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KENTUCKY--Less 'whooping, hollering' at jail attributed to evangelistic efforts.
NORTH CAROLINA--Drummond: Fascination with modernity sidetracking evangelical community.
JAPAN--Missionaries work at relief center in quake-devastated Japan city.
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Less 'whooping, hollering' at jail
attributed to evangelistic efforts by Ken Walker

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MAYFIELD, Ky. (BP)--Charlie Simmons isn't sure whether to credit a revival at the Graves County Jail to "Here's Hope" or to "Experiencing God" classes. He just knows the Lord is moving mightily.

Recently the jailer at the Mayfield, Ky., facility told Simmons, director of missions for Graves County Baptist Association, how much the jail has quieted down.

"They don't have all the whooping and hollering they used to," Simmons said. "Things are pretty peaceful up there. The jailer said, 'It's been so quiet, it's kind of scary.'"

The association's jail ministry began in November. When Simmons suggested a Bible study in December, he discovered inmates were eager. So he arranged to begin teaching "Experiencing God," a popular study course available from the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Beverly Burton and Lana Burgett of First Baptist Church, Mayfield, teach the women's course on Tuesday mornings, with about eight attending regularly. In the afternoon, Simmons and fellow High Point Baptist Church member Ricky Frick teach 20 men.

Two people have professed faith in Jesus Christ thus far.

"I'm seeing a tremendous change in the men because of the study," Simmons said. "Every time we meet, you can see the depth of their spiritual understanding is growing. "

News of the changes at the Graves County Jail filtered to the neighboring Marshall County Jail through a female prisoner's transfer. Now five women in Marshall County want to study "Experiencing God."

The Southern Baptist "Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now" campaign is creating additional excitement, Simmons said, even though there is not a formal program scheduled in the jail during the 60 days of witnessing. He said prisoners are encouraged to witness there and when they are released, so they will have a positive impact on their family and friends.

"We're teaching them a lifestyle that will be a witness," Simmons said. "We're excited about it because we feel God is doing some great things. I just want to make sure God gets the praise, not me. He opened the doors so I could go in. It's wonderful to be a part of what he's doing."

**Drummond: Fascination with modernity
sidetracking evangelical community**

By Dwayne Hastings

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--In a homecoming of sorts, Lewis Drummond returned to Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and, in a chapel address, voiced agony over an evangelical community stained by modernity.

"Where are the tears? Where is the agony? Where is the deep conviction?" asked Drummond Jan. 19. The immediate past president of the Wake Forest, N.C., Southern Baptist seminary, Drummond currently is the Billy Graham professor of evangelism at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, Ala.

A spiritual awakening is needed to re-establish a core of solid biblical theology in America, Drummond said, expressing concern at the alarming percentage of preaching that is turned inward, mirroring man's search for self-fulfillment outside of God.

"We have been so sucked into the modernity spirit of the moment. The result is a fragmented culture in which the core has been taken away and too much emphasis is paid to that which is on the periphery," Drummond said. If Christians are going to be truly biblical, they must have repentant hearts and be filled with the Spirit of God, he said.

In the final analysis, Drummond said, a spiritual awakening is nothing more than a return by the people of God to the basic New Testament experience. Turning to the Book of Acts, he said it was Jesus' last words which continue to be the Christian's marching orders: "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria and even to the uttermost parts of the earth."

He said whenever the church deviates from this theme, it stands in need of another fresh touch from heaven. "You have to do God's work God's way" as stated in Scripture, Drummond said, holding aloft his Bible.

Drummond lamented the proliferation of self-help books that suggest believers have a right to use God: "The evangelical world has been drawn into this mind-set to the extent that at least 80 percent of all the books published today in evangelical circles has to do with self-fulfillment -- with God's help only as an afterthought. Where is that theological core that once held everything together? The core that says Jesus is Lord.

"There is no polarization in the New Testament between the core of solid evangelical theology and the deep rich experience of the abiding God. Congregations do not need to hear cute stories, wam-bam music and wonderful illustrations -- just as in the New Testament church, when they hear the proclamation of the gospel, they will be cut to the heart."

Drummond, recalling his vision of revival on the Southeastern campus, said God's people must grab hold of the horns of the altar and pray for revival in the land. "I have never found one instance of spiritual awakening where there wasn't a handful of people praying for the moving of God's Spirit."

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EDITORS' NOTE: The following story corrects, updates and replaces the 1/24/95 BP story "Missionaries open relief center in quake-devastated Japan city."

**Missionaries work at relief center
in quake-devastated Japan city** By Mark Kelly

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KOBE, Japan (BP)--A Japanese Baptist church has opened its doors as a distribution center for relief supplies flowing into earthquake-devastated Kobe, Japan, and Southern Baptist missionaries are helping out.

Kobe Baptist Church, which survived the earthquake that leveled large sections of the city, will distribute food, water and other relief supplies being received from various sources.

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Foreign Mission Board missionaries Bob Sherer, Tak Oue, Bob Dilks and Mike Brooks are assisting with distribution of the much-needed supplies to residents of the area around the church.

The earthquake, which struck in the predawn hours of Jan. 17, killed more than 5,000 people and left as many as 300,000 homeless. Large areas of the city have no gas or electricity, and many residents depend on food and water distributions to survive.

A Foreign Mission Board team has assessed property damage and relief needs in the city, said Faye Pearson, area director of Foreign Mission Board work in east Asia. The team is preparing recommendations for relief and repair projects. Their report indicates seven churches and one rented missionary house sustained significant damage.

Contributions designated for Japan quake relief may be sent to the Foreign Mission Board, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230. Or call toll-free 1-800-866-FMB1.

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Prof's book offers insights
for combating the occult

By Russell N. Dilday

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ARKADELPHIA, Ark. (BP)--An Arkansas Baptist professor who wrote a book on the occult from a Christian perspective said the book has generated notoriety both in secular and religious circles. William C. Viser, author of "The Darkness Among Us, A Look at the Sinister Growth of the Occult and How Dangerously Close It Is to You," said it has recently entered its second edition with a printing run of between 10,000 and 18,000 copies.

Viser, associate professor of religion at Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark., said he had mixed feelings about writing the book.

"This has been, undoubtedly, one of the most interesting experiences of my life," he said. "The subject matter has made it an interesting experience and what has happened as a result of the writing has excited me, but I don't know of anyone in their right mind who would want to write a book of this nature unless the Lord led them to it.

"The word 'occult' comes from the Latin word occultus, meaning 'to conceal,'" Viser wrote in the opening chapter of his book. "The origin of the word is fitting, since those involved in the occult world do not want anyone to see what they are doing.

"It's so dark and oppressive," he said. "When you ... research evil and you see all of the manifestations of it, it works on your spirit. I really felt depression."

The book contains references to Satanism, spiritism, witchcraft, astrology and demon possession.

"I had one woman call me after she read the book and said she had to sleep with the lights on after she read it," Viser recalled.

He emphasized, however, his aim in writing the book "was not to write a sensational, Hard Copy/Geraldo-type thing."

Included in the book are suggestions for countering occultic influences. "When I pick up a book for information, I want to know what I'm going to get out of this book," he said.

"It would have been easier to write from a scholarly approach, but I wanted parents and kids to pick this up and say, 'Now what do I do with this?' So at the end of each chapter are innumerable things you can use. I wanted it to be practical and helpful.

"What I felt like the Lord wanted me to do was to send a wake-up call and tell people that this is not just fun and games," he added. Viser wrote that many people refuse to acknowledge the occult because they are "too sophisticated, too spiritually blind, too scared, too naive or too doubtful." He added others view the occult as "too incredible, too distasteful or too faddish."

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"The things that Satan is using today, he is using masterfully to draw people away from Christ," Viser warned. "I wanted parents to know they can't just let their kids go and think that the things their kids are involved in, such as horror movies, Ouija boards or Dungeons and Dragons (a fantasy role-playing game) are just harmless. This is serious stuff. A lot of kids have been seduced with their involvement."

Interest in "The Darkness Among Us," which recently reached number 4 on the Broadman & Holman Publishers best-seller list, has led to the signing of a contract in Brazil to print it in Portuguese, Viser said. "And we are looking at printing it at the Spanish Publishing House in El Paso and in Korean, German and Polish."

Public interest has generated what Viser said have been "hundreds" of radio interviews on secular and religious stations. "They started in August and I have done sometimes as many as three a day."

The media exposure also included interviews and excerpts from the book in newspapers and magazines across the country. He even declined an invitation to dialogue with a representative from the Church of Satan on the Sally Jesse Raphael Show, a popular daytime television talk show.

"It would have been a good plug for the book and a witness as well," but he said he declined because of concerns for the safety of his family "and I just did not have a peace from God about it."

Viser's fear for his family from occultists is well-grounded. He said he has received threats for his statements in the book. "I have gotten one letter from a person involved in the occult who was angry with what I had said and I have had verbal opposition on radio talk shows. There's been anger and skepticism from critics."

A licensed professional counselor who teaches a class at Ouachita on the occult, Viser has seen firsthand the danger from occult followers. "I've talked with parents, kids and former cult members. These people can be hard-core and capable of doing anything."

He added he has received many positive comments about the book including a letter from Anthony LaVey, son of Anton LaVey, founder of the Church of Satan and author of The Satanic Bible. The younger LaVey, "who is a born-again Christian, told me how much he had enjoyed the book," he said.

Viser said danger in writing books exposing occult activities don't always come from outside sources and warned other researchers of the risks of studying the occult.

"You run a real risk when you work in this area," Viser explained. "One of the risks is the fascination. When you are doing your research, one thing leads to another. Most people have no idea how deep the roots of the occult go or how many spin-offs this area can get into."

"I know more about it than I would like to know," he said. "If I wasn't careful, I would get deeper. And this is not your lighthearted, happy type of material. That's the risk."

"If the Lord is in it, that's one thing," he said. "But if you are in it for your own interests, you better watch out. My interest in the occult is limited. It's just enough for what God wanted me to do in writing this book."

Viser said the idea for a book project on the occult began in 1970 while he was a student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"When I was a seminary student, I had three years of experience working with youth during the late '60s and early '70s," he recounted. "Interest in the occult was widespread then. I found a fascination of the occult among young people while working with youth at two Fort Worth churches ... and parents bewildered by that interest."

He began gathering materials on the occult, planning to write the book, but delayed the project. He said that 20-year delay gave the book "more strength."

Following seminary, God's call took Viser to Rio de Janeiro, where he served as a foreign missionary. "It was an atmosphere heavily dominated by voodoo and spiritism," he said.

"With the encounters I have had since seminary, the book, written last year, is stronger and much more effective now than if it had been written in the '70s," he said.

Viser said his research has shown occult influences are growing nationally.

"The stories that are coming in from reputable sources are growing every day. Does that mean that Satanism is growing?" he asked. "Yes. In fact, many law enforcement officers are calling Satanism the crime of the '90s.

"Arkansas, for example, has its own manual for training law enforcement officers to detect signs that a crime is ritualistically based," Viser said. "You would be hard-pressed to find a sheriff in any county in Arkansas who couldn't give you some kind of documentation about occult activities in their county."

Occult activities in a state like Arkansas?

"Very definitely and in many different forms," he emphasized. "And a private investigator in Arkansas told me they (occult followers) are moving out of the cities and into the rural areas" to avoid detection.

Viser advised those wishing to combat occult influences to gain "knowledge of the enemy, cultivate our daily walk with Jesus, participate in regular activity with the church and make a daily priority of spiritual concerns."

Assessing the growth in occult activity, he said there is "far too much of this to be coincidental. Why is this growing? Why the prevalence? I have a strong feeling that we are living in the end times. This time in which we are living will be one of great revival, but Satan's also making his pitch."

He said although he is "alarmed" at cult activities, he is not "scared" by them. "I can't see the work that Satan is doing without an awe of how awesome God's power and authority is over him. No matter how diabolical Satan is, God is always 10 steps ahead of him."

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Parental input can help curb
occult activity, author says

By Russell N. Dilday

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ARKADELPHIA, Ark. (BP)--Author Bill Viser warns parents of adolescents should become involved in the lives of their children to help protect against involvement in occult activity.

"Many children are drifting over (to occult activity) with their parents blissfully unaware of it," Viser said. "Until one day they wake up and see that their kids have stepped over the line."

The occult is popular among teens and college students because "it is a shortcut to power," he said.

"As they become involved in the occult, they think they are going to get everything they want," he explained. "It's one of Satan's lies. For some students, they are pulled into it deviously through drugs, sex or extortion.

"Also, some kids are disillusioned with religion or this is rebellion against their parents," he said. "What stronger message of rebellion can a kid send to his parents than to say, 'I'm a Satanist. I'm a witch. I reject your religion.'"

Viser described various "warning signs" that show an adolescent may be interested or involved in the occult. One or more of these signs does not necessarily mean an individual is involved in the occult, but these signs should be taken into consideration with other factors such as behavioral changes. A partial list of "warning signs" includes:

-- "Nightmarish posters on their walls and items such as crystals and bones and skulls."

-- A change in behavior or attitude. "Who are they hanging around with?" Viser asked.

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-- Changes of dress. "Especially wearing of occult jewelry, painting their fingernails black, bizarre haircuts or hair color, a preference for the color black and notebooks with occult symbols or themes on them."

-- Obsession with rock music using satanic symbols or references. "What kind of music are they listening to?" Viser asked. "Do you understand anything about the groups? There are plenty of sources today that can help parents with background material, such as Dobson's Focus on the Family. There are also warning labels on cassette and CD covers now."

-- Possession or use of games with tarot cards, fantasy role-playing games or a Ouija board.

-- Rejection of friends or parental values.

-- Unusual interest in books of Satanism, black magic, witchcraft and other occult subjects. "If they read one book on the occult, it doesn't make them practicing occultists, but if they have a steady diet of this stuff, like Stephen King books, it's not healthy."

He also advocated parental monitoring of media as a key to combating occult involvement. "Many parents do not know what their kids are watching on TV and what kind of movies they are going to," he said.

Viser said parents "need to sit down with their kids and see what they are watching. Look for an obsessive interest in movies and TV shows such as 'Tales from the Crypt,' 'Friday the 13th' and 'slasher' or 'slice and dice' horror movies.

"Watching these shows doesn't make one a Satanist, but when they have an obsessive interest or if this is all they are watching, be careful."

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Lauren's story: An excerpt
from 'The Darkness Among Us'

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ARKADELPHIA, Ark. (BP)--Throughout his book, "The Darkness Among Us," author Bill Viser tells the story of Lauren, a fictional composite of many American teens who deal with occultic influences daily. Following is an excerpt from her story:

Lauren is sixteen, a tenth grader and an honor roll student. She is your average adolescent with long blond hair and blue eyes. She was always well-dressed and active in her school organizations, until recently.

Lauren's parents do not screen what Lauren watches on television. Lately, Lauren has been watching more and more shows with occult themes. Even Lauren's younger brother and sister watch the same programs. Everyone in the family agrees they are strangely fascinating.

Her parents recently found a book on witchcraft in Lauren's room, but Lauren just mumbled something about a friend loaning it to her. Her parents did not pursue it any further.

Her younger brother and sister told their parents Lauren's cassette tapes had pictures of the devil, demons and scenes from graveyards and hell but they dismissed it as "typical teen-age music."

Lauren's parents are out of touch with their daughter. They know very little about Lauren's world, her friends, or the boys she dates They don't know Lauren's grades have begun to slip ever so gradually.

Lauren's girlfriends have invited her to a slumber party. Lauren says she wishes she knew what her future would be like so she would know what to do now. The girls laugh and say that's easy. Haven't you ever hear of a Ouija board? Candles are lit, the lights are turned off and Lauren takes another step into a frightening and deceitful world

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