

LEADERSHIP OFF THE CLOCK

Four schools who serve Missouri Baptists describe how students, faculty and staff demonstrate leadership.

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EDITORIAL

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'MURDER FACTORY'

William Jewell College and area churches team up to minister in a neighborhood with a high prison percentage.

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Word&Way

SERVING MISSOURI BAPTISTS FOR OVER A CENTURY



FAITH AND ARTS

University Heights Baptist Church, Springfield, invites the community to think about faith utilizing the arts.

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Looking for leaders

The way congregations discover and train their ministers is in transition.

And local churches are driving that change, particularly as they reclaim their role in calling out and mentoring potential church leaders.

(See related article beginning on page 6)

ALSO IN THE NEWS

PARTNERING TO SERVE

Grace Point and Winnwood — two Kansas City churches — cross Missouri to minister in St. Louis.

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THE PRICE OF PEACE

The Missouri Baptist Convention Executive Board votes to allocate \$100,000 to bring peace between conservative factions.

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STUDENT MISSIONARIES INJURED

Two men ministering in Yellowstone are in critical condition after a Jeep Cherokee flipped and rolled. One of two other passengers was also injured.

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OPINION: WINNERS AND LOSERS

Missouri Baptist Convention lawsuits have produced obvious winners and losers during the past seven years.

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MBC Executive Board okays \$100,000 to reconcile state's conservative factions

But Board nixes committee's request for quarter of a million dollars

BOLIVAR (BP) — The Missouri Baptist Convention's Executive Board voted July 14 to adopt the final report of their "Peace Committee" and allocate up to \$100,000 out of reserves to pursue biblical reconciliation between two "conservative" groups in the state.

"They've given us not only a path to peace but also a strategy that's going to help us in the area of church health and personal discipleship," MBC executive director David Tolliver said.

"I am pleased with the work of the Peace Committee and their final report," he said. "I have now been empowered to lead Missouri Baptists toward genuine peace. I look forward to that journey."

The Peace Committee was established in April 2008 after disagreements arose between the conservative groups Save Our Convention and the Missouri Baptist Laymen's Association.

Messengers had elected SOC-endorsed candidates over MBLA candidates in officer elections at the two previous MBC annual meetings.

Months before the 2007 annual meeting, SOC held a rally and criticized the tactics of MBLA in gaining what organizers say was an inordinate amount of power in MBC life, particularly through the process of nominating members of convention boards and commissions.

They raised particular concerns about the growing influence of MBLA research director Roger Moran.

During their July 14 meeting at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, board members voted to adopt all of the original Peace Committee report except



Missouri Baptist Convention Peace Committee chair Jeff Purvis (right) reports to messengers at last year's MBC annual meeting while committee members John Marshall (left) and Roger Moran look on.

that a \$250,000 cap on expenses for the reconciliation process was lowered to \$100,000.

That amendment, proposed by Jim Wells, director of missions for Tri County Baptist Association at Nixa, passed 29-13, meeting a two-thirds majority requirement for the use of convention reserve funds.

The committee report and board action caps two years of infighting between SOC and MBLA over a variety of issues, ranging from disagreements about church planting to the termination of a former state executive director.

"I'm just happy it turned out the way the Lord sees it to be," said Jody Shelenhamer, a member of First Baptist Church in Bolivar and the board member who made the motion to create the Peace Committee.

The seven-member committee's report was presented by its chairman, Jeff Purvis, pastor of First Baptist Church in Hercul-

aneum-Pevely. He was joined by three other members: MBC president Bruce McCoy, pastor of Canaan Baptist Church in St. Louis; Jay Scribner, a retired pastor and former MBC president from Branson; and Moran, a layman from First Baptist Church, Troy.

In introducing the report to the Board, Purvis acknowledged that not all the issues between the groups have been resolved.

"It will take some time for the issues to be settled and for biblical reconciliation to be accomplished," Purvis said. "However, we have already seen some reconciliation and some relationships being restored.

"Our report, with its attachments, shares the truth about the historical perspective of the key issues and events which are at the heart of our inner conflict," Purvis added.

"Does everyone agree with what was said in the SOC DVD

and transcript? No. Does everyone agree with what was printed in the MBLA Viewpoint publication in response to the SOC meeting? No. But they give us an accurate account of what has taken place. The attachments are not...intended to be divisive," Purvis said.

Mitch Jackson, pastor of Miner Baptist Church in Sikeston, and MBC second vice president, tried unsuccessfully to amend the report, proposing the board "adopt" the fifth point of the Peace Committee report, "receive" the other four points and reject the four attachments.

Jackson called the attachments "divisive" and, after an attempt by McCoy to fashion a compromise, Jackson's amendment failed, 24-19.

The four attachments included in the final report were:

— an Oct. 28, 2008, interim report from the committee;

— the transcript and DVD recording of a Save Our Con-

vention rally held May 15, 2007, at First Baptist Church in Harvester;

— the May 2009 edition of the MBLA's *Viewpoint* publication; and

— an Oct. 27, 2004, resolution adopted by messengers to the state convention annual meeting, "Holiness and Cultural Forces of Influence."

Johnny Johnson, a consultant with Peacemaker Ministries, trained board members July 13 on Peacemaker materials and will be active in the reconciliation initiative as it unfolds in coming months. Johnson also conducted a training session with MBC staffers on July 16.

Tolliver said he hopes to put Johnson in front of as many Missouri Baptists as possible to help with the peace process. He added that prayer meetings, biblical reconciliation sessions and world view conferences also would be held around Missouri as part of the process.

In delivering the report, Purvis reminded directors that more than a decade ago conservatives in Missouri succeeded in doing what others in Texas and Virginia failed to accomplish.

"Let me share that what happened in our Missouri Baptist Convention 11 years ago, with the conservative resurgence, was nothing short of a miracle of God," Purvis said.

"We desire that what takes place in our MBC is honoring and glorifying to God, edifying to the church and is consistent with God's Holy Word."

(Written by staff members of the MBC newsjournal, The Pathway. Word&Way has incorporated background information into the story. The Executive Board has prohibited Word&Way's attendance at its meetings for years.)

MBC messengers will celebrate and likely debate

The Missouri Baptist Convention's annual meeting will be held Oct. 26-28 at First Baptist Church of Raytown.

The event will feature a celebration of the 175th anniversary of the state convention's founding in 1834.

Messengers will hear reports

from the MBC Peace Committee (story above), the Agency Restoration Task Force (until recently known as the Legal Task Force) and MBC standing committees, including the Nominating Committee.

Already garnering considerable pre-annual meeting discus-

sion and expected to generate debate from the convention floor is the inclusion of the 2010 MBC budget of a line item calling for the use of \$468,957 in Cooperative Program funds to pay fees in the conventions's seven-year litigation against five Missouri Baptist entities.

The MBC filed suit in August 2002 against Windermere Baptist Conference Center, *Word&Way*, Missouri Baptist University, Missouri Baptist Foundation and The Baptist Home. The trustee boards of each modified their charters in 2000 and 2001 to allow self-

election of their own trustees.

The MBC earlier this year lost its case against Windermere and unsuccessfully exhausted its appeals of the judgment in favor of the conference center. As of press time, none of the other four had been set for trial.

Illinois pastor's accused killer faces evaluation

By **BOB ALLEN**

EDWARDSVILLE, Ill. (ABP) — A man accused of gunning down an Illinois Baptist pastor in the middle of a worship service last March will undergo court-ordered testing to determine whether he is competent to stand trial.

According to the Belleville, Ill., *News-Democrat*, lawyers for Terry Sedlacek filed papers arguing their client is bipolar, schizophrenic and has "visual and auditory hallucinations."

Judge Richard Tognarelli of Madison County gave the prosecution and defense two weeks to submit names of experts they want to evaluate Sedlacek, who is charged with first-degree murder in the March 8 death of Fred Winters, pastor of First Baptist Church in Maryville, Ill.

Sedlacek, 27, had no known connection with the congregation before he allegedly walked down the sanctuary aisle and opened fire at Winters, 45, the church's pastor of more than 20 years, as horrified worshippers looked on.

Some men in the congregation managed to subdue the assailant, but not before one bullet went straight through Winters' heart, killing him almost instantly.

After his arrest, an old newspaper report surfaced describing Sedlacek's declining mental health, which his parents attributed to Lyme disease.

Meanwhile, First Baptist Church announced July 19 that the congregation was taking preliminary steps toward forming a pastor-search committee to find a replacement for Winters.

"The difficult part of this announcement is that since we are a large church family, we are a family encompassing a wide variety of emotions, thoughts, and dynamics in our lives," said an article on the church Web site.

"Some desire to move forward, feeling the passion to see 'Greater things have yet to come' while others are hurting, still grieving, and desire to just wait a while longer."

Once in place, leaders said they expect the search committee to work 12 to 24 months before recommending a new pastor, in order to give the church time to heal and embrace the future.

"It is very difficult for people to say goodbye to the familiar way of how things were done, say goodbye to the fond relationship and emotional bonds with Pastor Fred,

and then be able to embrace a new way of doing things," the statement said. "That's a lot of change."

Since the tragedy the church's attendance is up, baptisms have increased and finances are stronger than they have been in a long time, according to the statement.



Slain pastor
 Fred Winters

Recently the Southern Baptist Convention publishing arm honored Winters by naming him posthumously the first recipient of a new Holman Christian Study Bible Award honoring excellence in preaching and Bible teaching.

"The first HCSB Award goes to a former student of mine, a friend who led First Baptist to unprecedented growth and biblical faithfulness," Thom Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources, said while presenting the award to Winters' widow and daughters at the SBC annual meeting June 23.

Rainer told messengers that Winters died "while he was preaching the Word as he had done faithfully at First Baptist Church of Maryville for nearly 22 years."

Earlier the Illinois Senate and House of Representatives passed resolutions honoring Winters.

Since the tragedy, a detective with the Madison County Sheriff's Office has been speaking in area churches with a presentation he developed about improving congregational security plans.

"Churches should have a security plan, especially now," Capt. Brad Wells, a 17-year veteran of law enforcement who now serves as the county's chief of detectives, told the *Alton Telegraph*.

"If somebody wants to do something bad, they are going to do it," he said. "But if you put a plan in place, you may prevent something worse from happening."

Student missionaries still critical following accident

BILLINGS, Mont. (BP) — Two "Innovator" student missionaries remained in critical condition at St. Vincent's Hospital in Billings, Mont., July 24, three days after their SUV flipped and rolled over several times, injuring them and two companions.

A dozen of their fellow student missionaries are already using the tragedy to share Christ with tourists at nearby Yellowstone National Park.

North American Mission Board resort missionary Brad Lartigue — a local, full-time resort missionary for NAMB and the four students' supervisor — said 21-year-old Jeremy Vangsnes is still the most critically injured of the four.

Vangsnes underwent a procedure July 23 to relieve pressure on his brain and reduce swelling, Lartigue said.

The driver of the Jeep Cherokee, 21-year-old Scott Minear of Marietta, Ga., also remains in critical condition but an MRI July 23 revealed no significant spinal or neck damage, Lartigue added. Conscientious, Minear, a University of Georgia junior, is wearing a "halo" medical device to restrict head movement.

Jeremy Vangsnes' two brothers — 23-year-old Dan and 19-year-old Ryan — also were in the SUV at the time of the accident. The three brothers, residents of Spartanburg, S.C., were on a 350-mile side trip from Yellowstone to Glacier National Park, also in Montana, for a family reunion. Minear went along for the ride.

Prior to moving to Spartanburg, the Vangsnes family lived in North Dakota.

"Dan has had three surgeries since the accident but suffered no significant head injuries," Lartigue told Baptist Press. "Dan is talkative and lucid — he knows what happened." Requiring only stitches, Ryan was treated and released from Deaconess Hospital in Bozeman, Mont.

Both the Minear and Vangsnes families immediately flew to Montana.

The Vangsnes brothers were nominated as Innovator missionaries by the North American Mission Board, while Minear's appointment came through Georgia Baptist Campus Ministries.

The Vangsnes brothers and Minear were four of 17 Innovator missionaries who arrived at Yellowstone Park on Memorial Day Weekend to minister to resort visitors for 10 weeks, Lartigue said. They were slated to return home Aug. 3.

"The other kids are doing

vention is doing a great job of making every effort to help these two families," Culbreth said. "The spirits of the two families are good. They're praying for a miracle for Jeremy."

The brothers' parents, Mark and Kathy Vangsnes, are members of First Baptist Church in Spartanburg, S.C. Minear's parents, Frank and Tammy Minear, are members of Crosspointe Community Church, a Southern Baptist congregation in Roswell, Ga.

"I told the parents that the entire NAMB family and Southern Baptists everywhere are praying for their sons," Culbreth said.

Echoing Lartigue, Culbreth said he visited with the other Innovator student missionaries at West Yellowstone Park. "They're in good spirits and praying for a miracle for Jeremy," he said.

Culbreth said the dozen remaining Innovator student missionaries crafted posters on Thursday night with photos of Jeremy, Scott and Dan, and displayed them at Yellowstone, asking passersby to pray for their three friends.

"When tourists would come by and ask questions," Culbreth said, "the students would use the accident to remind people that 'you don't know how long you have or what's coming down the road. Do you know Christ?'"

Innovator missionaries are self-funded student missionaries — assigned by NAMB or a state Baptist campus ministry — who are involved in resort ministry at various tourist venues throughout the United States.

"The spirits of the two families are good. They're praying for a miracle for Jeremy." — Dennis Culbreth

fine.... I'm trying to reassure them," said Lartigue, who acknowledges that his own emotions have been on a rollercoaster since the accident. "I'm strong in my faith and I know God's in control. But at times over the last few days, I have been overwhelmed."

Morris H. Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, made a surprise visit to the Billings hospital yesterday, Lartigue added. Chapman, who coincidentally was vacationing nearby, said he learned of the accident via his Blackberry and the SBC Web site.

Dennis Culbreth, senior assistant to NAMB president Geoff Hammond, immediately flew to Montana upon receiving word of the accident.

"The Montana Baptist Con-



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Me to proclaim free-
dom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight
for the blind, to release
the oppressed...."*

Luke 4:18
NIV

More Word&Way upgrades!

This issue of *Word&Way* is different than any we have ever produced in our 113 years of history. Every page is in full color. Color throughout the newspaper is our new norm, beginning with this issue.

Our staff has been in transition for several weeks. We have anticipated a move from using the printing and mailing services of one company — Tribune Publishing in Columbia — to beginning a new relationship with Central Missouri Newspapers, Inc., associated with the *News Tribune* newspaper in Jefferson City.

Word&Way had been a customer of Tribune Publishing for 20 years. The printing relationship began in July 1989, and the newspaper immediately began using spot color (usually a single color) regularly on its front page and in its center two pages. Occasionally *Word&Way* sprang for full color to use color photography and color graphics, usually near holidays like Christmas and Easter and in special missions sections.

A major redesign of *Word&Way* brought full color to the front and back pages and center spread of every issue of the newspaper beginning in October 1998. That enabled color photography and color advertising. Through such transitions, the folks at Tribune Publishing held our hands and provided the training and assistance needed to move to each new level.

More than 10 years ago, we moved the labeling and mailing of *Word&Way* from being an in-house function to a service contracted from Tribune Publishing.

Our staff has forged close relationships with the sales, service and pre-press staffers at Tribune, and we will miss the regular contact. They looked over our work exactly like we hoped they would, often spotting mistakes we overlooked, usually before the presses started running. Staffers in their mailing area were

allies when we needed to solve problems related to poor postal delivery from time to time.

All of that makes our move bittersweet. We tip our hats to our friends at Tribune Publishing and certainly wish the best for each of them and the company they serve.

Our decision to give our business to Central Missouri Newspapers, Inc., came on the heels of competitive bidding ultimately involving four Missouri publishing firms.

Ironically, the firm that is now handling our business is the one we left 20 years ago. At that time, *Word&Way* had a significantly higher number of churches using our personalized back-page newsletter service. The Jefferson City company wasn't able to handle the logistics required to support that process, and Tribune Publishing in Columbia was.

A significant selling point for our new printer is the ability for us to present every page in color. Thumb through these pages and you will see the difference it makes. We will be adjusting to this new look and expect to improve the attractiveness and readability of *Word&Way* steadily as we move forward.

By making this move, *Word&Way* also acquired another capability that we have never had before. Churches may still run personalized newsletter pages on our back cover, but now they are not limited to

black and white. They can design, and we can produce, their pages in full color.

This very affordable church-page option will offer significant opportunities for churches to provide *Word&Way* subscriptions to members and package their own well-designed and colorful newsletters with the paper. This program conserves church staff time and effort, and congregational expense.

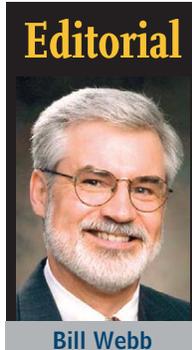
Circulation coordinator Ken Satterfield at ksatterfield@wordandway.org (573-635-2130, ext. 8) coordinates sales of church subscription plans, while communications assistant Jan Conley at jconley@wordandway.org (ext. 2) works with participating churches to receive their newsletter pages and forward them to our printer. Please feel free to contact either with your questions.

We hope you will let us know what you think of this next-generation version of *Word&Way*. We hope you also will pass along the word to friends who perhaps haven't noticed what *Word&Way* is up to these days.

What hasn't changed are our purpose, mission, vision and stated values. We exist to glorify God. Our mission is to accurately inform Baptists and others of relevant news, promote the work of Christ and encourage inspirational living. Our vision is to be the preferred source of Kingdom information in our state. And our stated values are integrity, accuracy, freedom, excellence, truth, responsibility and service.

Our staff and trustees believe what we do is important. These latest improvements underscore our commitment to make our ministry of information the very best it can be.

Bill Webb is editor of *Word&Way*.



Bill Webb

Vacation Bible School déjà vu

"I need a gangplank," my wife announced.

"What?"

"A gangplank!"

"You mean like to walk the plank on a pirate ship?"

"No, like the plank you walk up to enter a cruise ship."

"Now where am I supposed to find a gangplank?"

"Make one."

It's Vacation Bible School time. I made the gangplank; then she said she forgot to tell me it had to have a hand rail. After the hand rail, she wanted a log "to stick up out of the water to anchor the ship."

I think she has used some of everything in the house, curtains, saran wrap, all our suitcases, even the rope I keep hidden in my shop. She also spent a fortune at Walmart and used

Shepherd's Call



Wade Paris

up two ink cartridges on our computer. Next week at home, I'll be the chief cook and bottle washer because she will be "too busy with Bible School."

I am not complaining. I've been through this at least 50 times before. Vacation Bible School is the time to be creative. Adults like old repetitive stuff, but kids like to use their imagination and have fun. Wise adults figure out how to teach kids good things while they are having fun.

It's always fun to see adults, some older than me, dust the cobwebs off their hearts and brains to think and act like children again.

The dream of Bible School is to teach boys and girls about Jesus so He can shape the rest of their lives. It can happen. It happened for me. I made my first birdhouse in Bible School

and learned God knows every sparrow and knows me, too.

We don't make birdhouses in Bible School anymore, but I still make them in my shop. Sometimes I write Matthew 10:29 above the entrance and give them as gifts.

Vacation Bible School is an old and wonderful tool for teaching and reaching people for Jesus. Many effective methods of the past are going by the wayside, e.g. revivals, Sunday School, youth choirs.

Thank goodness Bible School continues. A wise man once said, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is older he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

You may recall I have written about Bible School before. Great! It's worth doing every year.

Wade Paris writes a weekly syndicated newspaper column, "The Shepherd's Call." He also is a *Word&Way* trustee.

MBC lawsuits' winners and losers

The lawsuits filed by the Missouri Baptist Convention against the five institutions that began selecting their own trustees in 2000 and 2001 have gone on for about seven years now. Only the one against Windermere Baptist Conference Center appears to have been settled. With continuing delays, amended filings and appeals, they could continue another seven years. The estimated cost so far is about \$10 million.

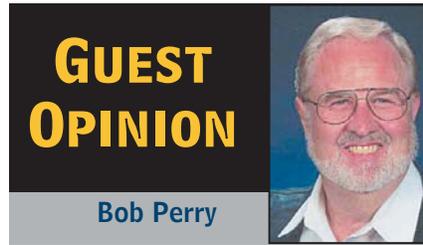
Even though the suits are still ongoing, I am ready to definitively declare who are the winners and losers. Here is the scorecard:

Winners of the lawsuits:

1. Lawyers. The vast majority of the \$10,000,000 spent has gone to attorneys. The attorneys who advised the MBC to sue, the attorneys who predicted the suits were winnable, the attorneys who pressed the cases and churned them through amendment after amendment and appeal after appeal, and the attorneys that had to be engaged by the defendants. These are the only winners.

Losers of the lawsuits:

1. The non-believing world that has watched a steady stream of news about self-proclaimed followers of Jesus Christ fighting with each other in the public square. These are souls driven that much further from Christ because of the negative image Christians create for themselves. I list these persons first because Baptists have always claimed to have a primary concern for lost souls.
2. The Missouri Baptist Convention has lost in so many ways it is hard to list them all. Here are a few:
 - The MBC has lost its biblical integrity by directly violating the clear instruction of scripture in 1 Corinthians 6. The denomination that prided itself in a belief in biblical inerrancy and literal interpretation conveniently rationalized its actions in suing fellow believers.
 - The MBC has lost the financial support of many of its churches and many individual Missouri Baptists as it has spent huge amounts of money on the suits. The argument about whether Cooperative Program



money technically has or will be used for the suits is pointless. The plain fact is that almost every dollar that comes to the MBC is the result of the sacrificial giving of Missouri Baptists and their churches, who are motivated by a love for missions. Whether the immediate source of the funds was an equity line against the Baptist Building or a rebate from Guidestone Financial Services, the origin of the money was the tithes and offerings of God's people.

- The MBC has lost the respect of other state conventions. Around the Southern Baptist Convention, they look at Missouri as the bad example of how conventions handle disputes with their affiliated institutions.

- The MBC has lost in court one ruling after another. In spite of continuous rosy predictions from the attorneys and their elected leaders, the convention has lost every significant ruling, every amended filing and every appeal to date. (One appeal was sent back to the lower court for reconsideration, but the outcome turned out the same.)

- The MBC has lost its passion for evangelism and mission. In the process of devoting time, energy and money to the lawsuits, the calling of Christ to fulfill the Great Commission in the spirit of the Great Commandment has been sorely neglected.

3. Rank-and-file Missouri Baptists have lost the services and benefits offered by the five institutions. By the

decisions made by the MBC, many do not feel they can enjoy the beauties and inspiration of Windermere, read the news and information provided by an independent *Word & Way*, or utilize the services of the Missouri Baptist Foundation, The Baptist Home or Missouri Baptist University. The five institutions have continued to strive to serve all Missouri Baptists in the same ways they have since their founding. The banning and boycotting by the MBC has certainly hurt the institutions, but it has hurt Missouri Baptists even more by pulling them away from places and institutions they loved.

4. The five institutions that have been sued have lost. Even if they prevail in court eventually, they have lost precious time stolen by the court cases, precious resources paid for legal expenses and energy that could otherwise have been devoted to the fulfilling of their missions. They have had to live with seven years of stress and undergo the pain of having misinformation and attacks directed their way. They have been accused of "stealing" the institutions when the only action they took involved who would elect their trustees so that they would not be caught up in and undermined by convention politics.

5. Churches and religious organizations that buy liability insurance in the future. One particular insurance company covered the MBC and several of the agencies. That company has been out millions in claims, and that cost will be passed on to future policy holders in increased premiums.

It would be wonderful if these suits would end right now, but whether they do or not, both the MBC and the five sued institutions have lost. They have lost things, both tangible and intangible, that may never be recovered.

Bob Perry is the leader of the Congregational Health Team for the Baptist General Convention of Missouri. He is the founder and president of Organizational Health Associates.

News analysis: American Baptists and diversity

BY ROBERT MARUS

Associated Baptist Press

PASADENA, Calif. — The makeup of the American Baptist Churches USA is one of the most diverse in American Christianity — ethnically, regionally and ideologically. Gathering for their ABC biennial meeting June 25-28 in a region that embodies that diversity, 1,200 delegates and visitors revealed both the glory and the struggle inherent in such inclusiveness.

Meeting a 15-minute drive from the heart of Los Angeles in Pasadena, Calif., delegates participated in worship and other gatherings that featured traditional hymns, mariachi bands, gospel choirs and even Hawaii's first African-American hula dance troupe. They heard featured speakers from multiple racial backgrounds and national origins and enjoyed Latin and Asian cuisine at a reception that program organizers dubbed "We are ABC: A Multi-Cultural Family Fest."

Delegates gathered in small-group "caucus" meetings for African-American, Asian, Hispanic, Haitian and Portuguese-speaking churches and ministers. And, for the first time ever, American Baptist Burmese refugees gathered for their own meeting.

"We are 62 percent immigrant congregations. We are at 120 countries represented — [the] gospel is preached in 48 languages in American Baptist Churches of Los Angeles," said Samuel Chetti, the executive minister of ABC of Los Angeles and Congregations of the Southwest and Hawaii, whose region played host to the meeting.

"I would say we have Anglos in every church, unless they are language-based," Chetti continued. "And I'd say 35 percent — 30 percent or so — are purely multi-ethnic congregations; they have everybody." Chetti said formerly traditional Anglo churches in the region have become multi-ethnic. "I can't imagine one church that's truly Anglo," he said.

But the very reason Chetti's region exists in its present form points to the conflict that can sometimes accompany such broad diversity. Formerly a local association of churches in Los Angeles and its immediate suburbs, Chetti's region ended up taking in churches that left the former ABC of the Pacific Southwest region in 2006.

That came after the conservative-dominated region decided to dissociate itself from the national denomination, mainly over regional leaders' perception that the

national denomination had been insufficiently resolute in denouncing homosexuality and excluding gay-friendly American Baptist congregations.

Some continuing tensions over sexuality and other divisive issues were on display in the delegates' narrow vote June 29 to reject a massive restructuring proposal. Denominational officials — who had been working on the proposal for more than two years — backed it, but progressive American Baptist leaders and some others expressed serious misgivings about the changes.

Delegates ultimately voted 377-217 in favor of the changes — failing, by a handful of votes, to muster the two-thirds majority needed to pass them. They would have spun off the denomination's two mission boards into quasi-autonomous entities, altered the form of representation on ABCUSA's main governing board and changed how American Baptists approve policy and resolutions.

In particular, progressive congregations and organizations feared that the changes would further marginalize their voice within the denomination and make it more difficult to rescind past ABC statements condemning homosexuality.

"To me, the need to pass these bylaws

was such that I felt we could have come back and reexamined those issues afterwards," said Tim Bonney, pastor of First Baptist Church, Greater Des Moines, Iowa.

A former ABC General Board member who served on an earlier committee that studied streamlining the denominational structure, Bonney said ABC's current top boards are simply too large and cumbersome to run the denomination's affairs at peak efficiency. "We can't afford our current structure; it's just too big."

Besides their stunning diversity — denominational officials tout the fact that there is no single ethnic majority among their approximately 1.3 million members in about 5,500 congregations — they occupy an ideological space somewhere between conservative evangelicalism and liberal mainline Protestantism.

"My congregation is also politically diverse, theologically diverse and we're comfortable with that; we like that," Chetti said. "I think American Baptists are generally kind of comfortable with that, but it's both our greatest strength and greatest weakness at the same time."



Some churches aren't waiting. Instead, they're taking seminary graduates and mentoring them for one or two years, sometimes in conjunction with an established seminary program, often on their own.

Training the next generation of ministers requires **new** models



BY ROBERT DILDAY

Virginia Religious Herald

When the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship held its general assembly recently in Houston, leaders documented a quiet shift that went almost unnoticed among the 2,000 people attending the annual meeting.

For the first time, participants from the theological schools that partner with the CBF outnumbered graduates of the six Southern Baptist Convention seminaries, which once provided the vast majority of church leaders for moderate Baptist churches in the South. Most of those schools are less than 20 years old.

At a meeting earlier this year, directors of the Baptist General Convention of Texas Executive Board heard a report that at spring commencement, Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary and Hardin-Simmons University's Logsdon Seminary graduated more Texas students with master of divinity degrees than Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The change points to what theological educators around the country maintain. The way congregations discover and train their ministers is in transition, and local churches are driving that change, particularly as they reclaim their role in calling out and mentoring potential church leaders.

"The whole question of the way we train ministers is under negotiation," said Curtis Freeman, director of the Baptist

House of Studies at Duke Divinity School in Durham, N.C. Ron Crawford, president of Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond (Va.), agrees: "Theological training is going through a great transition."

For churches, the question is critical. Many observers say the formulaic approach to seeking ministerial leadership — turning to graduates of a trusted pool of seminaries, with master of divinity degrees for small and medium-sized churches, doctor of philosophy degrees for "big steeple" churches — has broken down, in part because of changing expectations among congregations.

In the past 25 years, diminished denominational ties and the growth of movements such as the emerging church have created a demand for new kinds of ministers — and new ways to train them.

"We need a new type of theological education," said Bruce Corley, president of the B.H. Carroll Theological Institute in Arlington, Texas. "We need a new generation of ministers trained in a church-based theological education that will bring academia and the people together."

Statistics bear that out, Corley noted. There's been a "sea change," he says, in the age students begin seminary studies — 35 years on average. Meanwhile, only 15 percent of Baptist pastors under the age of 35 have seminary degrees.

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(Continued from page 6)

Not only are seminary students older; fewer of them are aiming for ministry in local churches. Only 25 percent of graduates of seminaries accredited by the Association of Theological Schools — the primary accrediting agency in the United States — enter local church ministry. In Baptist circles, the figure is 15 percent, Corley said.

“There are lots of ways to explain this,” Corley said. “Part of it has to do with crisis management in churches, burnout, dismissals, conflict — those sorts of things. But I also think the younger generation is on the cusp of a totally different way of learning. That’s where the training process needs a radical overhaul.”

Some churches aren’t waiting. Instead, they’re taking seminary graduates and mentoring them for one or two years, sometimes in conjunction with an established seminary program, often on their own.

Since 2002, Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, has maintained a two-year pastoral residency program that has graduated 13 ministers. Funded in part by the Lilly Foundation, Wilshire’s program mentors four potential pastors at a time, each receiving a stipend of about \$40,000 a year plus benefits, to provide “confidence and skills necessary to become effective pastors,” said George Mason, senior pastor at the church.

“The residents are part of our staff, but they don’t have a program assignment,” Mason said. “They participate in all kinds of things like hospital rotations and worship planning, preach on a regular basis and take Wednesday night prayer times. We largely teach them what is involved in the pastoral life, so that when they leave us and go to a senior pastorate, the goal is that nothing will surprise them. They know how to exegete a congregation, how to develop a budget, how to hire and fire staff, if they need to do that.”

For Andrew Daugherty, a graduate of the divinity school at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C., who spent two years at Wilshire, “The residency helped me gain confidence in and deepened the (ministry) skills I have.”

Daugherty now is pastor of Christ Church, a new Baptist congregation in Rockwall.

“It confirmed that, yes, I do have gifts and graces for ministry,” he said.

Daugherty said he also gained competence in ministry “blind spots.”

“The great gift of the residency was, the buck didn’t stop with me,” Daugherty said. “So, I had freedom to take risks and be more honest than if I had gone straight to a church (after graduation). I learned how to be gracious, how to be agile and to do it in a way that honored the people in the congregation — not steamrolling through the congregation because I think I’m the answer to all the problems. I learned confidence and humility in navigating the challenges of leadership in a church.”

A recurring question that guided his residency, Daugherty said, was: What if a pastor’s first church actually was his or her second church? Residency allowed him to “learn the ropes” in a safe environment.

“There are inevitably certain aspects of church leadership that you just can’t know,” he said. “We need to create an environment in which (potential ministers) can try new things in ministry without costing them a job.”

Wilshire’s residency program has shown results, Mason said, because “we are always working on what makes a successful senior pastor. Churches whose real goal is to get an inexpensive staff member don’t really have a pastoral residency program.”

(Continued on page 8)

Theological institutions with a Baptist tie provide firm foundation



Baptist Seminary of Kentucky

<http://www.bsky.org/>

Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond

<http://www.btsr.edu/s/918/start.aspx>

Baptist University of the Americas

<http://www.bua.edu/>

Beeson Divinity School, Samford University

www.beesondivinity.com

Baptist Studies Program, Brite Divinity School, Texas Christian University

www.brite.tcu.edu/degrees/baptist.asp

B.H. Carroll Theological Institute

www.bhcti.org

Campbell University Divinity School

web.campbell.edu/divinity

Baptist Studies Program, Candler School of Theology, Emory University

www.candler.emory.edu/ACADEMIC/BAPTIST/index.cfm

Central Baptist Theological Seminary

www.cbts.edu

Baptist House of Studies, Duke Divinity School, Duke University

www.divinity.duke.edu/programs/baptisthouse

George W. Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University

www.baylor.edu/truett

Logsdon School of Theology, Hardin-Simmons University

www.hsutx.edu/academics/logsdon/

John Leland Center for Theological Studies

www.leland.edu

M. Christopher White School of Divinity, Gardner Webb University

www.gardner-webb.edu/academics/graduate/divinity

McAfee School of Theology, Mercer University

www2.mercer.edu/theology

Palmer Theological Seminary, Eastern University

www.palmerseminary.edu

Wake Forest University Divinity School

divinity.wfu.edu

Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology, Virginia Union University

www.vuu.edu/Theology/home.htm

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

www.sbts.edu

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

www.swbts.edu

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

www.sebts.edu

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

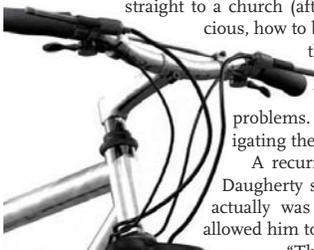
www.nobts.edu

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

www.mbts.edu

Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary

www.ggbs.edu



“There are inevitably certain aspects of church leadership that you just can’t know. We need to create an environment in which (potential ministers) can try new things in ministry without costing them a job.”

—Andrew Daugherty

Training successful leaders must include both biblical foundation and mentoring

(continued from page 7)

Other necessary components of a successful residency program, Mason said, include:

- A healthy congregation. “No one wants to get into a conflicted situation. That’s not going to be a generative experience.”
- An established relationship between the church and its senior pastor. “A new pastor shouldn’t undertake it. Trust needs to have been built up.”
- Adequate resources. “It’s a fairly capital-intensive program. A lot of churches can do this — the question is, what financial resources are available? We pay a stipend that’s the equivalent of a public school teacher.”

In attempting to meet congregations’ leadership needs, some seminaries are diversifying their degree offerings. At the John Leland Center for Theological Studies in Washington, D.C.’s Northern Virginia suburbs, the master of arts in Christian leadership is attracting increasing numbers of students.

“The Association of Theological Schools says enrollment in the (traditional) master of divinity degree has been in decline,” said Mark Olson, Leland’s president. “The only seminary degree enrollments that are growing are other kinds of master’s degrees.”

Leland — which offers classes not only at its main Falls Church, Va., headquarters but also in Roanoke, Va., and Virginia’s coastal Hampton Roads area — maintains a core curriculum of theology, biblical studies and church history but is expanding training in practical ministry.

“We still think it’s important to have a biblical and theological foundation, but we do feel that students need a greater focus on how to lead,” Olson said. “A significant portion of ministry is not just head knowledge but how to move people in a particular direction, how to get people dedicated to a vision, to give generously, to encourage a congregation to, say, form a Bible study that draws people and welcomes newcomers. These all require a knowledge of leadership, as well as knowledge of the Bible.”

Modifying degree offerings in response to churches’ needs is crucial, said Freeman of Duke Divinity School. “I’m not sure every congregation needs an M.Div. pastor,” he said. “I definitely don’t think every ‘big steeple’ church needs a Ph.D. pastor.”

“Congregations need to be talking and thinking more about what they need for leadership,” Freeman said. “One of the things I think happened in our tight Baptist denominational system in the South is that the whole question of calling for ministry, of preparation for ministry, became institutionalized. It was something only done by seminaries. Local churches stepped out of that or they played a minor role.

“One thing I see happening is congregations taking back a more active role of deciding who is called to ministry — to put candidates in the life of ministry and test them out.”

By making classes more accessible, seminaries increasingly are enhancing that discernment process. Some — like Leland with multiple Virginia sites or B.H. Carroll with approximately 22 “teaching churches” scattered across Texas — are avoiding costly campuses in favor of leased or borrowed space.

Historically, “our investments have been in buildings and large campuses,” Corley said. “It’s going to be very difficult to justify campuses with the high cost of maintenance and personnel in relation to the cost of students.

“Right now, accessibility and affordability are the two biggest issues in theological education,” he added.

And for most seminaries, that inevitably will mean leaps into the digital world.

“The most popular form of higher education in this country is blended learning — face-to-face class time with support in the electronic world,” Corley said.

“Theological education needs a mix of both those things,” Freeman agreed. “Ideally, if you want to educate someone, actually form them, you need to have time with the student, one-on-one discussion times. But online education, when it’s mixed with face-to-face can be done very productively.

Crawford, of Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, is a recent convert to online learning.

“I wasn’t two years ago, but I am now,” he said. “I changed because I realized more and more can be done online and most seminary students are extremely comfortable with it.... The truth is, based on student evaluations, online classes are ranked higher than face-to-face ones. Part of that is probably

“We kind of lay all the blame at seminaries’ feet when they don’t prepare a pastor well enough to succeed. ... But the practical dimensions of ministry — exegeting a culture or a church, not a text — are better learned in practice and in a church setting.”

—George Mason



because the students who choose online prefer to study online, so that’s right up their alley. But even so, it suggests that online education can be done as well as face-to-face.”

Online learning will help churches retain leaders they call out, rather than send them off to distant campuses. “One of our purposes is to call out ministers in their settings,” Corley said.

But, Crawford warns, churches should be careful not to trade convenience for quality. “In my mind, there is always going to need to be high quality in the training of ministers,” he said.

And while he acknowledges that free-standing theological institutions like BTSR will need “to work extra hard” in the future to survive, their success will depend on the extent that they maintain close links to the local church.

Mason agrees and believes churches can enhance the training done in the academy. “Frankly, we ask too much of seminaries,” he said. “We kind of lay all the blame at seminaries’ feet when they don’t prepare a pastor well enough to succeed.

“There was a time when pastors were always trained at the feet of other pastors. They lived in pastors’ studies and read their books and learned ministry that way. ... Seminaries and divinity schools can do things better than churches when it comes to the intellectual aspect of training.... But the practical dimensions of ministry — exegeting a culture or a church, not a text — are better learned in practice and in a church setting.”

Resources

Association of Theological Schools
www.ats.edu

Center for Congregational Health
www.healthychurch.org

Lilly Endowment
www.lillyendowment.org/religion.html



BGCM Message

Baptist General Convention of Missouri
 1900 N. Providence Road, Suite 301 • Columbia, MO 65202
 (888) 420-BGCM • (573) 441-2574 • www.baptistgcm.org



Help New Churches

Owen Taylor
 Church Planting Team Leader

There is a new church in St. Louis called "Shammah Church" and its members are new Americans from the African country of The Congo. Most of them speak French and they are very excited to have a church where the worship is in the French language. This past Sunday they had a special celebration and after the service one of the members was asked about the purpose of her new church. She said, "We're getting ready for Jesus to come back!" WOW! Is

that what you are doing at your church? I want to be more conscious of getting ready for Jesus to come back. My prayer is that all of our churches would find the new energy that this focus can bring to us. New churches have a way of having a clearer vision of what the important things really are. All churches have an opportunity to discover a vision for doing the will of God in reaching the world with the Gospel.

There are 195,000,000 unchurched people in the United States. This puts us in fourth place behind only India, China, and Malaysia in the amount of people who are unchurched. There was a 20% decline in church attendance in the U.S.A. in the decade of the 90's. There are 4,000 new churches started each year on average in our country but there are on average 3,700 churches that close every year as well. That is a gain of 300 churches annually but that does not even keep pace with the annual population increase. We are falling behind in the goal of even reaching America with the Gospel. We need our churches to be healthier and more effective in their mission and ministries. We need these healthy churches to be willing and purposeful in starting new healthy church plants.

A new focus for the BGCM church planting team is helping churches know how to get involved with new church work. We will continue to offer direction and assistance to the church planter. However, our specific emphasis will be on helping Missouri churches find effective ways to help in new church work across Missouri. A single church does not have to be able to fully fund and oversee a church plant to be involved. It is a new day in church planting and there are numerous ways for your church to have a real part and make a real difference. Please contact us and find out how you can help start a new church to help reach the unchurched in our state. Please pray that God will give your church a real desire to "get ready for Jesus to come back." Make a commitment to be a part of the renewal that comes to those churches willing to take the challenge of the Great Commission. Pray for the courage to take your eyes off of your own needs and see the needs of the world all around us. Contact your church planting team and become involved in starting a new church in Missouri. Contact me at otaylor@baptistgcm.org or (888) 420-2426, ext. 708

Free Download from the Congregational Health Team!

Dr. Bob Perry, Team Leader for the Congregational Health Team, has written a 13-page paper called, "Does Your Church Think Strategically?" The document can be downloaded free of charge as a service to church leaders from the Baptist General Convention of Missouri's Web site (www.baptistgcm.org).

The paper lists 100 questions to evaluate how well the church is prepared and preparing itself for a 21st Century future. It is designed to touch off ideas for "new paradigm" thinking about the ministry of the church.

Possible uses of the paper might be:

1. At the beginning of a strategy planning process, it might be a helpful exercise for the planning team to work through it and discuss it to encourage strategic and creative thinking.
2. It could be discussed in sections (it is a 10-part document) by a church staff as part of a self-evaluation or planning process.
3. It could be a discussion starter for a deacon retreat or series of deacon meetings to encourage strategic thinking about the church.
4. It might be useful to the senior pastor as a personal exercise of evaluating the church and developing vision for the future.
5. A church council or coordination team could let the paper lead to discussions to reshape the way the church calendars, budgets and/or structures itself for ministry.

Give to Missions Offering

If you would like to give to the Baptist General Convention of Missouri's missions offering but were unable to attend the missions banquet, send your money to the BGCM offices marked for "missions offering." Every penny you give will help Guatemalan Baptists. Please join us in supporting this important missions effort! Together, we can help fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. If you would like more information about the BGCM's partnership with Guatemalan Baptists, including how to become involved, contact BGCM Missions Mobilization Team Leader Gary Snowden at (888) 420-2426, ext. 709 or at gsnowden@baptistgcm.org.

Watch the Baptist Border Crossing

If you missed any or all of the Baptist Border Crossing, you can now catch up by watching it online. Or, if you were there and want to watch something again, you can do that. Go to the Baptist Border Crossing's Web site (www.baptistbordercrossing.org) and click on video tab. A link there will take you to the archived videos. Plenary session speakers included author Tony Campolo, North American Baptist Fellowship President David Goatley, Baptist World Alliance President David Coffey, evangelist Carolyn Ann Knight, and former U.S. President Jimmy Carter. Each one is worth listening to!

In addition to watching sessions online, you can also order a DVD with the sessions so you can watch them later. More information is available at the Baptist Border Crossing Web site. The cost, including shipping, for the DVD is only \$6.

To learn more about the Baptist Border Crossing gathering, visit the news section of the Baptist Border Crossing Web site. There you will find several articles about the weekend. You can also see lots of photos on the Web site. Stay tuned for more information about upcoming efforts from the Baptist Border Crossing Network.

The Holy Land

Three Hill brothers—Jim Hill (BGCM Executive Director), Drew Hill (Pastor of FBC, Sedalia) and Pete Hill (Pastor of FBC, Smithville)—and some minister friends will be leading a trip to Israel in 2010. The group will leave on January 12, 2010, for an 11-day trip and return on January 22, 2010. The trip is truly an investment in your spiritual growth. In Israel the tour will visit Caesarea (by the Sea), Haifa, Megiddo, Nazareth, Cana, Tiberias, take a boat ride to Capernaum, see the Mount of Beatitudes, Church of the five loaves and two fishes, Caesarea Philippi, Jericho, Qumran, the Dead Sea, Masada, Jerusalem, Bethlehem and much more. If you are interested in more information, a trip itinerary, or detailed cost information, contact Jim at jimhill@baptistgcm.org or (573) 659-3838. We hope you can join us for this special trip.



BGCM
digest

Shreveport pastor: National Guard, hospital were prepared for July 12 church bus crash

BY BOB ALLEN

SHREVEPORT, La. (ABP) — Both a National Guard unit that responded at the scene of a July 12 church-bus accident and the hospital where most of the victims were taken had recently received training for situations similar to what actually occurred, according to the congregation's pastor.

Greg Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church in Shreveport, La., said in his July 19 sermon a detachment of the Alabama National Guard's 2101st Transportation Company that stopped on the roadside to rescue victims pinned under the overturned bus was preparing for deployment in January to Afghanistan.

The bus was carrying members of the church's youth group and their adult chaperones to a camp in Georgia when it blew a tire and rolled over on an interstate highway near Meridian, Miss. The Guard unit happened to be traveling mere moments behind the accident.

Just weeks earlier, the pastor said, unit members went through specific training for combat medical support that included how to upright an overturned military vehicle.

Hunt, former senior pastor of Holmeswood Baptist Church

in Kansas City, called it one of a number of "uncanny things" surrounding the accident that he doubts were purely coincidental. Another the pastor noted was that he did not learn until visiting Rush Foundation Hospital in Meridian the Tuesday following the wreck that the hospital recently revised its plan to handle disasters.

"They had gone through training, just completed it and then just had their readiness signed off on," he said. "And guess what the first day of the implementation of that new disaster policy was? Last Sunday [the day of the accident]. Coincidence?"

Hunt said neither the guardsmen nor the hospital staff were planning specifically for such a bus crash, but they were prepared for it when it happened.

Similarly, he said, Christians

cannot pre-plan for every possibility in life, but they can prepare themselves for uncertainties with spiritual tools of faith, hope and love.

Hunt said some worshipers might have not been adequately

prepared to handle the tragedy. "It may be that last week you found your faith really faltering," he said. "Who can blame you?"

"There are moments when those times come, but God is still present and will step into the circumstances. And He will teach us, and He will use these experiences to develop more of the skills of our faith."

"There are moments when those times come, but God is still present and will step into the circumstances. And He will teach us, and He will use these experiences to develop more of the skills of our faith."

— Pastor Greg Hunt

he will teach us, and he will use these experiences to develop more of the skills of our faith."

"This last week we have learned this in spades, that life is fragile," Hunt told the congregation. "It can be here one day and it can be here one moment and the next moment it can be gone."

Even with precautions, Hunt

said, accidents happen. "Despite our best efforts, milk spills, tires blow and buses roll over on the highway," he said.

Some people, he said, respond to that fact by withdrawing and trying to control their environment in an effort to eliminate every contingency.

"You and I simply cannot plan every conceivable alternative of what might happen next," he said. "There's no way to do that. You go into lockdown if you try. You give up your 'yes' to life."

The other extreme, he said, is to give up hope.

"Accidents happen, but we don't have to respond to that by either locking ourselves down behind a fortress wall of vain security or waving the white flag of surrender and throwing ourselves on the mercies of fickle fate," he said.

Rather, he said, "We can throw ourselves into the arms of the all-powerful God, who superintends all of creation and every life circumstance and is bound and determined to bring glory to his name through the triumph of good over anything life can give us, and rest in him."

Sports Crusaders Day in St. Louis; tickets available

The St. Louis Cardinals have designated Aug. 15 as "Sports Crusaders Day" at the ballpark, and good seats are still available.

Sports Crusaders executive director Randy Curless said the tickets are for a 6:15 p.m. start pitting the Cardinals against the San Diego Padres.

He describes Sports Crusaders Day as a win-win for supporters and his organization. Tickets are available for \$25 each for outfield terrace box seats and \$30 for outfield loge box seating, a reduction from the normal prices of \$32 and \$39 respectively.

Sports Crusaders will receive \$15 per ticket to assist the sports evangelism organization with camp expenses, a radio ministry and/or other expenses of the non-profit.

The largest group to purchase tickets will receive two free passes to watch pregame batting practice on the field.

Sports Crusaders will figure prominently in throwing out the first pitch of the game. That honor will go to former Sports Crusaders board member James Smith, president of the Missouri Baptist Foundation.

To secure tickets, phone Curless at 636-248-3749 or e-mail him at randy@sportscrusaders.org.

Peck: Christians and Muslims should speak with each other

AMSTERDAM, Netherlands (ABP) — Christians and Muslims should speak with each other rather than about each other, a prominent European Baptist leader told reporters prior to a celebration of the 400th anniversary of the Baptist movement July 24.

Tony Peck, the general secretary of the European Baptist Federation, spoke at a July 24 press conference prior to the beginning of the "Amsterdam 400" conference in the Netherlands, scheduled for July 24-26.

The EBF-hosted meeting commemorates the founding of the world's first Baptist congregation, composed of English dissenters exiled to Holland, in the back room of an Amsterdam bakery in 1609.

Peck expressed the conviction that Christian-Muslim dialogue would awaken greater understanding for each group.

He noted that the founders of the Baptist movement had already struggled for religious liberty — not only for themselves, but also for Muslims.

Nothing has changed on that question since 1609, he said. The original Baptist congregation included Thomas Helwys (1550-1616), who published the paper, "A Short Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity," calling for complete religious freedom for all.

Peck said Christians and Muslims could discover that they indeed have many joint concerns — for example, in providing a good education for their children.

Peck criticized far-right European political parties that are resisting the social integration of Muslims in Europe. "We must learn to live together with Muslims and are also capable of doing so," he said.

Building Toward a Hopeful Future



Baugh-Marshall Chapel



*Thanks to a
\$2 Million Gift from the
Eula Mae and John
Baugh Foundation
for a new chapel on the
Shawnee campus,
Central Seminary
invites you to a
**Groundbreaking
Celebration**
September 11, 2009*




Schedule:

- 10:30 Convocation
- 12:15 Groundbreaking
- 11:30 Tours
- 12:45 Complimentary Lunch

**6601 Monticello Road
Shawnee, KS 66226-3513
913.667.5700
www.cbts.edu**

Central Seminary family reaches out to community

Central Baptist Theological Seminary professor of pastoral theology, Tarris Rosell's students have become involved in their communities in ways which have profoundly affected their own lives, as well as that of their communities. Rosell challenged students in his Christian Ethics course to initiate or participate in a justice-making project.

Linda Sutton, a Shawnee campus Master of Divinity student, "was completely taken aback" when she discovered the federal food stamp program did not allow for the purchase of toiletries.

"The poorest of the poor can purchase food, but they have no access to soap, toothpaste and toothbrushes, shaving supplies, etc.," she said. She began collecting toiletry articles for Micah Ministries, a ministry of Independence Boulevard Christian Church in Kansas City.

Sutton has also begun working on another ministry to the homebound. She became interested in these issues when her sister became homebound after suffering a stroke. Linda plans to speak with organizations who currently work with the elderly (Catholic Charities, The Salvation Army, Meals on Wheels, etc.) to tap into their experiences and knowledge.

"It seems to me that nothing fits the scriptural description of the plight of the widows and orphans more than the problems of our elderly in our modern American society," she said.

Another Shawnee student, Mary Ramavathu, used the ethics class assignment as an opportunity to begin a new

being paid \$20 per month to teach these children two hours a day, five days a week. Ramavathu organized and guides every aspect of the program. In addition, she started a six-month tailoring project for

served nearly 32,000 plates of food!" Darrell serves as their executive chef.

Shawnee student Judi McCue began volunteering for Johnson County Court-Appointed Special Advocates in 1994. The agency advocates for abused children, and Judi serves as a court volunteer and supports their fundraising and operational matters. She has been a member of the CASA Board of Directors since 1997 and currently serves on the Board of Trustees.

McCue, who expected to climb the corporate ladder at Hallmark Cards, Inc., was challenged to give back to the community when Congressman Emanuel Cleaver gave the commencement address for her graduating class at the University of Missouri, where she earned her MBA.

"I followed his advice and found my passion with preventing child abuse," she said. "My goal...was to work for a not-for-profit agency when I retired from Hallmark Cards." Although Judi now feels called to a pastoral role, she remains committed to her work with CASA.

Another Shawnee student, Cliff Caton, told this story:

"Three years ago, after visiting with a number of church members about the rising number of homeless people in the area, a few of us at decided to start collecting blankets in the hope that we could help at least some of the people in need. I had no idea what God had in store for us. Our initial goal of 1,000 blankets has, three years later, been magnified tenfold. What started out as an effort to address an immediate need has, through God's leadership, become an organization; and it has been through people I have met at seminary... that have been able to bring together many different abilities and contacts to multiply our initial efforts."

Jim Whitaker, Murfreesboro, Tenn., was inspired by the success of the New Baptist Covenant Celebration in Atlanta, Ga., last year, as well as regional events held in Birmingham, Ala., and Liberty. He and the Murfreesboro site coordinator, Ircel Harrison, are beginning plans to bring a regional event to Belmont University's campus in Nashville, Tenn., in October 2010.



the poor women in Hyderabad.

Ramavathu's community involvement has continued this summer. In June she held Vacation Bible School for 65-70 slum children. "It was amazing to see how the children learned and how they understood the truth about Jesus Christ," she said.

Her plans for the rest of the summer are to expand a school she and her sister started for the poor children in Bijapur, Karnataka, and to do HIV awareness camps in different slums of Hyderabad.

Other Central students have felt called to make a difference in their communities.

Sharon Cantrell, Shawnee student, is the one who introduced Sutton to Micah Ministries. She and her husband, Darrell, also a Central student, have been involved in that ministry for seven years.

"My involvement as a social worker called me to a deeper commitment with those with whom we serve, and it was there that I experienced a deeply felt call to prepare myself for ministry," she said.

In 2007 Cantrell was licensed for ministry and became the first outside minister yoked to Micah, which has become the largest urban mission of the

Christian Church in the largest Christian Church Region of the U.S. "We offer a radical welcome to all," she said. "Typically, we hand out between 500-1,000 items of children's and adult clothing weekly and in 2008



Central Seminary student Mary Ramavathu joins with her family in India to provide funding to tutor these children living in India's Baghlingampally slums.

The event will focus on youth and young adults, with the cornerstone to be a Luke 4 missions activity.

"I am really excited about this opportunity to forge Baptist connections with youth and young adults," Whitaker said. "This will bring a new spin on the New Baptist Covenant as well as give people an opportunity to be a part of doing."

Central Seminary administration, faculty and staff model community involvement as well. Along with leadership responsibilities in several area churches, they are committed to serve their communities in a variety of ways. Administration, faculty and staff, in partnership with other Midwest Baptist groups, were involved in planning and leadership for the Baptist Border Crossing Summit held in April — the Missouri New Baptist Covenant event.

Executive vice president George Townsend serves on the board and volunteers in other ways for the Ernest Shepherd Youth Center, which provides a backdrop for educational and recreational programs for youth in Clay County.

Rosell, initiated and co-directs the Sabbaths of Hope project to enable faith leaders and communities to respond to depression with hope rather than stigma. He edited and wrote substantial portions of the project's response kit.

Several seminary colleagues have also had significant involvement. Ruth Rosell, assistant professor of pastoral theology, co-developed a workshop module on depression that she has taught at many churches and conferences. In addition to leading a workshop, Dick

Olson, distinguished professor of pastoral theology, and adjunct instructor Cynthia Jarrold co-wrote a worship resource section of the response kit.

In February, Central hosted a Sabbaths of Hope conference for African American clergy and lay leaders. Amy Hartsfield, counselor and student assessment coordinator, co-led this event with Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church, Kansas City, and a grant-funded project she directs pertaining to depression and the African American faith community. Debra Sermons, Urban Core Initiative coordinator and director of recruitment, and the Rosells were also involved in the planning and leadership for the event.

Olson, who was part of a week-long summer 2008 study on "Christianity and the Holocaust: Teaching the Tough Questions" held at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC, has led numerous presentations on Christianity and the Holocaust in the Kansas City area, as well as in communities as far away as Hingham, Mass.

Several Central staff and students also participated in the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Missouri General Assembly in St. Louis this spring. The meeting had as its focus several community ministry projects in the St. Louis area.

For Central, commitment to community involvement is a given, leaders say. The seminary continues to develop programs and efforts to enhance that involvement. Their goal is for Central graduates to be ready to minister with a missional outlook in a diverse world.



Central Seminary student Cliff Caton leads his church to provide resources for the homeless.

ministry in Hyderabad, India, her home. She and her family began providing funds for a tutoring program for the children of the Baghlingampally slums.

Four college students are

Missouri Baptist University — serving St. Louis all year long

Including a community service project in a university's lineup of freshman orientation activities has for years been commonplace in both faith-based and secular institutions alike.

Missouri Baptist University has, in fact, for decades offered new students ways to serve others during its annual Welcome Weekend.

Over the years, MBU students have helped build houses through Habitat for Humanity. They've served



lunch to homeless mothers at a not-for-profit organization in North St. Louis City. They've painted walls and cleaned floors at a new community outreach center in Jefferson County.

The impact MBU students have collectively made through Welcome Weekend projects has been indisputably far-reaching.

But what if a university could do more? Lots more.

Beginning last year, MBU launched a campus-wide initiative aimed at providing students an enhanced means to partici-

pate in substantive service learning opportunities — all year long.

"The vision is not only to offer an opportunity to serve one weekend a year, but to provide the means for MBU students to become inspired to want to help others," said Jonathan White, MBU campus pastor.

"That might mean a student will pursue a summer-long mission trip out of the country. It might mean a student will become a lead volunteer at a soup kitchen in St. Louis. Wherever the service happens, our students are becoming equipped to become true leaders in the name of Jesus."

In a seemingly paradoxical move, university leaders nixed the long-standing Welcome Weekend service project, instead allowing new students enrolled in the required



Missouri Baptist University sophomore Abigail Ayers helps distribute food to Bosnian immigrants in St. Louis.

Collegiate Seminar course the opportunity to execute a service opportunity anytime throughout the year. The hope, in part, is that students — and, for that matter, faculty, staff and alumni, too — will discover an opportunity that more aptly interrelates with their strengths and passions, White said.

Secondly, MBU launched www.mobap.edu/service-learning, a Web page aimed at acting as a central hub for all-things service oriented. The Web page includes a comprehensive calendar of community service projects — from submissions pertaining to community organizations in need of help to MBU-related events. It's a point

of reference for various student groups who are required to complete community service hours. But it is also a medium for those students who simply long to help others but don't know where to start.

Last fall, one of the calendar's listings solicited volunteers to work at a food bank in South St. Louis City for a Saturday morning. MBU freshman Gabriela Valverde, along with about a dozen other students, saw the listing and decided to help.

The students spent their time doling out bags of groceries to primarily Bosnian immigrants living in South City, which is home to the

largest population of such immigrants in the nation.

Valverde, whose parents are missionaries in Guatemala City, Guatemala, believes integrating service into learning, like the University-sanctioned opportunity to volunteer at that South City food bank, helps students become more prepared to impact the world on a global scale after graduation.

That's one of the reasons why she chose a university like MBU.

"I believe service learning opportunities in college give students the opportunity to discover what we are called to do," she added.



MBU sophomore Ashley Sauer bags groceries at a food bank in South St. Louis City

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HLG students serve 12 years on the mountaintop

HANNIBAL — “It was a mountain-top experience.” The expression, although overused, is very descriptive of what the Hannibal-LaGrange College Missions Department and the International Baptist Convention have experienced over the last 12 years. The partnership between these two entities has resulted in the ministry and spiritual education of hundreds of young adults.

Since 1998, HLG has taken teams of college students to Grindelwald, Switzerland, to minister to the youth of Europe. European students attend EuroVenture camp, sponsored by the International Baptist Convention headquartered in Frankfurt, Germany. The IBC is made up of more than 65 English-speaking churches and missions located in 27 nations of Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

One week in July each year these churches send their young people to Switzerland to experience Euroventure. HLG enlists and trains a team of college students to impact the world, and when the two merge, a spiritual mountaintop experience occurs.

Jan Horak, student minister at Faith Baptist Church in Kaiserslautern, Germany, and European coordinator of Euroventure, has a lot to say about HLG mission teams.

“Our annual summer camp,

EuroVenture, could not take place without the help of the HLG team each year. Having the consistent and very able help of Dr. [Tom] Hufty and his team gives us the certainty that we can host a camp for the students of our convention.

“Over the years the HLG stu-

dents of HLG make in order to be such a vital part of what we call EuroVenture. I am extremely grateful for the giving and generous hearts of these students who willingly choose to serve God, even when the dollar has lost its buying power in Europe and the economic situation of the world seems so bleak.

“To have as many people still come despite the cost shows that these students not only receive an education, but have learned to walk by faith and trust in the Lord. Hearing the stu-

dents talk of the mission-minded heart of their school and seeing them be the hands and feet of God in the lives of our students and churches shows me that their professors are going beyond providing an education; they are developing and making disciples. So, thank you to all at HLG who have been a part of forming the students that minister to us. It is a great example of how the body of Christ can work together and make an impact of a global scale.”

“Over the last 12 years we have taken hundreds of college students to EuroVenture, and the domino effect of this ministry touches the world,” said Hufty, vice president for collegiate affairs and US coordinator of EuroVenture. “After a taste of EuroVenture, some of our students have served as summer

interns in IBC churches, while others have returned the following years to continue this ministry that reaches 27 nations in one setting.”

Another aspect of this unique partnership is the fact that several EuroVenture campers have become students at HLG. This has added a tremendous international flavor

to campus life and enabled our student body to become more global in their mindset, Hufty said.

The college motto, “Knowledge for Service,” is more than a catch phrase. It becomes a way of life as students embrace the opportunities to impact their world, Hufty said.



dents have ministered to thousands of students Europe-wide. Each year as students gather together for EuroVenture from all over Europe, the middle east and in some years even Asia, the college students of HLG have served as mentors, role models, spiritual leaders and counselors, often becoming good friends of students that have moved to the four corners of the globe. Their sacrifice of time, energy and money, year after year, has planted seeds during the one week of camp, which have grown and flourished in churches and youth groups after camp.”

“The students that come from HLG to assist our camp have done so out of their own time and energy. Many people who attend our camps do not realize the sacrifices these stu-



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SBU nursing program assists with Camp Barnabas

In July, St. John's College of Nursing and Health Sciences at Southwest Baptist University's Springfield campus spent a week volunteering at Camp Barnabas in Purdy.

Following are excerpts from an e-mail report Tina Tarter-Hamlet, MSN, RN, assistant professor of pediatric nursing, St. Johns College of Nursing at SBU sent to Carole Eldridge, dean of the St. John's College of Nursing:

"Thanks to you and our staff for forwarding the information about the need for volunteers at Camp Barnabas. They were able to fill their need of 23 volunteers within a two-day period. What a blessing!!!!

"I arrived home yesterday after a very spiritually fulfilling week. I took six amazing nursing students that worked non-stop the whole week. This term of campers was a difficult group to care for in the respect that all were physically and cognitively disabled. Most were non-verbal. We gave 30 tube feedings a day and many more continuous feedings throughout the night time hours. In addition we gave hundreds of medications and treatments in between meal-times. We even had a dehydrated camper who needed IV fluids and one of our students started

on the first try (which is not easy on a dehydrated kid with cerebral palsy). She had much encouragement from the other students and staff.

"We even had a camper who has a trach with oxygen and has a continuous oxygen saturation monitor. He was very fragile with his respiratory needs and required four treatments a day with each treatment lasting two hours. He also needed 24-hour nursing observation with suctioning of his trach. Our students took four-hour shifts each night to sit with him and monitor his needs. The students were *amazing* and the doctors and nurses said over and over each week that this boy would not have been able to stay a camp if it weren't for the nursing students.

"During the daytime hours we were able to take him to some of the indoor activities and we even took him swimming in a water wheelchair on one of the cooler days. This endeavor required much assistance from the students.

"I introduced the mother of this child to the students when she arrived to pick him up. She

cried when she heard about their hard work and dedication to her son's care. She thanked them many times through her tears

and compliments. As you can imagine, this time at camp for her son allowed her and her husband a much-needed break.

We received a standing ovation from the campers, volunteers and staff. The words of the song are as follows in the tune to 'Take me out to the Ball game' (FYI — the Fish House is the name of the health center):
Take me up to the doctor, / Take me up to the Nurse. / Band-aides for scrapes and insect bites, / Don't forget Benadryl at night! / Oh its root, root, root for the campers / When they have fun it is great! / We give breakfast, lunch and dinner meds / At the ole Fish House!
"The theme for this year was 'DIRT.' We discussed about how many of us are like 'fertile soil' and are ready to receive Christ in our lives and yet there are many of us who are somewhat like 'rocky soil' or may even be like 'sandy soil' that needs more cultivation, fertilization and tender care to be ready to accept Christ. All but one of my students were like fertile soil. One of the students had not been raised in a family that ever went to church or even discussed religion in their home. She was very emo-

tioned and I believe a door was opened this week for her to explore what awesome things God has to offer her.

"I would like to thank you for allowing me to continue this opportunity for the students and myself. It by far has to be the *best* week out of my whole year. It allows me to regroup and rejuvenate myself for the upcoming year so that when things are tense and stressful at the college, I can recall the true reason why I am a nurse.

"I only wish we could offer all of our students and staff this experience. I call it 'nursing in the raw' since we don't have the wonderful technology or extra disciples (pharmacy, OT (occupational therapy), PT (physical therapy), pastoral care, etc.) as in the hospital setting. The med team does it all at camp, and the students truly understand what nursing and team work is all about.

"I could go on and on about this wonderful place and the true peace that is experienced at Camp Barnabas, but until you experience it you will never know the true meaning it brings to one's heart."



SBU community models 'servant leadership'

Southwest Baptist University students, professors and faculty serve their community in a variety of ways.

At SBU's Bolivar campus, students in the College of Business and Computer Science again ranked in the 95th percentile on their Major Field Test. Computer science students excelled in regional and national competitions.

The Students in Free Enterprise team captured their 25th regional championship in 26 years and placed in the top 32 teams in the nation at national competition.

Phi Beta Lambda members also excelled in state and national competitions, garnering 19 top-three finishes and 10 first-place finishes. Three of these students received first place in their competition.

The SBU speech and debate team won the Missouri American Forensics Association Tournament in February.

SBU placed first in its overall record, second in its overall debate record and first in individual events. Two forensic team students took first place in

the Forensic Programming Challenge sponsored by the Heart of America Regional Computer Forensics Lab.

SBU faculty continue to publish books and articles, present at regional and national conferences, perform musical recitals and serve in leadership roles for various professional organizations and churches.

Rodney Reeves, professor and dean of the Courts Redford College of Theology and Ministry, has served as interim pastor at South Haven Baptist Church, Springfield, since May 2008.

During March, Reeves also served as the convener of the Institute for Biblical Research during the annual meeting in Dallas.

Bing Bayer, chair of SBU's department of theology and professor of Old Testament and Hebrew, preached at Union Mound Baptist Church in January and February. He taught the Winter Bible Study on Exodus at First Baptist Church, Bolivar, during February and March.

In March Bayer taught local

pastors at a Bible Conference in El Salvador and was involved in evangelism efforts in Santa Elena and San Salvador. He also preached at Calvary Baptist Church, Republic, during March and April. In addition, he preached at First Baptist Church, Lamar, on May 3 and spoke at their church banquet for seniors.

Duke Jones, assistant professor of Christian education, spoke during the Missouri Metro Youth Minister's Conference in Springfield on March 12. His topic was "Using Contemporary Christian Music in Youth Ministry."

During March, Kelly Malone, assistant professor of intercultural studies, spoke at First Baptist Church, Bolivar. During April, he and professor Jim Frost participated in the Baptist University Missions Mobilizer Meeting at the International Missions Board in Richmond, Va.

Malone also had an article published in the April 2009 edition of *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* titled "Doing Evangelical Theology with the

Japanese."

During April, Jim Frost, director of Intercultural Studies and professor of Intercultural Studies and spiritual formation, taught Perspective classes in

Springfield and Joplin, and participated in security training and university contingency policy planning. Frost continues to lead a student Bible study in his home weekly.

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Senior Adult Choirs Visit the Arcadia Valley Campus



Residents on the Arcadia Valley campus were especially blessed the last two months. Several senior adult choirs came to provide uplifting music and fellowship which was appreciated by all of the residents and staff. Pictured from top left to bottom right, **Kirkwood Baptist Church, Concord Baptist Church-St. Louis, New Hope Baptist Church-Fulton and First Baptist Church-St. Clair.**



Residents and Staff Celebrate 4th of July



At Chillicothe, **Jeff Parker** (Maintenance) and wife, **Brenda** (left) were among staff and their families who came out to enjoy 4th of July with residents. Also celebrating were (from left) **Sharon Berry** (CMT), **Dr. Frank Stark** (husband of **Joyce Stark**, Activities Dir.), **Lisa Gillilan** (CMT), **Beth Brenneman** (DON), **Dicky McKerlie** (Maintenance) and his wife, **Debbie**. Standing in front of Beth is her grandson, **Nikolas Stuver**.



Arcadia Valley residents (left) waited patiently for fireworks while Chillicothe residents bundled up against the cool air and enjoyed ice cream treats during the wait.

Reflecting God's love in ministry to senior adults

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*James W. Nelson
Director of Development*

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Matthew 25 Project: Lending a hand where a hand is needed most

William Jewell College has partnered with the Palestine Neighborhood Development Center and a number of churches to brighten up what the *Kansas City Star* refers to as "The Murder Factory." While the Kansas City urban core neighborhood's 26,000 residents make up about 6 percent of the city's population, it accounts for 20 percent of Kansas Citians in prison for murder or voluntary manslaughter, reports *Star* writer Tony Rizzo.

Each year, Jewell and Palestine Neighborhood Development

Center work together to select homes to be painted during the Matthew 25 Project. A qualifying home owner receives paint donated through the Kansas City Paint Program and Jewell provides the volunteers by inviting churches, schools and other civic groups from all across the metro area. Volunteer groups sign up to serve for one day during the week.

This year because of the extreme heat, crews started around 7a.m. and worked until noon or 1p.m. In four days, 17 crews completed four homes.

By Friday, homeowners were ecstatic about the facelift their homes received, Jeff Buscher, William Jewell campus minister and Matthew 25 project coordinator, said.

Buscher said one volunteer asked him, "Do you really think that painting this house will make a difference?" He said the question was answered very clearly the next day when DeWayne Bright, Coordinator of the KC L.I.N.C. Program at the center, relayed the following story. One of the residents of a street where volunteers were painting two homes told Bright how much she appreciated the work that was being done.

A year ago, she said, family members on that same block had been arguing and fighting with one another and the situation had escalated to some minor violence involving calls to the authorities.

She said that over the course of the week those same quarreling family members determined to work together to do some yard work and made plans to make some long past due minor maintenance projects on their own homes.

"Each day new groups would arrive at the homes ready to get as much done as they could before the heat sent them scurrying home at mid-day," Buscher said. "Equipped with paintbrushes, scrapers, ladders and water bottles, they worked



Tim Honse, associate chaplain at William Jewell, painting a house – Jewell had a team work one of the days, and also provided house captains and logistical support.



Cadets from Central High School and a Holmeswood Baptist Church, Kansas City, Adult group gather on the porch of a house they worked on.

in the morning sun and whatever shade they could find to beautify the resident's home."

In many instances they also made some minor repairs and did yard work to help spruce up the finished product. One homeowner complimented a group, telling them they were "angels" because of the work they had done.

"The Matthew 25 Project was a thrill for me and our church," said Tiger Pennington, pastor of First Baptist Church, North Kansas City, one of the participating congrega-

tions. "The opportunity to meet a real need in the name of our very real God is compelling."

Pete Hill, pastor of First Baptist, Smithville, appreciated the opportunity "to accomplish something together as a group of church folks."

The Matthew 25 Project is working to make a difference in "The Murder Factory." With more partners in this grassroots effort Buscher hopes that the biblical mandate of serving others, found in Matthew 25 can become a reality.

Making sense of your church

You may have heard that up to 93 percent of communication is non-verbal in nature. As can be the case with widely known but little questioned facts, this one is taken out of context from the original experiment.

Still, it is true that media involves much more than words. Although you may think of media as primarily print (newspapers, magazines) or electronic (television, radio, the Internet), it can just as well be something like a billboard, bumper sticker or lapel pin.

Or, your church. Ignore the church signs and ads for a minute and think about how the church can communicate — both well and poorly — just through your five senses.

Sight. Before entering a church, you're likely to be influenced by what realtors call "curb appeal." Are the grounds well-maintained? Is a coat of paint desperately needed?

Keep looking inside. Is it well lit? Is there a lot of clutter? Are restrooms clean?

Look at notices on the walls, decorations and bulletin boards and use the diaper principle: If it is old or the contents stink, change it! Signs or projected announcements should be simple, easy to read and call for action. Décor and themes can be seasonal.

Worship lighting, done with forethought, can affect mood and direct attention. Done haphazardly, it may seem more like playing with the lights.

Sound. Squeaky doors, noisy light fixtures, dripping faucets, loud ventilation systems and out-of-tune pianos can be

annoying.

On the other hand, live and recorded music can be inviting.

Think about peaceful and inspiring music as people enter worship or age-appropriate music for infants, children and youth.

The tone of those reading and speaking in worship should reflect the content, whether joy or anguish. Don't let scripture be monotonous!

Smell. Scents can communicate powerfully; just sniff a box of crayons and recall your childhood. Musty and dusty smells

represent a place that is out of date, while plants suggest freshness. (One exception: perfume and other odors can trigger allergies.)

Media and the Internet



Ken Satterfield

When babies are held or children hugged, the church becomes a safe and appealing place.

Studies have shown using multiple senses increases information retention and "brand awareness" (in this case, of your church). Reading scripture while holding a Bible, responsive reading and taking notes during a sermon are some examples of this. Descriptive language can evoke the senses.

Those responsible for worship planning, decorations and other appropriate teams can run with this. Have them brainstorm lists of at least 20 ideas appropriate for your church for each of the five senses. The result can be your church attracting a second look, or a second visit. It makes sense to try!

Ken Satterfield (ksatterfield@wordandway.org) was formerly a media specialist and is currently Word&Way's advertising/marketing coordinator.



Kansas City guitarist Charles David Smart plays during University Heights Baptist Church's Festival of Faith and the Arts.

Springfield church engages community in faith and arts

SPRINGFIELD — A Festival of Faith and the Arts held July 17-19 at University Heights Baptist Church, Springfield, provided a unique weekend of activities for the church family and community to engage personally in music and the visual arts.

This first Festival of Faith and the Arts held by the church had as its theme: "In the Beginning God Created..." By engaging various arts, individuals had opportunities to explore thought and faith.

Headliners for the weekend were New York Opera singers Maria Todaro and Michelle Jennings, who performed in Sunday worship and the afternoon presentation of "Divas Unleashed: The Benefit."

Also performing was guitarist Charles David Smart, Kansas City, Kan., in concert on Saturday evening. His music provided a wide variety of guitar selections from the popular "Classical Gas" to hymn arrangements.

"Divas Unleashed: The Benefit" was written and performed by singers Todaro and Jennings. The women had script consultation with David Letterman staff writers. The comedic "operatic play" is about two divas who have been double-booked to headline the same benefit. The performance combines an amazing display of superior vocal ability with the women singing much-loved solos and duets from favorite operas while battling for position with amazing stage antics including sword and gun fights.

The juried Visual Arts Exhibit was open to any artist with great technical and artistic

capabilities. Judges for the exhibit were John Wall, director of photo services at Missouri State University, and Bill Armstrong, professor emeritus of art at Missouri State and the namesake of the Bill Armstrong Gallery at the Springfield Art Museum.

Winners of the juried events were: Seth Murphree, Acrylic painting, "Secret Place;" Karla Trammel, Watercolor, "Aspen II;" and Aaron Murphree, Photography, "Entering the Louvre." Each winner received a \$250 award of excellence.

The weekend was planned by University Heights music minister Marvin Murphree. When deciding on the theme for the festival, he expressed the hope that by presenting a wide variety of arts and artists, people would engage both intellectually and emotionally.

"The first attribute of God in the Bible," Murphree stated, "is 'In the beginning God created...' so, to be creative is to be like God. Through creativity, we can see God and we can see others through the eyes of God."

In addition to his music ministry position at UHBC for the past seven years, Murphree is an adjunct professor of voice at Missouri Southern State University and the founder and artistic director of the Mosaic Vocal Ensemble.

CHURCH CHANGES

MELVIN M. (PETE) HILL recently resigned as pastor of First Baptist Church, Smithville. His wife's name is Susanne.

Kansas City youth groups partner to serve others

By JENNIFER HARRIS

Words@Way News Writer

Two Kansas City churches — Grace Point Baptist Church and Winnwood Baptist Church — recently teamed up for a joint mission trip to St. Louis.

According to Chad Cooper, associate pastor of student ministries and church discipleship, this was the fourth collaborative mission trip the two youth groups have taken.

"As smaller churches, our inter-church trips allow us to bring more students and sponsors because of lower costs, help students to get to know others from different schools, backgrounds and parts of the city, and allows the leaders to share in the trip planning, preparation and cost," he said.

The team was housed at Delmar Baptist Church and worked at a variety of locations in St. Louis.

On Friday, they spent the day at the Christian Activity Center in East St. Louis. Students spent time with the children by playing basketball, coloring pictures, playing board games, talking and having fun.

On Saturday, the team worked at Habitat for Humanity's Restore. The Restore is a place where the public can purchase donated and recycled building supplies. Students cleaned, organized the donations and helped customers with their purchases.

That afternoon, the students assisted at Father Dempsey's Charities, a Catholic transitional housing ministry. Students prepared a meal for the residents, many of whom are veterans, Cooper said.



Andrea Rowe folds clothes in the Third Baptist Church, St. Louis, clothing closet during the Grace Point and Winnwood Baptist Church joint mission trip.

On Sunday, the group worshiped at Third Baptist Church, St. Louis, and spent the afternoon working in the food pantry and clothes closet. "It was a great opportunity to help sort donations, organize clothes in the 'store' according to gender and size, as well as clean out some rooms to provide more store space," Cooper said.

The two churches have been

traveling together since 2005. Their first trip was to M-Fuge, a mission camp, in St. Louis. The churches then decided to try planning their own trip. That year — 2006 — the churches traveled to Dallas, Texas, to work with an inner-city congregation.

"These collaborating trips have always been interesting as well as meaningful," Cooper said. "One thing that struck me was that our group did a great job being accepting of one another, even though our group consisted of people of very different backgrounds."

Cooper described friendships forming across socio-economic and racial lines. "The inclusive nature of our team provided me with hope for the church's ability to have inclusive love," he said.

"I truly felt as I led worship that we were accomplishing something with our mission team which so many churches as failing to do — namely providing the opportunity for a group of diverse individuals to be brought together as one body under the unifying nature of Christ."



Briana Butler spends time with a student while surfing the Web at the Christian Activity Center's computer lab.

Religious leaders back common ground on abortion

BY BOB ALLEN

WASHINGTON (ABP) — A number of religious leaders are backing an effort to defuse the contentious debate over abortion with common-ground solutions that reduce the need for abortion by preventing unintended pregnancies and support women who might otherwise abort for economic reasons.

Democratic Reps. Tim Ryan of Ohio, a member of the Congressional Pro-Life Caucus, and Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, a member of the Congressional Pro-Choice Caucus, have introduced legislation titled “Preventing Unintended Pregnancies, Reducing the Need for Abortion and Supporting Pregnant Women and Parents Act.”

More than three dozen faith leaders and organizations from across the political spectrum announced support for the bill, which seeks to redirect decades of debate away from abortion rights and toward the reasons women have abortions.

“It emphasizes not the 10 percent of the issue, where we continue to differ, but the 90 percent where we all agree,” DeLauro said at a Washington press conference announcing the bill July 23.

Supporters range from NARAL Pro-Choice America to Florida pastor Joel Hunter, a one-time president-elect of the Christian Coalition.

Several Baptists submitted statements of support, includ-

ing Frank Page, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, who told the Associated Press he has concerns about the bill but that he tentatively supports it.

David Gushee, an ethics professor at Mercer University and regular columnist for Associated Baptist Press, said from his pro-life perspective it is “regrettable” the bill does not challenge legal access to abortion, but that it sends “a new kind of message” on abortion — providing “genuine choice” by meeting economic and health-care needs of women who otherwise might feel they have no choice other than to terminate their pregnancy.

“Pro-life Americans should support this legislation because of the very many creative and concrete ways it addresses the real-life circumstances that families face in relation to preventing and dealing with unintended pregnancies,” Gushee said. “In a time of economic crisis in our nation, more and more women and families are already being driven to abortion. This is terrible but true.”

Melissa Rogers, visiting professor of religion and public policy at Wake Forest University Divinity School, said the bill signals that one chapter is closing and a new one is opening in the abortion discussion.

“For decades, many Americans have been locked in a debate about abortion,” Rogers

said. “The problem has not been the debate — it is an important one that should continue. The problem has been that, all too often, we have been so focused on areas of disagreement that we have failed to look for areas of agreement.”

Jonathan Merritt, national spokesman for the Southern Baptist Environment and Cli Initiative, said young evangeli-

cals take protection unborn life just as seriously as their predecessors but bring a new approach to that commitment.

“Valuing results and eschewing combative rhetoric, we embrace a comprehensive approach that reduces abortion by preventing unintended pregnancy through means such as comprehensive sex education with an emphasis on abstinence, supporting pregnant women and families, and expanding adoption,” Merritt said.

Glen Stassen, a professor of Christian Ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary, said provisions in the bill are similar to a teenage parent program in which his wife formerly worked.

The program provided training by nurses in prenatal nutrition and childcare, contraceptives and social workers to help them plan their future. It also included a childcare nursery, an OB/GYN clinic and community support.

Stassen said just 1 percent of the pregnant girls in the program had an abortion, compared to the usual rates of 75 percent for

“I plea for uncommon decency and mutual respect in discussing and working together to achieve the healing we need.”

— Glen Stassen

teenagers younger than 15 and 39 percent for those ages 15-19. With the support and training they received, Stassen said, almost none of them got pregnant again until after they graduated from high school, and far more of them finished high school than in schools without access to the program.

“Our polarized nation needs healing,” said Stassen. “I plea for uncommon decency and mutual respect in discussing and working together to achieve the healing we need.”

The bill says 49 percent of all pregnancies in America are unintended and that, excluding miscarriages, 42 percent of unintended pregnancies end in abortion. It says low-income

women are four times more likely to experience an unintended pregnancy than their higher-income counterparts.

The bill summary says it aims to reduce the need for abortion by preventing unwanted pregnancies from occurring in the first place through comprehensive education and after-school and other programs, increasing support for family planning services under Title X of the Public Health Service Act, and Medicaid and services that provide health care services, information about pregnancy and other supportive services for pregnant women, and new parents.

Congresswoman DeLauro said at the July 23 press conference that the legislation “reflects real and principled consensus” among both pro-life and pro-choice groups.

She said the bill “aims to break a stalemate that has impeded forward progress on reducing the need for abortion in this country” and to “turn down the volume on the culture wars that have plagued our attempts to prevent unplanned pregnancies in the past.”

Not everyone is on board, however. Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council said that instead of reducing abortion, it would actually increase federal funding for abortion providers like Planned Parenthood.

Rainer: Hypocrisy not biggest obstacle to evangelism

BY BOB ALLEN

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) — People who don’t attend church are not too bothered by what they view as hypocrisy in the church, but there are some things they don’t like about Christians, says the head of the Southern Baptist Convention’s publishing arm.

Thom Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources, has been researching the “formerly unchurched” — men and women who have been Christians for less than a year — for nearly a decade. He says the results are surprising.

Contrary to popular belief, Rainer says, non-Christians by and large are not turned off by the church, preaching or Sunday School and are quite responsive to direct one-on-one evangelism.

But there are some things non-churchgoers don’t like about Christians, Rainer says in

a recent blog:

— Christians who treat other Christians poorly. “The unchurched don’t expect us Christians to be perfect, but they can’t understand why we treat each other without dignity and respect.”

— Holier-than-thou attitudes. “The unchurched...are repulsed when Christians act in superior ways to them.”

— Christians who talk more than they listen. “Many of the unchurched...have a perception that a Christian is a person who can offer a sympathetic and compassionate ear. Unfortunately, many of the unchurched found Christians were too busy talking to listen to them.”

— Christians who don’t go to church. “The unchurched saw the disconnect between

belief and practice in the lives of Christians who did not or who rarely attended church.”

Rainer says that contrary to the stereotype that hypocrisy is the main obstacle to evangelism, non-churchgoers are really not too bothered by some hypocrisy with Christians.

“They are well aware that any human will stumble at times,” he says. “But these lost men and women want to know that Christians will treat each other well. They want to see humility in our lives.... And they want to know that we love our churches.”

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Baylor Alumni Association loses links to the university

BY KEN CAMP

Texas Baptist Standard

WACO, Texas (ABP) — Baylor University graduates who want to reach their alumni association no longer can do it through the school's phone system, e-mail or Web site.

The university recently notified the Baylor Alumni Association it would be removed from the school's toll-free phone line and the alumni association staff would lose their "baylor.edu" e-mail addresses.

The alumni association also lost its Web site address and — without advance notice — its link on the "Alumni and Friends" page on Baylor University's Web site.

The Baylor Alumni Association's new toll-free phone number is 888-710-1859, and its new Web site address is bayloralumniassociation.com.

"The timing of these developments came as a surprise...as only a year ago the university specifically requested that (the alumni association) continue to

use these same communication services in the best interests of both the university and alumni," according to a statement issued by the alumni association.

However, Baylor University officials insist the alumni association has chosen operational and editorial independence, and the actions regarding the phone system, e-mail and Web site are simply the latest steps in an ongoing process begun a couple of years ago.

"We've been dealing with this over a long period of time," Baylor interim president David Garland said.

Jeff Kilgore, executive vice president and CEO of the alumni association, said an independent voice for alumni is "a critical and common piece of good shared governance."

Kilgore said the alumni association and Baylor University began to move toward a mutually agreed-upon degree of separation in the late 1980s, as the university incrementally

decreased its funding for the association.

In January, the alumni association retained a national firm to survey its members about what professional experience and personal qualities alumni want in Baylor's next president, and university officials objected.

That led to a May 26 meeting involving the Baylor Alumni Association executive staff, Baylor's general counsel and the university president's chief of staff. At that meeting, Kilgore reported, Baylor's general counsel presented the alumni association a cover letter and 22 pages of attached material, along with the instruction to "cease and desist all activity that is not within the scope" of agreements between the association and university signed in 1993 and 1994.

Those activities included the use of the university's Web site address, its e-mail addresses for staff and access to Baylor's toll-free phone service.

Churches affected by FCC wireless microphone changes

BY GEORGE HENSON

DESOTO, Texas (ABP) — While the digitization of television signals June 12 garnered wide publicity, many churches were left unaware their wireless microphone systems also were affected.

The Federal Communications Commission auctioned off the lower half of the 700-megahertz band to several telecommunications companies and reserved the upper half of that spectrum for law enforcement, fire and safety operation and municipalities.

Many sound systems in churches operate in that 700-megahertz frequency.

So, what has the impact been on churches?

"That's going to vary widely on where the church is located," said Rex Campbell, media-services manager for the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Churches in rural areas may not notice any problem, he noted. Even churches in cities may not see an immediate difference,

Campbell said.

Beyond the question of efficiency, churches also have wrestled with issues of legality. Some experts, such as Tim Hendrix, a senior accounts manager of Ford Audio Video in Dallas, insist it technically became illegal June 12 to use a sound system that falls into the 700-megahertz range.

Hendrix noted it technically has been illegal for several years to operate any wireless-microphone system without an FCC license, but the market exploded so quickly that it exceeded the government's ability to enforce its regulations.

"...Eventually if someone continues to use a wireless mic in that 700-megahertz range, they will get nothing but static," Hendrix said.

Wireless-microphone manufacturers no longer sell systems in the affected range, he said. Most are offering rebates to churches that want to trade their old systems for new ones in a different range.

BIBLE CROSSWORD

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Across

1. "Where ___ thou?" (Genesis 3:9)
4. "Gideon the son of ___, a man of Israel" (Judges 7:14)
9. "He it is, to whom I shall give a ___" (John 13:26)
12. "they that ___ against thee shall be as nothing" (Isaiah 41:12)
13. "Moses called ___ the son of Nun Jehoshua" (Numbers 13:16)
14. "___ things I have required of thee" (Proverbs 30:7)
15. Moabite name for biblical giants
17. "There was no room for them in the ___" (Luke 2:7)
18. "though they be ___ like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18)
19. "there was a swarm of ___ and honey" (Judges 14:8)
21. "Zechariah the son of ___" (Ezra 6:14)
23. "He...set my ___ upon a rock" (Psalm 40:2)
25. "he lift up his eyes, being in ___" (Luke 16:23)
29. Government tax agency

(abbr.)

30. Average
31. "An ___ spake to him" (John 12:29)
32. "The sons of Judah; ___, and Onan" (1 Chronicles 2:3)
33. "he ___ him, and he took it" (Genesis 33:11)
35. Symbol for sodium
36. "the waters of the ___ pool" (Isaiah 22:9)
39. "she was of the ___ of 12 years" (Mark 5:42)
40. Adherent (suffix)
41. "the contentions of a wife are a continual ___" (Proverbs 19:13)
43. "unto me every ___ shall bow" (Isaiah 45:23)
44. "I was delivered out of the mouth of the ___" (2 Timothy 4:17)
45. "It was planted in a good ___" (Ezekiel 17:8)
47. Roman numerals for 54
49. "The trees of the Lord are full of ___" (Psalm 104:16)
51. "And after him was Shamgar the son of ___" (Judges 3:31)
54. "we... ___ helpers of your joy" (2 Corinthians 1:24)
55. "the house that I shall ___ into" (Nehemiah 2:8)
57. "as the days of ___ were" (Matthew 24:37)
58. "___ verily, their sound

went into all the earth" (Romans 10:18)

59. "a book...sealed with seven ___" (Revelation 5:1)
60. "The son of Abinadab in all the region of ___" (1 Kings 4:11)

Down

1. "Stand in the ___, and sin not" (Psalm 4:4)
2. "there stood before the river a ___" (Daniel 8:3)
3. "the ___ of the Lord" (Psalm 122:4)
4. "Which was the son of ___ which was the son of Eliezer" (Luke 3:29)
5. Bone
6. "___ the son of Abdiel" (1 Chronicles 5:15)
7. "They have made...boards of fir trees of ___" (Ezekiel 27:5)
8. "Hath not my ___ all these things?" (Acts 7:50)
9. "be ___ in the Lord, and in the power of His might" (Ephesians 6:10)
10. "___ no man any thing" (Romans 13:8)
11. Hull
16. "much people ___ him" (Luke 9:37)
20. "the day ___ arise in your hearts" (2 Peter 1:19)
22. "He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his ___" (Psalm 10:9)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12			13					14		
15		16			17			18		
19				20		21		22		
23	24			25	26				27	28
29			30				31			
32			33			34			35	
36		37	38		39				40	
41					42			43		
		44				45	46			
47	48			49	50		51		52	53
54				55		56			57	
58					59				60	

23. "there were...shepherds abiding in the ___" (Luke 2:8)
24. "God smote him there for his ___" (2 Samuel 6:7)
26. "They...rejoice at the sound of the ___" (Job 21:12)
27. Taut
28. Blackboard
30. "Hear the counsel of the Lord...and his ___" (Jeremiah 49:20)
34. "Which leaveth her ___ in the earth" (Job 39:14)
37. "Her princes...are like ___ ravening the prey"

- (Ezekiel 22:27)
38. Upon (prefix)
40. Away from the coast
42. Silly
43. Relative
46. "a place...wherein shall go no galley with ___" (Isaiah 33:21)
47. "But ___ up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Matthew 6:20)
48. Wrath
50. School organization
52. "Is any thing ___ hard for the Lord" (Genesis 18:14)
53. Army (abbr.)
56. Small one (suffix)

For answers, see page 18.

Do you believe God or just in God?

BY ALBERT BEAN

Despite folks who want to drive a larger wedge between public life and God-language or God-symbols, references to God



ALBERT BEAN

are still popular today, maybe too popular. Athletes who score points sometimes stop their play and pray or point to the sky. Funerals for celebrities often include friends who imply their dead friend is in heaven

or with God regardless of the life the person lived. We hear God-language, but greed, lust, fear and hatred still fill the air. Why is it that we are one of the most religious peoples on the globe but still far from being godly? According to polls, a large majority of Americans believe in God. But, the same polls show that even folks who say they've been "born again" will lie; hate their neighbor or co-worker on the basis of race, politics, economics; or they will isolate themselves from folks in need. Perhaps the biggest problem is that we often ignore the difference between believing *in* God and believing *God*? Coupled with that is the myth that faith is mental, an agreement with facts or truths such as there is a God or that Jesus lived and died on a cross.

James was concerned about true faith.

But his emphasis was on the lifestyle and changes in attitude that true faith produces, not on the orthodoxy of its content. As a believing Jew, James had repeated the *Shema* (Deuteronomy 6:4f) thousands of times, affirming God is one. Big deal! The demons believe God is one, James wrote, but that does not mean their faith produces the actions or attitudes, the obedience God seeks.

Because James had folks around him who believed faith was a mental thing, he wrote his well-known words "faith without works is dead" (2:26). But that was after he described a faith that is meaningless, incomplete and useless. These harsh words have produced thousands of words written by Christians trying to explain or to rebut James' divinely-inspired truth. (This is the Word of God remember.)

Maybe you would like to have heard a debate between Paul and James on this faith-works issue. And they may have had such a debate — we don't know. What we do know is that ultimately, after explaining their positions, the two would have agreed. I think they would have admitted that Paul was being the evangelist when he explained Christians are saved by grace through faith. Paul would have gone on to

say salvation, then, produces the works that God designed for His children to do, but works could never either produce salvation or make it more complete. James would have said that his letter was for people who said they believed but whose lives denied the very salvation they claimed. Since salvation produces God-designed works, absence of these works implies that there is no salvation. James would say he never implied that works could save. Works follow from salvation. That's why he didn't write "tell me about your salvation" but "show me your salvation."

James provokes us with "Can that faith save him?" referring to the kind of faith that does not result in action [v.14]. We want to say, "Yes, faith saves," without making any distinction between a faith that results in action and a faith that is what we call "mental assent." But James maintains that faith without action is not saving faith. No, actions do not, cannot save; they simply show that a lively, saving faith is present. Here is where the believing God vs. believing in God distinction is clear. A person (or demon) who believes in God, who freely admits the existence of God, even the God of scripture, is giving mental assent to all the "facts." A person who be-

lieves God says "yes" to God, to God's revelation, to God's way of living, to the truth that eternity affects today and vice versa.

Evangelicals correctly emphasize faith as the beginning point of salvation. Works will (or should) come later, which agrees with James' use of Abraham and Rahab as examples of salvation in action. Working backwards from Genesis 22 to Genesis 15, James noted the works perfected Abraham's salvation (made it complete). Rahab, too, believed before she met Israel's spies, but her actions evidenced that belief.

God did not give us James' words to offset Paul's or vice versa. Rather, God's lesson is that we must not focus only on the faith-beginning of Ephesians 2:8f or Acts 16:31 but also on the faith-completing of Matthew 19:21 or Philippians 2:12f. Too many in our land and time have found it easy to "believe," to pray a prayer or agree with some wonderful truths. But do they intend to act when they hear Jesus saying "Follow Me"? Do they truly believe God's way is the best way and so consciously choose it? As long as our evangelism focuses on the minimum, getting someone saved, it will seldom bring about life change in the newborn child of God. In James' words the faith that is professed in such a casual decision is barren.

Albert F. Bean is a retired professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City.

Explore the Bible

August 9
Scripture:
James 2:14-26

What does your speech say about you?

BY ALBERT BEAN

When was the last time you were "cussed out?" I won't ask when was the last time you cussed somebody out. We'll save that for the confessional. Unfortunately, you may remember the last time somebody used harsh or vulgar words to put you down.

Those kinds of words stick with us, which makes me wonder about "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me." Words have tremendous power to hurt, and the hurt remains long after physical scars heal and bones grow together. But, we know, too, that honest words of praise, appreciation, or encouragement can build up, even heal.

But critical words seem to stay in our minds longer than we remember positive words. Whatever the reason for that, the Bible has a great deal to say about speech, and James 3 is one of the best-known passages.

Useful speech. Can you remember receiving an "ataboy" ("that a boy") or "atagirl?" These come when someone thinks we've done well.

Maybe you remember a time when someone reminded you of something you said that had a positive effect on him or her? Maybe you can recall a chance you had to explain something from scripture and help a class to see how it applied to life.

These are positive examples, and that's where we need to start. James

began that way. Before referring to the tongue as capable of starting a forest fire, he wrote about using a bit and bridle to control a horse or a rudder to control a ship. These tools are relatively small but James reminded us they can channel a horse's strength or the wind's energy into productive work.

You've seen this when another's words encouraged you to try harder, accomplish more, even grow in your faith. Why, we've even "heard" God speak encouraging words from scripture. (Pause just a moment in your reading and let Him remind you of some verses He has used to lift you up.)

You can encourage others in the same way.

Look back at verse one. We read that as a warning and rightly so. Teachers, especially Bible teachers, have a big responsibility to teach truth and to teach it well and to live the truth they teach.

You've certainly had some teachers who did that and turned you on to God's Word.

Now, many of you are doing that for others. You are using the gift of words to open God's Word in such a way it lives and reflects the glory of God. That's useful speech.

Hurtful speech. Recently I heard a

pastor refer to "addiction to criticism." He said many of us cannot go very long with saying something negative about a person or situation or even about ourselves. Then he challenged us to try to break that addiction. (I lasted almost an hour before I fell back into that habit.)

The pastor was not encouraging empty praise nor keeping quiet when something needs to be said. For words of encouragement to be helpful, they need to be authentic, true and appropriate to the situation.

Likewise, we know of many situations in which people need to hear a word of challenge or correction. We follow our Lord's example when we speak as God gives us words

to say in the face of hypocrisy, error or oppression.

Jesus did not speak out negatively in every situation nor try to correct every error. He did criticize when it was appropriate and potentially helpful.

Calling down the Pharisees, for example, did not seem to make them change their ways. It did point out their error for the "audience" standing near.

We have to be careful that we do not become "criticism addicts," putting others down in order to lift ourselves up or needing to make everyone feel as bad as we do. One way to change that sort of bad

habit is to look within.

Revealing speech. Have you ever heard yourself? Maybe someone tape-recorded a conversation or teaching session and played it back for you. Did you know that you sounded like that?

What if someone (such as the Holy Spirit) followed you around all day, recording what you said?

Would you want to hear the recording? What do you think it would say about you?

James challenged us when he followed the Lord by saying what comes out of a person's mouth reveals what's inside of that person.

Jesus had made that same point when some folks complained that His disciples didn't follow Jewish practice. Jesus said, "The things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man" (Matthew 15:18).

Jesus had in mind that both words and deeds show what's in our hearts. James' point was that when we listen to our words they tell us the truth about ourselves.

Yes, we can fake it for a while. We can sound good, but then we go home and listen to the re-play of our words and the thoughts behind them. When we do, what do we hear?

Albert F. Bean is a retired professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City.

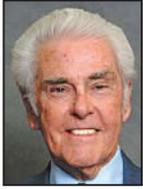
Explore the Bible

August 16
Scripture:
James 3

Have you found your place in God's will?

BY JOHN HOWELL

Paul Tournier, world-renowned doctor and psychiatrist, was startled by a remark from a student he was counseling. He summed up his need when he said, "Basically, I'm always looking for a place — somewhere to be." His remark set a whole new set of thoughts in Tournier's mind which resulted in his book *A Place for You*. What his client wanted was a genuine community into which he could really fit.



JOHN HOWELL

Finding and following the will of God for one's life is like finding a place of acceptance and fulfillment. It is the place to meet God and the place to share fellowship with other seekers. What do you do to find your place?

Be willing to use your personal gifts for God (Exodus 35:30-36:1). In the larger context for our text (35:4-29), Moses commands the Israelites to build and equip the Tabernacle for worship. They were to bring the products of their skills and resources to be used for the worship of God. They were to create a place where God could manifest His presence to them. A prominent feature of Moses' instructions is the recurrent phrase "everyone who was willing and his heart moved him" brought freewill offerings and the dedication of God-given abilities for God's service.

Outstanding among the people were Bezalel with his skill in designing and making crafts and Oholiab, who was accomplished at training others to become master craftsmen and designers. The people were so inspired to give of their possessions and craftsmanship that workers had to request that people stop bringing their offerings since the Lord commanded to be done." Have you ever been in a church building program where the leaders had to tell you to stop giving since there was "more than enough to do all the work?"

My church just completed the renovation of a missionary residence. When an open house was held, amazement at the beauty of the interior was virtually unanimous. The renovation was implemented primarily by the devoted service of several men who had skills in remodeling and carpentry. The untold hours they spent on the project was evidence of their willingness to serve God and the

church with their time and abilities. Midwestern Baptist Seminary purchased a former Farmland Coop training center adjacent to the seminary campus. Laymen came from across the Southern Baptist Convention to help renovate the building for seminary use. The result is a beautiful building now being used for offices and meetings.

We limit the meaning of "following the will of God" to ministerial callings, but our text reminds us that all believers are called to live in the pursuit of God's will. **Be open to God's calling throughout your life (Jeremiah 1:4-8).** Jeremiah's call to serve God as a prophet began when he was a young man but was renewed for him many times over his life of service. He, like Moses (Exodus 3:4-4:17), resisted God's will, but God assured him of His continuing presence and support in Jeremiah's life of ministry. Biblical and secular history remind us of the many times God has used men and women with limited natural gifts to become strong witnesses for Christian faith in churches and in secular voca-

tions. A key ingredient of their success is their openness to hearing God's voice through their Christian experience.

Seek to follow God's will in whatever you do (Colossians 3:16-17). T. B. Maston points out that "our Heavenly Father has a will for us in every area of our lives but we have the responsibility to respond to that will." Paul emphasizes this truth when he teaches the Colossians, "whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Whether it is our prayer life or our service life, we are to do it all in a manner consistent with the nature and purpose of Jesus Christ. This is what is meant by doing it "in the name of the Lord Jesus."

One of the most dramatic testimonies of Paul concerning the will of God became a marker point in my own life while enduring three months in a full body cast at the close of WWII. Romans 12:1-2 teaches us to present our bodies as living sacrifices and our minds as transformed from conformity to the world culture. "Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is — His good, pleasing and perfect will." Finding your place in seeking and following God's will can fill you with the excitement of new discoveries and the joy of living in fellowship with God and with fellow believers.

John Howell is Academic Dean Emeritus at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City.

John Howell is Academic Dean Emeritus at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City.

Bible Studies for Life

August 9 Scripture:

Exodus 35:30-36:1;
 Jeremiah 1:4-8;
 Colossians 3:16-17

Do you require signs to discern God's will?

BY JOHN HOWELL

In a class for incoming students, we had been discussing the importance of seeking God's leadership in significant decision. That evening, one of the students called me at home to ask for guidance in determining God's will as he and his wife considered buying a truck on display at a local dealership. They were trying to decide whether it was God's will for them to buy the truck or whether Satan was tempting them since they were really attracted to the truck. Finally, he said, "We have put out a fleece to determine whether God or the devil is influencing our choice. We are going to wait three days and then return to the dealership. If the truck is still there, we are accepting this as evidence that He wants us to have the truck."

What is your response to the nature of this decision-making process? I asked them to consider that such a choice was making their understanding of how God works with His people dependent on chance, not prayer or careful investigation as to whether this was the wisest use of their available resources.

But this type of bargaining with God is not limited to buying a truck. Christians frequently want some kind of tangible sign from God that will give them assurance that their desire or choice is within His will. This is what Gideon wanted as God was commissioning him to lead the Israelites in a battle against the forces of Midian.

Gideon's fearful request for affirmation (Judges 6:14-16; 33:40). The Israelites had been under the domination of Midianites

for seven years as punishment for their idolatrous worship of Amorite gods. Finally they sought God's help, and He commissioned Gideon to gather an army to conquer the Midianites. Gideon was so frightened by the prospect, even when God promised to empower him to win the battle, that he sought to get some assurance that it was really God who spoke to him.

The test was the familiar "setting out the fleece" described in our text. When God fulfilled Gideon's request for both a wet and dry fleece, Gideon did accept the challenge to conquer the Midianites with an army reduced to 300 valiant men (7:1-25).

Even though God honored his request, this is not the biblical way of determining the will of God. Gideon apparently recognized that fact when he said, "do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request." His request was not from a stance of strength and faith but questioning whether God would really be with him as promised.

Jesus rebukes the demand for signs to prove His messianic mission (Matthew 16:1-4). The Pharisees and Sadducees wanted him to "show them a sign from heaven," but Jesus declared that they would have only the "sign of Jonah." The

Greek word translated sign meant something that could be used as proof, evidence or convincing token that something was true and reliable. John, in his Gospel, describes the miracles of healing and care that Jesus demonstrated to the people as signs of His messianic mission.

What did Jesus mean when He told the Jewish leaders that they had "the sign of Jonah?" In Matthew 12:39-41, Jesus used the story of Jonah's three days in the belly of a great fish as a symbol of the Son of

Man spending three days and three nights "in the heart of the earth." The inhabitants of Nineveh who repented when Jonah preached a coming judgment on the city will be witnesses at the judgment because they repented of their sins whereas the scribes and Pharisees would be judged because they refused to accept God's revelation of His grace and love through Jesus Christ. The challenge of this word from Jesus is whether we who now hear the word of grace will also repent and commit our lives to the Lord.

Discerning God's will demands a dedicated life (Romans 12:1-2). To offer yourself as "a living sacrifice" brings to mind the truth that it is sometimes more demanding to live for Christ than it is to die for Him. On the other hand, as living

sacrifices, we too often want to slide off the altar when difficult times come!

Paul's emphasis on seeking God's will with a transformed and renewed mind teaches us that God's will may at time be non-rational but is seldom irrational. He encouraged the Philippian Christians to abound "more and more in knowledge and depth of insight" so they could discern what was best for them. This involved knowing and reflecting on God's will for their lives.

Morris Ashcraft, former professor of theology at Midwestern, described seeking the will of God as being on a continuing journey through life. "Living the will of God is not like taking a summer tour guided by a detailed travel plan outlined by a travel agent whose sources can route one around the hazards and road repairs to the best motels and restaurants. It is, rather, like a pilgrimage which begins in a dream of hope, then a setting out. There is a goal, but the road is not even marked in places. The pilgrims learn as they go."

Sometimes following the will of God means taking a detour from the original goal because of circumstances over which you have no control. Paul wanted to preach in Bithynia, but God led him to Philippi in Macedonia, which opened the continent of Europe to the gospel. Rather than quit the journey because Bithynia was closed, Paul and his companions took a new direction because God's will led them to it.

John Howell is Academic Dean Emeritus at Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City.

Bible Studies for Life

August 16 Scripture:

Judges 6:14-16, 33-40;
 Matthew 16:1-4; Romans 12:1-2

August WMU PrayerWays

- Harold Hurst** (retired, Middle America & Caribbean) and Emerging Leaders and Acteens Council meetings today.
- Pennie Olmstead** (Middle America & Caribbean) and **Janice Smith** (Indiana).
- Missionary kid (MK) **Anna Skinner** (16, Central & Eastern Europe) and those attending Girls Missions Camp in Holt this week.
- MK **Gabrielle Jensen** (9, Central, Eastern & South Africa), MK **Dean Bredbenner** (12, South America) and **Grady Evans** (retired, Ohio).
- Chuck Clayton** (California) and **Bob Gross** (retired, Tennessee).
- MK **Chloe Stow** (8, Central, Eastern & South Africa), **Roger Gaunt** (Arkansas), **Betty Harper** (retired, South America), **Merm Misner** (retired, Pacific Rim) and **Lorri Green** (Iowa).
- Lesotho: True Love Waits sexual abstinence program. Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands partnership: **Rafael** and **Nellie**, who will coordinate Mission Fest.
- Pam Weaver** (South America).
- Alita Beck** (retired, Georgia). Lesotho: Basotho team. Tientjin, China, partnership: Evangelism among students.
- Betty Demster** (retired,

- Idaho). Lesotho: **Flora** family's training. Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands: Training for WMU and church leaders.
- Carol Bowers** (Central, Eastern & South Africa). Lesotho: Basotho pastors and teachers.
 - Pam Creason** (Wyoming) and **Marie Bozeman** (retired, East Asia).
 - Kathy Politowski** (South America) and MK **Daniela Frealy** (4, South America).
 - MK **Hannah Karr** (15, Colorado) and **John Farris** (retired, Missouri).
 - Leroy Seat** (retired, Pacific Rim). Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands: WMU leadership team. Tientjin: Pastors and churches.
 - MKs coming to U.S. to start school. Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands: Health clinics.
 - MKs leaving for boarding school. Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands: **Nellie Torrado**, WMU executive director.
 - Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands: WMU president. Lesotho: Evangelization of Basotho.
 - Eunice Harvey** (retired, Central, Eastern & South Africa) and **Janene Ford** (South America).
 - Randy and Nancy Sprenkle** (Massachusetts) and missionaries and chaplains in dangerous places.

- Virginia Smith** (retired) and **Laura Christopherson** (Canada). Lesotho: Leadership training for Basotho.
- Doris Blattner** (retired, Pacific Rim). Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands: Those who visit shut-ins, nursing homes and hospitals.
- Amos Coffey** (retired, Arizona) and those serving in the Last Frontier.
- Lesotho: Support of pastors by their congregations. Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands: Evangelization of people.
- Lesotho: Thousands affected by HIV/AIDS.
- Lisa Laffoon** (Central, Eastern & South Africa). Lesotho: Those who pray for missionaries.
- Lynn Terrill** (Central & Eastern Europe). Lesotho: Relationships with team and Basotho leaders.
- MKs. Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands: Christians in the workplace.
- Carl Compton** (West Africa) and MKs going away to school.
- Charles Tope** (retired, Central, Eastern & South Africa) and **Martha Myers** (retired, Nevada).
- David Broyles** (West Africa). Lesotho: Summer missionaries.

Leland Center moves campus to Baptist World Alliance site

BY ROBERT DILDAY

FALLS CHURCH, Va. (ABP) — A Baptist seminary serving students in the region of the na-

tion's capital has moved in with an organization that serves as Baptists' international umbrella group.

The John Leland Center for Theological Studies has moved its main campus from Arlington, Va., to nearby Falls Church, Va., where it is leasing two floors in the Baptist World Alliance headquarters building. The building is just across the street from Columbia Baptist Church, one of Virginia Baptists' largest congregations.

For the past six years, Leland has leased administrative offices and classrooms in the Church at

Clarendon, a Baptist congregation in Arlington, just across the Potomac River from Washington. But this fall the Church at Clarendon will break ground on a massive undertaking that replaces its existing facility with an eight-story building.

The church's worship and educational space will be on the ground floor, while the upper floors will contain affordable housing for the community — one of many in the Washington region that have seen skyrocketing property values.

The Leland Center's move was completed July 27.



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Right or Wrong?

HOW CAN I TEACH MY CHILDREN TO BE MORE EARTH-FRIENDLY?

The question itself takes a great step toward your children's commitment to be more earth-friendly. If parents model appreciation for the world's condition, our children will notice. That having been said, how can we intentionally pass along to our children our environmental commitment? The best source for this answer comes from my "green" daughter. My wife, Laurie, and I admire Katherine's loyalty to God's creation. As a recent college graduate, she exhibits as much devotion to God's earth as any individual I know. What were her impressionable moments during her growing years? She remembers five simple, but profound, actions in our family:

- **Recycle.** Seeing the recycling bin on the curb every pick-up day and returning plastic bags to the grocery store revealed in her early years that we could do better than shift trash from our cans to a dumpsite. Today, she understands those dumps are not bottomless pits.

- **Travel.** Mission trips to less-developed countries revealed the evils of our wastefulness as compared to the need of others' frugality. Witnessing how our neighbors lived accentuated the surplus we have and misuse. Today, she understands our need to protect the world for them, as well as for us.

- **Turn out the lights.** It sounded like a simple instruction to cut electric bills to a young girl. But today, she understands it not only saves money, but it also saves the planet. The energy spent on silent wastes of electricity, such as lighting an unused room or running a clock display on an empty coffee pot, was reducing available resources for others and cluttering the environment with its excess waste.

- **Dispose of your trash properly.** On a trip to the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the grandeur of the monument almost was overshadowed by the mounds of trash tourists had thrown on the ground below. The long wait for the ride to the top was spent picking up trash at the bottom. It seemed a futile effort at the time. But today, she understands a small action in a brief moment can make an eternal impact. A few other tourists joined the effort.

- **Turn off the water.** Water from the faucet was so easy to obtain, it was difficult to imagine its value when she was young. Trips to poverty-stricken countries, especially when potable water could only be found in purchased bottles, taught the value of clean water. Today, she understands the world's pollution eventually could reduce an already-scarce water supply throughout the world and water should be treated respectfully, even through such simple acts as turning it off while brushing teeth or stopping a dripping faucet.

These small efforts may seem to be very simple in the eyes of young children, but they potentially lead to a way of life that reveals love and respect for God's earth.

Allen Reasons, senior minister
 Fifth Avenue Baptist Church
 Huntington, W.Va.

Right or Wrong? is sponsored by the T.B. Maston Chair of Christian Ethics at Hardin-Simmons University's Logsdon School of Theology. Send your questions about how to apply your faith to btillman@hsutx.edu.

Good Samaritan series hopes to kick-start Christian action

By CHARLES HONEY

Religion News Service

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — The camera follows Steve Jones as he walks along an alley in Grand Rapids, Mich., just as he did one early December morning singing "O Holy Night."

He came upon a man sleeping in the snow that morning, Jones tells his interviewer. But he kept on walking, like the two travelers Jesus spoke of who passed a half-dead man on the road to Jericho.

"The story of the Good Samaritan was really beating me up inside," Jones says on the video. The man haunted his mind until he returned to the alley, picked him up and carried him to shelter, as the Samaritan did in Jesus' story.

action.

Start Becoming a Good Samaritan will be a six-part video curriculum, workbook and Web site designed to help everyday Christians find ways to combat poverty, pandemic diseases and other social ills through the stories of others.

From South Africa Archbishop Desmond Tutu to Prison Fellowship founder Chuck Colson, the program brings together diverse voices calling on Christians to get involved.

Due out in August, the series is the brainchild of Mike Seaton, owner of the C2 video production and Web development company.

After 20 years of producing materials for corporations and churches, Seaton got the itch a few

football game," Seaton said. "We sit on the sidelines. We can have our fish bumper stickers and all this stuff, but if we've lost the joy of participation, and Christ is the quarterback with nobody to throw the ball to, he's just got a bunch of fans."

By filming the stories of about 60 Christian leaders and dozens of lay volunteers, Seaton hopes to show churches, adult education classes and small groups how to take the field.

"We have to have average people showing us, 'Yes, in spite of my hurried life and the economy, God still prompts me to go out and share my faith by helping other people in need,'" Seaton said.

His vision resonated with Zondervan, the giant Christian publishing house. Zondervan will produce the DVD series, workbook and a subsequent study book in partnership with C2 and the evangelical aid organization World Vision.

The program also will be marketed through ONE, the anti-poverty organization co-founded by the rock artist Bono.

The series is the first time Zondervan has collected so many of its authors for a single purpose, said John Raymond, vice president and publisher for church engagement.

"Instead of people being frustrated that they don't think they can do anything, we hope this curriculum will spawn enough interest that people will see, 'I can make a difference,'" Raymond said.

To find Christians who already are role models, C2 producers flew or drove more than 85,000 miles across the United States, to London and South Africa.

They interviewed people about a wide span of issues — Joni Eareckson Tada, a quadriplegic artist and author, about disabilities; Jim Wallis, CEO of Sojourners, about serving the poor; and Tutu about reconciliation.



Chad Gast, senior motion graphics designer for The C2 Group, watches a clip from a church curriculum DVD project his team is working on, *Start Becoming a Good Samaritan*.

PHOTO: LORI NEIDERHOFER/CONTOUR/GETTY IMAGES

"The Holy Spirit was beating in my chest so hard," said Jones, the volunteer coordinator at a local homeless mission. "It's like, this is exactly what we're supposed to do."

Watching the video in his office at The C2 Group, graphics designer Chad Gast said, "It's an honor just to hear these stories."

Gast and his co-workers are editing more than 100 interviews such as this for a DVD series they hope will kick-start viewers into social

years ago to break beyond the comfortable Christian life.

After a conversation with best-selling author Philip Yancey, Seaton conceived of a project involving many authors — activists and pastors who were living out the Good Samaritan story.

Through their interviews, he would create a "quilt of what it means to be the hands and feet of Christ today."

"The church has become like (a)

White House advisory council maps out faith-based plans

By ADELLE M. BANKS

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON — Members of a new White House advisory council have mapped out plans to link government and religious groups, from interfaith service projects to town halls on fatherhood.

Eboo Patel, founder of Chicago-based Interfaith Youth Core, said his task force of the Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships will work to advance President Obama's discussion about interfaith cooperation by fostering hands-on activities. Council members discussed the

priorities of six task forces, which range from reforming the faith-based office to addressing the economic crisis.

Melissa Rogers, an expert on religion and public affairs at Wake Forest University School of Divinity, said the task force charged with reforming the office will examine everything from executive orders to PowerPoint presentations to ensure church-state restrictions are clear when religious organizations partner with the government.

Several council members told administration officials they want to make sure government partner-

ships extend to the city and county level — in part to ensure that economic recovery funds reach struggling grassroots nonprofits.

Joshua DuBois, executive director of the office, said he expects inter-governmental outreach to increase, but he is seeking recommendations from the advisers on best approaches for that cooperation.

Many of the advisers' proposals will be developed into a report to the White House next year. Some of their work will be evident before then, such as regional town hall meetings on fatherhood scheduled later this year.

Research shows sharp difference between scientists, general public on religion

BY ADELLE M. BANKS

Religion News Service

WASHINGTON — Only a third of scientists say they believe in God, according to a new survey, and while 18 percent believe in a higher power, four in 10 scientists believe in neither.

The report was released by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press in collaboration with the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Scientists were evenly split — at 48 percent each — between those who claimed a religious affiliation and those who did not.

The new statistics vary sharply with findings for the general public — 83 percent of Americans say they believe in God, and 82 percent said

they are affiliated with a religious tradition.

The Pew report indicated sharp divergence between scientists and the general public on issues such as evolution and climate change. While 87 percent of scientists believe humans have evolved over time, just 32 percent of Americans in general hold that belief.

A similarly large percentage of scientists — 84 percent — said the earth is warming because of human activity, while only 49 percent of the public agreed with that statement.

Also, while 93 percent of scientists favor federal funding for embryonic stem cell research, just 58 percent of the general public agreed with such research.

But despite differences between

scientists and the general public, a majority of people acknowledge that science contributes to the well-being of society.

Two-thirds of people surveyed who said science conflicts with their religious beliefs nevertheless said scientists contribute “a lot” to society’s well-being. A slightly higher percentage (72 percent) of people who said there were not conflicts between their beliefs and science had similar praise for scientific contributions to society.

The report was based on a random sample of the scientific association’s 2,533 members and a random survey of 2,001 U.S. adults. Each of those surveys had an overall margin of error of plus or minus 2.5 percentage points.

Individualistic salvation ‘heresy’ and ‘idolatry,’ Episcopal presiding bishop tells assembly

BY BOB ALLEN

Associated Baptist Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — The presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church called the evangelical teaching that individuals can be right with God a “great Western heresy” that is behind many problems facing the church and the wider society.

Describing a United States church in crisis, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori told delegates to the group’s triennial meeting in Anaheim, Calif., the overarching connection to problems facing Episcopalians has to do with “the great Western heresy — that we can be saved as individuals, that any of us alone can be in right relationship with God.”

“It’s caricatured in some quarters by insisting that salvation

depends on reciting a specific verbal formula about Jesus,” Jefferts Schori, the first woman to be elected as a primate in the worldwide Anglican Communion three years

ago, can occupy, at the center of existence, as the ground of being.”

Jefferts Schori said “heretical and individualistic understanding” contributes to problems like neglect for the environment and the current worldwide economic recession.

“The sins of a few have wreaked havoc with the lives of many, as greed and dishonesty have destroyed livelihoods, educational possibilities, care for the aged, and multiple forms of creativity,” she said. “And that’s just the aftermath of Ponzi schemes for which a handful will go to jail.”

In order to be faithful, “we need to be continually rediscovering that my needs are not the only significant ones,” she said.



Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori preaches at the Episcopal Church’s general assembly in Anaheim, Calif.

ago, said.

“That individualist focus is a form of idolatry, for it puts me and my words in the place that only God

Bible helped set captives free, sheriff says

BY BENJAMIN ALEXANDER-BLOCH

Religion News Service

COVINGTON, La. — An Alabama woman used the spine of a Bible to conceal several hacksaw blades that helped her husband and three other inmates escape a maximum-security prison.

Claudia Buras was booked into the St. Tammany Parish jail on one count of introducing contraband into a penal institution and one count of assisting escape. Both are felonies, each carrying a

maximum sentence of five years behind bars.

When Buras, 24, of Irvington, Ala., came to the jail to visit her ex-husband, murder suspect Eric Buras, she smuggled the hacksaw blades to him by delivering the Bible, Sheriff Jack Strain said.

She had peeled off the Bible’s spine and then glued it back with the 6- to 6 1/2-inch blades inside, investigators said.

After she left, Eric Buras was strip searched, but the Bible was

never inspected, Strain said.

“Our deputies would not have dismantled the Bible,” the sheriff added.

Three other men accused of involvement in various murders escaped with Buras in the jailbreak. Three of the escapees were caught within hours; a fourth eluded authorities for just over two days.

Prison officials say the inmates removed the caulk around a window and then used the hacksaws to cut away metal bars over the window.



EVANGELICAL SCIENTIST NOMINATED TO HEAD NATIONAL AGENCY

Francis Collins, the researcher who mapped the human genome and navigated clashes between his Christian faith and science, has been nominated by President Obama to lead the National Institutes of Health. An atheist who converted to Christianity in his 20s, Collins regularly pushes Christians to reconcile their beliefs with scientific theories such as evolution. He directed the National Human Genome Research Institute from 1993 until 2008. In 2006, Collins authored the New York Times best-selling *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*. Some socially conservative evangelicals have expressed concern about Collins’ positions on embryonic stem cell research and cloning.

ONE RELIEF GROUP CLOSES, ANOTHER CUTS STAFF

International Aid, a Michigan-based Christian relief group, has closed its doors amid financial struggles, and World Vision, one of the largest evangelical relief agencies, has eliminated about 75 positions. International Aid has offered health and humanitarian support worldwide since 1980. Meanwhile, about 50 members of World Vision’s 1,200-member staff were laid off and about 25 open positions will not be filled, spokesman Dean Owen said. Among other cost-cutting measures, World Vision is canceling merit raises for the second year in a row and increasing employees’ premiums for health benefits.

CONSERVATIVE PRESBYTERIANS POST FIRST-EVER DECLINE

The Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) lost members last year for the first time in its 37-year history, according to a new report from the denomination. The PCA, a theologically and socially conservative evangelical denomination, saw membership decline from 345,582 in 2007 to 340,852 in 2008. The group wasn’t alone. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a more liberal mainline denomination with 2.1 million members, reported a loss of 69,000 members in 2008 — the most since the denomination’s founding in 1983.

SECURITY GROUP FORMS CHURCH VIOLENCE TASK FORCE

The world’s largest security training organization has opened a new church-security division due to a rise in crimes against faith-based organizations. ASIS International’s new church-security division will lead a seminar at its convention in Anaheim, Calif., to address threats and vulnerabilities that leave faith-based organizations at risk for violence. ASIS plans to release a free resource guide for churches in August that pools resources from other security task forces. The guide will urge faith-based organizations to form safety teams, assess risks of high-profile attendees and outspoken religious leaders, and be honest with members about potential dangers in their congregations. A separate organization, the Christian Security Network, which tracks violence against churches, recently reported six of the 17 violent crimes reported by Christian churches in the first half of 2009 resulted in homicides. The report also claims faith-based organizations suffered \$6.3 million in property loss due to burglary, theft, robbery, arson and vandalism.