative Ministries Consultant Lincoln Bingham also is working to involve African-American Baptists in this effort.

I pray that every church and association will plan to participate. Can you imagine what will happen when 50,000 Baptists pray for these homes, asking God to send revival and to prepare them as Christian witnesses?

A third major emphasis is evangelistic ministries during the World Equestrian Games. The games will be held in Lexington at the Kentucky Horse Park, Sept. 25-Oct. 10, 2010. It will be the largest equine sporting event ever held in North America, with spectators from more than 100 countries expected to attend. KBC Missions Consultant Larry Martin is serving as chairman for an international committee seeking to establish Christian witness and ministry prior to and during the games.

These are major evangelism opportunities I urge you to pray and plan to be involved.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

## STEWARDSHIP

## Should Christians be worried about economic crisis?

By Jeremy White

It seems the media relishes in delivering troublesome news to its consumers. The recent political campaigns and the credit crisis provide plenty of fodder to frighten the public with how bad things are.

Advertising also taps into this "shouldn't-you-be-worried" line of thinking. A television commercial portrays a father and daughter having a picnic in a tranquil park, sitting by a stream. He, relaxing under a tree; she, staring off in the distance as butterflies flutter nearby.

The father asks, "What are you thinking about, honey?"

"Butterflies," the young girl replies sweetly. "What are you thinking about, Daddy?"

"I'm thinking about butterflies, too," he responds, smiling contently.

"But, Daddy," the girl says very seriously as she turns to him, "aren't you worried about protecting your company and employees in the changing global economy?"

The father furrows his brow as she moves toward him. "But daddy, what about life insurance? College? Retirement? You need a smart financial plan, you know?"

The father collects his composure and says, "We are with AIG, honey. So I'm just thinking about butterflies."

The daughter replies, "Oh," and returns to playing.

The narrator then intones, "AIG: The strength to be there."

As you can imagine, this commercial was pulled last September when AIG was rescued by a federal bailout as it teetered on the edge of bankruptcy. It is just a further reminder of the truth in Psalm 62 I mentioned in a past column. Financial institutions come and go and need to be rescued. Meanwhile, God is your fortress and cannot be shaken.

Jesus tells us to not worry. In the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, He asks, "Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?" Jesus knows our needs, even though He may not provide for each super-sized, upgraded, flashy want that we Americans can dream up. Remember to seek first His Kingdom.

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



## Scripture, not separation, is key to fixing broken marriages

**Q: My husband and I are thinking about a separation. Things have not been going well for about a year. The time we do spend together usually is spent in silence. We thought maybe a separation might help clarify things for each of us.**

It sounds like life has run its course without much investment in the marriage. The marriage relationship, like any other, will become boring or uninteresting if there's not a steady infusion of life's energy back into it. Sometimes couples can feel like they have tried and tried but nothing changes.

### MARRIAGE

What do you believe a separation will reveal? How do you hope a separation will help your marriage? Will you work harder on the marriage while separated?

Separation in cases of abuse is essential for a time of healing and seeking help. Separation for the purpose of hoping time and absence will somehow bring new life and energy back into the relationship is magical thinking. Relationships are not transformed by magic but by living out God's Word, by putting Scripture into action. The New Testament testifies to the loving actions Christ repeatedly took; not waiting for humanity to make the first move, do their part or make up for its hurtful behavior.

It is a tremendous challenge for couples who are tired and frustrated in their marriages to try again. It can even be scary to "put out into the deep water" and be vulnerable and take a risk with your spouse.

Christ is paying attention to what is happening in your marriage not to condemn but in order to bless you. Both you and your husband will have to choose to listen to Christ, to put out into the deep waters of your marriage and be ready for the abundance of blessing. Seek out God's community to encourage you and help you to do marriage differently so that the blessing of marriage, as God intends it, will be yours.—Valerie Vincent

**Q: My wife and I would love to be closer in our feelings toward one another but need a few helpful suggestions.**

Marriage researchers John and Julie Gottman remind us that information is available on how to have a better marriage. The nation's top marriage educators offer plans whereby couples can increase their marriage happiness each week. One suggestion is called "Five Positive Thoughts per Week." These are:

■ I generally like ...

Name one characteristic of your spouse that is endearing to you. This can be a powerful affirmation.

■ I remember a joyful time ...

Describe it in as much detail as you can. Memories (often associated with traditions) are the glue that hold people together.

■ One romantic time ...

Think of the details that were fun, significant or important to you. Enjoy reliving the moment. Try to reschedule that time in the near future.

■ I am physically attracted ...

What comes to mind? Ponder how much you appreciate that. Share it with your spouse when the time is right.

■ A quality that makes me proud ...

Under what conditions does your spouse shine? What character trait is displayed? Thank God for that quality and share it with your spouse and others.

One of the Gottmans' main ideas is that couples need five positive interactions for every negative one. The same can apply for thoughts.

As Paul wrote to the Philippians: "Fill your minds with those things that are good and deserve praise: things that are true, noble, lovely and honorable" (Philippians 4:8).—James Stillwell

Family Forum writers are:

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



## Just what defines a cutting-edge church?

Floyd Price, chairman of the Western Recorder Board of Directors, had asked me to write about cutting-edge churches. When most church leaders hear the phrase "cutting-edge churches," they think of Willow Creek, Saddleback, North Point or Brooklyn Tabernacle just to name a few of the larger congregations. But what does it really mean to be a cutting-edge church?

According to Dictionary.com, the phrase "cutting edge" refers to "the sharp cutting side of the blade of a knife," or "the leading position in any movement or field." When I think of cutting edge I think of computer technology; it changes almost right before our very eyes.

Now, I'm about to show my age, but I was around when the first IBM personal computer came out. It didn't have a hard drive, it had a floppy disk drive. The disks actually were "floppy" and almost as big as the 45s I played on my turntable stereo (which, for those of you younger than 30, was a precursor to the iPod). The first PCs were large, heavy and sported a huge monitor. They also were very limited in what they could actually do. Today, I have 1,000 times the capability of that first PC all packed into my iPhone which I carry on my belt.

And, that's not even the half of it.

I'm an avid fisherman and there now is a fishing reel with a computer chip in it that helps to avoid backlashes, which are tangled lines caused by a faulty cast. (Of course, competent fishermen like myself do not need such an animal.)

Hopefully, my point is well made. Cutting-edge computer technology has changed drastically over the years and I, for one, don't think we have even seen half of what is yet to come.

However, cutting-edge churches are a little different. The primary message of the church has not changed in more than 2,000 years. In fact, the message of the gospel is unchangeable.

So what is meant by the term cutting-edge churches? In my opinion, it means churches that tell the old story in new and different ways.

Let's face it: Our culture is changing just about as fast as computer technology. Don't take my word for it, just engage a teenager or a college student in a conversation and you will discover the majority of them think much differently than the average church member.

So, how do we communicate the old story to such a changing culture? That all depends.

It's probably different in each and every Kentucky small town and big city. For instance, I have watched and admired Steve Ayers at Hillvue Hights Baptist Church in Bowling Green for many years. I consider what he's doing in that city to be cutting edge.

But let me tell you: That wouldn't work in Cynthiana where I was a pastor for nearly 15 years. In fact, I probably would have been run out of town years ago if I tried to do what Ayers is doing. But even though we might not have been presenting the gospel like Ayers' church, we still were sharing the gospel with a lost world. In fact, in the last few years Cynthiana Baptist Church has reached more than 300 people for Christ, 56 of those in one year.

We have to understand that each and every community is unique. For a church to be cutting edge, its leaders and members have to be able to adapt the presentation of the old story to their unique culture. That's not always easy, but that is the challenge that lies in front of each and every church across this state.

Will your church commit to the hard work of cutting-edge ministry in your community this year? I sincerely hope so because the eternal destiny of your community depends upon it.

Wayne Spivey recently was called as pastor of Harrodsburg Baptist Church after 15 years as pastor of Cynthiana Baptist Church

### GUEST EDITORIAL



Wayne Spivey

## Resolving to make changes in 2009

So it's 2009 already? As a boy, I never understood my grandparents when they said each year how time just seems to get faster and faster. But man, does it ever. This year, both of our children are seniors—my daughter, Karen, in college and my son, Jordan, in high school. How time flies.

This also is the time of year where people make a ton of resolutions they will never keep. I have been losing the same 10 pounds for 10 years now (only now, each pound has a friend that I need to lose as well).

So this year, instead of resolving to do more things, I resolve to do less, to learn to say "no," to take all the vacation days I'm allotted (most of them anyway), and to STOP. And I think that as we look at doing youth ministry in 2009, we can adopt this same mantra. How do we do this?

**Stop filling your days with busy work.** My good buddy Steve Coleman has taught time management tips to youth ministers for several years now. One of the principles he teaches is to prioritize your work for the day. I don't know how much time is wasted doing things that may need to be done, but aren't pressing. Let's prioritize our days and make sure we are being as productive as possible.

**Say "no" to distractions.** Maybe it is the ADD tendency that I have, but my day is constantly filled with distractions. With that being said, we need to remind ourselves that people aren't distractions—they are our mission. The Internet is a major distraction for me, what starts as a few minutes to check my e-mail, turns into checking my fantasy sports teams, my Facebook account, and, well, you get the picture. What is it for you?

**On/off.** At a Catalyst Conference last year, one of the presenters said this to us and it still resonates in my soul: For every new thing we add to our calendar, we need to take something off. Ouch! That event, conference, concert, retreat or speaking engagement that we add will cause something else to be pushed off the calendar. And if we don't take something else off our calendars then, by default, family time will lose out.

**Eliminate.** There are only so many hours in a day, days in a week and weeks in a year, and we cannot possibly continue to do more and more. So join me this year in evaluating what you are doing, what programs you are offering and whether or not they are helping to accomplish the mission to which you are

called. Then let me give you the freedom to stop doing some of those things. In his closing talk at Catalyst, Andy Stanley asked this question: "If we got kicked out and the board brought in a new CEO, what would he do? Why shouldn't we walk out the door, come back in and do it ourselves?"

However, we need to tread lightly here. This is not carte blanche permission to stop doing the things we don't like, or to end the events we don't have a passion for, or aren't in our strength set. But it does give us an opportunity to evaluate what we are doing to determine if it has lost its effectiveness. We need to do our homework—have supporting research and documentation as to why the event needs to go or be severely tweaked. Then we need to remember that someone has ownership of that event, maybe even helped to start it, and will mourn its passing.

So let's do our best in 2009 to streamline what we are doing, to make great use of our time, to not fill our calendars with so much business that we forget what is really important. Let us never get so busy that we fail to develop the two most important relationships in our lives—the relationship we have with God and our families.

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

### YOUTH MINISTRY CORNER



Joe Ball

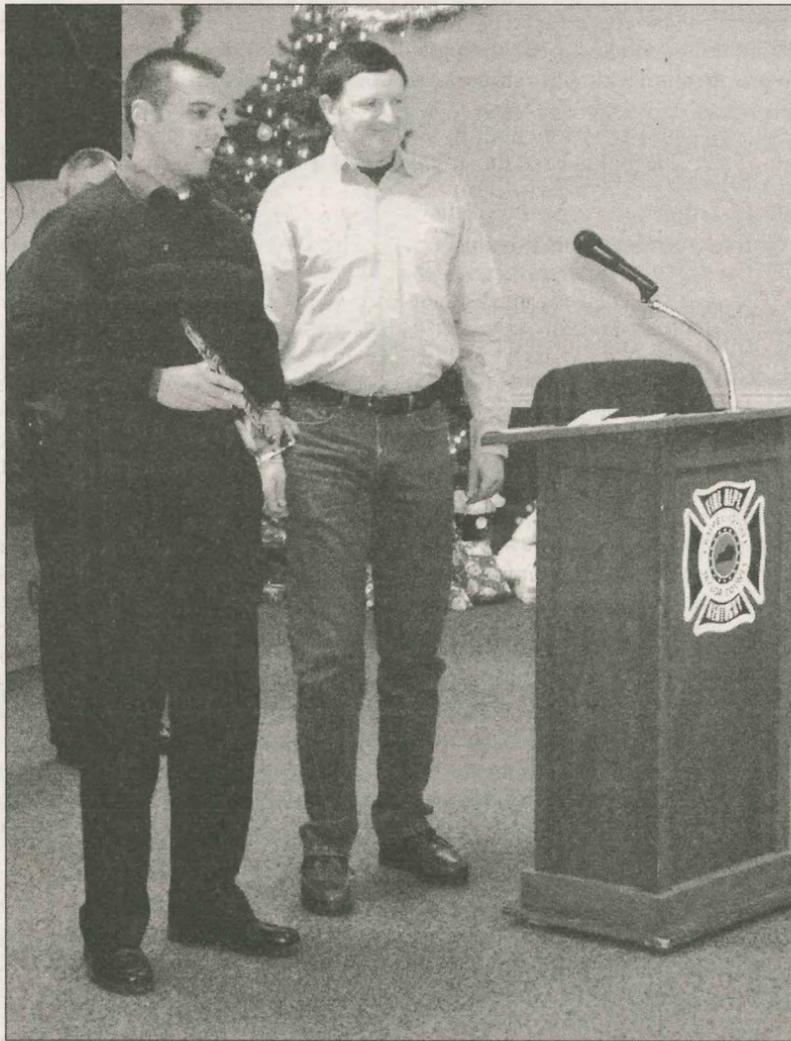
## Firefighters honor Campbellville student's heroic efforts

### Campbellville Senior Scholar also honored

Campbellville—Campbellville University Senior Scholar Tom Fisher was honored as Taylor County's Firefighter of the Year Dec. 6.

Fisher was recognized by Taylor County Fire Chief George Wilson for his hard work in the background helping to expand the fire department, both in the city and the county. Fisher primarily was credited with helping firefighters get access to working hydrants in rural areas of the county. He also was credited for participating in 103 fire runs during the year.

Fisher attends Campbellville University through its Senior Adult Scholar program.



**HERO'S HONOR** Campbellville University freshman Alexander Violet (left) is given the Above and Beyond Award at the Taylor County Fire Department's annual awards dinner Dec. 6. Beside him is TCFD Lieutenant Howard Dobson who made the presentation. Violet used quick thinking to help save two individuals from a burning car shortly after it collided with a van last September. (Photo by Linda Waggener/Campbellville University)

Campbellville—Alexander Violet, a freshman at Campbellville University, was presented with a special award Dec. 6 by the Taylor County Fire Department for his heroic efforts to pull two people from a burning vehicle.

"Each year we look back at runs we've had," said Taylor County firefighter Howard Dobson who presented the award to Violet, "and we recognize those involved in any extraordinary circumstances.

"On the night of Sept. 25, just after 9 p.m., we were dispatched to an accident with a vehicle on fire. ... Multiple people were in both vehicles. One person, came upon the accident and was successful in getting two or more victims out of the vehicles, drastically improving their chances for survival. For this act we give the Above and Beyond Award to Alexander Violet."

Violet, 24, was on his way back to campus when he was the first person on the scene of two-car collision.

"The car caught on fire," Violet recalled, "and I immediately pulled into a safe zone and got the first aid kit from the trunk," adding that he quickly assessed the situation as he ran to the scene, hearing frantic screams to call 911 and get a fire extinguisher.

Violet said his training as an active Navy Corpsman came into play that night. A field medical service technician who served with the U.S. Marine Corps, Violet is trained in operational and emergency medicine and trauma management.

In order to get the situation under control as quickly as possible,

Violet told the trapped passengers, "Everyone who can hear me, listen up. I need you to move to the safe zone if you are able."

He found an unconscious little girl in her child safety seat and was able to pull her out through a window. After getting her to safety, Violet checked others who had been able to get away from the wreck. Finding that none of their injuries were life threatening, he then returned to the burning car.

"I could feel the heat of the flames on my face but couldn't leave the one unconscious man in the car," he noted.

Working with another individual at the scene, Violet was able to pull the victim from the car. Violet said he recognized that the victim's chances of survival were extremely poor, so Violet made sure that the man was the first to be treated when emergency personnel arrived.

Campbellville University President Michael Carter praised Violet's selfless actions.

Violet's "act of heroism is noteworthy and exemplifies the spirit of Christian service that we stress," Carter said.

Violet, a native of France who has lived in Texas since he was 15 years old, came to Campbellville immediately following completion of his military service. He is a member of the CU Student Government Association, the Pre-Law Society and is actively organizing a Veteran's Club on campus.

"I have been impressed with him since he first arrived on campus," Carter said. "He is to be commended for having served his country."

## KBC now offers free video resources on the Web

Louisville—Church leaders and volunteers using multimedia in their ministries now have access to a variety of Southern Baptist video resources for download at [www.OneMission.tv](http://www.OneMission.tv).

According to Robert Reeves, Kentucky Baptist Convention's director of communications, the KBC is partnering with OneMissionTV to provide the free resources from several Baptist state conventions, as well as the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board, North American Mission Board and Cooperative Program office.

OneMissionTV is a subsidiary of EyeOn Creative Media Group, Inc., a full-service video production com-

pany located in the Atlanta area that provides production services to Christian ministries and non-profit organizations across the United States and Canada.

Reeves said the same KBC videos available at OneMissionTV also are available for download from the convention's Web site, [www.KyBaptist.org](http://www.KyBaptist.org), but noted, "The benefit of using OneMissionTV is the additional resources available to churches."

"This is a supplemental location where Baptists can go for one-stop shopping for Southern Baptist video resources," he said. "We're always looking for new ways to help KBC churches accomplish their

mission."

Additional videos and resources not produced by Southern Baptist outlets are available for purchase at the same site. Churches can purchase a variety of videos, including sermon illustrations and worship videos, Reeves pointed out.

Those individuals interested in running television or radio ad campaigns also will find helpful information about advertising and buying airtime. Pre-produced ads also are available for purchase, Reeves said.

For more information, visit [www.OneMission.tv](http://www.OneMission.tv), or call the KBC at (502) 489-3578, or toll-free in Kentucky at (866) 489-3578.

## Cumberlands case goes to state Supreme Court

Frankfort—The case involving state funding for a new pharmacy school at University of the Cumberlands will soon go before the Kentucky Supreme Court.

The state Court of Appeals Dec. 18 granted the university's appeal of a decision handed down last March that prohibited Cumberlands from receiving \$10 million in state funds to construct a pharmacy school building at the Williamsburg campus.

Franklin County Circuit Court Judge Roger Crittenden said that money and \$2 million appropriated for scholarships violated the state constitution as "a direct payment to

a non-public religious school for educational purposes," he wrote in his March 6 summary.

Kentucky legislators approved the \$12 million grant to University of the Cumberlands in April 2006. The money was intended to provide "an opportunity to improve the health and welfare of the people of Kentucky, especially those in the Appalachian region," according to a statement released by the school last March.

A homosexual rights group and several state legislators immediately sued then-Governor Ernie Fletcher, complaining that giving public funds to a private institution violat-

ed the state constitution.

The grant gained special attention because it coincided with the university's decision to expel former student Jason Johnson, who used his MySpace.com Web site to publicize his homosexual relationship with a student at another school—contrary to the university's guidelines for student conduct.

University of the Cumberlands President James Taylor declined to comment regarding the appeals process and the future of the case.

According to the political Web site, [PageOneKentucky.com](http://PageOneKentucky.com), oral arguments in the case could begin in early spring.

## CP giving decline increases budget gap through Nov.

Louisville—Cooperative Program giving totals have dropped behind last year's pace for the first time in the 2008-09 fiscal year.

According to Lowell Ashby, KBC's business services team leader, churches gave \$1,639,066 during the month of November, bringing CP totals to \$5,207,916 three months into the fiscal year, nearly \$101,000 (1.9 percent) less than the amount received over the same period last year, he noted. Ashby said the November figures increased the budget deficit to \$792,084 (13.2 percent).

The 2008-09 CP budget is \$24 million. In order to meet budget for the fiscal year, more than \$2 million is needed in each of the remaining months.

"We are grateful for Kentucky Baptists and their continued support of missions and ministries through the Cooperative Program, especially during challenging economic times," noted Billy Compton, KBC's executive associate for Cooperative Program and resources. "It's in times like these that the need for mission funds is as great as ever."

## Year in review highlights top Baptist news stories of 2008

Continued from page 1

worked with Boone's Creek church members to reach out to the community in a variety of ways, such as door-to-door evangelism, repair jobs and health screenings.

**MAY:** During a conference call, then-SBC President Frank Page told a group of North Carolina pastors that half of the convention's churches will die by 2030 if leaders refuse to accept change. Page said fault lies with pastors and their abilities to "maintain a vibrant walk with Christ."

Following a difficult illness which resulted in a month-long hospital stay, KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey returned to full-time work. Mackey spent much of March and part of April in a Louisville hospital battling an intestinal bacterial imbalance. He also was honored for his decade of service as executive director during the KBC annual meeting in November.

Kentucky Baptist missionary Harrell Riley is named NAMB's Mission Service Corps Missionary of the Year. Riley is director of Hell is Real Ministries in Princeton, coordinates ministries at three Job Corps sites and ministers at the Western Kentucky Correctional Complex in Eddyville.

**JUNE:** Six candidates vied to become Southern Baptist Convention president at the annual meeting in Indianapolis, the most since 1979. SBC messengers elected Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Ga., as president, receiving nearly 53 percent of the vote.

SBC Executive Committee President Morris Chapman announced that the convention would not support the creation of a sexual offender database for SBC churches. Chapman said local church autonomy superseded any jurisdictional authority the convention may have to create such a registry.

Alma Hunt, a longtime WMU ex-

ecutive director and missions advocate, died June 14 at age 98. Hunt led the Southern Baptist auxiliary from 1948 until her retirement in 1974.

Southern Baptist volunteers responded in the wake of extreme flooding throughout the Midwestern United States. Areas of Iowa, Missouri and Wisconsin along the Mississippi River were hit hardest. Several Kentucky Baptist disaster relief teams assist clean-up efforts primarily in Central Indiana.

**JULY:** A car accident claimed the life of Kentucky Baptist missions volunteer Lawrence Kendrick. The Danville native was part of a missions team serving in Russia in June when the car he was riding in was struck. After two weeks in Russian hospitals, Kendrick was flown home where he later died. He was 66.

Paducah's First Baptist Church confronted the danger of moral failure among its staff members, releasing a resolution detailing steps the staff had taken to ensure no staff members would make a bad decision and disgrace the church or its gospel witness.

**AUGUST:** Slumping sales forced LifeWay Christian Resources to cut 5 percent of its workforce. The reduction represented about 100 workers, mostly from the agency's Nashville headquarters. Georgetown College also announced the termination of several staff positions at the Kentucky Baptist school. Officials said the move was in response to a significant decline in philanthropic giving.

Criswell College President Jerry Johnson announced his resignation from the Dallas school. It came amid a public feud between him and First Baptist Church of Dallas Pastor Robert Jeffress, who Johnson accused of plotting to sell the school to finance a new sanctuary for the historic church.

Kentucky Baptists reflected on 60 years of mountains missions in East-

ern Kentucky. After years of dwindling attendance, area directors of missions decided to shelve the Mountain Missions Conference for the time being. The format and site of a future conference will be decided this May at the state meeting of DOMs.

In the middle of one the most expensive and heated campaigns ever, presidential nominees John McCain and Barack Obama sit down with Pastor Rick Warren for the Saddleback Civil Forum on the Presidency. Each candidate answered questions from Warren in a format that centered on discussion rather than debate.

**SEPTEMBER:** Kentucky Baptist disaster relief volunteers stayed busy during the month. Teams helped feed displaced Gulf Coast residents who traveled to Louisville to escape Hurricane Gustav. Volunteers also helped feed refugees in the war-torn Baltic country of Georgia. Later, disaster relief workers served back home following wind storms caused by Hurricane Ike that swept through the Midwest. The storms killed one person in Kentucky and knocked out power for days across much of the state.

IMB trustees voted to adopt a reorganization plan for the missions agency which would replace the 11 geographically based regions with eight "affinity groups." Trustees also approved a new child safety policy focused on ensuring thorough background checks for all short-term missionaries.

Nearly 400 people accept Jesus Christ as Savior during a four-day community crusade in Campbellsville led by evangelist Rick Gage. Many of those who made decisions were Campbellsville University students, including 134 freshmen at a campus assembly.

Kentucky Baptists set a record for Cooperative Program for a third straight year. CP giving for 2007-08

totaled more than \$23.8 million, a 1.4 percent increase from the previous year's record. The total fell less than 1 percent short of the KBC's budget goal of \$24 million.

**OCTOBER:** Randal Everett, who was named executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas in March, was invited by Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary President Paige Patterson to deliver a sermon at the school. The visit was seen by some as a sign that chilly relations between the two entities may be thawing. The convention also allowed SWBTS to have a display at the BGCT annual meeting for the first time since 2004.

Lifelong Kentucky Baptist servant Joe Priest Williams died Oct. 26. He was 85. He was pastor of Baptist Tabernacle in Louisville for 27 years, and was an outspoken advocate for racial reconciliation. Williams also was a fixture at KBC annual meetings, serving as assistant secretary for 12 years.

**NOVEMBER:** History is made as Barack Obama becomes the first African American to be elected President of the United States. Although some evangelicals see Obama's election as a threat to their fight against same-sex marriage and abortion, pro-family advocates scored significant victories on Election Day. California voters passed Proposition 8, an amendment which defined marriage as a union between a man and a woman, invalidating an earlier ruling allowing gay marriages in the state. Arizona and Florida voters also passed similar measures.

The Federal Communications Commission ruled in favor of several cell phone companies, granting them permission to develop "white space" devices that could interfere with churches' wireless microphones.

John Mark Toby, pastor of Beacon Hill Baptist Church in Somerset, was elected KBC president by acclamation at the annual meeting in Lexington. It was the second consecutive year that the KBC president was elected without opposition.

**DECEMBER:** Effects of the recession unfold as a trio of Southern Baptist entities announced cutbacks and budget reductions. Southern and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary both revealed budget shortfalls for the fiscal year. Southern Seminary President Albert Mohler said his school anticipated a \$3.2 million budget shortfall, while Southwestern announced it would need to cut its budget by as much as \$4 million. In addition, national Woman's Missionary Union announced a significant budget reduction and a hiring freeze until September.

KBC Mission Board members overwhelmingly elected Todd Deaton as Western Recorder editor. Deaton previously was managing editor of the South Carolina Baptist Courier for 12 years.

With the original plan due to expire Aug. 31, the Mission Board voted to extend the Kentucky Baptists Connect initiative another three years. The new plan focuses on several of the same areas as before, including increasing baptisms and planting more churches in the state.

### Religion in the presidential race tops Baptist news stories for 2008

Jacksonville, Fla. (ABP)—Baptist journalists and observers ranked religion in the 2008 presidential election the year's biggest story for Baptists. Faith in politics played a major role in the year's news cycle, according to an annual ranking of top stories compiled by Associated Baptist Press.

Religion stories ranged from the surprising emergence of Southern Baptist preacher Mike Huckabee as a contender for the GOP nomination, to questions about whether Mitt Romney's Mormon faith would be a turnoff to evangelical voters, to problems for John McCain over comments by his supporter John Hagee and to the Jeremiah Wright controversy that prompted President-elect Barack Obama to divorce himself from both his former pastor and home church.

## Explore the MISSIONAL RENAISSANCE

with Reggie McNeal

Thursday, January 22, 2009

10:00 am - 3:00 pm | Kentucky Baptist Building, Louisville

Pastors and church staff: join us for the 2009 Pastor/Staff Forum with Reggie McNeal. In his new book, *Missional Renaissance*, McNeal outlines the three shifts required of churches and church leaders who desire to be part of the missional church movement.

Registration is just \$8.00 per person and includes lunch.

For details and registration: [www.kybaptist.org/forum](http://www.kybaptist.org/forum)  
502-489-3576 or 866-489-3576 (toll free in KY)



Reggie McNeal is an author and missional leadership specialist at Leadership Network



## Controversy over prayers at inauguration is nothing new

By Bob Allen  
Associated Baptist Press

Washington (ABP)—President-elect Barack Obama's surprise pick of "Purpose Driven Life" author Rick Warren to give the invocation at his inauguration Jan. 20 is not the first time the ceremonial prayer has created controversy.

Eight years ago, Kirbyjohn Caldwell, senior pastor of Windsor Village Methodist Church in Houston, drew criticism for closing the benediction at President Bush's first inauguration with: "We respectfully submit this humble prayer in the name that's above all other names, Jesus, the Christ. Let all who agree say, 'Amen.'"

At Bush's second inauguration in 2005, Caldwell was more inclusive, modifying his closing to: "Respecting persons of all faiths, I humbly submit this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen."

Franklin Graham also offered the invocation at the 2001 inauguration in Jesus' name, drawing rebuke from non-Christians. Harvard Law School Professor Alan Dershowitz called it "particularistic and parochial language" that "excluded tens of millions of American Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Shintoists, Unitarians, agnostics and atheists from his blessing."

Graham said the backlash was evidence that "there are factions of society today that hate God and everything that He stands for."

Atheist Michael Newdow, best known for his fight against the phrase "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance, sued unsuccessfully in 2005 to block prayer at Bush's second inauguration, claiming that inaugural prayers violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. He again has filed suit to stop all prayers and mentions of God's name at this year's event.

Invoking God's blessing has been a part of the presidential inauguration ceremony since 1789, when George Washington added the words "So help me God" at the end of his oath and proceeded to St. Paul's Chapel, where the Senate chaplain read from the Book of Common Prayer.

The prayer was moved from the church to the Senate chamber for the 1937 inauguration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Every inauguration since has included prayers by one or more clergymen invited by the president-elect.

For years, Billy Graham was a fixture of inaugural prayers, befriending every president since Eisenhower. Unable to attend the first inauguration of George W. Bush because of illness, Graham sent his son as a substitute to deliver the invocation in 2001.

Joseph Lowery, an icon of the civil rights movement and co-founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, is scheduled to pronounce the benediction at Obama's inauguration, but garnering most of the attention is Obama's selection of Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., for the invocation.

The high-profile invitation particularly upset supporters of gay rights. Warren has compared homosexuality to incest, pedophilia and polygamy. He also spoke on behalf of Proposition 8, a California referendum to ban gay marriage, which homosexuals regard a civil right.

While Warren differs with Obama on homosexuality and abortion rights, they share values like fighting AIDS in Africa. Warren took heat from fellow religious conservatives for inviting Obama to speak at a conference on the subject at his church in 2006.

Joseph Farah of World Net Daily expressed "profound and abject revulsion" at Warren's acceptance of the invitation to ask God's blessing on Obama's policies, which he called "evil."

"Yes, we are commanded to pray for our leaders," Farah said. "But there is no suggestion in the Bible that we are ever to be used as political pawns by praying at their events—especially when they are promoting the wholesale slaughter of innocent human beings."

Warren's selection also disappointed the religious left, who say his non-partisan image belies a social agenda in lockstep with the religious right. Rob Boston of Americans United for Separation of Church and State called Warren "a kinder, gentler Jerry Falwell in a Hawaiian shirt."

Don Byrd, who blogs on church-state issues at the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, said regardless of their stances on controversial issues, he hopes both Warren and Lowery "manage broad, all-inclusive, non-sectarian approaches to this solemn occasion that should be for all Americans," and if Obama wants to offer a specifically Christian prayer with the religious leaders, that it be done before or after the public event.

## Prayer choice draws both criticism, praise

Washington—In the weeks since President-elect Barack Obama's decision to invite Pastor Rick Warren to pray the invocation at the Jan. 20 presidential inauguration, both men have received a flurry of praise and criticism.

According to some evangelicals, the choice demonstrates that Warren is the next Billy Graham, succeeding the evangelist who prayed at many previous Republican and Democratic inaugurations. Other observers say it shows Obama is serious about evangelical outreach.

"Aside from the chief justice, Billy Graham was the mainstay at the inauguration," noted D. Michael Lindsay, a sociologist at Rice University in Houston. "This is sort of seeing ... the baton being passed in a very significant way."

Christian Broadcasting Network Correspondent David Brody said including Warren in the inauguration "makes a whole lot of sense."

"Even though Warren and Obama disagree on the life issue, they do see eye to eye on many social justice issues," Brody said. "This move is also classic Obama because it is a signal to religious conservatives that he's willing to bring in both sides to the faith discussion in this country. Obama has never shied away from that."

Obama's "selection of Rick Warren indicates that people who disagree with the president-elect on sanctity of life issues are not automatically persona non grata at the White House in an Obama administration," noted Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

Last August, Warren invited both then-candidate Obama and his Republican opponent John McCain to his Saddleback Church for a high-profile presidential forum. Obama landed in hot water when he tried to brush off a question from Warren about abortion by saying determin-



**FACE TO FACE** President-elect Barack Obama answers a question from Pastor Rick Warren at the Saddleback Civil Forum last August. Both men have received praise and criticism for Obama's selection of Warren to pray the invocation at the Jan. 20 presidential inauguration. (RNS photo by Ann Johansson)

ing when a baby gets human rights is "above my pay grade."

Afterward Warren said he thought Obama should have been more specific in his answer.

### Gay marriage issue

But it is Warren's stance on same-sex marriage that has drawn fire on both men from gay rights groups.

Organizations have asked Obama to drop Warren and, in at least one case, declined an invitation to the inauguration because the pastor vocally supported Proposition 8, the ballot measure that banned gay marriage in California.

"I cannot be part of a celebration that highlights and gives voice to someone who advocated repealing rights from me and millions of other Californians," said Geoff Kors, executive director of Equality California.

Responding to the criticism, Obama said "a wide range of viewpoints" will be represented at inaugural events and Warren commended the president-elect's "courage to willingly take enormous heat from his base by inviting someone like me, with whom he doesn't agree on every issue."

Recently, in a video posted on the

Saddleback Church Web site, Warren termed criticism of his selection as "hate speech."

"It's what I would call Christophobia—people who are afraid of any Christian," the megachurch pastor said.

Warren insisted the media "is totally missing the story" by focusing just on homosexuality.

"You know the fact that an evangelical pastor believes in marriage, that's not news," he said. "And the fact that the gay community would disagree with me, that's not news either."

"The real story is that a couple of different American leaders have chosen to model civility for the rest of the nation, and that Barack Obama and Rick Warren have decided to try to create a new politic that says we can disagree without being disagreeable," Warren added. "We can walk hand-in-hand without seeing eye-to-eye. We can have unity in our nation without uniformity. And we can have collaboration for the best of America."

Compiled from reporting by Associated Baptist Press, Baptist Press and Religion News Service

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## Land: President Bush is not country's 'theologian-in-chief'

By Michael Foust  
Baptist Press

Washington (BP)—Evangelicals formed part of President Bush's base during his two campaigns and have been some of his staunchest supporters, but they likely could do without comments he made to ABC's "Nightline" last month in which he said, among other things, that there are multiple ways to God.

It is not the first time Bush has said something publicly that falls outside the bounds of Christian orthodoxy. In 2003, he told a news conference he believes Christians and Muslims worship the same God—a belief he has repeated at least twice, including during the Nightline interview.

During the Dec. 8 program aired on ABC, co-anchor Cynthia McFadden asked the president if he believes that his prayers are directed to the same God "that a Muslim prays to."

"I do," Bush answered.

"That's gotten you in some trou-

ble with your base," McFadden responded.

"Maybe it does," Bush said. "I do believe there is an Almighty that is broad and big enough, loving enough, that can encompass a lot of people. I don't think God is a narrow concept. I think it's a broad concept. I just happen to believe the way to God is through Christ, and others have different avenues toward God, and I believe we pray to the same Almighty—I do."

The rest of the interview was a mixed bag as far as evangelicals are concerned, but his comments on the exclusivity of the gospel have caused the most consternation among evangelicals, particularly since his views stand in conflict to biblical passages such as John 14:6 and Acts 4:12.

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said that upon hearing Bush's latest comments, he had the same reaction as to when Bush "has said similar things."

"I am very grateful that we have a president who is a person of personal and deeply committed faith in Jesus Christ, but statements like these remind us that he is indeed commander-in-chief, not theologian-in-chief," Land told Baptist Press.

"I know the president, and he is a person of strong faith and has sort of a C.S. Lewis Basic Christianity kind of faith that is very deep and profound in his personal life, but he is not a theologian. In this particular instance, he is wrong. The Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is not Allah, and there are not many paths to God."

### Bible "probably not" literally true

During the Nightline interview Bush also was asked how, in discerning God's will, he determines whether it is actually God's will or it is Bush's own ego.

"I think one way you make sure it's not your ego is you stay in the Bible," the president said. "At least that's what I have found. And I am

still learning. The Bible is an amazing book."

Asked if the Bible is "literally true," Bush responded, "Probably not. No, I'm not a literalist. But I think you can learn a lot from it."

McFadden then asked if it was possible to "love the Bible" and also believe in evolution.

"I think you can have both. Look, you're getting me way out of my lane here. I'm just a simple president. But I think that God created the earth, created the world. I think the creation of the world is so mysterious it created something as large as an Almighty. And I don't think it's incompatible with the scientific proof that there is evolution."

Bush also said that his faith, along with prayer, "has made a huge difference in my life."

"People say, 'Oh, it's just a crutch.' Well, for me, it's not a crutch. For me, it is the realization of a power, of a universal God, and recognition that God came manifested in human (form) and then died for sins."

*"I know (President Bush), and he is a person of strong faith and has sort of a C.S. Lewis Basic Christianity kind of faith that is very deep and profound in his personal life, but he is not a theologian."*

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

## Congress reflects overall U.S. religious landscape

Washington (RNS)—The religious makeup of the incoming 111th Congress roughly matches the overall American religious landscape, with overrepresentation among Jews and Mormons, according to new analysis by the nonpartisan Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life.

Just over half (55 percent) of House and Senate members who took office on Jan. 6 are Protestants, compared to 51 percent of the U.S. population. The second-largest group, Catholics, make up 30 percent of lawmakers, compared to 24 percent of all Americans.

Among Protestants, Baptists lead in the House and Senate, at 12 percent, followed by Methodists (11 percent), Presbyterians (8 percent), Episcopalians (7 percent) and Lutherans (4.5 percent).

Like the nation as a whole, the proportion of mainline Protestant members in Congress has fallen in recent decades. Methodists, for example, made up nearly one in five lawmakers in 1961. Episcopalians and Presbyterians have seen similar drops, while Lutherans have remained relatively steady.

### Catholic representation up

Catholics, meanwhile, have grown from 19 percent in 1961—the same year John F. Kennedy took office as the nation's first Catholic president—to 30 percent today. Catholics make up a larger share of the Senate (37 percent) than the House (21 percent).

Jews make up 8.3 percent of the new Congress, compared to just 1.7 percent of the general population.

Mormons, too, account for 2.6 percent of Congress but only 1.7 percent of the general population.

The 111th Congress will see the return of two Muslims (Democrats Keith Ellison of Minnesota and Andre Carson of Indiana) and two Buddhists (Democrats Hank Johnson of Georgia and Mazie Hirono of Hawaii) who all were elected to the House during the 110th Congress.

The Pew analysis said no Hindu has ever been elected to Congress, although a Sikh, Rep. Dalip Singh Saund, represented California for three terms beginning in 1957. Only one member of Congress, Rep. Pete Stark, D-Calif., is a professing nonbeliever; five members did not specify a religious affiliation in data collected by the publication, Congressional Quarterly.

## NATIONAL NOTES

**Poll: Recession not pulling people into pews.** The economic recession has not led to an increase in attendance at U.S. houses of worship, according to Gallup pollsters. Despite anecdotal evidence cited in high-profile media outlets, Americans' worship patterns held steady in 2008, the Gallup Poll reported. Since mid-February, Gallup said, it asked 1,000 adults a day how often they attend church. About 42 percent said they go weekly or almost weekly, with no increase in September through December, when the recession tightened its hold on the U.S. economy. Gallup also said there have been no significant change in the percentage of Americans who say they attend church about once a month, seldom, or never.

**Funding of AIG sued on religious grounds.** A Michigan man has filed a federal lawsuit claiming the government bailout of American International Group Inc. is illegal because the insurance company offers financial products that promote Islam and are anti-American. Kevin Murray, a former U.S. Marine who served two tours of duty in Iraq, is being represented by the Thomas More Law Center of Ann Arbor, Mich., which describes itself as dedicated to the defense and religious freedom of Christians. The lawsuit filed in federal court Dec. 15 claims the government's ownership stake and funding of AIG violates the establishment clause of the First Amendment, which prevents the government from endorsing a religion or favoring one religion over another. The lawsuit is seeking a court order to stop taxpayer funding of AIG and its Islamic-based businesses and activities.

**Obama to be sworn in with Lincoln's Bible.** President-elect Barack Obama has chosen the Bible used at President Abraham Lincoln's first inauguration for his own swearing-in on Jan. 20, inaugural planners announced. It will be the first time a president has used the historic Bible at an inauguration since it was first used by Lincoln himself in 1861. The Bible is part of a collection of the Library of Congress, along with the Lincolns' family Bible.

**Schuller son resigns from Crystal Cathedral.** Robert A. Schuller has resigned as senior pastor of the Crystal Cathedral in Southern California after his father, Robert H. Schuller, said his son would no longer be the sole preacher on the church's "Hour of Power" television program. In October, the elder Schuller said differences between the two men over the "direction and the vision" of the megachurch and its related television broadcast had led them to "part ways." At that time, the younger Schuller remained as the church's senior pastor while the elder Schuller hosted the broadcast and invited a range of guest speakers to the pulpit. A statement on Crystal Cathedral's Web site says the younger Schuller remains a member of the Reformed Church in America, the denomination with which the church is affiliated. Juan Carlos Ortiz, founder of Crystal Cathedral Hispanic Ministry, has been named interim senior pastor.

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## New health regulation to protect pro-lifers

*Doctors, other health care workers may object to abortions on religious grounds*

Washington (RNS)—A new federal regulation will allow health care workers to abstain from performing abortions or any service they object to on religious or moral grounds.

The regulation, introduced Dec. 18 by the Department of Health and Human Services, is directed primarily at shielding those with religious or moral objections to abortion or sterilization. But its scope could be much wider, including those opposed to assisted suicide, sex change operations or even vaccinations and family planning.

The rule says health care workers cannot be discriminated against for refusing to participate in objectionable procedures. The definition of workers is defined broadly, to include volunteers as well as janitors and others not directly engaged in the procedures.

The regulation goes into effect just before the end of the Bush White House. It can be overturned by the incoming Obama administration, and some lawmakers already are taking steps to change it through legislation.

The new rule impacts more than 580,000 hospitals, nursing homes, medical schools, doctors' offices and other recipients. Health care

service providers could lose federal funds for violating the rule, but HHS officials stress the department will assist entities that are deemed non-compliant before considering legal options.

HHS officials said the 127-page regulation—which will cost about \$44 million to implement—is designed to alleviate a trend of isolation and exclusion of people of faith from the health care industry.

"Doctors and other health care providers should not be forced to choose between good professional standing and violating their conscience," HHS Secretary Mike Leavitt noted. "This rule protects the right of medical providers to care for their patients in accord with their conscience."

### Compromised beliefs

Doctors inside and outside HHS confirmed pro-life medical workers already are pressured to compromise their moral and religious beliefs.

"Many health care providers routinely face pressure to change their medical practice—often in direct opposition to their personal convictions," HHS Assistant Secretary of Health Joxel Garcia said. "During my practice as an OB-GYN, I witnessed this firsthand. Fortunately, Congress enacted several laws to that end, but too many are unaware these protections exist."

The Christian Medical Association reported 41 percent of its members said in a survey they had been "pressured to compromise Biblical or ethical convictions."

"Medical students have been reporting to us that they are deciding not to pursue careers in obstetrics and gynecology for fear of coercion to do abortions," CMA Senior Vice President Gene Rudd explained. "Obstetricians are already being forced out of the profession because of soaring malpractice in-

surance costs. Forcing yet more obstetricians out of the profession simply for following the Hippocratic Oath and other medical ethical standards would only further harm patient access."

Liberal groups suggested the new regulation will undermine religious diversity, and place the doctors' views above the patients'.

"Using the guise of protecting the conscience of health care providers, this regulation ... denies women the right to follow their conscience and make decisions according to their religious and moral beliefs," said Carlton Veazey, president and CEO of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

It drew quick praise from religious conservatives, who had sought relief against being punished for not performing abortions.

"No one should be forced to have an abortion, and no one should be forced to be an abortionist," said Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council. "These regulations will ensure that conscience protection statutes will be strongly enforced by the government in the same manner as our other civil rights laws."

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops also praised the regulation, saying that, "Catholic health care providers will especially welcome this mark of respect for the excellent life-affirming care they provide to all in need."

The regulation cited concerns that health care workers might use religious or moral beliefs to mask objections to treating certain patients, including those with HIV and AIDS. The report disagreed with the hypothetical concerns, noting health care provider conscience protection provisions have been in place for decades, and Thursday's rule implements existing requirements.

*With additional reporting by Baptist Press*

## Study: Kids from religious, intact homes fare better

Washington (BP)—Children living with both biological parents or adoptive parents who attend religious services regularly are less likely to exhibit problems at school or at home, a new analysis of national data shows.

The study found that children in such a situation—when compared to children not living with both parents and not attending religious services regularly—are 5.5 times less likely to have repeated a grade and 2.5 times less likely to have had their parents contacted by the school because of a conduct or achievement problem.

Additionally, intact families who have regular religious participation (defined as at least weekly or monthly) are less likely to report parental stress and more likely to report a "better parent-child relationship," according to the analysis.

The study, co-released by the Family Research Council and more than 30 state family councils as part of FRC's Mapping America project, was based on interviews in 2003 with parents of more than 100,000 children and teens.

The data "hold up after controlling for family income and poverty, low parent education levels, and race and ethnicity."

The study showed that children in an intact religious family "are more likely to exhibit positive social behavior, including showing respect for teachers and neighbors, getting along with other children, understanding other people's feelings, and trying to resolve conflicts with classmates, family, or friends."

## Pres. Bush signs bill designed to fortify anti-trafficking laws

Washington (BP)—President Bush signed into law Dec. 23 a bill to strengthen efforts to fight human trafficking in the United States and other countries.

The president signed the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act during an Oval Office ceremony attended by supporters from Congress and the coalition that worked for the measure's enactment.

"This bill will significantly assist the United States government in impeding the trafficking of women and child for sexual purposes," noted Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. "It's a tremendously important new tool available to law enforcement officials in prosecuting those who traffic in human flesh."

Both the House of Representatives and Senate approved the bill without objection Dec. 10.

Enactment of the legislation followed a lengthy, contentious debate over competing pieces of legislation. Activists in the diverse, anti-trafficking movement strongly favored a measure approved overwhelmingly by the House in December 2007 over one proposed in the Senate. In the end, Congress passed a new bill more closely resembling the House version.

A majority of those trafficked across international borders are victims of sexual slavery or exploitation, though trafficking also includes forced commercial and domestic labor, as well as coercive recruitment of children by military forces.

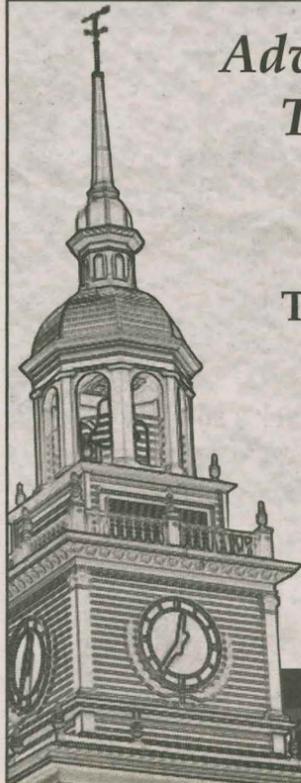
About 800,000 men, women and children are trafficked across international borders each year, according to the Trafficking in Persons Office. This does not include millions of victims who are trafficked inside their own national borders, the office said. About 80 percent of the transnational victims are females, and as much as 50 percent are minors.

The trafficking office has estimated as many as 17,500 people are trafficked into the United States each year.

Wilberforce, the English legislator after whom the new law is named, was an evangelical Christian who led the effort in Parliament year after year to outlaw the British slave trade, a campaign that finally succeeded early in the 19th century.

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Competition for your heart

**Do worldly influences keep you from focusing on Jesus?**

Something about these unsettling and unprecedented times in which we are living has prompted me to take an inventory of my life.

One of the results has been a reminder of the many and varied influences that are constantly competing for my heart. This is particularly true of the various forms of advertising with which I am bombarded daily via television, radio, the Internet, mail, newspapers, news journals, magazines and general conversation among those with whom I associate. In addition to the advertising aspect of the media bombardment, there is competition for my heart from the various programs, articles, e-mails and other sound bites to which I expose myself.

Another result of this inventory process has been the reminder of some of the key teachings of Jesus. Obviously, Jesus understood the grip materialism would have in our lives. Do you remember the key phrase in Matthew 6:16-21 about treasures in heaven? Jesus plainly stated wherever we find our treasure is exactly where we shall find our heart. He contin-

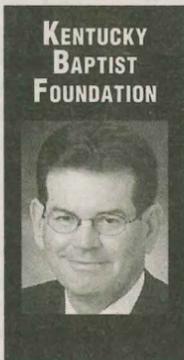
ued that thought in Matthew 6:24, "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

What about Jesus' encounter with the rich young ruler? Remember what Jesus prescribed in Mark 10:21 for this young man's problem with materialism? In order to follow Him, Jesus advised the young ruler that he must first go, sell and give. That sounds a lot like Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6:33, ("Seek first the kingly rule of God in your life ... and all of these things will be given to you as well") or like the un-

believable generosity of the Macedonians in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5. Paul reported, "They gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us."

As you begin a new year in 2009, I urge you to take an inventory of your life. Allow the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scriptures to assist you in identifying, sorting and selecting the most worthy competitors for your heart.

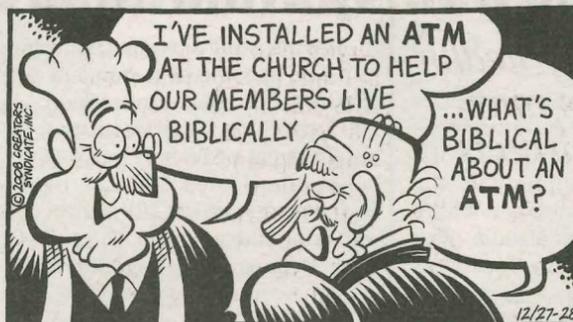
*Barry Allen is president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, PO Box 436389, Louisville, KY 40253; toll-free (866) 489-3533; www.kybaptistfoundation.org*



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Bible Crosswords

By Janet Adkins

Across

- 1 Feminine name
- 4 "All the trees of the field shall \_\_\_\_ their hands" (Isaiah 55:12)
- 8 State, Main, etc.
- 11 Johnny \_\_\_\_
- 12 Lucifer
- 13 Biblical exclamation
- 14 First name of Greek magnate
- 15 One (comb. form)
- 16 Confederate general Jubal
- 18 Easter time
- 20 Civil rights activist Guinier
- 21 O.T. book
- 22 Aloof
- 25 Geometrical shape
- 26 Main part of the church building (pl.)
- 27 Buckeye state (abbr.)
- 28 "Stand in \_\_\_\_, and sin not" (Psalm 4:4)
- 29 Linking verb
- 30 "Asahel was as light of foot as a wild \_\_\_\_" (2 Samuel 2:18)
- 31 Quadrant in D.C.
- 32 Brother of Rebekah
- 34 "Yet he abideth faithful: he cannot \_\_\_\_ himself" (2 Timothy 2:13)
- 35 "When I shall send \_\_\_\_ unto thee, or Tychicus" (Titus 3:12)
- 37 "Cursed be every \_\_\_\_ that curseth thee" (Genesis 27:29)
- 38 "I am weak: O Lord, \_\_\_\_ me; for my bones are vexed" (Psalm 6:2)
- 39 Reveal
- 41 "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask \_\_\_\_" (James 4:3)
- 43 Father of Saul
- 44 Pale

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- 47 "I count all things but loss ... that I may \_\_\_\_ Christ" (Philippians 3:8)
- 48 Son of Enan (Numbers 1:15)
- 50 Compass dir.
- 51 Record of progress
- 52 Replied
- 53 Moisture

- 22 Belonging to the fifth son of Zerah (1 Chronicles 2:6)
- 23 "\_\_\_\_ comes to the Father except through Me" (2 words, John 14:6, NKJV)
- 24 Not we
- 25 "And ... there was a marriage in \_\_\_\_ of Galilee" (John 2:1)
- 26 "David heard in the wilderness that \_\_\_\_ did shear his sheep" (1 Samuel 25:4)
- 30 "Thy youth is \_\_\_\_ like the eagle's" (Psalm 103:5)
- 32 Sheltered place (pl.)
- 33 Belonging to Absalom's captain of the host (2 Samuel 17:25)
- 34 Of gold (Fr.)
- 36 Object
- 39 Coach of the Indiana Pacers
- 40 Good king of Judah (1 Kings 15)
- 41 Hole-making tool
- 42 Mine (Ital.)
- 43 Ripe old age, in Rome
- 45 Chemical suffix
- 46 "And he hath put a \_\_\_\_ song in my mouth" (Psalm 40:3)
- 49 Laughing sound

Last week's solution

L	O	Y	A	S	S	C	I	S				
A	P	E	L	A	M	S	A	R	A			
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Thomas Nettles  
Gary Dorrien  
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Martin Luther King, Jr. with Henlee Barnette (left) and Nolen Howington (right).

50

**"The lack of effective government action to protect these communities from abuses has established Iraq among the most dangerous places on earth for religious minorities."**

U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom Chair Felice Gaer

## Religious liberty violations in Iraq 'severe'

By Tom Strode  
Baptist Press

Washington (BP)—A bipartisan U.S. panel has recommended Iraq be returned to a list of the world's worst violators of religious liberty for the first time since an American-led invasion liberated the Middle East country from Saddam Hussein's rule in 2003.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom announced its recommendation Dec. 16 that the State Department should designate Iraq as one of its "countries of particular concern," a category reserved for governments that have "engaged in or tolerated particularly severe violations of religious freedom."

Iraq should receive such a designation based on the "ongoing, severe abuses of religious freedom (in the country) and the Iraqi government's toleration of these abuses, particularly abuses against Iraq's smallest, most vulnerable religious minorities," USCIRF Chair Felice Gaer told reporters at a Capitol Hill news conference. "The lack of effective government action to protect these communities from abuses has established Iraq among the most dangerous places on earth for religious minorities."

The lack of protection for these minorities—which include Chaldean-Assyrian and other Christians, Sabeen Mandaean and Yazidis—has resulted in many of their members fleeing to other parts of Iraq or into neighboring countries. In addition, problems remain between the Shi'a and Sunni Muslim sects, according to the USCIRF.

The decision to recommend Iraq as a CPC was the next step in a progression for the commission. In 2003, the State Department redesignated Iraq as a CPC barely two weeks before the U.S.-led offensive began. By the next year, USCIRF declined to recommend Iraq as a CPC, and the State Department obliged by dropping the country from the list.

In 2006, the commission expressed concern about religious liberty conditions in Iraq but refused to recommend it as a CPC or for addition to the "watch list," which is reserved for regimes the panel does not believe should be designated as CPCs but require close monitoring. USCIRF, however, added the country to the "watch list" in 2007 and warned it might recommend it as a CPC the next year.

Only five members of the nine-member USCIRF voted to recommend Iraq as a CPC, the commission said in its latest report. The other four commissioners voted against CPC designation in the belief that Iraq's failures do not meet the standards required for such designation. Among other reasons it gave, the minority contended the Iraqi government has a "serious lack of capacity" to deal with terrorist and insurgent actions against religious minorities, according to the USCIRF report.

The minority agreed, however, the Iraq government has not done what is required to combat the problem. The four commissioners also approved of the policy recommendations made by the entire panel.

Urging Washington to keep re-

ligious freedom high on its agenda in Iraq, the commission included these recommendations, among numerous others, to the U.S. government:

- Call for the Iraqi government to build representative police units to protect religious minorities.

- Take the lead in providing security for just provincial elections in later this month.

- Encourage Baghdad to approve constitutional amendments that will promote human rights, including the removal of a section that says a law may not contradict "the established provisions of Islam."

- Designate a special envoy for human rights and quickly send it to Baghdad.

Rep. Frank Wolf, R-Va., spoke at the news conference and was particularly distressed at the Bush administration's failure to press Iraq for religious freedom for its citizens while American troops are risking their lives. He said he believes Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice "has failed."

Religious minorities are in danger of extinction in Iraq, according to the USCIRF. The Christian population of the country has fallen from as many as 1.4 million Christians in 2003 to a total of 500,000 to 700,000. Nearly 90 percent of Sabeen Mandaean have either left the country or been killed in that time period.

Under the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act, the USCIRF makes CPC recommendations to the State Department, which makes CPC designations. The State Department has not issued a CPC list in more than two years.

## Christian leaders want travel limits to Cuba eased

New York (ABP)—Christian leaders called on President-elect Barack Obama Dec. 18 to ease travel restrictions to Cuba that they say hinder religious work.

Denominational and ecumenical leaders from a variety of faith groups said restrictions imposed in 2005 have made it harder for religious bodies to send delegations or support church partners in Cuba. Religious institutions now are eligible for only limited travel licenses, and some have been unable to obtain even those.

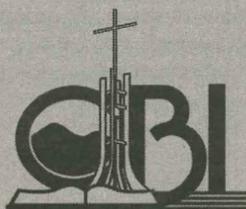
The group went a step further, urging the president-elect to lift the ban on travel to Cuba for all Americans, ending a 46-year-old trade embargo and restoring full diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba.

"For decades the U.S. policy toward Cuba has had unfortunate consequences for the Cuban people, while denying important freedoms to Americans," the letter said. "It has failed significantly in its stated objective to precipitate change in the Cuban government."

The faith leaders said hostility between governments also has disrupted historical bonds between churches in the U.S. and Cuba, at a time when Cuban churches are growing rapidly and need support from their U.S. Christian counterparts.



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Education for Time and Eternity

## Family tradition

### Another Ditty follows God's call to attend Clear Creek

When you mention the name Ditty around here, you have to be sure to include the first name. Just ask first-year student Andrew Ditty.

"I have a pretty unique connection here," Andrew noted. "Unlike a lot of students who don't have any family members or friends here, ... my dad and grandpa are professors here."

Andrew's father, John, teaches Old Testament; his grandfather, James Sr., teaches missions. They both graduated from Clear Creek. His cousin, Paul, is the son of James Jr., a director of missions in Guam and a Clear Creek grad.

"I get a lot of jokes since the Ditty name is so popular here," Andrew said. "People kid me about getting special treatment, but I don't. I get treated the same as everybody else. In fact, I don't get any slack at all. If I do something I shouldn't, someone is always there to tell me about it."

Andrew will be the first to tell you, though, that he is not just following in the family footsteps for the sake of keeping the name going; he is following a call that God has placed on literally his entire family.

"God called me to the ministry when I was in the seventh grade," Andrew recalled. "I did not choose to be a minister, God called me."

"I looked at three schools and applied to two—Clear Creek was one of them. I prayed and asked God to show me where He wanted me to attend," Andrew said.

"As I continued to pray, God showed me clearly that I was to come to Clear Creek simply because this was where He wanted me to prepare for ministry. I came here for the same reason that everyone comes to Clear Creek; because God called me here."

"I love the family atmosphere," he added. "It is easy to make friends with everyone. I am also thankful for the practical ministry opportunities that are available to students. I recently started a new ministry at a local skate park. I have been going there and talking to some of the young people. ... I am trying to develop some relationships and open up some opportunities to share my faith with them. I hope to have some Bible studies there in the future."

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

### CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Donnie Fox

## Black churches struggling to blend youth and tradition

By David Briggs  
Cleveland Plain Dealer

**Cleveland (RNS)**—A battle between good and evil, God and Satan, is taking place at Emmanuel Baptist Church on Halloween night.

In the front of the sanctuary, teenage dancers act out a story of young people overcoming the temptations of the streets. One by one, they resist drugs, sexual advances and violence.

It is the first night of a weekend Youth Explosion, and a band blasts contemporary gospel music in the church on Cleveland's East Side.

David Cobb Jr. knows that many older members consider this type of topic and style of worship too worldly for church. But he also knows that young people want a better balance in church life, from sermons that pay attention to the problems of youth to opportunities for dance, drama and contemporary worship.

Therein lies the challenge for many black churches, where aging congregations confront a generation whose music, technology and dress clash with century-old traditions.

Nowhere is the struggle more striking than in inner-city congregations. These churches have stayed in the neighborhoods where youth face poverty, violence, drugs and unemployment.

But many of these churches find that a majority of their members live in the suburbs. The number of people with ties to city churches and traditions is dwindling.

In a generation with fewer attachments to church than any in modern history, relaxed dress codes, expanded musical styles, increased participation in services by young people and the use of video screens and Web sites are no longer merely an option, many black church leaders insist.

Cobb said he is challenging "sacred cows" in music and dress as fast as he can. He uses rap singers, praise dance teams and the Youth Explosion to reach young people in the neighborhood around his church.

The pastor hears the murmurs from older members who object to jeans and sweat shirts or dancing in the church. But he is committed to

building a "blended" congregation of young and old.

"I would define myself as a true blended pastor," Cobb noted. "Most pastors are only blended in their minds. When it comes time to put up or shut up, they shut up."

There is a lot of David Cobb Jr. in 15-year-old Brandon Baldwin.

Cobb, whose parents divorced when he was 8, found a spiritual and personal refuge in Little Zion Baptist Church in Atlanta, where members rallied around him and his family. When three of the older deacons died, and with them the objections to drums in Sunday services, he became the drummer at Little Zion.

Baldwin, whose mother died three years ago after a heart attack, finds love and support at Emmanuel Baptist. Under Cobb, he became the church's drummer.

"I love this church," Baldwin said. "Despite everything I've been through in the past, this church is the first thing on my mind."

Cobb, 35, and Baldwin, who lives a few blocks from Emmanuel, both want to bring in more young people so they can find the same joy in church.

The congregation recently hired a music minister for youth, and Cobb is thinking about adding more contemporary music on Sundays.

Among other plans are creating junior deacons and junior trustees so young people can have a say in the spiritual and administrative life of the church.

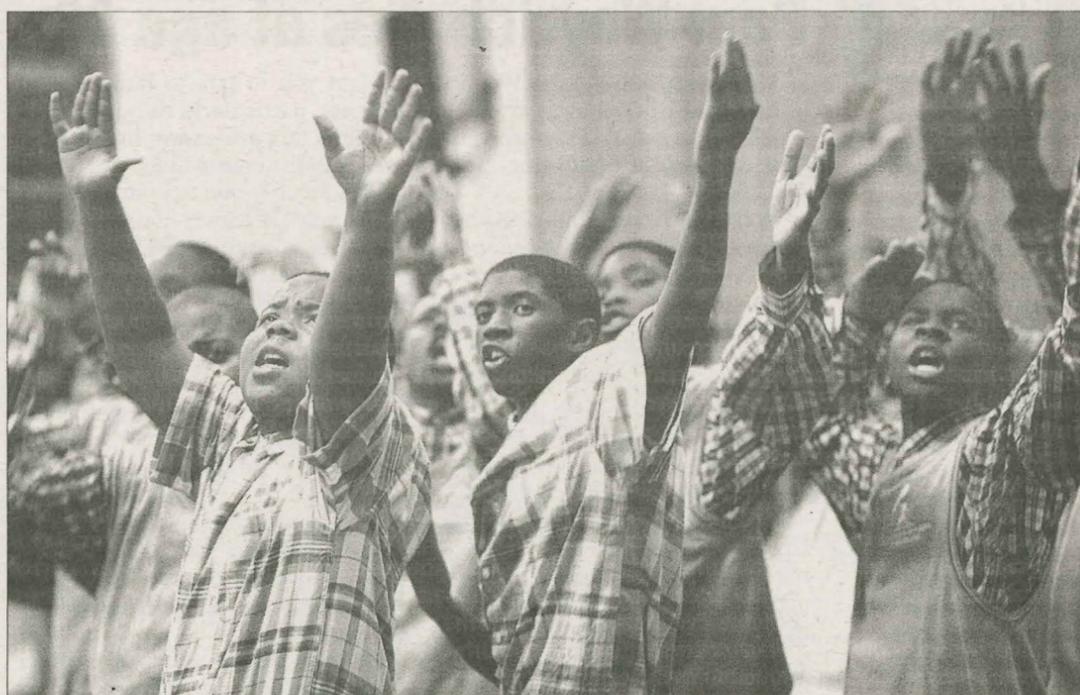
The changes cannot come too soon for Emmanuel's youth.

Jasmine Blue, 16, a member of the praise dance team, said when she tries to encourage her peers to come to church, they say, "No man, church is boring."

"I don't want to listen to a lot of older people with their old boring songs" all the time, she said.

But to older church members, hip-hop and rap—Christian or not—represent violence and drugs.

The tension is not new. Gospel great Thomas Dorsey, who used the popular music styles of the 1930s to write such church standards as "Take My Hand, Precious Lord," once was labeled "too bluesy."



What gives the issue of music a special urgency, church observers suggest, is that one can no longer count on succeeding generations to come through church doors.

Pew Research Center surveys have found only 14 percent of respondents ages 18 to 29 attended church more than once a week, half the percentage of those 50 and older.

In his grandparents' day, Cobb noted, "Everybody went to church. Church was mandatory until you die." In his mother's day, that changed to "you had to go to church until you were 18, then it was strongly recommended."

### 'Video chat' links small church with missionaries, need to give

**Leesburg, Va. (BP)**—Necessity is the mother of invention. Just ask Van Welton.

As senior minister at Crossroads Baptist Church in Leesburg, Va., Welton is challenged by limited resources when looking for creative ways to promote the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions.

Welton recalled the excitement he felt several years ago when the North Carolina church where he was serving as youth minister spoke with a missionary on the phone—and he wanted his small Virginia congregation to experience that same delight.

"I called the (Southern Baptist International Mission Board) and said I needed missionaries that could talk to us about Lottie Moon," Welton said.

That phone call set into motion the IMB's process of connecting the church with a missionary overseas. Crossroads has been phoning missionaries since December 2006, but in 2008 they tried something new.

On Dec. 7, the congregation spoke with Chris and Angie Lynch, first-term International Service Corps missionaries who work with students in London. But instead of talking on the telephone, the church set up a live "video chat" via Internet connection with the missionaries.

"We asked (the LYNCHES) three questions," Welton recalled. "Tell us about your ministry and family. How can we pray for you? And what does

"Today, it's basically you can go if you want to," Cobb said.

When they do go, they increasingly "church shop" rather than automatically attend where their parents and grandparents went.

For those churches who stay in the city, it is critical not to let traditions such as suits and ties for men and dresses for women get in the way, many church leaders recommend.

"You don't have to just have one way to praise Him," Cobb declared to his congregation at the fall youth day service. "We are just happy to see young people today, praise God."

#### RAISING VOICES

Members of Distinguished Gentlemen of the Spoken Word perform during the Youth Explosion event at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Cleveland. The church held the event on Halloween night, addressing youth issues, playing contemporary Christian music and keeping kids off the streets. (Photo by Tracy Boulian/Cleveland Plain Dealer)

the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering mean to you?"

The video chat technology is a considerable improvement over prior phone conversations with missionaries, Welton noted. Previously the church rigged a sound system by taping a microphone to the telephone. However, by talking live with the missionaries via Internet video, his congregation could picture the mission field through the missionaries' eyes.

"Connecting the people on the pews to the missionaries on the field (is) invaluable, not only for their knowledge as Southern Baptists but in their giving as Southern Baptists," Welton acknowledged.

Lottie Moon offerings at Crossroads increased more than 500 percent after the first phone call to missionaries in 2006.

The members "willingly gave when they learned and connected firsthand with missionaries on the field," Welton said.

The pastor's inventive ideas to challenge his congregation to give have not stopped with phone calls or video chats. During his December sermons, he dressed up as different Bible characters and related each person's story to the birth of Christ.

Welton said he hoped the sermon series helped his congregation see Bible characters in a new light, just as talking with missionaries shed new light on supporting overseas missions.

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## HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

By Dannah Prather

Each Jan. 1, many of us make promises to ourselves, our families and even to God, to live our lives differently. But those promises can be as fleeting as the day's snow flurries.

We may desire to alter our circumstances or attitudes, but God alone provides eternal and comprehensive change through Christ: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold new things have come" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Instead of developing a new way to look upon the world, we are given, through Christ, brand new eyes.

Perhaps the most desperate person is the one who fails to recognize his need to change, but there is overwhelming evidence that most of us are aware, even painfully so, of our many faults. When we reach that point of acceptance (Romans 3:23) the path to lasting change often shines crystal clear: "The wages of sin is death but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

Immediately God accepts us in our sin and bewilderment, seeking only an honest heart. "If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses resulting in salvation" (Romans 10:9-10).

God is the transformer. It's our job, every day, to get out of the way and let Him work. We do have responsibilities (Romans 12:1-2) but therein also lies the celebration—no confetti required.

Happy New Year.  
Happy New Life.

Dannah Prather is partnerships editor for the Western Recorder

## Conservative political leader Paul Weyrich dies at age 66

Washington (RNS)—Paul Weyrich, a man who worked away from the limelight to galvanize conservative Christian political advocacy, died Dec. 18.

Weyrich, 66, co-founded the now-defunct Moral Majority with the late Jerry Falwell and served as the first president of the Heritage Foundation, a Washington-based conservative think tank.

"He was key behind the scenes in establishing the religious right," noted Jerry Falwell Jr., who succeeded his father as president of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va. "I think he recognized that there were people in many different faiths who shared the same moral values and he saw the need for a coalition to pull those groups together."

Weyrich, who served as a deacon at Holy Transfiguration Melkite Greek-Catholic Church in McLean, Va., used that coalition and others to advance policies, such as the maintenance of the anti-abortion plank in the Republican platform.

"Paul Weyrich fought tirelessly for three decades to protect the pre-born, preserve traditional marriage and ensure that people of faith had a voice in shaping the public policy that affected their lives," said Focus on the Family Chairman James Dobson. "Had there been no Paul Weyrich, there would be no conservative movement as we know it."

At the Values Voter Summit sponsored by the Family Research Council in 2007, Weyrich urged grassroots activists to fight efforts to resurrect the Fairness Doctrine, which would require broadcasters to give a portion of their airtime to opponents' views.

"The reason I am here is because

## Survey shows U.S. churches are more racially diverse, Web savvy

Durham, N.C. (RNS)—U.S. congregations have changed significantly in the last eight years, according to a new study, with them becoming more ethnically diverse, more technologically savvy and more informal in worship.

Predominantly white congregations reported greater racial and ethnic diversity between the first and second surveys of U.S. houses of worship by the National Congregations Study.

When the study was first conducted in 1998, 20 percent of churchgoers reported attending a church that was all white and non-Hispanic. In the second round, conducted in 2006-07, that figure had dipped to 14 percent.

The study also found that the percentage of congregations with no Asian members decreased in the same period from 59 percent to 50 percent, and the percentage of congregations with no Latino members dropped from 43 percent to 36 percent.

"We're far from a color-blind society, in religion or anything else, but there is some movement in church-

I want you to talk to radio station owners, particularly those who carry news talk programming," he said at that Washington meeting. "It's going to be up to you to inform them."

Family Research Council President Tony Perkins called Weyrich a Washington fixture who did not lose his fighting spirit despite his battle with diabetes. Two years before the summit appearance, Weyrich underwent surgery for amputation of both of his legs.

"He didn't over-intellectualize about Christians 'jumping into the fray,'" Perkins said. "He recognized early that the fray had jumped onto us. ... Paul Weyrich was the first to show us how we could effectively petition our government for redress of our grievances."

Through his 35 years of work in Washington, including his role as president and chairman of the conservative Free Congress Foundation, Weyrich gained the respect of supporters and opponents.

"I don't think there's anyone who knew more about grassroots organizing or how to organize grassroots conservatives to make a difference in political campaigns and in public policy," noted Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. "It was always about the cause, not about personal profit or personal gain. He was someone who was dedicated to the cause of conservatism."

Interfaith Alliance President Welton Gaddy, who differed with Weyrich on many issues, nevertheless credited him with sharing a concern for the proper role of religion in U.S. politics. "The religious right has lost a leader and strategist," Gaddy said. "The nation has lost a patriot. And, I have lost a friend."

es as well as elsewhere," noted Mark Chaves, professor of sociology, religion and divinity at Duke University and lead researcher on the project.

While researchers found that some congregations that were previously all-white now have a couple of minority families as members, Chaves said mostly black churches did not report a comparable change.

"If you look at predominantly black churches, we don't find more whites or Latinos or Asians in them," he said.

Other findings include:

- The number of churches with Web sites increased from 17 percent in 1998 to 44 percent in 2006-07, and use of e-mail rose from 21 percent to 59 percent.

- Drum use rose from 20 percent to 34 percent, while people raising their hands in praise during worship services increased from 45 percent to 57 percent.

- The average age of the senior pastor in a church rose from 48 to 53. In 1998, 25 percent of the people in the average congregation were at least 60 years old; in 2006-07, 30 percent were.



Paul Weyrich



## 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.

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**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for Providence First Baptist Church. Send resumé and, if possible, a photo, DVD or cassette, and references, to Mr. Ray Gobin, 214 Benjamin Terrace, Providence, KY 42450. Phone: (270) 667-2302.

**SEEKING:** Executive associate pastor for First Baptist Church of Sevierville, Tenn. Send resumé to: Executive Associate Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 317 Parkway, Sevierville, TN 37862. A ministry description for this position can be requested by e-mailing [info@fbcsev.org](mailto:info@fbcsev.org).

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

**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](mailto:barrymc3853@hotmail.com). Deadline for submitting resúmes: Dec. 30.

**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.

# Meeting the Good Shepherd

*Family accepts challenging post to share Christ among nomads of Mongolia*

By Dea Davidson

SBC International Mission Board

**Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (BP)**—As the grip of communism was relaxing in Mongolia, messengers to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1990 heard a 700-year-old challenge for missionaries from the reign of Kublai Khan.

The Mongol empire—led by Genghis Khan's grandson, Kublai Khan—once stretched from the Black Sea to the Pacific Ocean. In 1266, Kublai Khan sent a request by Marco Polo to the Christian church in Rome for 100 men to teach Christianity in his court.

But it was 28 years before one, not 100, reached the court. By that time Khan's interest had waned. "It is too late," he said. "I have grown too old in my idolatry."

With the Iron Curtain falling in the communist country 700 years later, it was a call that couldn't be ignored again. In 1991, the first Southern Baptist workers to Mongolia moved to the capital city of Ulaanbaatar, a place once rooted in Buddhism and shamanism.

They persevered in the coldest capital city on earth, using ration cards for scarce food supplies and drawing curiosity as the only non-Russian foreigners some Mongolians had ever seen.

## Number of believers grows slowly

The "Land of Blue Skies" has modernized since those first workers arrived. Today, instead of sheep, Land Cruisers populate the main road called Peace Avenue. Ulaanbaatar's approximately 1 million people—among the more than 2.5 million in Mongolia—now dress in Western fashions rather than the traditional *dels* (long, coat-like garments) worn by those in the countryside.

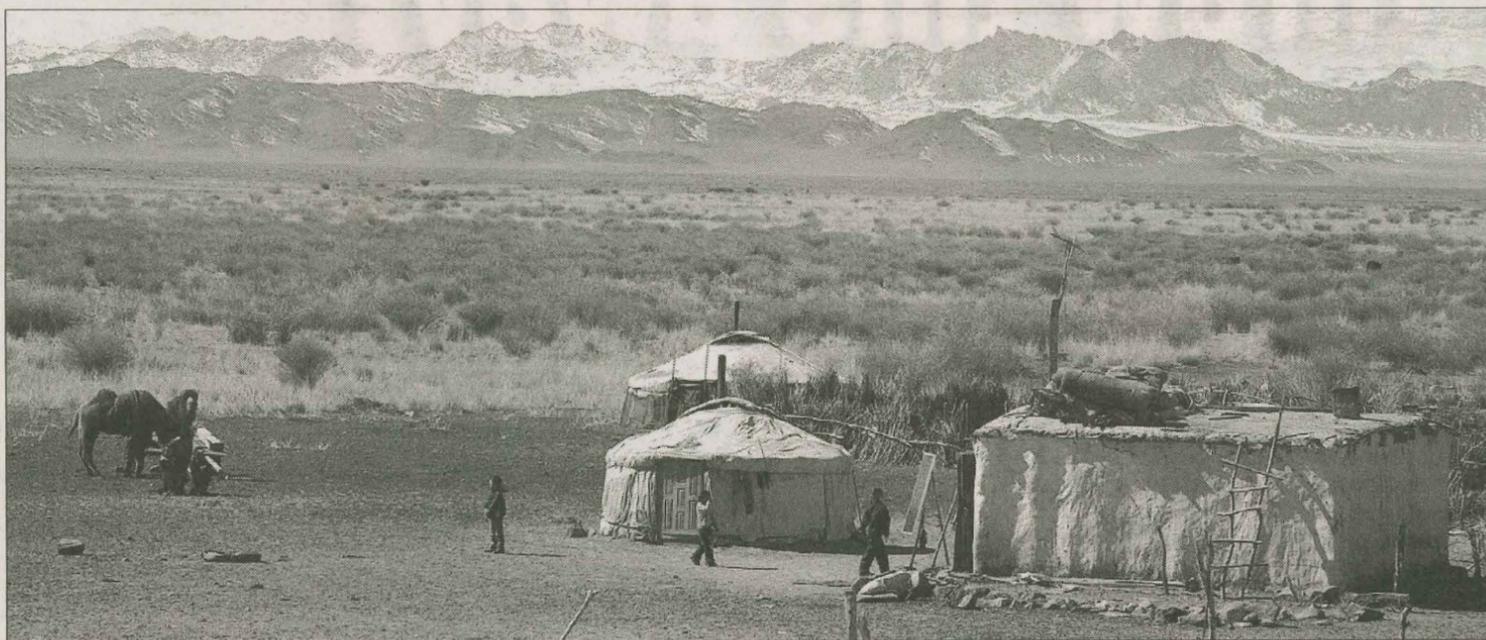
In the land where the Khan empire once ruled, the number of Christians is increasing. Operation World estimated that in 1989 there were only four known Christians in Mongolia. Now that number has risen to approximately 10,000.

Combating the view of Christianity as a foreign religion, Mongolia team leader Jeffrey Dawes\* has one main strategy—to see that every Mongolian has the opportunity to hear, understand and respond to the gospel. Southern Baptists are going to Mongolia as English teachers, physicians, community developers and school volunteers. They find opportunities to share their faith while riding in taxis, fishing in icy streams and drinking milk tea in homes.

Their goal is to plant indigenous churches in *gers* (traditional nomadic homes) and by affinity groups.

It took Daniel White\* and his family about a week to reach their new home in the Mongolian countryside. He selected an adobe-walled plot in a small town for their home—price tag: \$500.

Over the next few weeks, he and his wife, Allison,\* and their daughter, Mandy,\* built an outhouse, located a water source and commissioned the building of a family ger—a round, white house made of felt stretched over a wooden frame.



When their nomadic Mongolian neighbors returned that fall, they met them. In beginner's Mongolian, the Whites quelled suspicions they were Russian spies.

Moving to the Mongolian countryside was the answer to Daniel's question—"What's the hardest job nobody wants to do?" team leader Dawes answered: Nomads.

"As a believer, I've always been called to the edge," Daniel said. "This is a very joyful place to be. It's a hard place. If you make a mistake, you pay for it. But we're where we're called to be."

Aerial views of this area justify Mongolia's reputation as the least densely populated country on earth. Most people live in the bustling capital city of Ulaanbaatar. Few choose to forfeit hot showers and restaurants to build a life in the wind-swept country among 1.5 million nomads.

## Friendships built around hard work

On a plain surrounded by mountains, the Whites' ger almost looks like any other in the community. A stovepipe extends from the top of the tent. The family added carpet and a storm door. Neighbors consider the canvas outhouse a novelty.

The ger's ceiling opening begins to reveal daybreak at 6 a.m. Creeping from a futon bed, Allison stokes the wood-burning stove. In February, with minus 40-degree temperatures outside, the indoor air is below freezing.

Allison studies Scripture, fuels the fire, starts coffee and cuddles 7-year-old Mandy until she falls back to sleep. She serves the family biscuits and eggs before calling their 16-year-old son at school in Thailand using cellular Internet service.

The rest of Allison's day is a flurry of teaching Mandy, studying language, visiting neighborhood women, cutting wood, gathering water from the creek, cooking meals and washing dishes. The family takes showers once a week in a larger town—a 40-minute drive each way—where they buy groceries.

Since moving to Mongolia in 2006, Daniel has had more than his share of accidents. Most recently, while helping a neighbor move a



**HARD LIVING** On the dusty plains of western Mongolia, three generations survive together by living in *gers* (white felt tents) and raising sheep, goats, camels and horses for food.

cow across a frozen river, he tore the ACL in his knee when the animal fell on his leg. Daniel uses a cane, struggling to drive the Unimog—an extreme-duty vehicle that can plow through 40 inches of water and up a 30-degree incline.

## Nearest church 2,000 miles away

During a visit to a neighboring Muslim family, men round up camels and horses for riding. Women prepare sheep meat taken from their herd. It's a sacrifice after a hard winter when only 150 sheep and goats were born out of an expected 200.

Before eating from a community pot, Daniel asks to give a prayer. The grandfather follows Daniel's prayer with one of his own, using his hands to demonstrate the "washing" of God's blessings over his head.

Daniel sees prayer as an opening into lives. So is a conversation about the man's grandson named Isa (Jesus). "Muslims are open to prayer," Daniel said. "They may not always understand, but they appreciate when somebody takes time to pray for them."

Chuluun,\* a Mongolian, is Daniel's right-hand man. The Whites asked Chuluun's family—his wife, Odval,\* two daughters and son—to move from the regional capital

to help them with the Mongolian language and rural life. The family agreed, setting up a ger within the Whites' yard. The girls now speak in English and Mandy responds in Mongolian. Odval is teaching Allison to cook Mongolian delicacies.

Together, Allison and her believing friend have started a ger church with their children. "There's not another church for 2,000 miles to the north of us," Daniel pointed out.

Chuluun and Daniel want to expand their village's crop production beyond potatoes and carrots. In addition to combating 1,000-year-old agricultural techniques, White strives to plant spiritual lessons into his conversations.

"Our strategy for working with these people is a needs-based strategy," he said. "Helping them could only show them God is a God who cares."

As the ice-capped river melts, the Whites watch their nomadic neighbors load *gers* onto camels for the journey to their summer locations. Electricity is cut off for the season.

However, each September, power returns to the valley. As herds lead families back to this town, the waiting light from the Whites' ger leads them home.

\*Names changed

**PORTABLE HOUSES** With late spring snow lingering on distant mountains, family *gers* dot the landscape of Mongolia's western plains. Soon, families will pack their tents onto camels to trek to their summer riverside homes. (IMB photos)



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