

**January 20, 2009**  
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**Churches free to view Super Bowl how they choose**

**New York**—Churches planning to host Super Bowl outreach gatherings can do so without restriction this year, thanks to a reversed decision by the National Football League, which cracked down on such events the previous two years.

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell stated in a letter to Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch following last year's game that the NFL would allow religious organizations to host "live showings—regardless of screen size—of the Super Bowl."

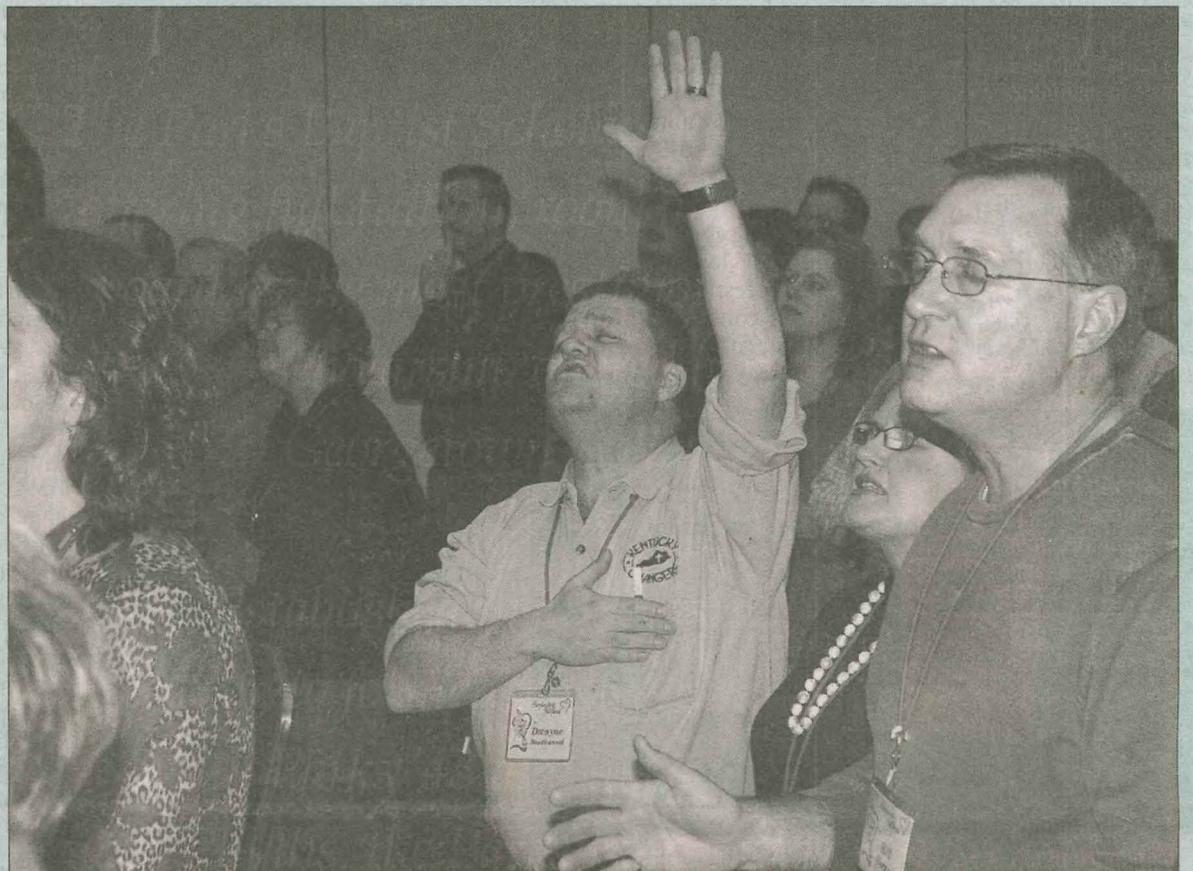
The announcement freed churches to plan outreach events beginning with this year's Super Bowl. The NFL's letter did stipulate that the big-screen viewings must be free and held on premises that the church routinely uses.

Prior to the reversed decision, churches across the country were forced to cancel events in 2007 and 2008 because of the NFL's restrictions on public showings of the Super Bowl.

After a lot of negative backlash, the NFL softened its restrictions, only requiring a 55-inch screen size limit. The move still did not help churches, many of which were forced to cancel their events.

Super Bowl XLIII will be played Feb. 1 in Tampa Bay.

**Rest, worship & reconnect**



*Dwayne Southwood (center), pastor of Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church in Greensburg, worships during last week's Shepherding the Shepherd conference in Lexington. The annual conference drew more than 300 pastors and their spouses with sessions that promoted healthy marriages, relationships and ministries. Richard Adams, director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention leadership development department, said the event remains popular because of its "focus on providing encouragement and inspiration for the pastor and spouse in a relaxed setting." Story and more photos on page 3. (Photo by David Winfrey)*

**Fort Knox-area churches deploy ministries ahead of soldier influx**

**By Ken Walker**  
*State Correspondent*

**Radcliff**—With thousands of soldiers transferring to Fort Knox this year, two Kentucky Baptist churches in the nearby town of Radcliff are stepping up ministry efforts to military members and their families.

The troop movements stem from the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, a military restructuring process that is closing some bases and increasing the size of others.

The largest single unit relocating to Fort Knox is the 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. It will consist of approximately 3,500 soldiers from Fort Hood, Texas, according to Fort Knox spokesman Ryan Brus.

The Army also is building a human resources center at the post that will employ some 4,000 people, mostly civilians, but will not be complete until 2011.

"It's a very fluid situation," noted Brus, explaining that the post's population of 16,500 does not include 8,000 short-term trainees who came through last year.

Although Brus said a net increase of 5,000 in permanent population will not be complete until 2012, several smaller units that transferred there the past three years have been noticed.

"We're already seeing new fac-



**HOLY OPERATION** *Dozens of soldiers worship during a recent Operation Bold Knight service at Mill Creek Baptist Church in Radcliff. Nearly 250 individuals have made professions of faith as a result of the ministry to soldiers and their families. (Photo courtesy of Mill Creek Baptist Church)*

es," said Gregg Curtis, pastor of Stithton Baptist Church in Radcliff, which hired a part-time associate pastor to direct children's ministries last May. "We've launched into a renovation of our facilities."

In the fall of 2007, Radcliff's Mill Creek Baptist Church named retired Army veteran Jim Griswold as its first military ministries director.

Lately it has focused on completing its new fellowship hall. Targeted for a late February opening, the new facility is part of a long-term growth plan.

"We're expanding our Sunday school classrooms," said Griswold, a member of Mill Creek since 1979. "We've more than doubled the size of the church through the building program. The changes at Fort Knox precipitated it."

Stithton Baptist began preparing for the influx by recarpeting the children's area, redoing the children's church stage and adding new lighting.

It hopes to eventually redesign its welcome center, add a kids playground and incorporate several oth-

er family-friendly features. Another change recently implemented was redesigning its Web site to make it more attractive and user-friendly for military families.

"For these parents the children's ministry is critical to their comfort with the church," Curtis noted. "That's more important than a good music program."

Last summer, Stithton started "Moms Out, Kids In," a monthly Saturday program that features games, Bible lessons and other children's activities. The three-hour sessions allow mothers time to shop or take care of other errands.

Directing this program and others planned for the future is Rob Hecox, a missionary with Military Children's Ministry, an offshoot of Child Evangelism Fellowship.

Since last spring, Hecox has overseen enhanced security precautions, developed more of an educational approach for preschoolers and renamed the children's church, now called Kingdom Club.

"I think it's a great opportunity for churches in the area to reach children," Hecox said of the new wave of soldiers and civilian workers. "You have a larger number of people to outreach to and there's changes every year—a third are leaving and a third are coming in. You ▶ See Fort Knox soldiers ... *Page 6.*"

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, Jan. 21.

## Annie Armstrong offering tops \$58 million

By Mickey Noah  
SBC North American Mission Board

Talladega, Ala. (BP)—Despite last year's economic downturn, Southern Baptists still contributed more than \$58 million to the annual Annie Armstrong Easter Offering in 2008—98 percent of the amount raised in the previous year's campaign.

Southern Baptist North American Mission Board President Geoff Hammond announced the updated results of the offering Jan. 12 at a meeting of some 100 national and state leaders of Woman's Missionary Union at Shocco Springs Baptist Conference Center in Talladega, Ala.

"It's been a tough year," Hammond told WMU leaders. "We knew we were in a recession and the economists didn't confirm it until September. But it was going on all year. We were raising Annie Armstrong

funds in the middle of \$4-a-gallon gasoline prices.

"To raise \$58 million in a recession was a miracle and we praise God for that," he added. "While Annie was down about 2.2 percent over last year, the fundraising of many charitable organizations was down 10 percent or more."

Presenting a large "thank you" board signed by NAMB staff, trustees and missionaries, Hammond expressed special gratitude to WMU leaders. "We don't do it on our own and we can't do it without you," he said. "Thank you for what you have done."

Hammond added that in times of recession, Southern Baptists have to focus on the most important things. "We're determined that although there is an economic recession, we cannot allow an evangelistic recession," he said.

### "Significant" partnership

WMU Executive Director Wanda Lee called the Annie Armstrong offering results "significant because they show what the partnership between WMU and NAMB can do in a difficult year.

"I pray in 2009 all of our cooperative efforts will continue to bring in the resources that our missionaries need to reach the United States and Canada for Christ," Lee noted. "We pledge to do our part, although we're having significant changes in our own budgets."

In December, WMU announced

it was enacting measures to reduce its 2009 budget by \$1.4 million. Some of those steps included reducing team expense budgets in areas such as travel, projects and activities; implementing four weeks unpaid furlough for each staff member between January and August; a hiring freeze on vacant positions; reducing employer contributions to retirement plans; freezing merit pay increases; and eliminating incentive bonuses in 2009. The organization's revised budget for 2009 is \$9.6 million.

Earlier this month, Hammond instructed NAMB's 250 staff members to operate at 90 percent of their approved budgets during 2009 and said hiring would be monitored closely this year.

The 2009 goal for the Annie Armstrong offering is \$65 million. This year's Week of Prayer is March 1-8, with the theme, "Live with Urgency: Sowing Together for Harvest."

The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering accounts for 46 percent of NAMB's budget. The other key channel of funding is the Cooperative Program by which churches' gifts support state, national and international missions and ministries.

The national missions offering was established in 1895 by Woman's Missionary Union to support Southern Baptist Convention missionaries in the United States. In 1934, the offering was named in honor of Annie Armstrong, WMU's founder and tireless champion of missions.

## Southern Seminary to cut 35 jobs by the end of January

Louisville (BP)—Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, in response to the national economic downturn, announced recently it will reduce its administrative staff by 35 positions—20 full-time and 15 part-time—effective Jan. 30.

Each employee will receive a placement package, including placement assistance, according to a Jan. 15 news release from the seminary. No faculty members were included in the staff cuts.

The workforce reductions, combined with budget cuts made in December, are designed to close a projected \$3.2 million shortfall in the seminary's \$30 million budget, the news release stated, and will "place the seminary in a stronger financial position for 2009."

The 2009-10 academic year will increase by less than 10 percent according to current projections, Southern Seminary President Albert Mohler wrote in a letter last week. The increase, he said, is akin to the tuition increase for the current academic year.

Work will continue on capital projects that already have been contracted and funded, but no new projects will begin until economic conditions improve, according to the news release. On Dec. 18, the seminary announced that it had reduced its budget by \$1.7 million, including the halt in various capital projects along with reductions in travel expenses.

"The national economic downturn has resulted in reductions in Southern Seminary's primary revenue sources, a situation common to the release stated.

Mohler did, however, note that Southern Baptists' financial gifts to the school remain strong.

"There is good news to report in that we have experienced good support from our churches channeled through the Cooperative Program," he said. "We are certainly watching the Cooperative Program income as directed through the state conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention into Southern Seminary's budget. We can never presume upon the performance of the Cooperative Program in troubled times, but I am confident that our churches will do everything possible to maintain their own stewardship and investment in this important work and mission."

Mohler, though not citing a dollar amount, added that he is "particularly pleased to report that we experienced strong donor support as the month of December came to a close. As a matter of fact, our donors gave both generously and sacrificially in this time of economic challenge."

"THANK YOU" Geoff Hammond (left), president of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, presents a poster from NAMB staff, trustees and missionaries to Woman's Missionary Union Executive Director Wanda Lee (center) and WMU President Kaye Miller thanking WMU for their work with the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. (NAMB photo by Mickey Noah)



## LifeWay conference center to adjust operations

Glorieta, N.M.—Vowing to remain a viable ministry in a tough economy, Glorieta Conference Center will implement a new operational model Oct. 1. The conference center, located near Santa Fe, N.M., has served Southern Baptists and other evangelical Christians for more than half a century and is operated by LifeWay Christian Resources.

Under the new model, Glorieta will continue to offer the same facilities and level of service from mid-May through September. From October through mid-May 2010, only the New Mexico Hall and Hall of States facilities will be in operation with a focus on more effectively serving smaller off-season groups. The only planned exception to the smaller groups will be Fuge Winter Camps for students, which will continue to be offered four times during the winter months.

### Jobs affected

The move will result in the reduction of full-time staffing by roughly one-half (from 44 to 21) by Oct. 1. Severance packages will be offered to employees whose positions are being eliminated. A number of impacted employees will be able to retire while other employees may have opportunities to continue as temporary employees.

"We are adjusting operations to better fit demand," said Byron Hill, LifeWay's executive director of conference centers. "With a focus on smaller off-season events such as ministry staff and board retreats, our new operations plan will provide a more efficient model throughout the year."

New Mexico Hall encompasses guest registration, the Chuck Waggon restaurant, Holy Grounds Coffee Shop, a book store, offices and meeting rooms. Hall of States, the newest upgrade at Glorieta, is a modern 60-room hotel built in 2006.

"Glorieta has touched countless lives for Christ throughout 56 years

of ministry, yet it often operates at a loss," Hill noted. "Our goal in launching a new operational model is to ensure the long-term ministry impact of Glorieta, even in economic downturns."

Hill said the new operational model will help ensure the continued year-round operation of the Glorieta ministry in a challenging economic environment.

Glorieta director Hal Hill said he sees the new plan enabling a stronger off-season focus on ministry.

"We believe Glorieta is a place in fall and winter where smaller groups—ministry teams, executive leaders, and so on—will find excellent lodging, dining and meeting space."

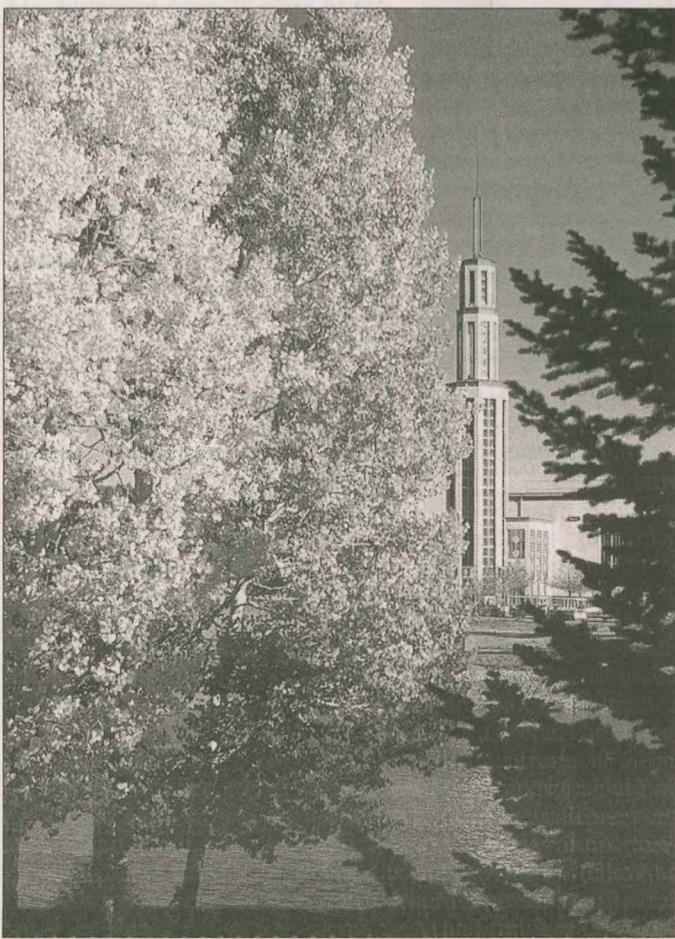
He added that the plan will not impact the center's newly launched summer camps, Camp Glorieta for Boys and Camp Glorieta for Girls. In fact, in 2010, Glorieta will expand its camp offerings with the introduction of family camps.

"In the short time that I have been at LifeWay, I have witnessed first-hand significant improvements in facilities, the growth of our camp ministry, and sold-out events for youth and adults. Our hope is that these ministries will only grow stronger in the days ahead," LifeWay President Thom Rainer said.

Glorieta has undergone major capital improvements in recent years. In addition to the newly built Hall of States, there has been renovation to Holcomb Auditorium and its adjacent meeting rooms, to all youth dormitories, and to the Chaparral, Texas and Oklahoma hotels.

### MAKING ADJUSTMENTS

To account for the economic downturn, LifeWay's Glorieta Conference Center will adjust its operations beginning Oct. 1.



# Shepherding the Shepherd

*Pastors & spouses retreat to Lexington for weekend getaway, opportunity to unwind*

By David Winfrey  
State Correspondent

**Lexington**—Too many pastors burn out because they have forgotten the joy that comes from serving while being closely connected to God, Richard Blackaby told pastors and their spouses at last week's Shepherding the Shepherd conference.

"No one can take the joy of the Lord from you. So why are there so many joyless ministers out there today?" Blackaby asked those attending the Lexington meeting.

Restoring the joy of ministry is among the goals of the annual Shepherding event, co-sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention and the Baptist Healthcare System.

Participants said they attend Shepherding to rest, worship and reconnect with their spouses.

"It's a renewing time and a refreshing time. It's just wonderful," said Anita Payne, whose husband, Ellis, is pastor of Concord Missionary Baptist Church in White Plains. This was their third time at Shepherding, which falls near their anniversary.

Like the Paynes, many couples return to this event annually, according to Richard Adams, director of the KBC leadership development department, and a key planner for the conference. "More than one wife has been heard to say, 'This is something I need. It can be my Christmas present or anniversary present, but we will be at Shepherding.'"

Mrs. Payne said she wishes more younger couples in ministry would attend to learn that they are not alone in facing the many challenges of today's churches. "They need to start off knowing there are other people who are going through the same things they are going through."

Workshops at this year's event ranged from avoiding monotony in the ministry to maintaining intimacy despite the daily spotlight.

Blackaby encouraged participants

to stay connected to God in order to maintain joy in their ministries and joy in their families. "You may have, like Martha, been so busy to serve Jesus that you've forgotten you're not supposed to leave His presence."

He told the audience that they alone decide whether to stay connected to God and the joy that comes from Him. "No critic can take your joy from you," he said. "You have to surrender that yourself."

Just as church leaders should minister from the joy they find in God, those who attend church are hungry for that same joy, noted Blackaby, an author and former pastor who now is president of Blackaby Ministries.

"In this society in which we minister today, there's a lot of people who need joy, and all we have for them is a sermon," Blackaby said. "Don't talk about enjoying your family. Let them see you enjoying your family. ... Let them see you enjoying God."

More than 300 people attended this year's conference, which Adams said continues to grow.

Many speakers and workshops focused on maintaining healthy ministries and families amid the pressures of the pastorate.

## "Insane" setting

Dan Summerlin, pastor of Lone Oak First Baptist Church of Paducah, talked about the challenges of parenting while serving in a local church. He told participants that the pastorate is one of the few professions where nearly everyone in the organization believes they know how to do your job. He noted that members sometime ask what it's like to work only one day a week. "It's wonderful, Buck, and you better hope your funeral's on Sunday."

Pastors also have no privacy, he added. "I feel sorry for my wife. I don't think I've ever been out to eat without somebody coming to talk to us."

## Strong December totals trim Cooperative Program deficit

**Louisville**—Kentucky Baptists gave \$1,984,929 through the Cooperative Program in December, the highest monthly total so far in the current fiscal year.

The strong month also boosted receipts ahead of last year's pace by \$96,448 (1.4 percent). With the exception of November in the current fiscal year, year-to-date receipts have remained ahead of the 2007-08 pace.

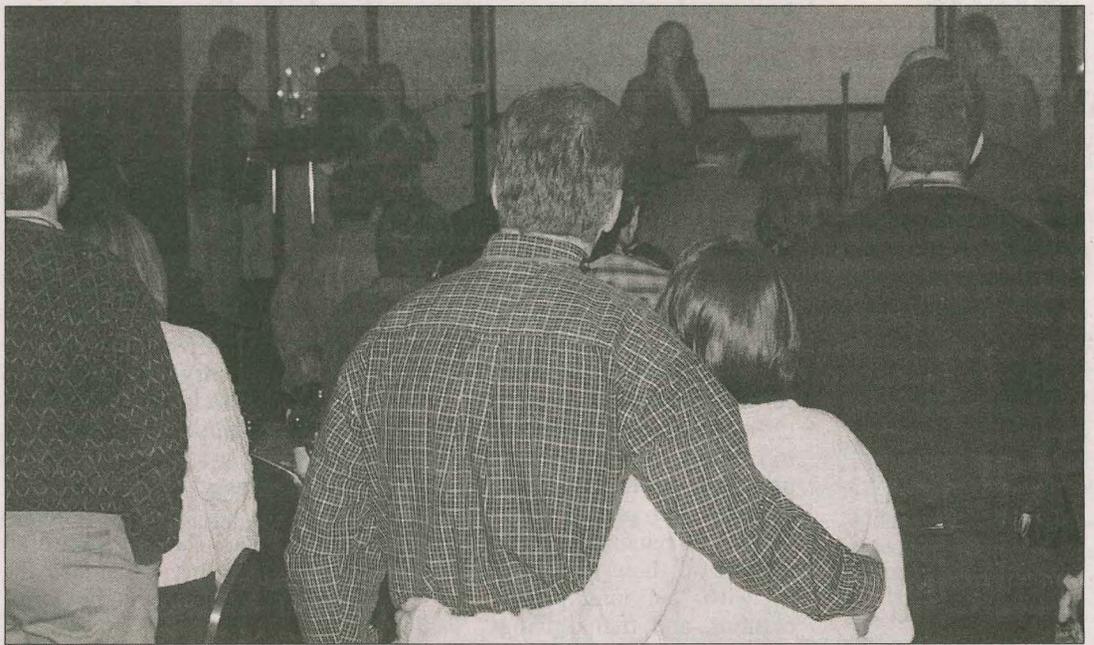
According to Lowell Ashby, KBC's business services team leader, Kentucky Baptist churches have given a total of more than \$7.1 million through last month. At the close of December during the previous fiscal year, churches had given slightly less than that total.

Ashby said the December fig-

ures also helped narrow the budget deficit to 10.09 percent, down from the 13.2 percent deficit posted at the close of November. CP giving currently is behind budget by \$807,155.

The 2008-09 CP budget is \$24 million. In order to meet budget for the fiscal year, more than \$2.1 million is needed in each of the eight remaining months.

"Kentucky Baptists continue to make significant investments in our cooperative ministries and missions, regardless of the difficult economy," noted Billy Compton, KBC's executive associate for Cooperative Program and resources. "The needs of the mission field are as great as ever and we are grateful for the generosity of our churches."



**COUPLES' TIME** ■ Above: Greg and Pamela Smith worship during last week's Shepherding the Shepherd conference in Lexington, featuring workshop topics ranging from practicing grace to parenting in the ministry. ■ Left: Brandt and Lisa Lyon (left) talk with Ronne and Brady Cornelius during a meal at the Shepherding conference. More than 300 people attended the 11th annual event, which is co-sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention and Baptist Healthcare System. (Photos by David Winfrey)

Amid what can be an "insane" setting, Summerlin acknowledged, pastors and their spouses often face what one doctor called the delusion of parenting omnipotence. This delusion, he said, can cause both pride ("If my child is problem-free I must be doing something right") and guilt ("If my child is doing something wrong, I must be doing something wrong.")

"You look in the Bible. See how many good fathers have 'bad sons,' Summerlin suggested. "Children have choices. ... There is no pattern."

Pastors often think their children will validate their ministries by becoming a great pastor or missionary. "I see my children and I see the people who will pick my nursing homes," he said. "Get rid of the pride of parenting, but also get rid of the guilt."

Summerlin noted he and his wife have had one simple parenting goal: "to prepare our children to get out of the house and survive."

He also outlined four traits he and his wife, Eileen, have sought to instill in their children:

- Provide authenticity to instill stability. Too many pastors act one way at church but another in the home, he pointed out. "That's confusing our children. The bottom line is you've got to be secure in yourself. If you're not secure in yourself, you will never be authentic."

- Give security by supplying discipline. Summerlin distinguished between punishment, which often is a penalty dispensed in anger over the past, as opposed to discipline, which is provided to develop future growth. "We've got to learn to discipline and to do it correctly."

A key to discipline is the consistent enforcement of boundaries, he added. "If you're not consistent, it

doesn't work."

- Give wisdom by providing spiritual counseling. Summerlin encouraged parents to look for teachable moments for providing spiritual lessons.

- Give confidence by providing love. Children need affection, affirmation and attention, which takes time, Summerlin noted. "I don't do things on Saturday. I figure one day my kids will leave and I'll have time to do things."

## Letting go

Roger and Julie Barrier encouraged participants to face their feelings of betrayal, hurt and disappointment through the power of forgiveness.

"Sometimes we feel betrayed. Sometimes we feel disappointed," said Mrs. Barrier, a music producer and conference leader.

"Unchecked, unprocessed anger can lead to all kinds of debilitating things in our lives," added Roger Barrier, an author, speaker and pastor of Casas Church in Tucson, Ariz.

The duo stressed that forgiveness does not mean forgetting the hurt, resuming a fractured relationship without boundaries or letting the offending person off the hook. "They're still on God's hook," Barrier emphasized. "You don't have to be bitter."

They said Jesus modeled a three-step process of forgiveness in which the order does not matter: Mourn the hurt and receive comfort; understand the truth of what has happened; forgive the offender.

"Forgiveness is an act of the will," Barrier added. "Forgiveness is not a sign of weakness. Anybody can let anger and bitterness sap the life out of them, but it takes courage and strength and grace to forgive."

## WESTERN RECORDER

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

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## Your prayers can change our country

By **Richard Land**

**Nashville (BP)**—Shortly after Election Day, I released an open letter to President-elect Barack Obama in which I told the new president that I would pray for him, his family and his administration.

What prompted my promise to pray for the president-elect? The Scriptures are clear: While as a Christian I am a citizen of both the earthly and spiritual realms, I am under the authority of the civil magistrate (Luke 20:25). I am compelled to be a good citizen of the state "for conscience's sake" (Romans 13:1-7).

In the Apostle Paul's first letter to Timothy, Paul wrote that the first priority in our fulfillment of our civic duties is to pray (1 Timothy 2:1). We are to remember everyone, including all those in authority over us, with "petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings." Paul sought to underscore the fact that proper conduct within the body of Christ includes praying for and respecting those in power as a primary spiritual civic duty.

Those in the first-century church were no doubt chafing under the yoke of a thoroughly pagan (and antagonistic) state that harbored no thought of affording the masses religious freedom.

Remember, the New Testament churches existed in occupied lands, under the watchful eyes of Jewish religious leaders in some areas, and everywhere under the steady and hostile glare of the Roman government leaders, who were decidedly negative about any worship that didn't involve their gods.

Joining the Apostle Paul on missionary journeys, Timothy experienced the fact that those in authority were hostile to followers of Christ. Paul experienced firsthand the wrath of those who opposed his proclamation of the gospel. And he understood that Christians victimized by government authorities would not be predisposed to remem-

ber such officials in prayer.

The Apostle Paul was well aware that during His earthly ministry Jesus had promoted respect for the state, for His Kingdom was not primarily of this world. Jesus did not confront the Roman state directly, but taught respect for the civil magistrate (Matthew 22:21). Paul also would have known that in the Old Testament, God likewise told the Jews who were in captivity to respect those who took them from their homes (Ezra 6:10; Jeremiah 29:7).

Matthew Henry, the great 18th-century British expositor, commented on 1 Timothy 2: "Our duty as Christians, is summed up in two words; godliness, that is, the right worshipping of God; and honesty, that is, good conduct toward all men." Thus, Henry concluded, by such means those who do not know God will be more likely attracted to the gospel.

This teaching of the Apostle Paul, as summarized so aptly by Henry, reminds us that while we are commanded to be "salt" and "light" in the world (Matthew 5:13-16), we also are to seek to live peaceably with all men. That includes respect for whatever civil authorities God has allowed to be in power.

It is likely that, as with every person who has occupied the White House in our lifetimes, we will disagree with at least some of President Obama's positions on social and moral matters. If we contend with his decisions with bitterness and an unflattering spirit, we run the high risk of bringing dishonor on the name of Christ.

We should urge those within the Obama administration to apply biblical principles and values in their decision making. However, it could well be that how we convey our concerns will have as much—if not more—impact on our ultimate success than the nature of the concerns themselves. We must be mindful of our gospel witness. We can—

## COMMENTARY

## Oppose expanded gambling

This is an urgent time for the citizens of the commonwealth to contact their state legislators and express opposition to a bill proposal that would place video lottery terminals at Kentucky's race tracks.

House of Representatives Speaker Greg Stumbo of Prestonsburg filed the bill Jan. 9. However, Stumbo has said he will not move forward with bringing the bill to a vote without a "super majority" of 60 House votes—so it is urgent that you call now.

There are many reasons why you should oppose expanded gambling and especially video lottery terminals. These machines (which essentially are slot machines tied into a central computer) are the most addictive form of gambling.

They are popular with the gambling corporations because they produce the most money in casinos. The fast action, ease of play and emphasis on quick money make falling into addiction with video gambling very easy.

In fact, pathological addiction is essential to the VLT business. As much as 42 percent of revenue typically comes from gamblers who are pathologically addicted. Here in Kentucky, we could expect 105,000 additional Kentuckians to become pathological or problem gamblers.

A Louisiana study calculated that the annual individual social cost for problem gamblers in that state was \$10,958 each. In Wisconsin, the social cost of serious and problem casino gamblers was calculated to be \$9,791 each. The costs include low productivity; unemployment; theft and bad debts; bankruptcy; prosecution, prison and probation costs; aid to families; and treatment/therapy.

In addition to taking on the additional social costs, Kentucky citizens would need to put \$1.5 billion into these machines in order for the state to receive the \$500 million in revenue that is projected. In a time of economic crisis, it is especially poor judgment to attempt to

and must—disagree without being disrespectful.

You may not have voted for our new president, yet I imagine that as a follower of Christ you are thoroughly convinced of God's Divine Providence. God is not surprised at who is serving in the White House, in Congress or in any other office in Washington. We can be confident that God does not ignore an institution He Himself ordained.

We can pray:

■ For the safety of President Obama and his family, that God would foil the attempts of those who wish to harm him, that his family would always trust God and know His Scriptures.

■ That our president and other national leaders would look to God for His wisdom in dealing with the difficult issues of the day.

■ That Christ would be glorified by the decisions made in the White House, Congress and the courts, and that good would triumph over evil in every policy decision.

■ For policies that encourage moral behavior and attitudes, that prescribe justice for those who do wrong, that do not fetter our right to speak freely, and that recognize the foundational strength and importance of biblical marriage.

■ That we would be willing to make the necessary hard choices and become a part of the solution to the troublesome problems we face as a nation and, that as churches and Christians, we would be particularly sensitive to those who are struggling and defenseless.

■ That we would put our faith in God, not in man's plans or government programs.

If we are not faithful in going to our knees in intercession for our new president and other national leaders, we can be assured that evil will be more likely to prevail. We hope that you will join us in praying for our new president, his family, and for those who advise him.

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

take more money from individuals and families. And, it is unrealistic to expect that Kentucky's economy would be able to support citizens putting more than a billion dollars at risk every year.

Last year, expanded gambling proponents argued that the legislature needed to pass a constitutional amendment in order to expand gambling. Now, the strategy has changed, with proponents claiming that the vote which authorized the lottery 20 years ago also allows these kinds of machines.

Please call your state representative and senator at (800) 372-7181 to express your opposition to the proposed gambling bill that would allow video lottery slot machines at race tracks. If you don't know the names of your legislators, the operator will be happy to help you. Also, ask the operator to copy your message to the Senate and House leaders and to the governor's office.

Keep up with this and other public policy issues on the KBC's Committee on Public Affairs blog at [www.KyBaptist.org/PublicAffairs](http://www.KyBaptist.org/PublicAffairs).

*Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention*

## STEWARDSHIP

Questions to ask  
when determining  
financial success

By **Don Spencer**

A common focus at the start of a new year is to assess and

evaluate our goals and priorities in life. One of the many areas to be considered is how well we're doing financially.

In today's challenging economic times, this evaluation is even more critical.

Are we on target to achieve our goals? Do we need to set new goals or adjust our goals? Are we succeeding financially?

This leads to another critical question: How do you define success? Do you know what success will look like when you get there? Does success for you involve a particular position in life? Does it involve accumulating a certain level of material possessions? If so, how much is enough?

Success for each person is based on their personal values and goals. Those things which are important to you will determine your success. Often, the tensions we feel in life come from an inner conflict between our values and how we spend our money.

Money itself has no intrinsic value. It is only a medium of exchange. It can be used to help you reach your goals in life. Many people never get in touch with this reality. Without a proper focus on money, you can experience many negative emotions such as anxiety, worry, guilt and fear.

To gain a proper perspective on money, you must view it as a tool. If you're given a tool, you have to know what to do with it—what task or what goal you're trying to accomplish—or the tool is useless.

As you set financial goals, realize that every person earns a certain amount of money over a lifetime. The process of meeting short-term and long-term goals is a matter of allocation. Every dollar spent involves a choice between alternatives. You can never spend that dollar again.

Many things in life will affect if we reach our financial goals. As we strive to do so, remember that financial success will be different for everyone. What makes it different is our values and priorities. Once we identify those aspects, we can achieve financial success by focusing our financial planning and spending on them. Hindsight will later confirm whether you have reached your own personal definition of financial success.

*Don Spencer is a certified financial planner and directs the Kentucky Baptist Convention's church financial benefits department*



## Listening can make or break potential new relationships

**Q: I want to keep my New Year's resolution about making new friends, meeting people and being more confident. I wonder if I am off-putting in my mannerisms and the way I approach people. Any suggestions?**

The classic Scripture text about friends is Proverbs 18:24, that he who would have friends "must show himself friendly." What is involved in friendliness? Part of it is an orientation to move outside the self. Think back to the most boring conversations you've ever experienced and you likely will find it was with individuals who talked only about themselves.

### SINGLES

Active listening is key to a conversation—and the part we easily forget. Ask for feedback. Focus on the message and key points. "Tell me more" can be helpful words in a caring conversation, but only if we are sincerely ready to listen.

We often think that listening is done only with the ears, but eye contact also is important. Communication coach Dorothy Sarnoff said that 90 percent of the impression people make is eye to eye. Sarnoff also said that a "first listen" is as important as a "first glance." We often put a great deal of effort into how we look, then open our mouths and negate the work we've done in front of the mirror.

Before entering a social situation, take a quick mental note of your self-talk and posture. Assume that your presence and the presence of the people you meet will be positive.

Another relevant text is Proverbs 11:14, that in the multitude of counselors there is safety. Have an informal team of trusted advisors who will give you honest, confidential feedback on how you present yourself. Seek out those who are good with social interactions and get their advice. Get feedback on such things as your posture, clothing choices and mannerisms.

You can exude confidence that comes from preparation, the joy of the Holy Spirit and concern that lets others know you care. Jesus is the ultimate example of a young man who grew in "wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). Social growth is vital along with the intellectual, physical and spiritual. You cannot grow in one area of your life without having an effect on others.—James Stillwell

### Q: Does your child know what to do in an emergency?

In December, a 5-year-old girl took action when she saw her babysitter fall to the floor. First, she tried to wake the babysitter with a loud noise, banging a toy against the door. When the young lady did not respond, the little girl called 911. She knew her parents' names and her address and that information was all paramedics needed to find the house.

The dispatcher described the 5 year old as "a smart little girl to know to call 911." As you might imagine, the service gets many calls from children playing with phones. This little girl said she learned to call 911 from her parents and Safety Town, which operates in Kentucky under the auspices of the Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet, and always is a featured exhibit at the Kentucky State Fair.

Wise parents will talk to their children about emergency situations, perhaps even using stories like this one to emphasize how important the correct response can be. Make sure your children know your names, as well as their address and phone number. Tell them about 911—what it is and how it works. Make sure they understand the number should only be used in true emergencies. You might want to act out an emergency situation with a parent or sibling pretending to be hurt and a parent pretending to be the 911 operator. Let them know when they should call. The simple lesson the 5 year old learned was to call when you see someone lying on the ground.—David Garrard

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## Obama's election evokes mixed emotions

This week, a non-white man, Barack Hussein Obama, was inaugurated as the 44th president of the United States. To avoid all the ethnic terminology wrangling, "non-white man" makes the point.

This is high drama in American history. Why he won is, and will be, debated among the politicians—the economy, the war, "change," etc. However, the fact is that the world was watching when the son of an African and a white woman swore to uphold the United States Constitution—the same constitution that originally considered Africans to be less than fully human. He even took the oath of office using the same Bible as Abraham Lincoln, signer of the Emancipation Proclamation. Anyone who cannot see the high drama is blind.

While racism still is a reality in too many sectors of American life, Obama's election certainly represents a symbolic rejection of an evil and dark part of America's history.

Drama notwithstanding, this has been an interesting presidential election cycle for me. My thoughts and feelings have been pulled in different directions, to say the least. I am willing to be corrected, but I do not believe the last year in American politics has been as distressing, conflicting and exciting for anyone like it has been for a follower of Jesus Christ who is black and believes in the authority of the Bible.

I have been both happy and disappointed with some citizens of my state, with some of my fellow Kentucky Baptists (both black and white), and with some supposedly prominent Christian spokesmen.

I have heard some white Kentuckians unashamedly say on radio or television that they would never have voted for Obama solely because he was black. Fortunately, I also heard other white Kentuckians rebuke such prejudice.

I am disappointed that some Baptists act and talk as if the Republican Party is God's party, and likewise, some Baptists act and talk as if the Democratic Party is God's party. He belongs to neither.

I have seen so-called leading Christian voices flip-flop when it was politically expedient. I have seen double standards applied when "evangelicals" critique the theological and exegetical errors of politicians. I have even seen Christians try to determine which candidate was a "better Christian." This election cycle taught me much more about white and black Christians than it did about Barack Obama or John McCain.

Probably most troubling, I have seen Christians question the eternal standing of other Christians in the Kingdom of God based on whether they adopt certain political philosophies and methodologies in the kingdom of man. I have bitten my tongue many times when I have heard the proverbial, "I don't see how a Christian could ..." (do, act or think other than the way I do).

Often, the political disagreement among Christians does not reflect exegetical disagreement, but rather differences of political emphasis, methodology, priority and experience—especially experience. If a person disobeys a command of God, they have sinned. If

they disagree with your political methods or choices, so what? Are you infallible?

I have observed some of the most arrogant Christians on both sides of the aisles during this election cycle. I gladly chose years ago to be an "independent" after working, professionally, on both sides of the aisle. It really is entertaining to see some Christians try to fit their beliefs into their political-party loyalties. Long ago, Frederick Douglass noted the difference between the "Christianity of Christ" and the "Christianity of this land." During this election cycle, I have seen the Christianity of Christ, the so-called Christianity of the Democrats and the so-called Christianity of the Republicans.

I certainly pray that Kentucky Baptists and other Christians will remember that no matter who sits in the White House, we still are an "alien" people of God traveling through a "barren land" (at least that's what Bible folks believe). Our main focus is still Kentucky Baptists connecting people to Jesus Christ.

President Obama (like any politician) is a mixed bag. No candidate runs to advance the Kingdom of God. Therefore, every politician can make Christians happy and sad—at the same time. I feel good that he has been married to one woman and prioritizes his kids. That's a good model for Americans, especially young black men. I feel good that Michelle Obama cherishes the joy of motherhood. That will be especially good for America with our overabundance of dysfunctional families and feminist assaults on dedicated mothers.

I feel bad (more than bad, actually) that he does not think abortion is the murder of unborn babies. Christians must voice strong dissent during the next four years to pro-abortion policies and judicial appointments. Although he does not support same-sex marriage, I am disappointed that homosexuality is not considered a sin to President Obama, and he chooses to mock the Old Testament and Paul's teachings in the New Testament. That being said, I would have had the same mixed-bag reaction if John McCain or Hillary Clinton had won the election.

The election of Barack Obama leaves me with mixed feelings. However, the disjointed political engagement of Christians makes me feel bad. It is so hard to find the biblical balance of being "in this world, but not of this world." Wasn't it embarrassing to have so-called Christians predicting the end of the world and calling various candidates "the anti-Christ?" Can't you tell when Christians are "overinvested" in the political process? Do we still believe that the weapons of our warfare "are not carnal?"

When I saw the first black man assume the presidency of the United States of America, I was inspired about America's story. Much has happened in the life of this young nation. However, when I looked around at so-called leading Christian voices during this last election cycle, there was very little inspiration—mostly concern.

Kevin Smith is pastor of Watson Memorial Baptist Church in Louisville and assistant professor of church history at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

### GUEST EDITORIAL



Kevin Smith

## Have you counted your active enrollment?

By David Francis

**Nashville (BP)**—We all recognize the sometimes dramatic gap between our enrollment and our average attendance in Sunday school. But have you ever counted your active enrollment?

There are a number of advantages to tracking this monthly measurement. I have used this for years to motivate and encourage Sunday school leaders. Here's how:

- Count the names of each member who attended at least once during the month.
- Do not count the names of visi-

tors. This is a great incentive to keep the concept of open enrollment at the top of leaders' minds—especially near the end of each month.

- In adult groups, count the names of all associate/service members. The total picture of health in the adult department or class is incomplete without recognizing the group's contribution to the overall ministry.

- Report the results. You will be so delighted to know this number that you'll want to report it.
- Reward the results. Some of you will be turned off by this idea,

but I actually implemented it very successfully among adults.

Each group had a fellowship budget that they controlled. They "earned" their budgets based on their active enrollments.

How does it work? Every month, active enrollment is calculated. Then, an amount is credited to the groups' fellowship funds.

Most groups saved up their funds to help with a Christmas party, but they could spend their funds on other fellowship or ministry needs as well.

You get what you measure—and reward.

David Francis is director of Sunday school for LifeWay Christian Resources

### FIRST PERSON

## Fort Knox soldiers benefit from churches' ministries

Continued from page 1

have a chance to evangelize and disciple, and they're on to another place."

Besides his church duties, in late February, Hecox plans to start a 10-week-long Good News Club at Fort Knox for elementary-age children. A few months later on base, he will oversee five-day summer clubs, similar to a backyard Bible club.

Last summer, Military Children's Ministry sponsored its first Kids Film Festival, showing the "Jesus" film to more than 300 children, 40 of whom accepted Christ as their personal Savior. Stithton Baptist actively participated in that event.

The Kentucky Baptist church also holds two festivals each year aimed at military families, one in late spring and the other in the fall.

Last year, Stithton hosted five "Operation Appreciation" days, when new recruits have a chance to play games, eat, call home and attend a worship service. Between 40 and 80 soldiers have responded to the invitation to follow Christ at each event, Hecox said.

Mill Creek and other churches in the North Hardin Ministerial Association, a coalition of churches in the area, began a similar outing seven years ago called Operation Bold Knight.

Volunteers from throughout the church help stage the events. During a 13-month period through last October, Mill Creek recorded 246 professions of faith and 208 people who rededicated their lives to Christ.

The church also participates in "Hooray for Heroes" and has started a new ministry for families of deployed soldiers. That initiative offers spouses assistance with household repairs, auto repairs or personal emergencies.

This month, Mill Creek will be gearing up its Sunday school and Awana programs in anticipation of increased attendance.

"I'm very excited," Griswold said of the expected growth. "But I'm also scared by it. It's a lot of work. Sometimes I wonder if we'll ever accomplish what we need to. You pray God will take the lead."

Ministering to children of military families is a unique challenge, Hecox added.

The vast majority are facing the prospect of a parent being deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan for 12 to 18 months at a time and wondering whether their loved one will even return, he noted.

"That's the reality of the war situation we're in," Hecox said. "Another problem is moving from installation to installation every two or three years"—which presents a tough adjustment challenge for some children.

Ironically, Hecox said he is likely to move on to another military installation after establishing the ministry at Fort Knox. His initial commitment to Kentucky was for two years, including training another missionary to take over for him.

Still, Hecox said, "However long God wants me here is how long I'll be here."

### Ministry honored

**Radcliff**—Mill Creek Baptist Church in Radcliff recently received a commendation from a U.S. Army agency formed in 2005 to recognize veterans, family members and other supporters who contribute to its mission.

The Army Freedom Team Salute program honored the church for Operation Bold Knight.

Mill Creek began the periodic events seven years ago to provide a meal, worship experience and other amenities to new male recruits (there is no basic training for female soldiers at Fort Knox).

Pastor Jim Shaw received a certificate of appreciation and a letter signed by Gen. George Casey Jr., Army chief of staff; and Army Secretary Pete Geren.

A Fort Knox chaplain, Capt. Joe Schrock, nominated Mill Creek for the award.

"I think our church family will be honored and humbled," Shaw said of the recognition. "What we do is nothing compared to what these men do. (Church members) lovingly want to do this ministry. We're just trying to do our part to help our service personnel, both home and abroad."

Not only have members enjoyed hosting the soldiers, of the 199 professions of faith at Mill Creek during its 2008 church year, 160 came through Operation Bold Knight, Shaw explained.

Military Ministries Director Jim Griswold, who as a retiree also has received a Freedom Team Salute, appreciated the church being honored.

"It's a recognition we've received that we are doing something of value to the military, that they do appreciate it and want us to continue working with them," he said.

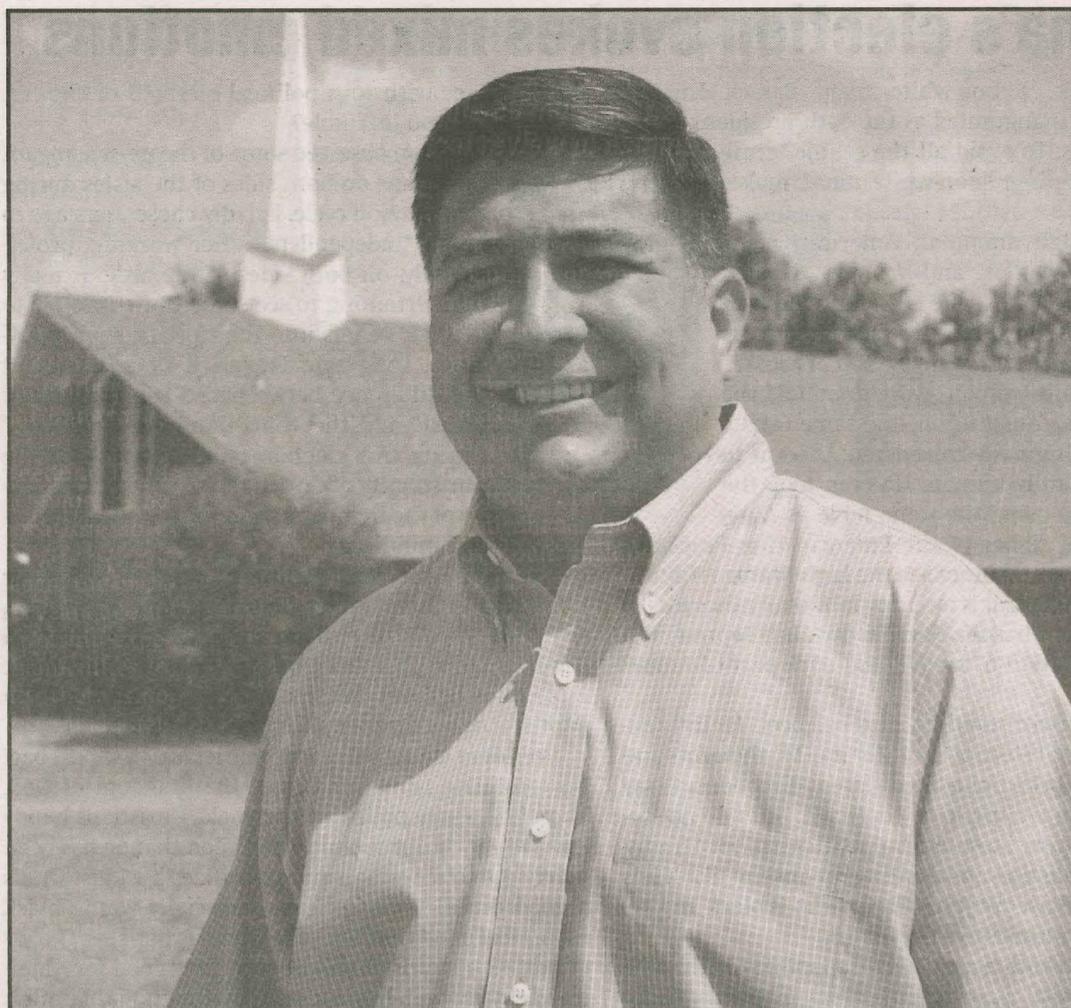
David Thompson, media relations manager for the Freedom Team, noted that more than 95 percent of certificates awarded the past four years have gone to individuals, with the church falling in the category of other supporters.

In addition to the lapel pins that come with each certificate, Thompson said Mill Creek would begin receiving Salute, a quarterly newsletter.

The team distributes the publication to stay in touch with Army supporters and let them know they are important, Thompson noted.

The next Operation Bold Knight event will be held Mar. 14 in Mill Creek's new fellowship hall.

"We haven't had a bad experience," Shaw said of the special services. "We've had a privilege loving these men and sharing with them. It's been a blessing."



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Estate planning alert

Tax rule changes warrant critical review of estates

There has never been a time more important than now for every one of you to review your estate plan, regardless of your financial station in life. Why?

■ The value of most of what you own likely declined significantly this past year as a result of the negative impact of unprecedented and unsettling negative global economic and financial factors. This would include the value of your home, any stocks, bonds or mutual fund shares, retirement account assets, etc.



Barry Allen

■ The federal estate tax rules changed effective Jan. 1; the estate tax exemption was increased significantly from 2008 to 2009. Also, President-elect Barack Obama will be asking Congress to consider changes for 2010, 2011 and beyond.

■ The rules allowing charitable gifts from Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) have been extended.

Not only do you need to be informed about these rule changes, but you also need to confirm that your current estate plan still accomplishes your purposes in a tax-advantaged manner.

KBF Trust Counsel Laurie Valentine, who is licensed to practice law both in Kentucky and Florida, is available to you at no cost or obligation for a private, confidential telephone consultation session. You may simply have an estate planning question for which you need a response. Or, you may need a more extensive session that requires a person-to-person visit. In either case, call Laurie toll free.

Review all of your estate planning documents and the current values of your assets. These documents would include—at least—your will; trust; life insurance and retirement account beneficiary designations; power of attorney; health care surrogate designation; living will directive; and payable-on-death accounts.

As responsible Christians, we are to have our “financial houses in order,” and now is the time to make sure that is the case. Upon review and in consultation with Laurie, you may or may not have to make any changes. But at least you will have the peace of mind of knowing your financial house is in order.

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

For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan



Church of the Covered Dish

Thom Tapp



Bible Crosswords

By Janet Adkins

Across

- 1 Hand or season
- 4 “\_\_\_ things are lawful for me ... but I will not be brought under the power” (1 Corinthians 6:12)
- 7 \_\_\_ the bill
- 11 Very (Fr.)
- 13 Medic’s abbr.
- 14 King of Israel (1 Kings 16)
- 15 Bye-bye, to Brits
- 16 Canadian prov.
- 17 The act of (suffix)
- 18 Biblical measurement
- 19 “Redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a \_\_\_ people” (Titus 2:14)
- 21 Put on the feedbag
- 23 Pronoun
- 24 “They defile not their \_\_\_, in the midst whereof I dwell” (Numbers 5:3)
- 27 “For the \_\_\_ of this people cause them to err” (Isaiah 9:16)
- 32 To braid
- 33 “And the anger of the Lord was \_\_\_ against Israel” (Judges 2:20)
- 34 Great Lake
- 35 “Send me also cedar trees, fir trees ... out of \_\_\_” (2 Chronicles 2:8)
- 37 Land measure (pl.)
- 38 That hurts!
- 39 Boring tool?
- 40 “\_\_\_ now thy Creator in the days of thy youth” (Ecclesiastes 12:1)
- 45 “Neither do the \_\_\_ understand judgment” (Job 32:9)
- 49 Great-grandfather of Lamech (Genesis 4:18)
- 51 Partner of rant
- 52 Virginia \_\_\_, first English child born in America
- 53 Possessive pronoun
- 54 Tied
- 55 Father of Ahira (Numbers 2:29)
- 56 Article
- 57 Golfer Ernie

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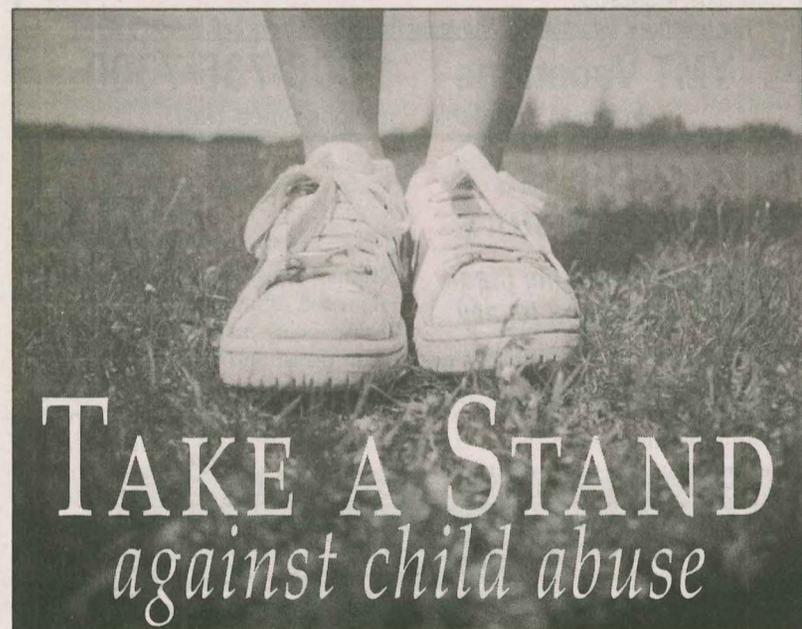
Down

- 1 King of Germany, and Holy Roman Emperor
- 2 Oil filter maker
- 3 Honor, as at a banquet
- 4 Use as one’s own
- 5 Single
- 6 “Nor the \_\_\_ of their shoes be broken” (Isaiah 5:27)
- 7 Young farm animal
- 8 All, everywhere (comb. form)
- 9 Killer whale
- 10 Arena area
- 12 “Unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto \_\_\_, a city of Sidon” (Luke 4:26)
- 20 Vowel trio
- 22 Simile syntax
- 24 Army rank (abbr.)
- 25 \_\_\_ wife
- 26 Fairy queen of English folklore
- 27 Actor Chaney
- 28 “Sing praises to the Lord ... \_\_\_ among the people his doings” (Psalm 9:11)
- 29 Mess up
- 30 Bible grain (Isaiah 28:25)
- 31 French possessive pronoun
- 33 Nevertheless (arch.)
- 36 \_\_\_ de plume

- 37 Exclamation of protest
- 39 Was resurrected, as Jesus Christ
- 40 To stay afloat, with “out”
- 41 One of the sons of Shuthelah (Numbers 26:36)
- 42 “Call me \_\_\_: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me” (Ruth 1:20)
- 43 Idyllic setting
- 44 O.T. book
- 46 Contributed
- 47 First name in “daredevilry”
- 48 Cubs’ “cribs”?

Last week's solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
L	A	R	A	H	A	C	J	A	W
O	M	E	R	A	L	M	A	U	S
G	I	V	E	P	L	A	C	E	S
F	A	M	I	N	E	S	A	T	A
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D	O	G	S	E	E	E	M	I	R
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## Ky. ministry, churches involved in quake clean-up

**Costa Rica (ABP)**—Ten mission volunteers in Costa Rica working to provide safe drinking water and vision clinics turned their attention to disaster relief efforts when a 6.2-magnitude earthquake hit Jan. 9.

Nineteen people were confirmed dead and 23 missing as of last week from the quake that hit near the Poás Volcano, a popular tourist destination 25 miles from the Costa Rican capital of San Jose.

A PureWater PureLife team that was finishing the installation of a water system and conducting a vision clinic in Costa Rica at the time changed its itinerary after the earthquake struck. Instead of moving to another part of the country, the volunteers from the non-profit faith-based organization EDGE Outreach in Louisville decided to stay put and respond to needs of about 350 families cut off in the village of San Miguel de Sarapique.

The team refocused efforts on providing emergency relief for the next 10 days to an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 residents without food or safe water.

Mark Hogg, executive director of EDGE Outreach, said the town has no electric service or potable water. A factory that had employed 600 people collapsed.

He explained that three miniature water-treatment plants will provide 1,200 gallons of pure water per hour, while a feeding operation will seek to serve at least one hot meal per person for 10 days. He said the operation will cost \$35,000, and about \$22,000 has been raised so far.

"It's really not a lot, when you think about 1,200 or 1,300 (people)

have water and food for a few days," he noted. The water equipment will stay behind, allowing residents to produce clean drinking water for themselves long after the volunteers are gone.

"Our water work is all about empowerment," said Hogg, a business entrepreneur and former youth minister who started a non-profit charity in 1995 and has been doing water purification since 2001.

### Importance of clean water

While people in developed countries take safe drinking water for granted, in developing countries 25,000 people die, on average, every day from water-borne diseases like cholera. Diarrhea is the world's second-leading cause of infant deaths. The World Health Organization says 80 percent of all global illnesses can be attributed to unsafe water and inadequate sanitation.

Hogg pointed out that some mission groups travel long distances to drill a well but forget about purification, leaving residents at risk.

PureWater PureLife teams bring along a portable purifying machine that fits in a suitcase. The device uses table salt and electricity from a 12-volt battery to make chlorine, which kills water-borne bacteria. Volunteers are trained not only to set up the purifiers, but to repair United Nations wells that need service.

Shipments also include appropriate containers for the safe exchange of water. People exchange their old container for a new one that has been sanitized, reducing the risk of contamination from a dirty bucket or jar.

The team is ecumenical, with Protestant and Catholic members, but there are Baptist connections. Three members of the team hail from Kentucky Baptist congregations—Crestwood Baptist Church in Oldham County; Berea Baptist Church; and Louisville-area church plant Phos Hilaron Church. Each of those churches provided financial assistance, along with Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville. Team members worshipped at Crescent

Hill before embarking on the trip.

Hogg attended Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville and belongs to a Baptist church. D.E. Adams, a musician popular at Baptist gatherings over the years, manages the organization's Web site and computer technology.

Links to EDGE Outreach can be found on the Web sites for both the Kentucky Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

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## It's later than you think

### Now is the time to explore missions opportunities at the Oneida campus

If you, your mission leader or your church have been talking about a mission trip for this summer, you may be thinking it's only January so you have plenty of time, right? Wrong.

Many ministries like Oneida already have a crowded schedule of volunteers for 2009. I'm sure we are like most ministries in that June and July are the two most popular months. If you are planning a mission trip almost anywhere this year, it may be later than you think.

In January, I normally receive dozens of calls and e-mails from individuals and churches asking about volunteer opportunities for the summer. I always am excited to know that folks are interested in coming here, but they often are surprised to discover that some months—like June and July—are nearly full. We have housing for about 60 volunteers at a time. We can normally accommodate three groups of 15-20, or four groups of 10-15 each week.

We likely will be blessed to have several hundred volunteers offer their talents and skills in 2009. Many have come for years, while others will visit for the first time. Many volunteers know a lot about our ministry; others know much less about the opportunities we provide to students who find their way to Oneida.

OBI traditionally provides housing and meals for all volunteers. Normally, your only cost is the travel expense to and from our campus. We provide all the materials you will need for any project we assign. Men with carpentry, electrical, mechanical, plumbing or similar skills often prefer

to bring their own tools. Women who sew or have other special skills may prefer to bring their own sewing machines or other items.

We do have some limitations. Because of insurance restrictions, we are not allowed to use volunteers under the age of 18 unless they come with—and work with—a parent or grandparent. We do not recommend bringing anyone under the age of 13.

Because of the diversity of our campus and facilities, I have never met anyone with a skill we could not use. If you have a heart for missions involvement and are willing to meet a need that we have, you will most likely receive a blessing from being a part of a mission trip to Oneida.

OBI has had a wonderful network of volunteers for more than 70 years. In fact, the highest award presented at graduation each year is the William A. Evans Award, in honor of a volunteer who came to Oneida in the 1930s and '40s. There was no interstate system then and travel by car was much more complicated.

Today, I can leave my office and drive across the Ohio River at Cincinnati in about three hours. When Mr. Evans came to OBI, it took three days. Evans was an educator from the Cincinnati area and made the trip to our campus every summer. He spent most of the summer here and often brought others with him.

Unfortunately, Evans passed away in 1944 in his early 40s. That year, Oneida Baptist Institute presented the first-ever William A. Evans Award to the most outstanding senior at graduation. Remember: It may be later than you think.

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

### THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

## A place in history

### New book highlights Clear Creek's significant legacy

Shakespeare said, "What is past is prologue." A prologue comes before all other material in a book, giving the impression that it is important enough to read first, and valuable enough to influence the rest of the text. I have to agree: History is our prologue.

At Clear Creek, we cannot close the book on our history because it still is being written. This is true in the real sense as well as metaphorically. Our history is an ongoing process.

It was many years ago that L.C. Kelly founded Clear Creek—but his work is not done. One historian observed that nothing worth doing is completed in our lifetime. The race is not finished when one runner passes the baton to another. We still haven't done all God put in the heart and mind of Kelly, so our history still is being written.

It still is being written in the literal sense as well. Chris Beckham is putting the finishing touches on a book that soon will be available—a history of what God has done, and is still doing, through Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. Many are familiar with Carvin Bryant's book, "The Voice in the Moun-

tains." Those who have read it have learned about Clear Creek and have been inspired by what God can do in and through an institution that depends on Him.

Our expectation is this new edition of Clear Creek's history will continue to touch hearts in that same way. We think Kentucky Baptists will want this book on their shelves. It can be ordered now at a special pre-publication price to be delivered as soon as it's available. The cost is \$20 (plus tax) and we will pay shipping. You can order one by sending a check for \$21.20, along with a note saying you want to order the book, to our development office at the address below. Or, you can order online at [www.ccbbc.edu/Partner/Donation.asp](http://www.ccbbc.edu/Partner/Donation.asp); be sure to mention the book in the Special Comments section.

This work will be a valuable contribution to Kentucky Baptist history. Clear Creek is proud to be the Kentucky Baptist Convention's only Bible college. We always have lived up to that identity—our history proves it.

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

## Bush legacy likely to be shaped by faith-based programs

By Adelle Banks  
Religion News Service

**Baltimore (RNS)**—To hear Jean Patterson Cushman tell it, President Bush's faith-based initiative has been critical for her Baltimore organization that helps ex-prisoners find new jobs.

Infused with \$2.3 million in grant money from a Department of Labor initiative, Cushman's group, Episcopal Community Services of Maryland, has moved from helping 50 men and women a year to 200.

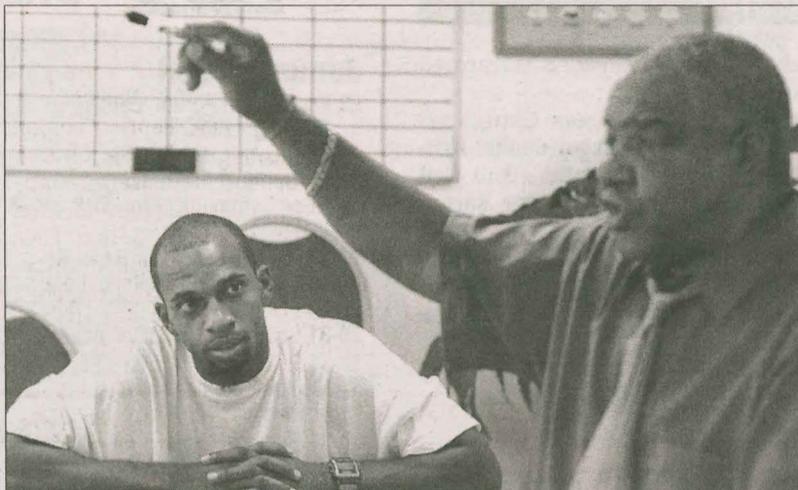
"I would say it's made a fundamental change in what we could do," noted Cushman, who hosted Bush during a visit to her agency nearly a year ago. "We were a little program, sort of going along by ourselves. ... It's just opened up so many doors for us."

Love it or hate it—and many feel that strongly about the initiative—the program started by Bush days after he entered the Oval Office has been a major contributor to the debate over the proper intersection of God and government.

Its long-term effects on public policy may well be determined by the Obama administration—which has vowed to continue the program after a top-to-bottom review—but experts say it already has made significant changes in how religious groups can partner with governmental agencies.

Which is not to say the program has been universally embraced. In fact, the initiative has been battled in the courts since its inception, and an atheist-led legal challenge resulted in a landmark Supreme Court ruling that experts say will have long-range effects on taxpayers' ability to challenge any manner of government spending.

Church-state watchdog Barry Lynn, for one, said he wishes the White House Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives had never opened its doors.



**FAITHFUL FUNDS** The Baltimore-based Episcopal Community Services of Maryland, seen here, has been able to increase the size of its prisoner re-entry program from 50 people to 200 per year after receiving funds from President Bush's faith-based initiatives office. (RNS photo courtesy of Marshall Clarke/ECSM)

"I think this is truly one of the most corrupted and useless programs in modern presidential history," said Lynn, whose Washington-based Americans United for Separation of Church and State has filed multiple suits against the program during its eight-year run.

"It became so totally politicized, utterly nontransparent—nobody to this day knows where most of the money went—and turned out to be kind of the 21st-century equivalent of walking-around money doled out for political purposes to groups which frequently had no record of success at all."

While the Clinton-era "charitable choice" welfare provision expanded existing federal funding for faith-based social programs, the Bush administration added a "very splashy push" to public-private partnerships, said Ira Lupu, a professor at George Washington University Law School.

Lupu recently co-authored a report that assessed the program's legal impact, and doubts that such partnerships will ever again be "cat-

egorically disqualified" for delivering social services.

"The constitutional era of mandatory exclusion of intensely faith-oriented organizations from these kinds of partnerships is over," Lupu explained.

### "Life-changing aid"

With Bush yielding the White House to President Barack Obama, the faith-based office issued a final report Jan. 12 to its religious and secular partners, declaring it a success.

"(F)ederal partnerships with faith-based and other community organizations have greatly expanded," the president wrote in "Innovations in Compassion." "The initiative has also extended and strengthened the capabilities of these groups. Most importantly, together we have brought life-changing aid to millions in need."

According to White House tallies, nonprofit groups received \$15.3 billion in competitive grants in fiscal year 2007, an increase of 3.9 percent over the previous year. That figure included \$2.2 billion to faith-based

nonprofits, which have received federal grants of more than \$10.6 billion since the initiative started in 2002.

Yet federal dollars were subjected to numerous legal challenges. A federal appeals court ruled that a prominent faith-based prison rehabilitation program was unconstitutional, while the Supreme Court determined that atheist taxpayers lacked standing to challenge the overall faith-based initiative.

Critics also accused the White House of using the office as a political tool to appease religious conservatives in the GOP base, and to build electoral bridges to blacks and Hispanics. Even some staff left the project disillusioned and disappointed.

But on the ground, groups like Episcopal Community Services of Maryland say the initiative has boosted their professionalism, made them more accountable and increased their ability to help those in need at a deeper level.

Melissa Rogers, who directs the Center for Religion and Public Affairs at Wake Forest University's School of Divinity, applauded the Bush White House for codifying rules that say the clients of social service groups cannot be discriminated against on the basis of religion. She also praised the initiative's international efforts to fight AIDS and malaria, which she said were "warmly and widely embraced."

At the same time, Rogers, who recently co-wrote a report on federal/faith-based partnerships, urged Obama to work with Congress to avoid "a kind of whiplash" for social service providers who must operate under rules that can change from one administration to the next.

"It's not fair to the providers, it's not fair to the people that they serve, and it's not fair to taxpayers who have to shell out money for a bunch of changes that are not durable," she said.

## Groups seek executive order banning torture

**Washington (RNS)**—An interfaith coalition of religious groups has asked President Barack Obama to sign an executive order banning torture on his first day in office.

Members of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture sent Obama a letter with their request Jan. 9 and met with members of his transition team last week.

"We believe it's the singular most important act that he can take after being sworn in that will tell the nation and tell the world that the United States has changed," said Linda Gustitus, president of the campaign.

The letter, which was signed by more than 30 Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders, was accompanied by a list of principles the group hopes Obama will consider in an executive order. They seek a national standard for treatment and interrogation of prisoners, a ban on secret prisons, and adherence to "the golden rule" so U.S. interrogations include no methods that would not be acceptable for U.S. soldiers or civilians.

## Pair of faith-healing trials to take center stage in Oregon

**Portland, Ore. (RNS)**—Two high-profile deaths from 2008 will land in the courts in 2009 when the Oregon justice system determines whether members of an Oregon City faith-healing church acted criminally in the deaths of two children who were denied medical treatment.

The trials could lead to the first tests of a 1999 state law disallowing faith healing at the expense of a child's life.

What's more, the almost-certain appeals in the cases may ask the courts to redefine the balance between freedom of religion and parents' legal responsibilities for the health and safety of minors.

The first trial, set for Jan. 26, will weigh manslaughter and criminal mistreatment charges against Carl Brent Worthington and his wife, Raylene Marie, in the death of their 15-month-old daughter, Ava. The girl died last March of bronchial pneumonia and blood infections after she was denied conventional medical care.

In the second trial, set for June 23, Raylene Worthington's parents, Jeffrey Dean Beagle and his wife, Marci Rae, will face charges of criminally negligent homicide in the death of their 16-year-old son, Neil. The boy died in June of heart failure triggered by a urinary tract blockage.

In both deaths, state medical examiners said the children could have been treated with routine medical procedures or medicine.

The common thread in both cases is the Followers of Christ Church, a fundamentalist sect that bans medical attention for congregation members, instead relying on prayer vigils and the "laying on of hands."

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## PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Pray for the Kentucky Baptist congregations that have responded to NAMB's Acts 1:8 Challenge.

■ Pray for those Kentucky Baptist associations and churches that continue to partner with Maryland/Delaware churches.

■ Pray for all of Kentucky's International Mission Board missionaries who are serving all around the world.

■ Pray that Kentucky Baptist churches will respond to the many international missions projects that are available worldwide.

■ Pray for those attending the Missions Volunteer Appreciation Banquet Feb. 20.

For more information about partnership missions opportunities, contact the KBC partnership missions department at (502) 489-3529, toll free in Kentucky at (866) 489-3529, or visit [www.KyBaptist.org/Partnership](http://www.KyBaptist.org/Partnership).

## MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **BUFFALO**—Buffalo Church recently ordained **Wes Brewer** and **Mike Ovesen** as deacons. **Rodney Troutman** is pastor.

■ **CADIZ**—Rocky Ridge Church will hold revival services Jan. 20 with Pastor **Bob McIntosh** as evangelist. Special music will be provided by **Little River Association men's choir**.

■ **HENDERSON**—Immanuel Temple will host the "Redesign in 2009" Green Valley Association Church Functions Conference Jan. 29, 5:30 p.m., with **Ross Bauscher**, KBC's

evangelism team leader, as featured speaker.

■ **LONDON**—Hawk Creek Church recently ordained **Brian Cooke**, **Kriston Jervis**, **David Walters** and **Neil Warren** as deacons. **Trevor Barton** is pastor.

Swiss Colony Church recently called **Mike Salisbury** as minister of youth and education. **Dennis Hammons** is pastor.

■ **SHARPSBURG**—Sharpsburg Church recently called **Donnie Land** as pastor.

## SBC strategist to lead KBC retreat

**Lexington**—Kentucky Baptist deacons and pastors, along with their spouses, will have the opportunity to be encouraged and equipped for their ministries at the annual Deacon/Pastor/Spouse Retreat Feb. 6-7, at the Griffin Gate Marriott Resort in Lexington.

Keynote speaker Ken Hemphill, Southern Baptist Convention's national strategist for Empowering Kingdom Growth, will lead two teaching sessions during the retreat, focusing on the Sunday school-based model for deacon ministry.

Hemphill "will examine the Sunday school model and give practical ways to effectively use the model," said Mike James, Kentucky Baptist Convention's strategist and discipleship assimilation coordinator. "We'll also benefit from his insightful work related to the SBC's Empowering Kingdom Growth initiative as he brings this perspective to bear on his teaching."

According to the SBC, Empowering Kingdom Growth is "an initiative designed to call individual Southern Baptists to renew their passion for the Lord Jesus and the reign of His kingdom in their hearts, families and churches from which God can forge a spiritual movement marked by holy living, sacrificial service and global witness."

Hemphill has served in the strategist role since 2003, following a tenure as president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort

Worth, Texas.

The retreat also will feature other breakout session leaders, including Jim Castlen, director of missions for Three Forks Baptist Association, and his wife, Shelby; Shane Garrison, assistant professor of educational ministries at Campbellsville University; Roy Saint, associate director of discipleship and family department for the Florida Baptist Convention; Brenda Rick Smith, KBC's electronic media specialist.

Breakout topics include:

■ Deacon ministry today: Practical ways to serve.

■ Deacons making disciples through spiritual transformation.

■ For the rookies: First-year deacon ministry.

■ Stop, drop and roll: Deacons dealing with conflict.

■ Friend me: Connect and build relationships through social media.

■ Creating and maintaining a church Web site.

■ Partners in ministry: Encouraging couples serving together.

■ Chasing skinny rabbits: Overcoming emotional and spiritual exhaustion.

The retreat will be Feb. 6, 5-10 p.m., and Feb. 7, 7:30 a.m.-noon. Registration is \$40 per person, which includes meals and a Friday evening banquet.

For more information or to register, visit [www.KyBaptist.org/dps](http://www.KyBaptist.org/dps) retreat, or call (502) 489-3581, or toll free in Kentucky at (866) 489-3581.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### January 2009

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.

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

## Campbellsville University to host annual Worship Arts Conference

**Campbellsville**—Author and church leader Shane Claiborne and musician Charlie Hall will be the featured presenters at Campbellsville University's third annual Worship Arts Conference Feb. 19-20.

With the theme, "The Changing Face of Worship: Ageless Worship in a Church Full of Ages," this year's event will focus on intergenerational renewal in the worshipping church, and how churches can find a balance between ancient and contemporary practices. Claiborne, author of "Irresistible Revolution" and "Jesus for President," will challenge participants to pursue a life where worship and justice meet.

A pair of praise and worship artists also will perform during the conference. Hall, a solo artist also known for his work with the Passion band, will perform Feb. 20. John Mark McMillan, an up-and-coming Christian musician from North Carolina, will perform Feb. 19. Rachael Hurt, another young artist and former Campbellsville

University student, will lead worship during the conference and will hold a pre-conference concert Feb. 18 at 7 p.m.

Conference session topics include: spirituality of the worship leader; worshipping church as a hospitable church; practical issues of worship arts leadership; use of painting in worship; use of banners to celebrate the Christian calendar and enhance the worship service; songwriting and the encouragement of "indigenous worship;" and general aesthetics of worship.

Tickets for the two-day conference are \$45 (\$25 for students), which includes admission to Hall's concert. Tickets for Hall's performance are \$15 for general admission, \$20 for "artist's circle" seats, \$12 for students and \$10 for groups of 10 or more. Tickets can be purchased online at iTickets.com.

For more information, visit [www.CUWorshipArts.com](http://www.CUWorshipArts.com), or call Campbellsville's School of Theology at (270) 789-5029.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

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

**FOR SALE:** Christian, patriotic and military neckties, \$6. Humor book, "500 Laughter Doeth Good Like a Medicine" (over 1,000 sold), \$6. Booklet, "Death: How to Prepare," \$6. (606) 285-3051.

**SEEKING:** Part-time director to plan, coordinate and lead music for worship services in a northern Pulaski County church. Send resumé to: NBC, PO Box 129, Science Hill, KY 42553.

**SEEKING:** A growing church in southern Kentucky seeks a committed Christian with a passion to work with children (birth-6th grade) and their families. Contact High Street Baptist Church, 102 Bourne Ave., Somerset, KY 42501; or [www.highstreetonline.org](http://www.highstreetonline.org). Phone: (606) 678-8973.

**SEEKING:** Bivocational songleader to lead blended style worship at Pilot Oak Baptist Church in Graves County. Send resumé to Pilot Oak Baptist Church, 5378 State Route 94W, Water Valley, KY 42085.

**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:** Full-time minister to students to minister alongside four other full-time pastors at First Baptist Church of Tullahoma, Tenn. The minister will focus on middle school, high school and college students. First Baptist seeks to be conservative in its theology and progressive in its methodology. Send resumé to Dr. Herb Hester, pastor, 108 E Grundy St., Tullahoma, TN 37388. (931) 455-5461.

**SEEKING:** Part-time church secretary for Jeffersonton Baptist Church. Experience in bookkeeping, Microsoft Word, Excel and/or PowerPoint. E-mail resumé with references to [office@jtownbaptist.com](mailto:office@jtownbaptist.com).

**SEEKING:** Instrumentalist for east end congregation—contemporary and traditional music. Send resumé to Melbourne Heights Baptist Church, 3728 Taylorsville Road, Louisville, KY 40220, Attn: Personnel Dept. You may call the church at (502) 454-4681 to set a time for an interview; hours and pay will be discussed at the interview.

**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@fbcv.org](mailto:info@fbcv.org).

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister to youth for Sand Spring Baptist Church in Lawrenceburg. This individual must be a hard worker who feels called to serve in youth ministry. Candidates should send a resumé with a current photograph to [sandspring@roadrunner.com](mailto:sandspring@roadrunner.com).

**SEEKING:** Interim youth minister for east end church. Approximately 20 hours per week; \$200 per week. May lead to continuing ministry. Experience and degree preferred; will consider someone who is working toward these goals. Send resumé to Melbourne Heights Baptist Church, 3728 Taylorsville Road, Louisville, KY 40220, Attn: Personnel Dept. For questions, call the church at (502) 454-4681.

**SERVICES:** Experienced tax practitioner seeks to help ministers with tax returns, housing allowance and basic record-keeping. Contact Bro. Grant Mathes at (502) 859-0359.

## 'Relational outreach' draws Native Americans

By Dana Williamson  
Oklahoma Baptist Messenger

**Oklahoma City (BP)**—It's the Christmas story like you've never seen it before.

All the participants are meticulously dressed in Native American regalia. Tribal chiefs portray the Wise Men. The shepherds who come to worship the Christ child are seen as hunters. Across the packed auditorium, members and guests watch as "A Native American Christmas Story" unfolds.

This is one of the more popular outreach activities at Glorietta Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, Okla., a 350-member congregation; 90 percent of its members are Native American. According to its pastor, Emerson Falls, the church conducts a wide range of activities to engage its community and to help people mature in Christ.

Falls, who grew up just a few miles from the church, recently was elected president of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.

But of all the initiatives the church undertakes, Falls says the most important thing they do is pray. Like many other churches, the Wednesday-night schedule begins with a meal but then the rest of the evening focuses entirely on prayer.

"Whatever we do comes out of a dynamic relationship to God," Falls said. "We encourage members to read Scripture daily and keep a journal of what God is saying to them. We have to be connected with God before we can do anything."

One of the major changes the church felt led to make since Falls



**THE STORYTELLER** Roger Kernell tells the Christmas story in Native American fashion at Glorietta Baptist Church in Oklahoma City. **Inset:** Cari Spain, who plays Mary, holds baby Jesus, played by Simone Runningwater. (Photos by John Clanton/Genesis Photos)

became pastor five years ago was to move its Sunday-evening service to 2 p.m. and to change it from a time of worship to a time of discipleship training. That helped members involve more families, many of whom travel to the church from all over the metropolitan area.

Falls said he tries to use the afternoon session to equip members for witness and ministry.

"We recently did 'Becoming Contagious Christians,' and we revisited 'Experiencing God,'" Falls said. "We also train our people in the 'Roman Road' plan of salvation once a year."

Church members work to get

people in the pew so they can hear the gospel. "The No. 1 reason people come to church is because they know someone," Falls said. "Therefore, our outreach tends to be relational."

The church launched "Give Friday Nights to Jesus," a social time—a cook-out, game night or other event—where unchurched people are special guests. Summer movie nights, a fall festival, open gym nights and a senior banquet are other draws.

"One man had not been to church in 20 years, but he was invited to a social event at someone's

house, got to know them, came to church and two months later was saved," Falls said.

The church also tries to connect with non-church groups, such as the Oklahoma City Pow-Pow Club.

"They have asked us to lead worship services and they use our building for their Christmas dinner," Falls said.

The church also works with the Oklahoma City public schools' Indian program, counseling and helping raise money. Mission activities include collecting toys for the Indian Clinic and involving members in a drug rehab program.

During the summer, they provide water for native people who play in sports leagues. They also work with a juvenile detention center and the Capital Baptist Association rescue mission.

"We try to get unchurched people involved in these activities with us," Falls said. "One lady who helped us gather toys was baptized six months later."

Judy Barker, a member of Glorietta for five years, knows firsthand the value of involving unsaved people in church projects. Her husband, Bob, came to know Christ personally during one of the church's outreach efforts. "He came, got to know the people, connected with them and started coming to church," she said.

Barker says she loves the church's passion for ministry and missions. Although culturally diverse, Glorietta also is a close-knit congregation, she said. "We take care of each other and embrace those who come in and get them into a small group so they are not lost in the pews."

## Multi-ethnic N.J. congregation shares gospel worldwide

By Norm Miller  
Baptist Press

**Randolph, N.J. (BP)**—Bible Church International lives up to its name.

The Randolph, N.J., congregation that started as a house church with 30 people in 1982, now draws nearly 350 regular attenders from China, Nigeria, Ireland, India and the Philippines. But it's also involved with 30 church plants in Thailand, Cambodia, Dubai and the Philippines, as well as North America.

Pastor Jerry Lepasana, himself a Filipino, describes the multi-ethnic Southern Baptist congregation as a "glocal" church—a global "Great Commission" vision fueled by a passion for local ministry.

Those ministries include regular visits to nearby retirement centers and a local soup kitchen, as well as more non-traditional outreach activities.

Last November, for example, Bible Church International sponsored a concert of popular recording artists from the Philippines who are Christians. The concert drew more than 700 people—400 of whom were unchurched, Lepasana said. The church also has capitalized on the decades-old trend of Filipinos leaving their impoverished home villages to work in wealthier countries.

What they cannot leave behind is their desire for fellowship among other Filipinos.

"The immigrants are far away

from their families, and these people are not Christian, yet," said associate pastor Ed Ramos, who heads up BCI's global missions and local ministries. "But through the ministry of the church they have found an extended family to relate to, and soon find also the family of Christ."

Many of those who leave the Philippines for the United States are nurses. Bible Church International has led many of those nurses to Christ, Ramos said. When the church challenged them to reach out overseas, medical missions to the Philippines was a natural outlet.

Only 12 people joined the initial medical mission trip in 2003, and that included Pastors Lepasana and Ramos. But after hearing reports of what God did on that trip, 65 members volunteered in 2005 and 97 participated in 2007. Ramos expects more than 100 for the scheduled 2009 venture.

As part of the medical ministry, patients hear gospel presentations from the American volunteers and some become Christians. Churches also are born as BCI coordinates follow-up and discipleship efforts with local Filipino Christians.

Church planting has boomed since the congregation began the medical missions trips to the Philippines, Ramos said.

"The good reports really boosted our people's passion to do the mission," he said. "When our people

hear the results, they get excited to join the mission."

During one overseas medical project, the father of a young man on the church's praise team shared that God had called him to plant a church among Filipinos who had immigrated to Cambodia.

Before Lepasana and Ramos could follow up with more serious conversations, they discovered he already had moved his family to Cambodia and started the work.

Lepasana since has traveled to Cambodia to assess the ministry and hammer out an agreement with the pastor on doctrinal guidelines and financial accountability.

Bible Church International also sponsors a church planter in Thailand who is beginning an English as a Second Language ministry among college students. "Teaching English in foreign countries is a very effective way to reach people for Christ," Ramos explained.

Aware that many Filipinos have emigrated to Dubai recently, BCI began a two-year search for a church planter to serve there. Now a small congregation in Dubai numbers 60 and has conducted outdoor baptisms in front of scores of local residents.

Everything begins with local ministry, however, Ramos said.

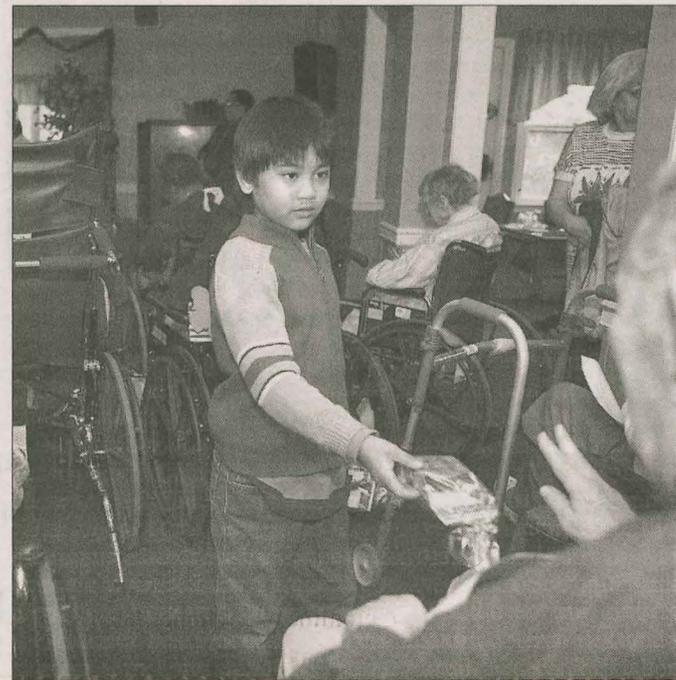
"We want our people to first serve in the community and to be seen in the community because ev-

ery time we give ... something to the residents, there's the church name, contact information and Web site attached so those who receive the ministry can see where the gift and ministry come from," he said.

"Because we do these overseas missions and minister in our community, God is continuing to add members to our church—but especially when we started doing missions outside this country," Ramos said. In 2008, "God added about 60 members."

### PRACTICING SERVICE

A youngster from Bible Church International in Randolph, N.J., helps give out Christmas presents to residents of the Merry Heart nursing home. (Photo by Najlah Feanny/Genesis Photos)



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