

PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

WESTERN RECORDER

June 12, 2007
Vol. 181, No. 24



Oneida Baptist Institute
Father's Day Offering
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FOR THE RECORD

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Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, June 13.

Poll: One-third of Americans believe in a literal Bible

Princeton, N.J. (BP)—About one-third of Americans believe the Bible is absolutely accurate and that it should be taken literally word for word, according to a recent Gallup poll. Even the majority of those who do not believe the Bible is literally true believe it is the inspired Word of God.

Gallup indicated Americans' views on the Bible have not changed substantially over the past 16 years the organization has been conducting polls on the matter. Still, about one in five Americans believe the Bible is an ancient book of "fables, legends, history and moral precepts recorded by man."

Analysts say the higher the level of education a person has, the less likely the individual is to believe that the Bible is the actual, literal Word of God. But even the majority of those with postgraduate degrees believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God rather than just a human creation.

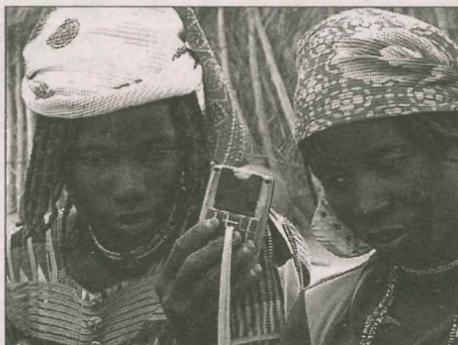
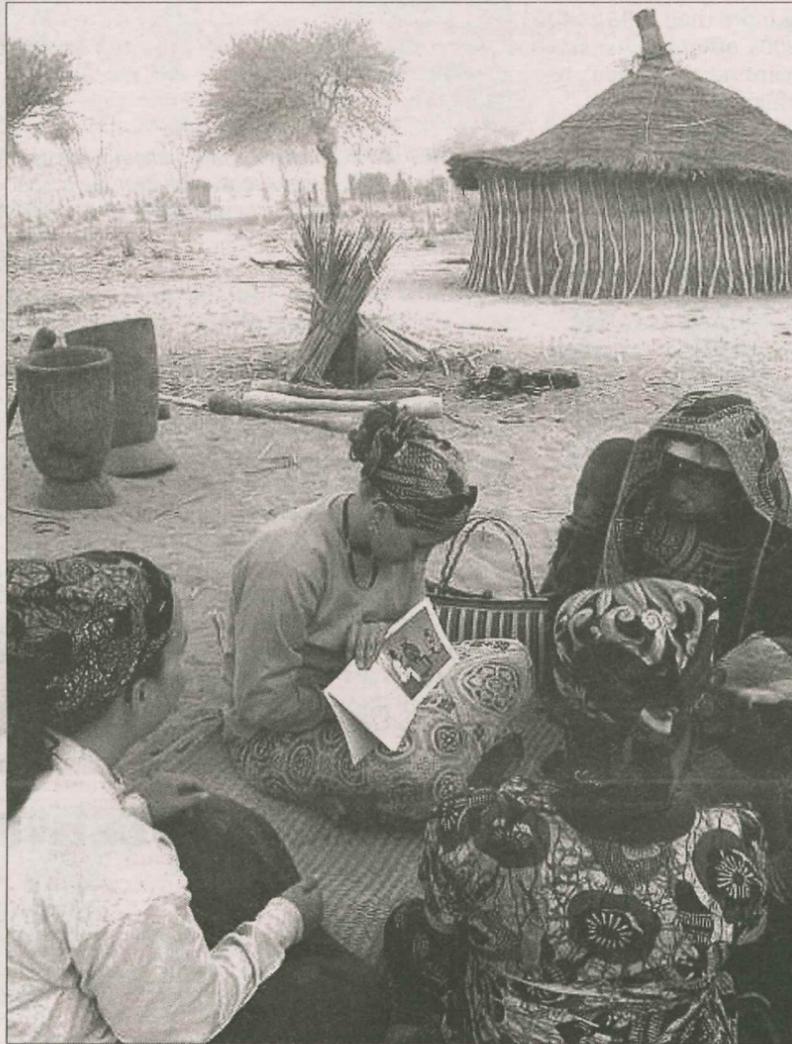
The poll also indicated those who claim to be Protestants are significantly more likely than Catholics to believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Of those with no religious identification, 10 percent believe the Bible is literally the Word of God and another 26 percent believe it is inspired.

According to the poll, there are regional differences among Americans as well. "Church attendance is highest in the South, so it comes as no surprise to find that Southerners are most likely to believe in a literal Bible," the Gallup release said. "Those in the East are least likely to believe in a literal Bible."

According to Gallup's Web site, even those who believe in the literal Word of God can still be at odds in their attempt to interpret exactly what the Bible says about key areas of Scripture and moral issues such as evolution and the teaching of it in public schools and opposition to same-sex relationships.

The Southern Baptist Convention, in its Baptist Faith & Message 2000, states, "The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy."

Making the journey



IMB Journeyman missionaries are bringing the Word of God to the Sokoto Fulani people, some who have never heard the name of Jesus. **Above:** Journeyman Jessica Busko holds a picture book as two Sokoto Fulani women listen to a Bible storying cassette. **Left:** Sokoto Fulani women listen to the Bible on a solar-powered radio.

IMB Journeyman are answer to prayer for Sokoto Fulani people

West Africa—Ministry to the Sokoto Fulani people group of West Africa was among global needs highlighted in last year's Southern Baptist Week of Prayer for International Missions.

Six months later, Kentucky Baptists continue to be part of the answer to that specific prayer request.

Wickliffe Baptist Church in Bardonia "adopted" the Sokoto Fulani as part of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board's "PrayerPlus" emphasis. The first visible answer to their prayers came when Danielle Koepke of Florida was appointed as a two-year IMB Journeyman missionary.

In turn, Koepke began to pray for other mission workers to answer God's call to work among the Sokoto Fulani. Her prayers were answered when four other 20-something Journeyman were appointed to the region, including Jessica Busko, whose parents are members of Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville.

And the answered prayers are multiplying. During a three-month period, the young women reported more than 50 professions of faith in Jesus among the Sokoto Fulani, most by those who never had heard His name before the Journeyman arrived.

"There was a mentality that it takes a long time to reach Muslims," noted team member Rachel Weigand, citing studies indicating it can take up to eight years for members of a Muslim people group to respond to the gospel.

"I came here thinking we would have groups who would listen to our stories, but no one would accept" □ See *Journeyman take ... Page 8*

'Receiving Sunday' brings unexpected blessings

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

Union—Pastor Mike Osborne set out to teach his church how to receive from God, but the benefits of that lesson also enriched Journey Baptist Church.

As part of a sermon series about God's Kingdom, Osborne held a "Receiving Sunday" where—as a gift from God—members could accept cash the church had withdrawn from the bank.

Although the object lesson cost Journey \$1,600, two months later a special offering replaced those funds more than tenfold, a boon for a congregation that started last September.

Journey is a high-impact church that is part of the "Kentucky Baptists Connect" emphasis sponsored by the

Kentucky Baptist Convention. After moving several times, the congregation now meets in a reception hall.

The couple who donated \$18,000 didn't specifically relate it to the "Receiving" service, the pastors said, but it serves as an example of God's faithfulness.

Stepping out in faith

"When we stepped out on faith, in obedience, He in return blessed us out of His endless supply," Osborne said.

Church bookkeeper Marilyn Jones said the influx of funds will help the new congregation, which generally faces a tight cash flow.

The church's administrative team and elders are discussing how to allocate the extra money.

"We decided to step back and

pray," Jones said. "We felt if we moved too quickly it would be us deciding and not the Lord."

The idea for the "reverse offering" originated with a Cincinnati-area pastors' forum that involves eight churches, including Journey.

When Osborne told his teenage son he liked the concept but it would cost too much, his son asked, "You mean we can step out and start a church on faith, but we can't trust God to meet Journey's needs?"

The following week, Osborne met a young man for lunch. A newcomer to the area, the man earns a modest salary and his wife is in college, so the pastor intended to buy him lunch.

However, his guest said, "I want to pay for it."

□ See *'Receiving Sunday' ... Page 3*

Baptists give record \$150 million Lottie Moon offering

By Shawn Hendricks
SBC International Mission Board

Richmond, Va. (BP)—Southern Baptists topped the 2006 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal, delivering the largest gift in the offering's 118-year history.

After the books closed May 31, the final tally hit \$150,178,098.06, an 8.9 percent increase over last year's \$137.9 million. Southern Baptists last exceeded their goal three years ago by giving more than \$136.2 million to the 2003 offering after missionary appointments lagged because of insufficient funds.

The offering supports the work of more than 5,100 missionaries across the globe. This year's gifts are expected to have a notable impact on the number of personnel being sent to the field. Board leaders anticipate sending 200 additional missionaries over the next two years, in addition to the normal appointment numbers.

"Generous level of giving"

"Because we are a missionary-sending organization, the number of missionaries we are able to send is directly related to the gifts we receive from Southern Baptists through the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering," said Jerry Rankin, president of the International Mission Board.

"Not only will this unprecedented amount enable us to send more missionaries, it demonstrates the



OFFERING IMPACT Because of Southern Baptists' record gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, more people will hear the gospel. Here, members of Good News Baptist Church, along with several other churches, meet on the outskirts of Moscow for a baptismal service.

heart of Southern Baptists for missions and the high priority they give to reaching a lost world.

"More unreached people groups will have access to the gospel, more people will be won and baptized, more churches planted and leaders disciplined and trained around the world because of such a generous level of giving."

Rankin credited Woman's Missionary Union's support for contributing to the offering's success.

"We are grateful for the partnership with WMU and their conscientious efforts in sponsoring and promoting the offering, as well as the personal sacrifice that gifts to the

LMCO reflect in individuals throughout the convention."

Lee affirms "faithful support"

Wanda Lee, executive director of national WMU, voiced her appreciation for faithful support among Southern Baptists.

"Support for international missionaries is critical, and we are so grateful to the men and women, boys and girls, who are a part of what God is doing around the world by supporting international missionaries through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering," Lee said.

"When WMU sets the (Lottie Moon Christmas Offering) goal each

year, we recognize that it can only be attained when believers prayerfully consider the need and give sacrificially so that others may hear the name of Jesus."

Since the offering began in 1888, the total amount received through 2006 has exceeded \$2.8 billion.

David Steverson, IMB treasurer and vice president for finance, announced at a May trustee meeting that if early projections held up, the board would be able to send an extra 200 missionaries to the field. Now, the question is whether enough Southern Baptists will step forward to accept God's call to missions, he said.

"We are grateful to the Lord for the tremendous blessing of this record offering given through Southern Baptists," Steverson said.

Last year, IMB officials reported that 104 new people groups were engaged with the gospel, 23,486 churches were started and 475,072 people were baptized.

"Thank you, Southern Baptists, for stepping up to the challenge of global evangelization and funding the highest Lottie Moon offering in missions history," said Gordon Fort, IMB vice president for overseas operations.

"As a result, we will be taking new initiatives to engage unreached people groups and will have the financial resources to increase our capacity to send more missionaries to the front lines."

Texas Baptist leaders post list of clergy sex abusers

Dallas (ABP)—The Baptist General Convention of Texas has made public a list of registered sex offenders currently or previously on staff at affiliated churches.

The decision is significant in light of a spate of Baptist clergy sex abuse cases and increased urging from abuse survivor groups for Baptist organizations to take action.

The BGCT initiative comes at the same time that Kentucky Baptist Convention leaders have agreed to study the possibility of establishing a similar registry.

Members of the KBC Mission Board voted last month for the board's administrative committee to "consider the feasibility of developing and implementing a registry of ministers/staff/employees in Kentucky Baptist Convention member churches who have been accused, charged, arrested and/or terminated from church responsibilities for any criminal activities including but not limited to child abuse and/or sexual abuse of any nature."

The Texas Baptist convention posted the names of eight convicted sex offenders online at www.bgct.org/brokentrust. Convention leaders have also said they will review ministers at the more than 5,600 BGCT-affiliated congregations and post additional names as they discover new, registered offenders.

BGCT leaders also have agreed to keep the list updated and mail it to all Texas Baptist churches periodically, beginning this fall.

The move is part of a convention-wide emphasis to protect children and churches, said Emily Prevost, who works with the BGCT congregational leadership team. Publishing the list online will help churches make informed decisions in hiring and retaining staff members, she said.

Any person convicted of rape, child molestation or sexual battery is required by law to register as a sex offender. The complete BGCT list, totaling fewer than 100 names, also includes ministers who committed adultery, became addicted to pornography or engaged in homosexual behavior. BGCT officials have declined to release the names of ministers who were not convicted of specifically criminal activity.

The BGCT may also establish a hotline that would allow victims to report sex abuse. No implementation process is in place yet, Prevost said.

International festival launches 2007 Crossover

By Erin Roach
Baptist Press

San Antonio (BP)—At least 1,000 people attended a festival featuring foods prepared by six ethnic churches in the San Antonio Baptist Association June 2 to kick off Crossover San Antonio, an outreach effort preceding this week's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

"The last I heard, we had 24 professions of faith," Steve Payne, Crossover coordinator for the association, told Baptist Press. "Several people had some questions about whether there were any Baptist churches near where they lived, so we were able to answer those questions. It was a good day, a lot of good fellowship. I think everybody was well pleased with it."

The international festival offered free samplings of Chinese, Korean, Lao, Indian and Hispanic food as well as prize giveaways including a high-definition television and a laptop computer. For the children there were balloons, slides and snow cones.

Payne said about 140 volunteers from the association and from ICE (Intentional Community Evangelism) teams from such states as Arizona, Georgia and Kansas joined in the effort.

Roland Lopez, Hispanic church planting consultant for the association, noted that three young women from a nearby town stumbled upon the festival and left with the hope of salvation.

"All three girls had planned that they would leave their hometown to come to San Antonio and do some bar hopping," he said. "That follow-

ing day, which was Saturday, they decided to go to Brackenridge Park. Being at the park and seeing the free food and free door prizes, they decided to come for a free lunch.

"They were sitting there, and I approached them and shared the gospel with them. In sharing the gospel, I found out that one of them had been exposed to the gospel and was not a Christian," Lopez added. "They were kind of smirking and smiling and one said, 'Mr. Lopez, we're not making fun of you or anything. It's just that I'm looking at these other two girls because of the fact that I just can't get away from God.'"

Lopez said the girls had come to San Antonio looking for fun "and found themselves confronting the Lord Jesus Christ. It was a privilege for me to share the gospel with them and lead them to faith in Christ." Now he is working to find a Baptist church in their hometown where they can be reached for follow-up.

Also that day, Lopez noticed an 88-year-old man and his daughter eating some of the international food, and the man said his wife had died the previous week.

"I engaged him in a conversation as he was eating and found that he needed to be ministered to and prayed for," Lopez said. "I shared the gospel of the Lord Jesus and led both to faith in Christ."

Such face-to-face talks about life happened across the park as ICE teams and local volunteers canvassed the grounds, striking up conversations that eventually led to questions about salvation and church membership. In addition to the 24 people who professed faith

in Christ, Payne said he hopes the event sparked something that will lead others to make decisions in the future.

Several people have asked the association if there will be a similar event next year because they enjoyed it so much.

"Even the park employees wanted to know that because they said it was a neat way for the churches to reach out to the community," Payne said. "They were very well pleased with that."

Payne said he also saw some progress within the association as some of the churches got to know each other better.

"I think it drew together the Asian churches," he said. "A lot of times they feel left out there by themselves, but they got to know each other better. I think working with Hispanic churches also they realized the importance of our Hispanic churches and different ethnic groups."

"They're talking about the possibility of maybe doing one next year, making this an annual thing," he added. "They felt excited about it, I think they felt it was well worth doing, and I think it's just a way of sharing the Lord with the community."

The San Antonio association has about 250 churches, Payne said, and many of them are Hispanic. Some congregations have five to 10 members, and others have 5,000 to 10,000 members, he noted.

Though the city has a rich religious heritage, 82 percent of the population of 1.5 million people does not attend church regularly.

Former Guatemalan infantryman finds higher calling

By Herb Brock
The Advocate-Messenger

Danville—Miguel Gonzalez has endured the clash of two different cultures experienced by other migrant Hispanic workers. He and his compadres all have had to cope with differences in languages, lifestyles, food and fashions in exchange for better jobs.

But the 43-year-old Central American also has gone through two other changes since coming to the United States—major occupational and spiritual transformations.

Most people from his native Guatemala have continued in the same or similar jobs they had in their home countries, mostly as farm workers and common laborers. But Gonzalez came to the States after spending months not only on the farm but in the military. Once here, he pursued a career far different from both farming and fighting.

When he left Guatemala, he was Private Gonzalez in that country's army. Today, he is Rev. Gonzalez in a Southern Baptist congregation. But the farmer-turned-military man-turned minister sees a tie that binds.

"In Guatemala, I was a soldier for my country. Now, I am a soldier for my Lord," he says. "In both situations, I was in a job that requires total dedication to a cause."

Gonzalez, a little man with a huge smile and, according to those who know him, an even bigger heart, took up his new cause six years ago when he was ordained as a Southern Baptist minister.

Today, he serves as pastor to Hispanic congregations at Southern Heights Baptist Church in Danville and Community Baptist Church in Junction City and also at churches

in Harrodsburg, and he preaches to Spanish-speaking inmates at the Boyle County Detention Center and makes frequent home visits.

"It's a long way from Guatemala City to Junction City," he says with a giggle.

Gonzalez, a resident alien in the U.S., joined the Guatemalan army when he was 18 and, at 21, married his hometown sweetheart, Elsa.

Heading north

He had spent 14 months in the army when one of his sisters living in the United States urged him to leave and head north.

"My sister said, 'You can get a better-paying job and have a better life in the U.S. You need to leave Guatemala,'" says Gonzalez, who heeded his sister's advice, as did three of his other siblings over time.

Gonzalez and his wife moved to Phoenix where he got a landscaping job, and the couple lived in a section of the city where "everybody was an immigrant and spoke Spanish."

The couple then moved to New Jersey, where he worked in a factory. The next stop was the Shelby area of Kentucky, where he worked a variety of farm and general laborer positions. In the next few years, he would undergo the most significant changes of his life.

"A Baptist minister from Venezuela talked to me and other Hispanics about Cristo y la Biblia—about Christ and the Bible—and I was impressed and moved by what he said," said Gonzalez, who was raised as a Roman Catholic.

Less than a year after he began talking about his faith with the Venezuelan pastor, he was baptized.

"In 1991, I underwent a bautizo, what you call baptism in English, and I soon became a Bautizo, a Baptist," he says. "In 1992, I was taking courses part-time in the seminary to migrant to laborer and minister to migrant farm laborers and to Hispanic congregations in local churches."

After working as a student-pastor at churches and in farm fields in Shelby and Oldham counties, Gonzalez moved to Danville in 2000. He was ordained in 2001 and since then has been ministering to Hispanics.

"I am always on the road," he says. "I work out of my home but mostly out of my car. I stay busy every week day and weekend day."

"Yo acepte a Cristo"

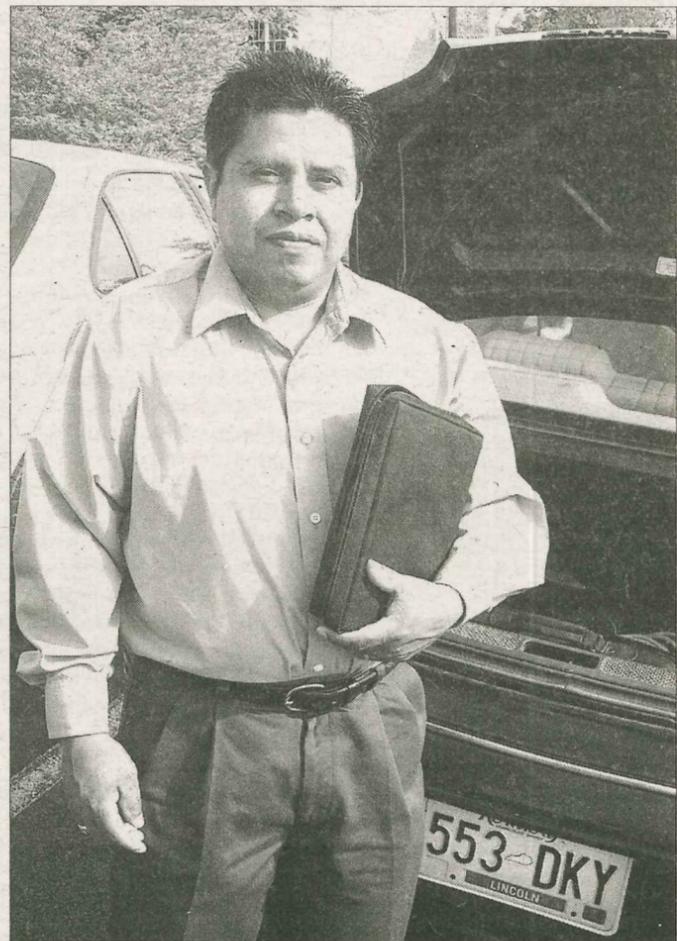
Gonzalez's numerous trips to his various congregations have been productive.

"Last year I had 160 decisions by people to accept Christ in the Danville congregations and 82 in Harrodsburg," he says. "The most special words in Spanish and English are, 'Yo acepte a Cristo,' or, 'I accept Jesus.'"

And when he hears those words, Gonzalez replies with special words of his own: "El dios de mayo bendice," or "May God bless you."

It's been an eventful more than two decades for Gonzalez as he has changed countries, cultures and callings.

He declares the long journey a success, saying that life is very good for him and his family, which includes Elsa and their 17-year-old daughter, Cindy, a junior at Boyle



County High School.

"America has been good to us, and Danville is a good place to live and raise a family," says Gonzalez, who takes a two-week vacation annually to his hometown in Guatemala.

"When I came here, I knew there were a lot of Hispanics for us to meet and know and share our faith with, and that has been a good thing."

Reprinted with permission of The Advocate-Messenger

ROAD WARRIOR In his efforts to reach the Hispanic communities throughout the state, Pastor Miguel Gonzalez spends a lot of time in his car. "I am always on the road," he said. (Photo by The Advocate-Messenger)

New procedures take effect for 2007 KBC resolution process

Louisville—Following new procedures approved at last year's Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting, the KBC Committee on Resolutions is now accepting resolutions to be considered at the 2007 annual meeting.

All resolutions eligible for consideration must adhere to the new procedures. They specify that submissions will be received as early as June 1 but no later than 30 days prior to the next KBC annual meeting. This year, that date will be Oct. 14.

Previously, convention messengers were required to present resolutions by the close of the afternoon session on the first day of the convention. The changes are designed to "facilitate thorough consideration and to expedite the committee's work."

Resolutions must now be accompanied by a letter or e-mail from a church qualified to send a messenger to the annual meeting, stating that the person submitting the resolution is in good membership standing. No more than three resolutions per person will be considered each year.

Other new guidelines related to proposed resolutions include:

- Resolutions must be typewritten, titled and dated.

- Resolutions must include complete contact information for both the person submitting it, and his or her church.

- Resolutions must be addressed to the Committee on Resolutions in care of the KBC Executive Office at its registered or e-mail address. Electronic copies of resolutions are preferred.

The Committee on Resolutions will review all properly submitted proposals and submit only the resolutions the committee recommends for adoption at the annual meeting. By a simple majority, the convention may also consider any other resolution properly submitted to the committee.

Also new this year, a list of the titles and dispositions of all properly submitted proposed resolutions will be distributed to messengers at the convention. The list will include the name and city of the person who proposed each resolution.

This year's KBC annual meeting will be held Nov. 13-14 at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown.

Resolutions should be sent to the Committee on Resolutions in care of the KBC Executive Office at P.O. Box 43433, Louisville, KY 40253-0433 or executive@kybaptist.org.

'Receiving Sunday' is blessing for Ky. church

Continued from page 1

After Osborne told him he needed to receive that because of his upcoming sermon on receiving from God, the man handed him a \$200 gift and said, "God told me to write this check to Journey."

"I knew God was telling me to do what He led me to do," Osborne reflected.

However, that Sunday when he passed offering bags and urged people to accept whatever they needed from God, few took him up on the offer.

Osborne responded by emptying the remaining cash on the altar and inviting people to come forward.

"You may not need money, but you need to learn to receive from God," he said.

The gesture stimulated an overpowering emotional reaction, several members said.

Marilyn Jones said many people's hands went up in the air, some cried and others hugged.

"It was an amazing example of how to receive," she said. "In learning to receive from God, we can learn how to give more to God."

"We always think there is someone worse off than we are, and that's true," she added. "But it may be God wants to bless us through this other person."

Her husband, Chuck Jones, said he watched two different families that he knew needed major sums of money refuse to answer Osborne's invitation. Jones called that a sad commentary on the pride that often inhibits people from receiving God's gifts.

However, Jones said, since the service three to

five new families have been visiting each week and members have exhibited a different spirit.

"People are more receptive to giving," Jones said. "God teaches us how to give. God said, 'If you'll learn how to receive, then I'll teach you how to give.'"

Glen Cowan, who tapes Osborne's sermons each week, said he is still overcome with emotion when he reflects on the service.

Cowan said he observed several people weeping and hugging as if they had been relieved of a great burden. Afterwards, it took twice as long for everyone to file out of the building, he added.

Learning to receive

Cowan said the experience has taught him to receive from God.

"When opportunities open up now, I receive His love and grace a lot more freely," he said. "Around friends I receive their love and their impact on me. I can open up to them."

Osborne said several members of his leadership team later told him that they had been telling co-workers or employees about Christ.

In addition, two young women handed in decision cards indicating they had accepted Jesus as their personal Savior that morning.

Ironically, during the month after the receiving sermon, total offerings declined about \$300 compared to the previous month, but the pastor said he wasn't shaken by that temporary setback.

"To me it's all a faith thing," Osborne said. "That's why God led me to do this."

WESTERN RECORDER

Box 43969
Louisville, KY 40253
(USPS 679-380)

TRENNIS HENDERSON
Editor

DREW NICTER
News Director

THOMAS C. TOWNSEND
Marketing & Business
Manager

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

Western Recorder is published weekly by Western Recorder Inc., an agency of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253, except for one week in July and December. For general information, call (502) 489-3535. Periodicals postage paid at Louisville, Ky.

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POSTMASTER: Send address corrections to: Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253.

To register change of address: Send the mailing label from page 1, along with your new address, to the subscription department at the Western Recorder address.

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A friendly reminder to pray

By Henry Blackaby

Atlanta (BP)—In Luke 18:1-8 Jesus reminds us "that men always ought to pray and not lose heart"

To illustrate this, He spoke a parable about a persistent, helpless widow who sought justice from her adversary. But the judge to whom she took her complaint "did not fear God nor regard man." He simply didn't care and sent her on her way. But after her "continual coming," the judge granted her the justice she sought. How much more, then, will God, who loves us with an everlasting love, "avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him?"

There should never be a time when a believer should not have his attention directed to God. God is faithful. God is always present and always active in the midst of every situation. Our fellowship with Him should be uninterrupted and unbroken. In every circumstance God has something to say. This is why Jesus desires that our prayer life be a con-

tinual 24/7 way of life.

Paul knew this as well. His attention was constantly directed toward God and he urged every believer to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

COMMENTARY

Many in our nation observed the annual National Day of Prayer last month. May I challenge you to continue praying daily and without ceasing "for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence" (1 Timothy 2:2).

Pray continually for President Bush, our Congress, our courts and our military. Pray for local and state officials. Pray for our policemen and our firefighters. And pray for pastors and leaders everywhere who bring the Word of God to the nations (Hebrews 13:7).

Jesus also said in praying that we ought never to "lose heart" or become discouraged. Today, we are living in dark and desperate times. Many believers have grown weary

Practical tips for reading the Bible with kids

By Pam Gillaspie

Gurnee, Ill.—June is here and while it has been claimed by adults as, among other things, International Men's Month, Turkey Lovers' Month, Learn French Month, Candy Month, Lady Lawyers Month, Iced Tea Month, and yes, even Potty Training Awareness Month, its primary significance for kids across the nation is singular—summer vacation.

With no homework and more discretionary hours in the day, summer vacation is an ideal time to be more intentional about reading the Bible with your kids. The real Bible? Not just Bible stories? Absolutely! Show them they can understand God's Word for themselves before someone else convinces them that it's too hard.

This summer consider these simple tips for reading the Bible with your kids:

FIRST PERSON

1. Pray before you start. Ask God to give you and your kids a desire for His Word.

2. Use an understandable translation. Think you can save a couple of bucks by dusting off the family's old King James and still see results with your school-age kids? Think again. Try a more reader-friendly version like the New Living Translation or the even easier-to-read God's Word Translation.

3. Start in Genesis and concentrate on following the storyline. When you run into such items as genealogies, lengthy laws, and the instructions for building a tabernacle, summarize the material and move

from the moral decay of our culture and ask how long until God sweeps across the nation in a mighty revival. Others have become discouraged with our involvement in Iraq and ask when God will bring peace to the Middle East. And still others ask when God will avenge His elect who are persecuted worldwide.

Like the widow, many feel helpless and oppressed in their circumstances. In all things, however, we must remember that Jesus' promise remains true: "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes" (Mark 9:23). Therefore, let us ask God to help our unbelief.

In a solemn closing remark in Luke 18:8, Jesus adds, "When the Son of Man comes, will he really find faith on the earth?" Will He find His people in persistent prayer? You see, Jesus knew from His own life how essential prayer was to be in every life. But He wondered if people would possess the type of faith required for such a prayer life. May we not disappoint Him by ceasing to pray.

Henry Blackaby is the founder of Blackaby Ministries International in Atlanta

on to where the storyline picks up again.

4. Help your kids learn how to reason through the text. As you read, help your children identify recurring themes by asking and encouraging questions, but let them know up front that you might not have all the answers. They will respect your honesty and learn that meaningful reading does not always mean having all the answers.

5. Make it fun! The last thing you want is for your kids to dread spending time in God's Word. If making it fun means breaking out the ice cream, then break out the ice cream and show them what the Psalmist meant when he said, "How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

Pam Gillaspie is the author of "Ablaze: Igniting Spiritual Passion for Life through Reading God's Word"

SBC meeting highlights spiritual awakening

As you read this column, the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention will most likely either be in session or have just ended.

The theme for the June 12-13 meeting focuses on prayer for spiritual awakening—His Holy Spirit's revival. Each session highlights an aspect of this emphasis such as confession, repentance and asking the Lord to energize our evangelistic efforts.

There will be special prayer times during each session as well as a message by President Frank Page based on 2 Chronicles 7:14.

One of the most anticipated reports of the convention is the 10-year plan of evangelism presented by Geoff Hammond, the new president of the North American Mission Board.

"I'm a missiologist at heart," Hammond says. "Cross-cultural evangelism and church planting are my heartbeat."

Hammond says he takes leading NAMB's 5,000 missionaries as a serious calling. "We are going to tell

their stories in a way that will help Southern Baptists fall in love with our missionaries all over again."

Hammond also says that one of his priorities is strengthening relationships with state conventions, noting that he will look to state conventions as key partners in the task of reaching North America for Christ.

"We need to think like missionaries and see the people groups and population segments in our harvest fields," he emphasized.

Another major focus at the annual meeting is the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the first Baptist association, which was formed in 1707 in Philadelphia.

Crossover San Antonio, held the weekend before the SBC, involved hundreds of Southern Baptists sharing faith and ministry all over the city through local churches. Former SBC President Bobby Welch spent six weeks visiting churches in the area to promote Crossover as he did the two previous years.

My wife, Kay, and I always look

GIVING

Charitable gifts of life insurance are simple & effective

By Laurie Valentine

Using life insurance to fund

a charitable gift could allow you to make a larger ultimate gift to charity than you ever thought possible.



While you might not be able to make a gift of thousands of dollars all at once, you may have the financial resources to make gifts of modest amounts on a regular basis to cover the cost of the premiums for a life insurance policy on your life. Or you might be in a position to give up ownership of a policy you purchased years earlier for a particular financial need that no longer exists.

The simplest way to set up a gift to charity using life insurance is to designate one or more charities as the beneficiary of a policy on your life. Any type of policy can be used. This option provides no current tax benefits to you, but sets up a plan to fund a potentially significant gift to the designated causes at your death. You can designate the proceeds to be paid outright to the charitable beneficiaries or to an endowment fund benefiting one or more charitable causes.

Another option is to make an irrevocable transfer of the ownership of an existing policy to charity, or arrange for the charity to purchase a new policy on your life with funds you provide.

A gift of an existing policy will allow you to take a charitable income tax deduction equal to the lesser of the fair market value of the policy (the policy's cash surrender value) or the premiums you have paid prior to making the gift. If the policy is not paid up at the time you give it, your payment of future premiums will entitle you to additional charitable income tax deductions since you have no further obligation to make premium payments after you transfer ownership.

At your death, the charity can collect the proceeds immediately; there is no waiting for the settlement of your estate. The charity usually will incur no expense to collect the death benefit. Best of all, the amount the charity receives usually is far larger than the total premiums paid during your lifetime.

A charitable gift of life insurance is a simple but effective way to leave a legacy and make a lasting difference.

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation

How can families balance summer plans, time, cost?

Q: As parents, how can we balance what seem to be ever-increasing summer activity options for our teens with limited time, energy and resources within the family? Simply put, how can we avoid being absolutely exhausted at the end of our already short summer?

As a parent of two teenage girls and an 11-year-old boy, I can closely identify with your concern. One of the first things we do is sit down with the family calendar and look at all the opportunities for each family member in advance. Potential involvement in sports, camps, church camps, Vacation Bible School leadership, mission trips, as well as sports and band practices could keep us in constant movement.

PARENTING

As a family, we discuss which activities are most important before putting anything on the calendar, keeping in mind that one of our priorities is a family vacation. We remind our children that we have limited time, energy and money to spend so each person has to prioritize. One easy way to make this clear is to make a list of the monetary cost of each big event. Once we have put the big events on the calendar, we begin to discuss daily activities.

One challenge to summer is balancing time spent with family and friends. Teenagers need to be encouraged to take initiative to develop and grow their friendships with peers while not being constantly on the go. Encourage them to invite friends to your home and help them brainstorm interesting activities. Some parents might need to consider making an investment in their home to make it a more user-friendly space for teens to enjoy.—Scott Wigginton

Q: I've started the path to recovery from divorce, but am aware that I need spiritual guidance. How can I get spiritually focused, now that I've started to feel better?

As your coming! Tony Campolo says, "It's Friday, but Sunday's coming!" After experiencing crucifixion (divorce) you may fear that resurrection (recovery) is far away. Harold Ivan Smith in "A Time for Healing" lists some choices that can help chart a path toward meaningful spiritual recovery from divorce:

SINGLES

Know that God is not through with you yet. Hear Joshua's words, "There remains much land to be conquered." (Joshua 13:1) and Jeremiah's, "I know the plans I have for you ... plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11).

Look more to the future than to the past. Romans 8:28 is still true: God causes all things to work together for your good and His glory when God is your focus. Remember the reason of stained glass—the most incredible light comes through windows made from broken pieces.

View life as opportunity more than challenge. The wilderness of your experience does not frighten God. No matter what the challenge, God is with you.

Choose a welcoming stance toward life. The other options are skepticism or defensiveness and both are unproductive. With God's help you can testify that "I've been to the bottom, but I'm happy to report that the bottom is solid."

Choose the direction. As Dr. Seuss would say, "You have brains in your head, you have feet in your shoes, you can steer yourself any direction you choose." You don't have to just let life happen to you. You can choose to take the high road, the road less traveled, and as Proverbs 3:6 reminds us, ask God to direct your paths.

Trust the God who never fails. God's everlasting arms are strong enough for you.

Focus on the Father rather than on the crisis. Jesus did that when facing the cross, and so can you.

Do something! God beckons you to take action with the time you have available. Seize the moment. Live God's priorities. Ask for wisdom; God promises to supply. God redeems the paths of our lives.—James Stillwell

Family Forum writers are:

David Garrard, minister to children at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville. E-mail: dgarrard@smbclouisville.org.

James Stillwell, minister to singles at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington. E-mail: james@ibs-lex.org.

Valerie Vincent, Christian counselor with Hardy Associates in Louisville. E-mail: dr.vincent@insightbb.com.

Scott Wigginton, associate professor of pastoral ministries and counseling at Campbellsville University. E-mail: sewigginton@campbellsville.edu.

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



Memories & milestones on the road of life

Last week marked a pair of monumental milestones in the Henderson household: My wife, Pam, and I celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary and our younger daughter, Audrey, graduated from high school.

As Pam and I move rapidly toward the empty nest season of life, we are awash in cherished memories accumulated over the years.

Audrey and our older daughter, Emily, a senior in college, have been the focus of many of those memories—from first steps to first dates as well as slumber parties, band competitions, school plays, mission trips, family vacations, etc.

Emily and Audrey helped remind us of many of those long-tucked-away reflections as they presented Pam and me with an anniversary scrapbook featuring photos from every year of our married life as well as notes, cards and letters they collected from friends and family members. Sitting together on the couch and looking through the scrapbook provided a fresh reminder of the joys of marriage and parenting Pam and I have shared over the years.

Five years ago, on our 20th wedding anniversary, I wrote a tribute to Pam titled, "In honor of the absolute love of my life." As we hit a quarter of a century together (Kind of makes us sound old, doesn't it?), my sentiments obviously are still the same: "Pam consistently has remained my dearest friend, confidant and encourager. She is, for me, the living example of 'an excellent wife' eloquently described in Proverbs: a priceless treasure whose 'worth is far above jewels.' ... I thank God for the precious gift of a godly wife."

During a quiet, relaxing anniversary lunch last week at one of our favorite restaurants, we shared with our server that we were celebrating our 25th anniversary. "Wow, 25 years, that's probably almost a record these days," she responded. "I was married for two years; I wish I was still married."

Unfortunately, that's a sad commentary on the state of many marriages and former marriages today. But it also is a reminder to all couples to continually

seek to protect and strengthen your marital commitment to one another.

On the graduation front, it's an emotional experience to watch your last child walk across the stage and receive her high school diploma.

Audrey has brought countless blessings into our lives with her outgoing personality, talent and deep Christian commitment.

As she heads to college this fall to study social work, her career choice is a reflection of her compassion for the hurts and needs of others around her.

Audrey's biggest life decision came at age 7 when she made a personal profession of faith in Christ. In another old editorial published exactly a decade ago, I noted that Audrey wrote out her personal testimony in preparation for her baptismal service. "I decided that I was a sinner and God was sad about it. So I did something about it," she wrote. "At home with Mom and Dad, I asked Jesus into my heart. I feel very good about it."

"Now I know that Jesus loves me and I love Him," she added. "He has helped me and has been with me since that day! And, well, here I am today being baptized." As I pointed out at the time, "That's a powerful testimony whether you're 7 or 70."

I don't share such reflections to suggest that our family is particularly unique or special—except to our family. Rather, it is an affirmation that a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, a committed Christian marriage and the adventure of parenting are valued gifts from God to countless individuals, couples and families. Make certain that you take time to thank God for the blessings of life and to share words of affirmation and appreciation with those who are most dear to you.

On a couple of personal notes: Thank you, Pam, for the incredible journey we have shared for 25 years as husband and wife. I cherish you. Congratulations, Audrey! Your mom and I are so proud of you. We look forward to all that God will accomplish in and through your life in the years ahead. I love you.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Beyond the one-decision invitation

By Don Mathis

Having served as a pastor for nearly 30 years, an interim pastor for three years and a vocational evangelist for eight years, I have made every conceivable mistake in giving the invitation.

When it comes to the invitation, most ministers are "fellow strugglers." So as a fellow struggler, please allow me to make a few suggestions. And, as they say, "A picture is worth a thousand words."

Recently, I was in revival with a pastor who presided over the invitation with near perfection:

Body language. As soon as I had finished explaining the invitation, a few seconds before we began to sing, he stood, turned toward the congregation, and with a welcoming smile, opened his arms in a receptive manner. This is the opposite of what I sometimes see when a pastor seems reluctant to stand at the front, and if he does, he crosses his arms and bows his head. It appears that he would prefer no one come forward and if they do, they will be disturbing him. Of course, he wants individuals to come forward, but it just doesn't look that way. Body language says so much.

Joyful welcome. As individuals began to come forward, the pastor greeted each one by reaching out

his right hand to joyfully welcome them as they came. This does a lot of positive things. It magnifies the normal Christian greeting of a handshake. More importantly, it prevents

the person who is emotional from grabbing the pastor and clinging. Forgive me for just saying it—too often I see a woman cling to the pastor for what appears to the congregation to be a five-minute hug.

Trained counselors. As individuals come forward, the pastor greeted them warmly and found out their name (if he did not know it) and the nature of their decision. Immediately, he turned and introduced the person to a counselor (a male to a male; a female to a female). Obviously, he had helpers, men and women, who were near the front on both sides of the auditorium ready to help. All of this took about 15 seconds and he was ready to receive the next person.

Each decision-maker had the full attention of a counselor to stay with him or her as long as needed. This contrasts with a person coming forward for the next 10 to 15 minutes occupying the pastor's attention. While he is dealing with one person, maybe even a rededication, there might be a dozen unsaved people in the congregation. They are not

going to come forward when the pastor is not there to greet them. Rarely will they come to the evangelist or a deacon, sometimes to a staff minister, but most of the time they want the pastor to greet them. The surest way to guarantee no more than a one-decision invitation is for the pastor to be totally occupied with one decision that is made early in the invitation.

As a pastor, if you do not have anyone available to help you with the invitation, enlist about eight to 10 deacons, men and women Sunday School teachers (be sure to include some who work with children and youth), and others and let the evangelist meet with them before the first service of a revival.

I typically train volunteers on how to counsel those who respond to the invitation. I assure them that if they encounter an unexpected problem, the pastor and evangelist will be available to help. With that assurance, there will be men and women in your church who will gladly help at invitation time.

Many ministers know more about giving an invitation than I do, but if the above can be helpful to you, please receive it in the spirit intended. May the Holy Spirit guide us as we partner with Him at invitation time.

Evangelist Don Mathis of Bowling Green is a former Kentucky Baptist Convention president

Billy Graham Library dedicated

Former U.S. presidents, ministry partners gather to honor legendary evangelist

"This building behind me is just a building. It's an instrument, a tool for the gospel."

Billy Graham

Charlotte, N.C.—A crowd of 1,500 people, including three former presidents, gathered in Charlotte, N.C., May 31 to dedicate the Billy Graham Library.

"This building behind me is just a building," Graham said. "It's an instrument, a tool for the gospel. The primary thing is the gospel of Christ."

Graham, 88, barely able to see, hear or walk, made a rare public appearance for the dedication.

On stage with the guest of honor was his son, Franklin, who leads his father's ministry, and former presidents George H.W. Bush, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, who each took turns praising Graham.

Presidential perspectives

Bush gave an emotional keynote address in which he commended Graham for starting a moral awakening in the United States and in the former Soviet Union.

Graham has met every U.S. president since Harry Truman, and he certainly made an impression on those who spoke at the dedication.

Carter said Graham's message had "permeated the entire world," and Clinton said he chose to attend the event "because of the public Billy Graham and because of the private Billy Graham."

"When he prays with you in the Oval Office or upstairs at the White House, you feel he is praying for you, not for the president," Clinton said.

"Billy has known me since 1985,"

he said. "But I have known him for nearly 50 years."

"I feel like I've been attending my own funeral with all these speeches," Graham said during the dedication. "I know they all meant it. But I feel terribly small and humbled by it all, and I feel I don't deserve it because it's been a whole team of people that have worked together, prayed together, traveled together, believed God was going to do wonderful things together."

In addition to remarks by Franklin Graham, North Carolina Gov. Mike Easley and others, Billy Graham's longtime ministry partners George Beverly Shea and Cliff Barrows sang a hymn.

Shea, 98, had to grip the podium to get through two verses of the crusade anthem, "How Great Thou Art," the hymn he introduced to the world at Billy Graham's 1957 crusade in New York.

"It's been a long journey, and wonderful," Shea said.

"What a privilege it has been for me," Barrows agreed.

The 40,000-square-foot, \$27 million facility sits on 63 acres just four miles from the farm where Graham grew up. It is open to the public for 90-minute self-guided tours with no cost for admission.

A tour of the library begins in a barn representing Graham's humble beginnings and expands into exhibits covering the eight-week tent revival in Los Angeles in 1949 that catapulted his ministry; his trips to Asia, Africa and communist Eastern Europe; and his many sermons.

Towering above the six exhibits, four galleries of more than 350 photographs and two theaters is a 24-by-40-foot cross-shaped glass window embedded in the front of the barn-shaped building.

"This library is not about Billy



HOMETOWN HISTORY Guests tour the facilities of the Billy Graham Library. To the left in the background is the house Graham lived in while he was growing up. It was moved from its original location about four miles away. (BP photos by Guy Lyons)

Graham, but it's about the message that Billy Graham has preached for the last 60-plus years," Franklin Graham said at the dedication. "And that is the message of the cross. And if you look at the library, what you see is a cross. My father's name is not on the building, but the cross."

Sermon manuscripts

The library will also be the repository for Graham's personal papers, including his correspondence, ministry records and sermon manuscripts.

For children, there is a scavenger hunt on the self-guided tour, starting with an animatronic cow named Bessie that tells of Graham as a young boy. "It's a tool for ministry for years to come," Franklin Graham said of the library. "It's a tool for evangelism. And long after my father and mother are in heaven, people are going to come to know the Lord Jesus Christ because of the message they hear inside those

doors."

Billy Graham said his favorite part of the library is the room devoted to his wife, Ruth Bell Graham, who has been bedridden for six months and could not attend the dedication.

"More than me, she deserves to be here today," Graham said of his wife.

The evangelist himself has been ill in recent years. He has a condition known as fluid on the brain, as well as prostate cancer and Parkinson's disease. He and his wife are mostly confined to their home in Montreat, N.C.

But at the dedication, Graham summoned the power to raise up the past and briefly express what the focus of his ministry has been.

"My whole life," he said, "has been to please the Lord and honor Jesus."

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



HUMBLE SERVANT At the dedication ceremony for the Billy Graham Library, the legendary evangelist said he was overwhelmed. "My one comment when I toured it was it was too much Billy Graham," he said. "You know, my whole life has been to please the Lord and to honor Jesus, not to see me or to think of me."



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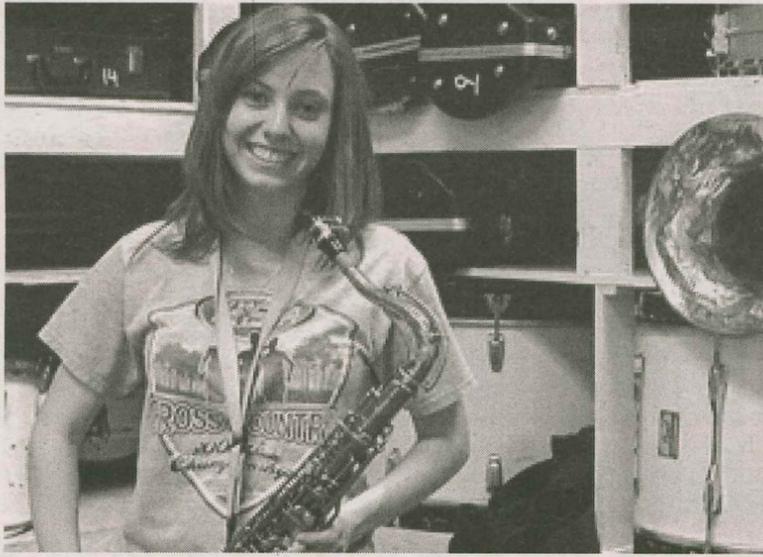
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Come and See . . .

Oneida Baptist Institute

2007 Father's Day Offering

Oneida was the "different atmosphere" Vicki needed



Vicki developed her musical skills at OBI by trying different instruments. She plans to attend college to become a music teacher.

Vicki enrolled at OBI her sophomore year. "I had been all over the military, and 'I had had been in the place,'" she said. Her mother died when she was five, and her dad remarried when she was 11. Her step-mother became a Christian, and Vicki said they started attending church. "I became a Christian and was baptized," she said. She remembers the biblical teaching she received at that time of her life. "I soaked it up," she said.

From seventh to ninth grades, however, Vicki began having problems. Her dad retired from the military, and they settled in central Kentucky. At school, Vicki said she never

stopped feeling like the "new kid." She felt depressed most of the time.

She said her parents wanted to find a new environment for her, and Vicki was ready to "take a break." They looked for Christian boarding schools on the internet and found OBI. The diversity of Oneida's student body appealed to Vicki and the fact that she would not have to change schools or friends again.

Vicki noticed that Oneida had a "different atmosphere" and that "people were kind of happy." She appreciated OBI's caring, Christian teachers. "They don't get mad. They act mature and do things how God would have them do things," she

said. She liked daily chapel and said, "The majority of the sermons are helpful. It gives you peace every day." Between chapel, Bible class and other Christians, Vicki believes she was able to lay a solid spiritual foundation at OBI. "I got back on track," she said.

Soon after she arrived at OBI, a student asked her to join cross country. "They wanted to start a girls' team, and I guess I looked like a runner," Vicki said. She finished that first season by qualifying for state. "I really liked it. I never did sports before [OBI], because of try-outs," she said. She went to state her junior and senior years as well. She earned the 110% award, the Coach's award and the Most Valuable Runner award. Vicki also participated in swimming, track and volleyball.

Vicki explored her musical talent by enrolling in instrumental classes. She learned to play both woodwind and brass instruments and began guitar. "I would pick up an instrument and a book, and if I had a question, I would ask Mr. Cochran. My major in college will be in music. I want to be a band teacher," she said. Vicki played in the pep band during basketball season for three years.

"She's one of the most versatile and talented students that I have ever worked with," said band director Tim Cochran. "She seems to have success in everything she attempts to do. She is a very gifted athlete and musician. She's hard-working, dependable and very likeable."

Jesse grew up in a world-wide mission at Oneida

Jesse's family moved to Oneida before he was born. He is the youngest of four boys enrolled to OBI staff and faculty belonging to Blake and Joy Godbold. His three older brothers graduated from OBI. Jesse said, "Oneida has always felt like home, but I always thought of Charleston, South Carolina as my home away from home. We visited my grandparents there two or three times a year."

While living in rural Oneida, Jesse grew up among people from many different cultures and all walks of life. He said, "I got people's ideas on all different aspects of life from styles of dress and ways of speaking and thinking to religion. . . . It helped me realize even more that you can't just stay in one place. You have to go out and share your faith. Everyone counts, and it's a world-wide mission."

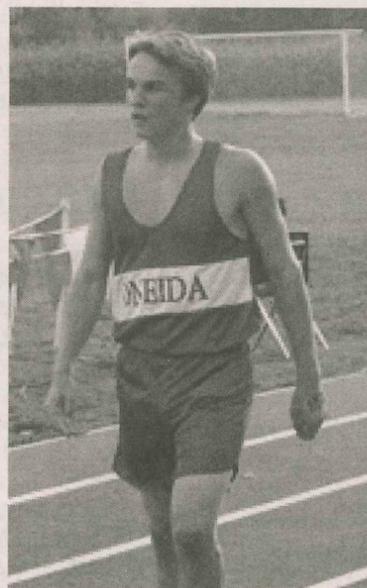
Jesse graduated second in his class. He made it his goal to take advantage of academic opportunities beyond basic requirements whenever possible. In middle school, he attended the SCATS pro-

gram at Western Kentucky University for two summers. In high school, he enrolled in OBI's wide array of advanced courses. His junior year, Jesse was accepted to the Kentucky Governor's Scholar program. "That was the best thing I ever did. The people were as goal-driven as me. Everyone there was treated as if we were in college." Jesse plans to study cultural anthropology or medicine in college.

Jesse's sports career began in the fifth grade with cross country.

His eight-year membership on the team included four years' state competition. He also played soccer, baseball and basketball each for four years and swimming and track for one season each. "I love exercising and the intensity of it, the rush you get. Plus, I don't like to just sit around," Jesse said. He rounded out his OBI experience with activities like drama, Creative Ministries, Baptist Campus Ministry and Student Government Association.

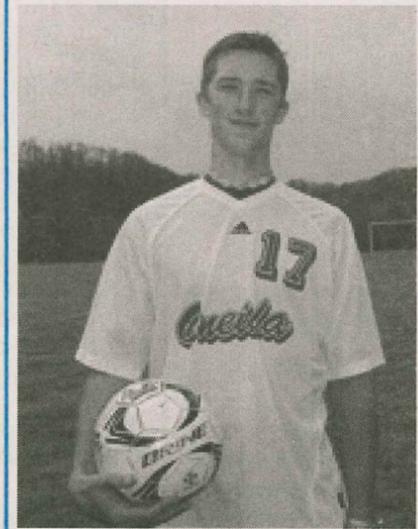
OBI principal, Dan Stockton, said, "It has been my privilege to



Finishing the race: OBI gives Jesse and others the chance to grow to their full potential academically, athletically, socially and spiritually.

watch Jesse grow from a small boy in kindergarten into a compassionate, caring young Christian gentleman. He is a strong, gifted leader in every area of OBI life. Jesse contributed immensely to our overall school environment."

Layden appreciated finding an affordable Christian school



Layden enjoyed the many athletic opportunities he had at OBI.

Layden is from northern Kentucky. He and his family were looking for an affordable private school and were happy to find Oneida and to learn it was a Christian school. Layden said the admissions process at OBI made him feel welcome.

"Just coming in, you get your own personal interview. They find out who you are, not just your name and social security number," he said.

He was also impressed when he found out why Oneida is affordable. "They explained how a lot of the money [for OBI] comes from churches across the state and country, and how all the volunteers donate money and time and do so much work. It's amazing how many people are involved in something like this," Layden said.

OBI's structured schedule and environment enabled Layden to improve his grades from a 2.5 to a 3.8 average. "I always had the capability, but I didn't apply myself. My dad told me that for years, and now I agree with him," he said.

Layden was very pleased with the sports program at OBI. "I'm really athletic, and I had so many athletic opportunities at Oneida," he said. He joined baseball, basketball, soccer and swimming. He earned several awards including the Coach's award, the 110% award and the Most Improved award.

Scott Self was Layden's swimming coach and senior English teacher. He said, "Layden is a hard worker and carries himself in a very mature fashion. He was a joy to have on the swim team. As a student, he was the example for other students."

Layden plans to attend a university in Kentucky, where he will major in pre-law and play soccer.

Oneida Baptist Institute

ANNUAL OFFERING

This is the thirteenth year for Kentucky Baptist churches to observe the Father's Day Offering for Oneida Baptist Institute.

FUNDING

Approximately 9 percent of Oneida's funding comes from the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

35 percent comes from student fees.

The remaining 56 percent comes from income from our modest investments, churches, and individuals who choose to invest in the lives of young people. These gifts are the financial backbone of our ministry.

Eve learned how to be more self-sufficient at OBI

Eve came to Oneida as a sixth grader. She lived in Ethiopia with her parents until fourth grade, when she and her sister were sent to live with relatives in Maryland to avoid civil unrest in her country.

A few years later, one of her cousins attended OBI. Eve recalled, "She liked it, so [my family] sent me and my sister here. They wanted us to learn how to be independent." She was apprehensive, but having her cousin already at OBI gave her some comfort. "I wasn't as homesick as I thought I would be, because my cousin helped. I was shy. She helped me. She would introduce me to people," Eve said.

Her cousin also helped her navigate daily responsibilities and chores like doing her own laundry, cleaning her room and going to work after school. Eve said, "I had to learn to work every day. At first I didn't like it,

because I wasn't used to working. After a while I kind of enjoyed it, because it made me be more independent," she said.

Eve worked in the kitchen during sixth grade. In seventh grade, she landed a coveted spot in the campus grill. "A friend told the Winters I'd be a good worker, so they let me. I'd never done something like that." She started out serving drinks and cleaning and was a cook by her sophomore year. "I worked my way up," she said.

Mike and Debbie Winters were Eve's supervisors in the grill. Mrs.

Winters, who also teaches English said, "Eve came to OBI as a little girl and has grown into a beautiful, Christian young woman. She was an excellent worker in the grill and a wonderful student."

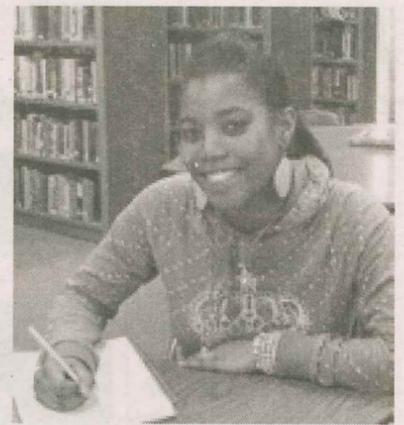
Eve explored an interest in sports and became a key player for the girls'

basketball team. She played for seven years. Her awards included the Most Improved and Coach's awards. She also joined track, soccer and volleyball.

Eve has always had top grades at OBI. Some classes proved more challenging than others. "I had to study to get good grades," she said. She earned several top scholar awards.

Eve enjoyed daily chapel and how details from a Bible story were illuminated. She took Bible class her junior year and said, "We went deep into the Bible and learned things I never knew. It gave me more knowledge about God and how I can follow Him."

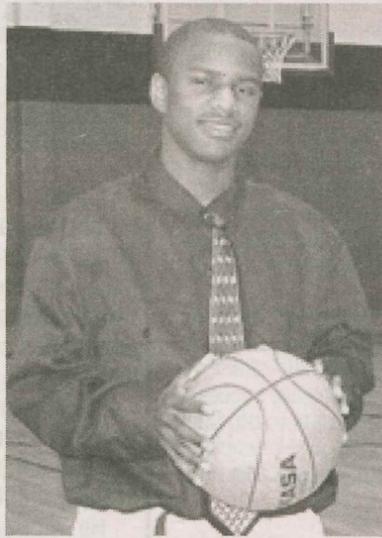
Reflecting on her years at OBI, Eve appreciates the experience. "I think if I had not been here, I would be more dependent on other people, and I would not have the experience of working. I would not be as social or



Eve enjoyed a deep study of God's Word in both chapel and Bible class at OBI

have made as many friends as I did here. I really liked it," she said. Eve would like to attend college and become a pediatrician.

Adolphus waited three years for the opportunity to attend OBI



Adolphus learned team work, sharing and sacrificing both on and off the court at Oneida.

Adolphus is from North Carolina. His mother was looking for an alternative school to help his older brother. She ran a daycare and learned about OBI from one of her clients. "I had always looked up to my brother. They brought him here [to OBI], and they figured they'd send me here, too," Adolphus said. He was in the sixth grade when the boys enrolled at OBI.

His brother did not stay after that first year. "When he left, I wanted to stay, but my mom said I was too young. I liked it here, how you get a chance in everything. You get more opportunities, especially in sports."

A few years later, "My mom finally realized I was old enough to come back, and she saw the negative influences I was around. She suggested I come back, and I agreed," Adolphus said. This time, he was a sophomore. "My parents missed me, but they

knew it was the best place for me to go," he added.

Adolphus got involved in sports right away. He participated in cross country, basketball and baseball all three years at OBI. "I learned teamwork, sharing and sacrificing. The team spirit was really good, because we knew each other more from living in the dorm," he said.

Another benefit of dorm life was the friendships Adolphus developed. "I was closer to my [Oneida] friends than I ever was at home," he said. He also learned problem-solving skills. "We had to deal with our differences and work it out. If I had a problem, I told the person about it, and we tried to work it out the best way possible," he said.

Adolphus often found answers to daily problems in chapel. "I could relate to a lot of things in the sermons. When I had problems in the dorm,

sometimes Mr. Spencer told me how to solve the problem without speaking directly to me. I felt like the Lord was speaking to me," he said.

Adolphus appreciated finishing high school in a place where he did not have to worry so much about negative influences. "I began to be more focused, because I didn't have outside things distracting me. I went from being a D student to a B student," he said. He was on the honor roll all three years at OBI. He added, "You get more attention here. The teachers answer your questions. Now, I get an opportunity to go to college. Nobody in my family has gone to college."

OBI basketball coach, Kenneth Woods, believes Adolphus will achieve his goals. He said, "Adolphus is hardworking, dependable and a determined young man willing to do anything to make his life better."

Why do young people choose Oneida Baptist Institute?

- Some are struggling with academic setbacks.
- Others have been hurt by family conflicts and situations.
- Many need a change in peer group.
- Still others are seeking a distinctly Christian education.
- Often parents and grandparents are looking for a loving and structured environment for their teens.
- Young people enjoy the independence boarding school gives in preparation for college.

Tara continues family tradition at OBI

Tara attended OBI as a day student for five years. Close proximity to campus and the fact that both her parents are alumni were the main reasons Tara chose Oneida over public school. She added, "There were more opportunities for me. I got to do the two favorite things I love: cheerleading and piano."

Tara said she felt closer to God at OBI because of daily chapel services. She was an A student and voted Most Studious seventh grader and Most Outstanding eighth grader by her teachers.

Sometime before her freshman year, Tara began to wonder if she were missing out on something by not attending the county high school.

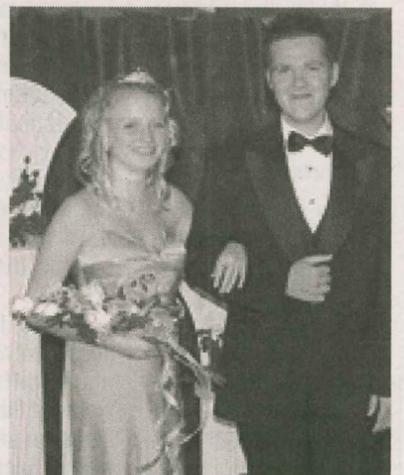
"I decided to try it, because I still talked to all my [community] friends, and they encouraged me. My family said I could make my own decision. I

found out I didn't like it," Tara said.

She returned to Oneida as a sophomore and stayed through graduation.

"At OBI, the classes are smaller, and you can get one-on-one help from your teachers. I knew I could call them or e-mail them for help," Tara said. She also appreciated the diversity of students. "Everybody has their own story, and they are from different places. It's good to get a new view from people," she said.

Tara became one of the captains of the Oneida cheerleading squad her senior year. Coach Michelle Barnes described Tara as a "positive influence" on the squad. "She encouraged the other girls to give their all and do the right thing. She took an active role with the squad and helped to generate new ideas. I have really appreciated having her on the squad," Barnes said.



Tara was crowned the 2006-2007 Oneidian Yearbook Queen. Her escort, Trey Abner, is also a day student at OBI. Approximately 50 young people who live in the surrounding community attend OBI each year.

Oneida Baptist Institute

Out of Africa: OBI helped Andrew adjust for college

Andrew was born in Louisville, Kentucky, but his parents became missionaries and moved to Nigeria when he was five months old. His father, Paul Davidson, taught music to seminary students. His mother, Diane, took care of the household and home-schooled Andrew and his sister. "Every four years or so we would come back to Louisville for six to twelve months," Andrew said.

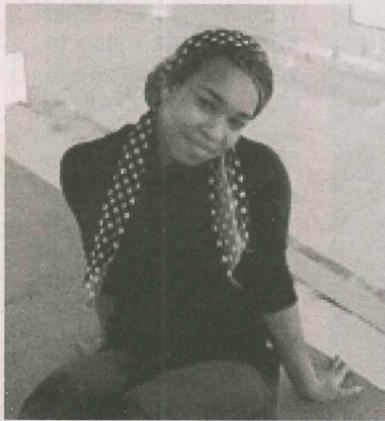
In 2005, the family decided to remain in the U.S. They learned about OBI from their church and came for a visit. Andrew's parents decided to accept teaching positions and move to Oneida.

Andrew was a junior and thankful for OBI students who welcomed him and introduced him to others. He enjoyed the chance to have friends his own age. "Oneida has been good, because in Nigeria, all my friends were [adult] guys at the seminary. I'd go bike riding with them on the compound. Some nights, when there was electricity, we'd play ping-pong. I feel like Oneida has helped me socially," Andrew said.

He joined after-school activities like soccer, tennis, pep band and drama to have more opportunities for peer interaction. "I like talking to people," he said.

Andrew was a valuable addition to the OBI choir for two years. He was accepted to the All Festival Chorus and the All State Chorus both years. Choir director Tim Cochran noted, "I'm convinced Andrew could do just about anything he wants to do. He played saxophone and bass guitar in

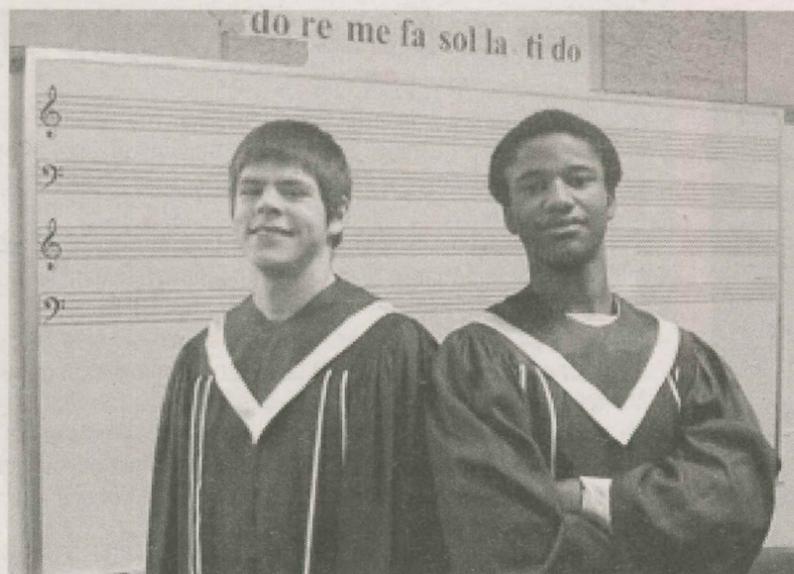
Melinda sought a boarding school experience to prepare for college



At OBI, Melinda discovered a talent for swimming

Melinda came to Oneida from New York her freshman year. "My parents had attended boarding school, and they thought it would be good for me," she said. They wanted a Christian school and heard about OBI from a friend.

One thing that stood out to Melinda was the diversity of OBI's student body. "In my community, it's all one race. I was not used to seeing Asians and Caucasians," she said.



OBI choir members Andrew (left) and Gaiell were both accepted into the 2007 Kentucky All-State Chorus

the pep band and did an excellent job. He was a strong leader in the choir's bass section. As a person, he has an amazing character. He's very trustworthy and will stick to a commitment."

Andrew is this year's class valedictorian. He was also named the Most Scholarly senior boy. Last year, he was voted Most Outstanding junior boy. He is undecided about his college major but named engineering, medicine or aviation as possibilities.

Andrew appreciates his mission upbringing: "You see how blessed you are." He is also thankful for his time at Oneida. "It's given me a chance to blend into America, to help me adjust."

Gaiell found fewer distractions at OBI

junior, and went to state his senior year. He played three seasons of tennis, earning the Most Improved and the 110% awards.

Tennis coach Ken McCain said, "I can't say enough about Gaiell. He went from not having ever played before to being one of the best on the team. He was completely self-motivated and got other tennis players to be more dedicated. He took tennis practice to another level."

Gaiell found himself involved in drama, when an actor needed to be replaced the day before the spring 2006 play opened. Gaiell had never been in a play before, but he accepted the challenge of stepping in at the last minute. He even memorized his lines by curtain time. The Save the Show award was created for Gaiell and presented to him on awards day that spring. He enjoyed it so much, he auditioned for and accepted a large role in the next play.

Gaiell was a member of the OBI choir the last two years and was named Singer of the Year as a junior. He was accepted into All-Festival Chorus both years and was surprised to make the cut for All State Chorus this year. "I liked that I was part of the elite group. The music was harder. It gave me a taste of what college will be like," Gaiell said. He plans to become a social studies teacher and later study music.

Gaiell came to Oneida his sophomore year from New York. His older brother graduated from OBI in 2006. Gaiell said, "The atmosphere is better here. There are fewer distractions than in New York."

To reduce his tuition costs, Gaiell worked in OBI's three-week summer work program for two years. "It was hard work, but it was fun. Last year, I was on a wax crew. I cleaned, mopped, waxed, buffed, scrubbed and burnished [floors]," he said.

Cocurricular activities were the highlight of Gaiell's time at Oneida. He joined the cross country team as a

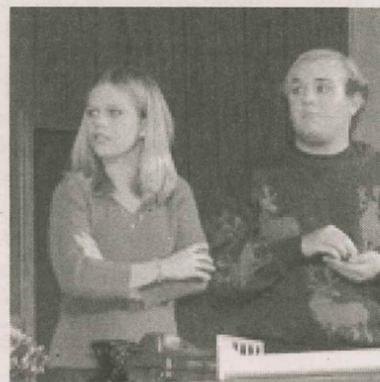
Katie grew in all aspects of her life at OBI

Katie is from Ohio. She had been having some serious family problems. "Mom was looking up boot camps and different kinds of schools, and Oneida came up. My mom and I both liked that it was a Christian school. Plus, it had sports and drama. I was ready to come here. It sounded like a sanctuary for me," Katie said. She enrolled as a sophomore.

Katie was surprised to find that she could have close relationships with staff members at OBI. "The teachers became like parents to me. That's what I needed," she said. She often talked to adults about dorm problems or other concerns. "They were always there when I was down. They would show up at the dorm and bring me food, when I didn't even ask," she said.

Cocurricular activities became an outlet that helped Katie work through personal issues. She joined sports, drama, Creative Ministries and was a hall monitor in the dorm. Her senior year, she performed in a skit at the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Tamara Cochran, the OBI drama coach, enjoyed the chance to work with Katie. "If I could describe Katie in one word, it would be 'dependable.' I never had to worry about whether she would get her job done. Her positive attitude and diligent approach to work time affected every-



Drama was just one of many outlets for Katie at Oneida

one. She was a pleasure to have in the cast," Cochran said.

Katie's OBI awards included Best Supporting Actress, Artist of the Year, the 110% award in cross country and track, the Coach's award and Most Valuable Player in basketball, and the highest GPA award in softball.

Katie was an A student and believes she is prepared for college because of the advanced placement courses she took at OBI and the responsibilities she learned in the dormitory.

"I wish things had changed at home, but I'm glad I came here and grew mentally, physically, socially and spiritually," Katie said.

A BETTER VIEW

Our average enrollment is 325. We have approximately 150 full-time faculty and staff.

Our classrooms have an average 1:11 teacher/student ratio.

Oneida has a 700-acre campus which includes a 200-acre farm. We have a full agriculture program.

Our student body consists of young people from the local community, across the state of Kentucky, the United States and around the world.

We accept students throughout the year.

OBI provides Christian education at an affordable rate.

EDUCATION FOR TIME AND ETERNITY

Every school deals with the mind of man, but few, like Oneida, minister to the soul as well. Day after day, our students hear the gospel message. Each year, many boys and girls make positive decisions of eternal significance.

WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT THE OFFERING

Make sure your church has received our box of offering materials.

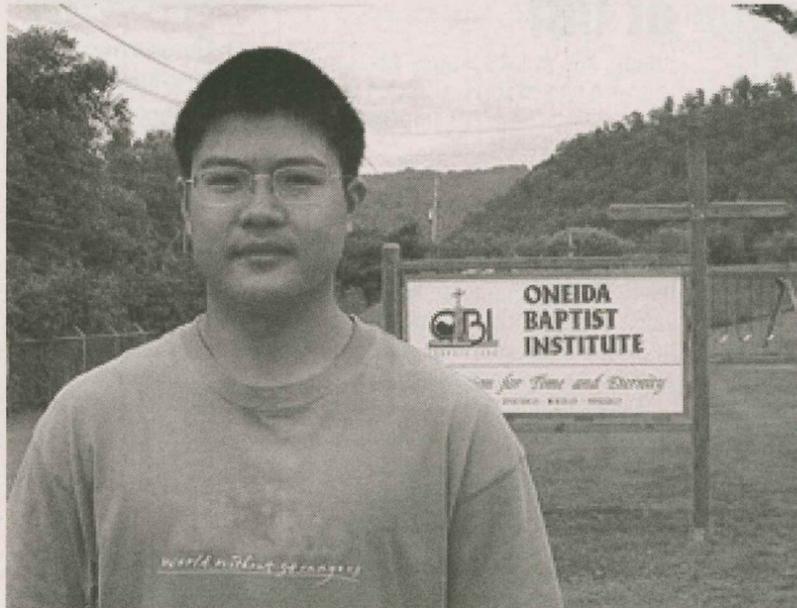
Offer to take charge of displaying posters and distributing brochures in your church.

Tell others about the Oneida ministry.

Pray for a successful offering.

Oneida Baptist Institute

OBI hosts Chinese exchange student



Bohao enjoyed Oneida's quiet, rural environment and his "nice" teachers

Bohao (pronounced bo-how) is an exchange student from China.

Originally, he was assigned to live with an American family and attend a public school. When those plans fell through, he was told about OBI as an option. "I wanted to know more about America. I wanted to experience having an education in another country," he said. He was a junior when he enrolled at OBI.

Like some of our other "city kids," Bohao had a surprise when he came to Oneida. "In China, I live in a big city," he said. Soon, the quiet, rural environment became one of the reasons for his decision to remain at OBI a second year. The other reason he gave for staying was his teachers. "They are nice to me. I can ask them questions, and they help me," he said.

Bohao had taken English classes in China, but it was challenging for him not only to be immersed in the English language, but also to learn OBI's rules and policies. Socially, Bohao found Americans to be nice

but loud. "I'm a quiet person," he said.

Bohao lived in OBI's quietest dorm, Baker Hall, both years. The houseparent he had the most contact with was Suzi Garrett. She described Bohao as "the most gracious, gentle and intelligent young man I have ever met." She added, "He studied constantly and asked a lot of questions. He stayed out of trouble and never said mean things about anybody. He was just a real joy to be around."

Bohao had heard about God in China. He had the opportunity to learn more about Christianity in daily chapel services at OBI. He described some of the things he heard as "interesting."

Bohao had attended boarding school in China for four years, so he was accustomed to having a daily job. He became the supervisor of a cleaning crew here at OBI.

Bohao plans to attend college in the United States. He would like to study aviation, science or computers.

Come and see the works of God

Springtime is a wonderful time of the year. The evidence of the renewal of life is always refreshing. Every time I mow my grass, I find pleasure in being able to know my yard looks its best because of the attention I give to it.

Spring is also a time of renewal for this ministry. Graduation is a reminder of the importance of our work and the investment we have made in the lives of young people.

As I take pride in my yard all summer, we can also take pride in the result of our efforts. If it had not been for our ministry, a good number of our recent graduates would not have made it this far. The majority of the class of 2007 would likely never have experienced God's gift of salvation if they had not discovered their need of Jesus while on our campus. Our chapel services each school day and worship on Sunday mornings and evenings are constant reminders of God's love.

The support our friends provide through the Father's Day Offering is critical to all that we do. Many of our most rewarding experiences have been with students from low-income families. We were able to meet their needs because Kentucky Baptists have been faithful in supporting us. As we approach the Father's Day Offering, I ask you to prayerfully consider joining others who have been willing to make an investment in the lives of young people who otherwise would be facing a very uncertain future. We ask for your prayers as we challenge our students to do their very best.

I encourage you to visit us this summer. Come and see what God is doing at Oneida.



W.F. Underwood

— Dr. W. F. Underwood (OBI '63)
President

Since our founding in 1899, God has provided supporters, students and staff for Oneida Baptist Institute. While many boarding schools in Kentucky have closed their doors due to lack of funds, Oneida has remained open due to our faithful supporters and dedicated staff. From the beginning, our students and faculty have met daily at chapel time to honor and praise God for His continued blessings on our school.

You may have heard our former president, Dr. Barkley Moore, or our current president, Dr. W.F. "Bud" Underwood, say, "Every student who comes to Oneida has a story." I am proud to be one of many thousands of students who God brought to Oneida Baptist Institute to get an "Education for Time and Eternity." My first introduction to Oneida came when I attended GA camp at age 10.

I made my second trip to OBI when I enrolled as a sophomore. My family had moved from eastern Kentucky to Louisville the summer after I completed eighth grade. After attending a large high school in Jefferson County for a year, my older sister and I begged to go to Oneida. We thrived on the opportunity to be involved in a variety of activities. I participated in BSU, drama and debate. In the spring of my senior year—1960—no one could have been more surprised than I

was when our senior sponsor announced that I was valedictorian. After my older sister and I graduated from OBI, our two brothers and younger sister also chose to come to Oneida.

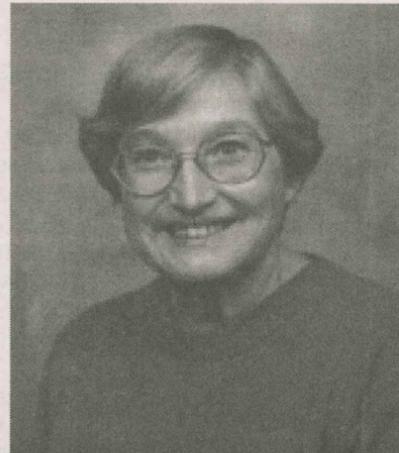
While attending Georgetown College, I often dreamed of returning to Oneida to teach. That dream didn't come true until 1984 when I made my third journey to OBI, this time to serve as Guidance Counselor until I retired in

2004. I'm still here as a volunteer, serving as Alumni Director. If you were to ask me, "What does Oneida mean to you?" I would smile and say, "Oneida is home." As I'm sure you have heard, there's no place like home.

By now your church should have received a box of materials about the Father's Day Offering for OBI. Please check with your pastor or church secretary and be sure the information is made available to your congregation. There are still boys and girls waiting to come to Oneida.

Why not let God use your church to give them an "Education for Time and Eternity?"

—Myrtle Webb Cooke (OBI '60)



Every student ... has a story

A day at Oneida

Morning: Students get up, clean their rooms, and must be in class on time.

At school: Young people may take a variety of classes. High school students can choose a college or vocational track of study.

Chapel time: Each school day, our entire student body and faculty join for a time of worship.

Afternoon: As the school day ends, an afternoon of jobs, sports and other activities begins.

Evening: "Free time" is a chance to visit with friends in our recreational facilities.

Study hall: All students not on the honor roll attend nightly study hall.

Night-time: Students do evening chores and get ready for another day.

Summer camp season under way

Crossings ministries impact campers around the world

As I write this, we are literally down to hours before camp begins. As you read this, however, we will be two weeks into the summer camp season.

Life certainly seems to move faster and faster each year. This summer will yet again be our largest year ever with Crossings. Also included this year will be three weeks of Crossings for Kids (our camp for 3-6 graders).

This summer is also extra special for the Melber family as we add our fifth child by way of adoption.

Orphan awareness has a special meaning to me ever since 2003, when I was able to visit an orphanage in Moldova. As you may know, since that time we adopted Maritess, a now 9-year-old-girl, and soon a boy named Yonas from Ethiopia. Since Yonas does not have any records, we can only estimate his age, but we think he is about 6.

What has been equally exciting is that so many campers who have attended Crossings have captured a vision to reach out to the fatherless. Through Crossings, nearly \$250,000 has been given to support mission camps comprised of thou-

sands of orphans. We are eagerly anticipating how God will move next in this ministry as we continue to look for ways to reach out to the world and as we seek to create awareness among the hundreds of churches we serve each year. Without question, God is working in the hearts of our campers here by creating a passion to see the world and to extend compassion to those in need.

Perhaps you never would have imagined that the world is being impacted through camp! This summer we will be supporting six camps in the countries of Moldova and Ukraine.

I realize that visiting the camps during the summer might be difficult, but I encourage each of you to visit us if at all possible. You simply cannot understand or perhaps even imagine what takes place without personally experiencing camp. It is not just what is taking place in the hearts of those at Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek, but how that experience is reaching our world.



David Melber

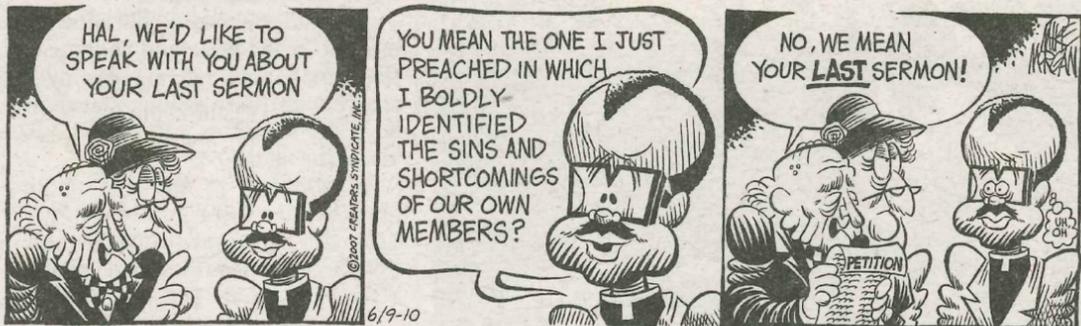
David Melber is president of Kentucky Baptist Assemblies. Contact him at Box 99918, Louisville, KY 42069-0918; phone (502) 491-7000.

Kudzu



Doug Marlette

For Heaven's Sake



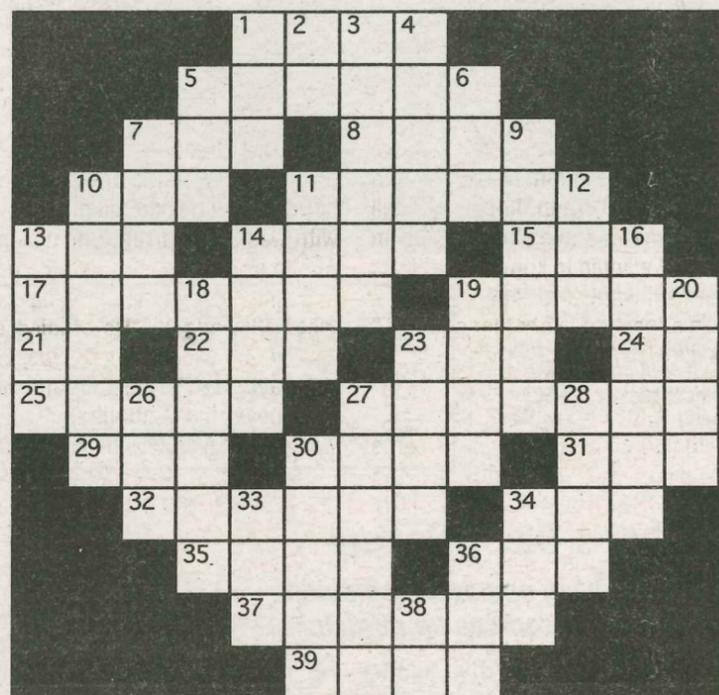
Mike Morgan

Bible Crosswords

By Janet Adkins

Across

- 1 "(I) will ____ praise to the name of the Lord most high" (Psalm 7:17)
- 5 "Famine and pestilence shall ____ him" (Ezekiel 7:15)
- 7 "He hath chosen Solomon my son to ____ upon the throne" (1 Chronicles 28:5)
- 8 "When it shall turn to the Lord, the ____ shall be taken away" (2 Corinthians 3:16)
- 10 Letter before dee
- 11 "____ is confounded and dismayed" (Jeremiah 48:1)
- 13 Self-addressed envelope, abbr.
- 14 Religious group
- 15 "There ____ him ten men that were lepers" (Luke 17:12)
- 17 "And hired counsellors against them to frustrate their ____" (Ezra 4:5)
- 19 "And if he trespass against thee ____ times in a day ... forgive him" (Luke 17:4)
- 21 Plural ending
- 22 Belonging to Judah's first son (Genesis 38:2-3)
- 23 Prohibit
- 24 Alcoholics Anonymous, abbr.
- 25 Robinson Crusoe author
- 27 "They found him ... sitting in the midst of the ____" (Luke 2:46)
- 29 "____ thy morsel in the vinegar" (Ruth 2:14)
- 30 "I will ____ in thy truth" (Psalm 86:11)
- 31 Amount, abbr.
- 32 Girl's name
- 34 Late general/president



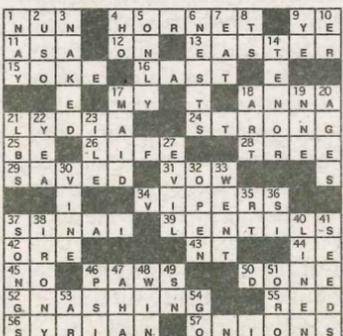
- 35 Father of Ahira (Numbers 1:15)
- 36 Saints, abbr.
- 37 Fur-bearing aquatic animals
- 39 Syringe, for short

- 13 "Have they not ____?" (Judges 5:30)
- 14 "For they were ____ afraid" (Mark 9:6)
- 16 "They did ____ and ceased not" (Psalm 35:15) (2 words)
- 18 "Let my ____ go, that they may serve me" (Exodus 9:1)
- 19 "And the cup was found in Benjamin's ____" (Genesis 44:12)
- 20 Political cartoonist
- 23 Gaucho's weapon
- 26 "No grapes on the vine, nor figs on the ____ tree" (Jeremiah 8:13)
- 27 "All things which were ____ and goodly are departed" (Revelation 18:14)
- 28 "He was strong as the ____" (Amos 2:9)
- 30 "For the fierce ____ of the Lord is upon you" (2 Chronicles 28:11)
- 33 "Let us meet ... in the plain of ____" (Nehemiah 6:2)
- 34 Contraction
- 36 Theatre sign when there are no more seats, abbr.
- 38 European Plan, abbr.

Down

- 1 "I will ____ no wicked thing before mine eyes" (Psalm 101:3)
- 2 Method of administering medication, abbr.
- 3 "Not a ____, lest ... he fall" (1 Timothy 3:6)
- 4 "That he was gone to be ____ with a man that is a sinner" (Luke 19:7)
- 5 Expire
- 6 Equip
- 7 "And Samuel answered Saul ... 'I am the ____'" (1 Samuel 9:19)
- 9 "Gird yourselves, and ____, ye priests" (Joel 1:13)
- 10 "I have ____ you to be carried away captives" (Jeremiah 29:7)
- 11 "And there followed him a ____ of meat from the king" (2 Samuel 11:8)
- 12 Girl's name, for short

Last week's solution



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Hearing God's Call?

In this course you will deepen your understanding of what it means to be called by God, discover how you can be sure God is calling you to ministry, take a closer look at the potential God created within you, and begin mapping some steps to guide your journey of living into God's call.

The 4-week online course Spiritual Formation and Calling is highly interactive and provides opportunities for online discussion with the facilitator and other study participants.

Courses dates: June 25 - July 22, 2007.

Registration is \$150 (Scholarships are available to cover 50% of registration fees.)

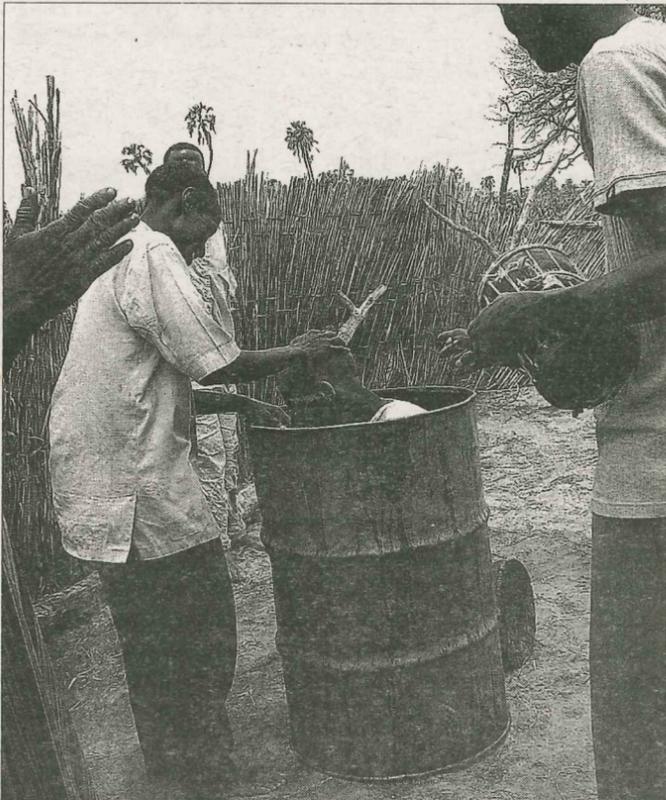
For more information: www.btsr.edu/spirit_form.html
1-888-339-2877 (toll free) or email scminfo@btsr.edu.



Journeyman take the Word of God to the Sokoto Fulani people

Continued from page 1 while we were here," Weigand added. "It would be with the people who came after us."

Instead, one village of Sokoto Fulani people now has 10 believers, including a chief who had only heard about Jesus being a good man before



WASHED CLEAN A former Muslim is baptized in a barrel of water since there is not enough standing water in the area. (IMB photo)

Weigand and her teammate, Melissa Woodson, came to tell them that Jesus is God's Son and the only way to heaven.

Woodson said some of the men may have heard about Jesus as a prophet mentioned in the Koran, but she said none of the women in the village had heard about Him. Yet several of the women accepted Christ after hearing the Journeyman's Bible stories.

"It's God and His Holy Spirit at work," Woodson insisted.

She said the chief is still showing interest in the Bible and the stories the missionaries tell. He asks deep and thoughtful questions that show he really wants to understand and learn, she added.

In addition to statistics about how long it can take to reach Muslims with the gospel, cultural tradition indicates a Muslim man will not listen to a woman talk about faith.

Busko and Sarah Saxon heard all the statistics and studies during their training to become Journeyman. But the challenges didn't deter them from moving to a region that is 80 percent Muslim.

"It doesn't seem to bother them that we are women," Busko says about the village where 16 of the 25 Christian converts are men. "It bothers us more than it bothers them."

The men gather twice a week to study the Bible, sing and pray. Some-

times Busko and Saxon join them, trying to encourage the village women to participate.

The missionaries also spend time in the villages roaming from hut to hut playing Bible stories on cassette tapes with a solar-powered radio. The village women often stop their work to take turns holding the small radio up to their ears to hear the stories.

One of the mission team's greatest challenges is getting the female believers baptized. So far, only the men have been willing to be dunked in the barrel full of water that serves as a makeshift baptistry. Living in a sub-Saharan climate where water is scarce, they said many of the women are afraid they will drown if they are immersed in the water barrel.

Praying with an older woman who wants to be baptized, the Journeyman are encouraging her to

show the other women that God will take care of them.

Koepke, the first member of the Sokoto Fulani team, lives four hours away from her teammates.

While the four other Journeyman were an answer to her prayer, she still doesn't have a partner. But that doesn't stop her from getting on her dirt bike to make the 30- to 45-minute trip to two remote villages she is serving. She recently saw four people become believers in villages that previously had been resistant to the gospel.

The five young women are outsiders and still sometimes struggle with the Fulfulde language. But they emphasize it is not by their words or work that the Sokoto Fulani are coming to know Christ.

Reflecting on the spiritual harvest, Weigand said, "God is proving He is above statistics."

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Father's Day Offering

Annual giving opportunity provides additional resources for ministry

Father's Day is this Sunday. For families blessed with a mother and father in the home, Father's Day is a wonderful opportunity to say thanks to dads who make the effort to create and maintain a family the way God intended.

When we are working with a prospective student, it always is encouraging to learn that there is a mother and father supporting our efforts. You may wonder why a child who has a mother and father at home would even need to be at Oneida.

The majority of our students are from single-parent families, but we also minister in a variety of ways to families that have not been affected by divorce or the death of a parent. The needs of a child from an intact family often are not very different from those of children from broken homes.

Academic and social struggles are common. Some very bright students often are unable to achieve success in a large classroom setting. More individualized attention is possible in a class less than half the size of most schools back home. Often, that is the key for students to getting back on track. Many students, because of personality differences, are very uncomfortable at school. Being made fun of or teased can turn the learning environment into a place to be dreaded. There can be other issues in a whole family, but these are the most common.

Among students who come from single-parent families, most are being raised by their mom. I grew up with a stepfather who not only was a poor role model, but he didn't feel that being a good role model was his responsibility. How won-

derful it was for me to be at Oneida as a teenager! I was so happy to be away from alcohol, fighting, poverty and other things that made my life at home very difficult.

There was no Father's Day Offering in 1961 when I came to OBI. I did not have the modest \$1 per day for room and board, but the administration made a way for me to come, even though the school had been running in the red for many months. As she has done for more than a century, Oneida Baptist Institute opened her heart and arms to another needy student. The Father's Day Offering provides another way for friends of this ministry to support us as we try to help those students we believe can find success in our school.

In March and April, I told stories in the Western Recorder about several of our graduating seniors. I hope you will take time to read other stories in the insert in this week's issue. On May 19 we proudly awarded 57 seniors with diplomas. I am happy to say that 61 percent of the graduating class received advanced diplomas. Even though many of those students came to us with failing grades, the love, attention and discipline we provided helped many of them turn failing grades into passing scores. Several seniors reported that they had given up on graduating before they came to Oneida. Also, three of our seniors earned the state's highest diploma, the Commonwealth Diploma. Father's Day Offering gifts provide additional funds to help teens who need to be at OBI. We've stood the test of time, and with your support will continue to turn failure into success.

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Called to missions

Tennessee student prepares for mission to young people

Third-year Tennessee student Charatie Morrell didn't realize when she was saved at age 7 that her life would be used in Christian service.

"My calling is missions," she declares. "It may be at home or overseas, but wherever God leads, I believe it will involve working with youth."

As a single woman in a predominantly family-centered school, Charatie admits, "Sometimes it is tough; but it is such a blessing to know the professors and learn from their rich experience." Her Tennessee pastor, Donald Long, told her about Clear Creek when she surrendered to ministry.

Charatie said she thanks God for Kelly Hall supervisors Greg and Kay Jones for "all they have done for me."

During her first two years on campus, she worked with "Young Disciples," junior- and senior-high children of our students. Last summer she had the "neat experience" working with volunteers on campus serving with the Appalachian Service Project. ASP returns this summer. Founded by a Methodist pastor, ASP sends volunteers to ar-

eas of Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia to repair homes. During the eight-week work period, hundreds of volunteers from several states stay in Kelly Hall.

"The groups include youth and college students with adult chaperones," Charatie said. "They don't use our gym or pool; they are too tired to do much after a long day

of work. They are pretty good most of the time. I work in the kitchen, cooking and doing the dishes. I had prayed for a job and God provided this for me during the summer." Other summer plans for Charatie include a mission trip to Indiana.

She is a member of Mill Creek Baptist Church. "I love singing and going to church," Charatie said. She's learning to play the guitar and hopes to use it at church, she added.

Family is important to Charatie. "My mom is a big inspiration to me," she said. "I thank God for her praying for me and showing me the way I am supposed to live as a Christian."

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Donnie Fox

Small Christian retailers fighting a losing battle

Independent bookstores struggle to compete with chains, Internet

By Zachary Lewis
Religion News Service

Cleveland (RNS)—David may have defeated Goliath, but in the battle between independent Christian bookstores and retail giants, it's the little guy who's losing.

If what's happening in the Midwest is any indication, small, locally owned religious bookstores and church suppliers are going out of business, conceding defeat to the Internet and big-box retailers like Wal-Mart, Borders and Target.

One of the latest to fall: The Word Christian Resource Center in suburban Parma Heights, Ohio, the third and final store in the small chain to close since 2005.

"People don't understand what's going on," said owner Rob Haskell, whose parents started The Word in 1976. "If people are willing to give up their local jewels, that's one thing. ... But if they're not, they need to support the independent stores."

Haskell isn't alone in his frustration. Nationwide, 623 Christian book and supply stores closed between 2005 and 2006, according to CBA (formerly Christian Booksellers Association).

Meanwhile, demand for Christian products is greater than ever. CBA member stores reported total sales of \$4.34 billion in 2004, \$340 million more than in 2000.

The Internet effect

Retailers say one factor is more consumers are shopping by computer. Sometimes, Haskell said, patrons use his store to view the item they want before buying it online.

"There isn't one day that goes by

that the Internet's not brought up by my customers," he said. "That's the 800-pound gorilla."

In many cases, consumers aren't even shopping online. They're downloading or copying what they want freely from sites like Bible.com and Biblegateway.com.

"People don't need to buy Bibles anymore to compare (passages) ... and I can't disagree with them," said Nancy Davis, owner of Buckeye Church Supplies in the suburb Rocky River, which closed its street-level store last June and fell back on its basement warehouse.

There's no doubt Internet stores have made online shopping convenient.

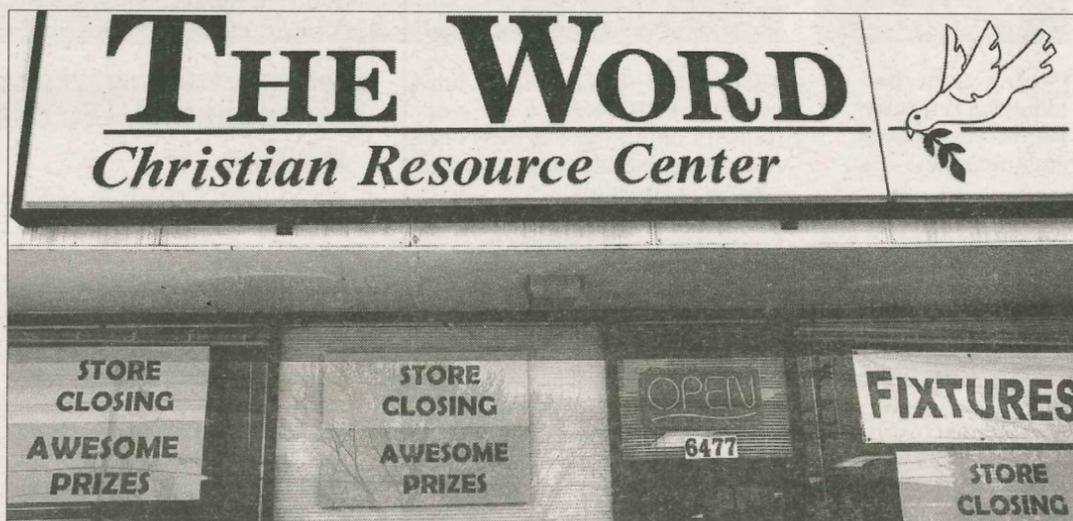
Wal-Mart's Web site directs visitors shopping for Christian books to a range of specific sub-genres and lists organized by denomination. The books are often discounted 20 percent to 40 percent and shipping is typically 97 cents. At Amazon.com, most purchases of more than \$25 qualify for free shipping.

Family Christian Stores, a national chain with 300 stores in 37 states, also maintains an active Internet component selling everything from Bibles to church supplies and DVDs.

Tom Cousineau, owner of Henninger's religious goods, said his family's 86-year-old company in Cleveland has remained profitable in part by embracing the tech wave and mounting an Internet business in 2002.

"You don't buck the trend. You go with it," he said. "We make sure we know what's going on."

But even Web sites with advanced profiling abilities can't replace the



personal touch or expertise of staffers at neighborhood stores, he said.

"I'd rather recommend an author to you, and you realize I know what I'm talking about, and then you'll come back to me," he said.

Just as vexing to small Christian bookstores are mega-stores, such as Wal-Mart and Target. Business owners say customers who used to buy Bible software and Christian music at their shops now get those items the same place they buy shoes, groceries and electronics.

Critical condition

At the area's largest Christian bookstore, Rainbow Family Book Center in Maple Heights, co-owner Alice Wilson sent a letter to customers pleading for help a few weeks ago.

"Our situation ... is critical," the letter said. "We are struggling to survive in a difficult economy along with increased competition."

Wilson said she wrote the letter after watching sales decline by 10 percent each of the last three years. Sales during January and February

this year were down 25 percent from those months last year.

Closing has been an option permanently on the table, she said. "We always talk about it, but then we come up with something else."

Buckeye, where the employee roster has dropped from 14 to three, has stayed afloat on sales of church bulletins and Communion supplies, two types of products still in relatively high demand.

Smaller stores are also less attractive to publishers and distributors, many of whom have ceased offering discounts on small orders or have begun selling in bulk directly to churches.

Davis said it's often cheaper for her to buy certain products herself at Target or Wal-Mart and resell them.

There have been surges in sales. One came after 9/11. Another came after the release of Mel Gibson's film, "The Passion of the Christ."

But neither lasted long enough to rescue stores already in trouble. "After that, we really saw a drop-off," Haskell said.

OUT OF BUSINESS The Word Christian Resource Center in Parma Heights, Ohio, closed because it couldn't keep up with online sales and big-box retailers. (RNS photo by Roadell Hickman/The Cleveland Plain Dealer)

Christianity Today chooses top evangelical books for 2007

Carol Stream, Ill. (RNS)—Christianity Today magazine has chosen its top books for 2007, awarding honors in 10 categories for work of interest to evangelical Christians.

"This contest is our attempt to reward good, thoughtful writing that addresses issues that concern evangelicals," said Mark Galli, managing editor of Christianity Today.

Ten winners of the Christianity Today Book Award 2007 were chosen in the following categories:

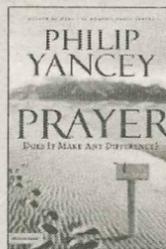
Apologetics/Evangelism: "The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief" by Francis Collins (Free Press).

Biblical Studies: "Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony" by Richard Bauckham (Eerdmans).

Christianity and Culture: "The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World" by Miroslav Volf (Eerdmans).

Christian Living: "Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?" by Philip Yancey (Zondervan).

The Church/Pastoral Leadership: "Simple Church: Returning



to God's Process for Making Disciples" by Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger (B&H Publishing).

Fiction: "Dwelling Places" by Vinita Hampton Wright (Harper-SanFrancisco).

History/Biography: "Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the Civil War" by Harry Stout (Viking).

Missions/Global Affairs: "The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative" by Christopher J.H. Wright (IVP Academic).

Spirituality: "The Divine Embrace: Recovering the Passionate Spiritual Life" by Robert Webber (Baker Books).

Theology/Ethics: "The Shadow of the Antichrist: Nietzsche's Critique of Christianity" by Stephen Williams (Baker Academic).

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PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for the following Kentucky Baptist missionaries and ministries.

Mission Service Corps Missionary Leonard Adamson of Russellville. Adamson serves as a missionary chaplain and volunteer coordinator at the Green River Correctional Institute in Central City. Adamson's faithfulness to the spiritual needs of the inmates is evident by his involvement in worship services, Bible study, academic course work, the "Lifers Club," "prison invasions" and personal evangelism. Pray that God will continue to provide for Adamson's needs as he gives of himself each day. Pray also that inmates will be convicted of sin and have spiritual strongholds removed from their lives.

Pathway of Hope Pregnancy Resource Center, Greenville. Diana Anderson and Second Baptist Church minister through this center that offers pregnancy tests, prayer and counseling, material support and other resources to individuals who experience unplanned or unwanted pregnancies. Pray for the staff to be bold and confident in their witness to every client and family member. Pray that the women they minister to will be receptive to the gospel of Jesus. Pray also that workers will be effective in encouraging young women to practice sexual abstinence until marriage.

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

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **CRESTWOOD**—Ballardsville Church ordained **Brent Rowe** to the gospel ministry June 3. He has been called to serve as associate pastor of Calvary Church in Danville.

Harrods Creek Church ordained **Fred Balke** and **Pat Napier Jr.** as deacons May 20.

■ **GERMANTOWN**—Germantown Church recently called **Calvin Redmond** as pastor. He and his wife, **Heather**, have served as missionaries to the Philippines and West Africa.

■ **LEBANON JUNCTION**—Mount Moriah Church recently called **James Briggs** as youth minister.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Ormsby Heights Church will host a Freedom Celebration July 1 beginning at 6 p.m. with fireworks at sundown. For more information, call (502) 447-6867. **Rick Bowden** is pastor.

■ **MADISONVILLE**—Troy **Doster** recently resigned as associate pastor and music minister of Grapevine Church.

Pleasant View Church ordained **Billy McKinsey** as a deacon June 3.

■ **MAYS LICK**—Bracken Association recently called **Bill Boldt** as director of missions. He currently is pastor of Stanton Church.

■ **MONTICELLO**—Elk Spring Valley Church ordained **Jason Dishman** and **Freddie Gregory** as deacons May 20. **Stan Stevenson** is pastor.

Spotlight on ...

Dry Ridge



Concord Church will hold homecoming services June 24, 11 a.m., with **Bill Mackey**, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, as guest speaker. Other activities include a noon meal and a 2 p.m. service with **Lester Caldwell** as guest speaker. For more information, call (502) 961-0229. **Eddie Reynolds** is pastor.

■ **NEBO**—Neil **Kolodey** recently resigned as pastor of Johnson Island Church.

■ **SHELBYVILLE**—Clayvillage Church recently called **Denise Watts-Wilson** as minister of music. **Lee Bolton** is pastor.

■ **SHEPHERDSVILLE**—First Church recently called **Russell Bone** as associate pastor/youth. His wife, **Sarah**, has been called as minister to children.

■ **WALLINGFORD**—Oak Ridge Church recently called **Joseph Watson** as pastor.

National 'Blume' conference for girls set for next month

Kansas City, Mo. (BP)—The stage is set for thousands of girls to gather for "Blume"—four days of worship, interactive conferences, hands-on missions and ministry projects, concerts, nightly fun activities and new friends.

More than 6,000 girls from across the nation are expected in Kansas City, Mo., for the July 10-13 missions event designed to encourage them to recognize their gifts and live out their God-given purpose. Blume is the German word for "flower," representing growth, youth and new life. The event is open to all girls ages 12 and up, including collegiate young women.

"The purpose of Blume will be accomplished in our minds and hearts if girls leave empowered with the realization that God has a plan and purpose for their lives," Blume program coordinator Suzanne Reece said. "They are each uniquely gifted, and God can use them even now to make a difference in the world and to accomplish His mission."

Blume is based on Luke 10:27 when Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind. And, love your neighbor as yourself."

Seeking to encourage girls to truly love their neighbor as themselves, the event will provide various ways for participants to give according to their personalities and interests. And through interactive stations, the girls will be able to connect with missions efforts from around the world.

Throughout the conference, **Celia Whitler**, a Christian recording

artist and songwriter, will lead participants in praise and worship. Although Blume will include time for all the participants to gather together, specific activities and times of worship also have been planned specifically for the collegiate audience. **Cindy Johnson**, a Christian songwriter, singer and guitarist, will lead the collegiate young women through worship and testimony.

Bethany Dillon, an 18-year-old recording artist and Dove Award nominee, will be featured in concert.

The cost to attend Blume is \$149 per person if staying within the block of hotels reserved for Blume or \$199 per person if reservations are made outside the block of rooms. Registration is open and can be completed by telephone, fax, mail or online.

For more information about Blume, sponsored by Woman's Missionary Union, visit www.blumefor girls.com or send e-mail to blume@wmu.org.

Blume was previously known as the National Acteens Convention. WMU launched Acteens, a missions organization for girls in grades seven through 12, in 1970.

The first NAC was held in 1972 at LifeWay Glorietta Conference Center near Santa Fe, N.M. Taking place approximately every four to five years, recent events have been held in Louisville in 1998 and Nashville in 2003.

Now known as Blume, this year's event is larger in scope since is it open to all teen girls whether or not they are involved in Acteens. This is also the first year the event has offered a track for collegiate young women.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June

- 15-16 Mother/Daughter Overnight, Cedar Crest.
- 17-24 All-State Youth Choir/Orchestra Tour, Campbellsville.
- 18-22 Mission Service Corps Basic Training & Support, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.
- 18-22 Mission Adventure Camp for Girls, Cedar Crest.
- 22-23 Acteens Splash, Girls in Action Overnight, Mother/Daughter Overnight, Jonathan Creek.
- 23-30 Kentucky Changers, Maysville.
- 25-29 Mission Adventure Camp for Girls, Cedar Crest.
- 29-30 Mother/Daughter Overnight, Cedar Crest.
- 30 Baptist Nursing Fellowship Summer Luncheon, Farmdale Baptist Church, Frankfort.

July

- 2-3 Mother/Daughter Overnight, Cedar Crest.
- 5-7 Express Mission Adventure Camp for Girls & Boys, Cedar Crest.
- 5-7 Pursuit Student Leadership Academy, Campbellsville University.
- 7-14 Kentucky Changers, Monticello.
- 9-13 Mission Adventure Camp for Girls, Cedar Crest.
- 19-20 Quarterly Prayer Meeting for Spiritual Awakening, Northside Baptist Church, Mount Vernon.
- 25-26 Kentucky Baptist Secretaries' Summer Conference, Baptist Building, Louisville.
- 27-28 World Missions Unlimited, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington.

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

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SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Parkville Baptist Church in Boyle County, six miles west of Danville, Ky. Please mail resumé to: Search Committee, Parkville Baptist Church, 6610 Alum Springs Road, Danville, KY 40422; or e-mail kathy.belcher@bellsouth.net.

SEEKING: Minister of education and administration. Seminary degree preferred. Duties include oversight of church education and outreach programs and supervising day to day operations of the church. Please send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Salvisa Baptist Church, PO Box 75, Salvisa, KY 40372; or e-mail salvisa@bellsouth.net.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of students. Please send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, 8645 Kenwood Road, Cincinnati, OH 45242.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music (called to the ministry) for a dynamically growing congregation (20 hours per week). Duties: leading a comprehensive music program including two Sunday morning blended services, Sunday and Wednesday night services, adult choir; and coordinating other choirs and special music. For more information, go to www.woodburnbaptist.org. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Woodburn Baptist Church, PO Box 38, Woodburn, KY 42170.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for First Baptist Church, Paris, Ky. We are a growing Southern Baptist church in central Kentucky. Please send resumé and a tape/DVD of a sermon by June 30 to the Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 327, Paris, KY 40361.

SEEKING: Bivocational pastor for Calvary Baptist Church in Maysville, Ky. Send resumé to **Tom Adams**, 9529 St. Rt. 41, Aberdeen, OH 45101. Phone: (937) 549-2006.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Aberdeen Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist church in Bracken Association of Kentucky Baptist Convention. Send resumé to **Lowell Lively**, Pastor Search Committee, 1996 Campbell Drive, Aberdeen, OH 45101.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music with seminary degree for conservative but progressive SBC church in southeast Kentucky. Must be energetic, Spirit-led individual with an ability to work with all age groups, blended as well as traditional worship services. Send resumé to: Music Search Team, First Baptist Church, 170 Madison Ave., Whitesburg, KY 41858.

SEEKING: Lawrenceville First Baptist Church in Gwinnett County, Ga., is accepting resumé for a full-time senior pastor. Please mail a resumé, and a DVD, videotape or other media, to Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 228, Lawrenceville, GA 30046-0028.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor, First Baptist Church, Hodgenville, Ky. Send resumé to the Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 730 Tonieville Road, Hodgenville, KY 42748.

SEEKING: Part-time/bivocational minister of music (approx. 20 hours/week). Duties include leading Sunday morning worship and evening congregational singing in blended music style, plus leading adult choir, youth choir and children's choir. Send resumé to: Search Committee, McHenry Baptist Church, PO Box 154, McHenry, KY 42354; or e-mail mchenrybaptist@voyageonline.net.

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Southern Baptist chaplain sees war's toll, God's hand in Iraq

By Tammy Sharp
Baptist Press

Fort Polk, La. (BP)—Army chaplain Pete Keough is no stranger to war and the loss it brings—nor the mysterious ways of God.

Stationed in Baghdad from October 2005 to September 2006, Keough, a captain with about 1,400 soldiers under his spiritual care, saw hundreds of soldiers dedicate their lives to Christ during that time. He also saw soldiers lose their lives, some without a personal relationship with Christ.

"I would travel all of northern, central and southern Baghdad visiting soldiers, doing ministry in all those places," Keough said. "We actually were able to baptize more than 25 in makeshift baptisms that were either large engine containers or old water tubs that we found. We were pretty resourceful."

In addition, Keough led a weekly worship service at the main base camp. Starting with four soldiers, Keough saw the worship service grow to nearly 100 by the end of his tour of duty.

"That was amazing," he said. "But there's a hard side, too. A war zone by its very nature brings death, and some of those deaths inevitably hit very close to home."

Keough, a Florida native, is an 18-year Army veteran who entered the chaplaincy in 2001.

After graduating from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in 2003, Keough was stationed at Fort Polk, La., where he is one of a few assistant pastors at the post's chapel.

Becoming a chaplain was no dif-

icult leap, Keough said. As he continued in both military service and spiritual training, God's call became ever clearer.

"The more I was around soldiers, the more I saw it as a ministry," he noted.

A tour of duty in Iraq where soldiers face their own mortality and faith daily simply reinforced that view.

"It's an interesting dynamic," Keough said. "Soldiers go into war knowing that death happens. But there's nothing you can do to change how much it hurts when it happens to someone close to you. You pray for the best and prepare for the worst."

Dealing with death's impact can become almost instinctive for those who face it every day, and time is of the essence for survivors who must not only grieve for their comrades, but face the ever-present possibility of their own deaths.

"When we lost a soldier, I would immediately take the group of people, that very day, within hours, and get together with them to do traumatic event management," Keough recalled.

Death of a friend

Besides caring for the survivors, the chaplain also memorialized each soldier who died.

"Each death affects you differently," said Keough, who experienced his own grief when his squad leader was killed 10 months into his mission.

Staff Sergeant Andreas Contreras, the personal security detachment squad leader in charge of driving Keough and Task Force Command

Sergeant Major Mark Green through Iraq, was killed by an improvised explosive device.

"When he was killed, I was absolutely broken," Keough reflected. "But through that event I realized two things. First, God literally picked me up and did everything through me." My ministry "is God's call on me."

The second thing Keough realized was the truth of Romans 8:28. All things do work together for the good of those who love the Lord, he said.

The hardest part of the loss for the chaplain was that Contreras was not a Christian. "That's what still stinks," Keough acknowledged. "It wasn't for a lack of trying, though, I'll tell you that."

"Divine residual effect"

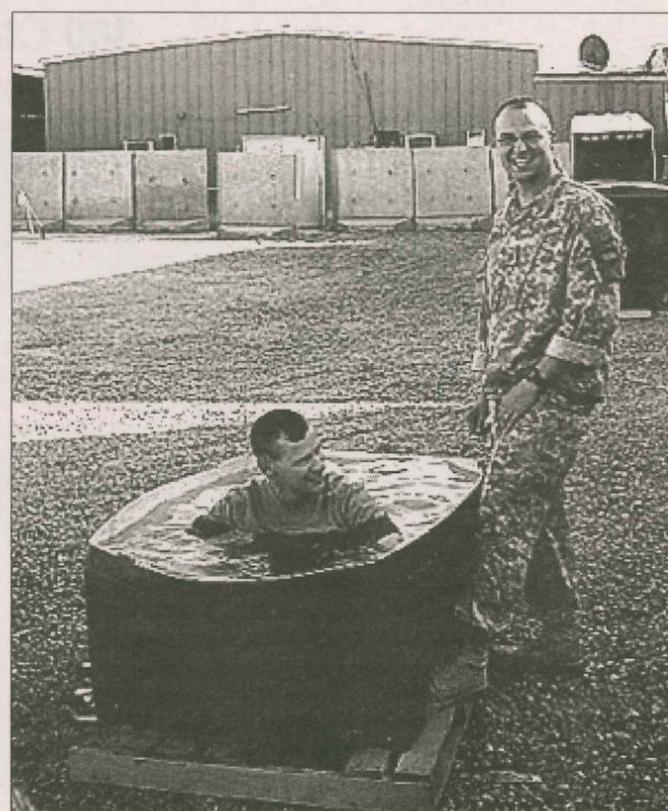
Despite the pain over Contreras' apparent lack of faith, Keough was amazed by what he called the "divine residual effect" of his friend's death.

Several weeks later, as Keough and Green were coming off a mission, Keough led the group in prayer, thanking God for their safety and survival.

Green "pulled me aside and said, 'Chaplain, I've seen something I've never seen before. I've never seen God work in such amazing ways.'" Keough recounted. "He told me he knew he needed Jesus to be his Lord and Savior and had asked Him that day."

Green wanted to follow in believer's baptism and for as many people to witness it as possible.

Afterward, at least one other sol-



dier came to be baptized and others approached the chaplain with questions about faith.

Serving in war-torn Iraq with death ever-present, has taught Keough to be much bolder about sharing his faith.

"We don't know when our last day is, our last minute," he said. "I've been IED'd, shot at, mortared. Yet here I still stand unscathed and uninjured. I'm not worried about tomorrow. I'm concerned about His Kingdom work today, because that's what He's given me is today."

BAGHDAD BAPTISM

Army chaplain Pete Keough baptizes Army Command Sergeant Major Mark Green in a Baghdad on-base baptistry in a sawed-off engine container. "When people hear a sergeant major is being baptized, they want to see it," Keough said.

Iraq veteran finds security in Christ, success on the field

By Luanne Byrd
Baptist Press

Boone, N.C. (BP)—In dire need of money and discipline, Brian Stokes enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps and served two tours of duty in Iraq. He earned a Purple Heart and an achievement medal for combat valor, but knowing all along that his greatest security was in Christ.

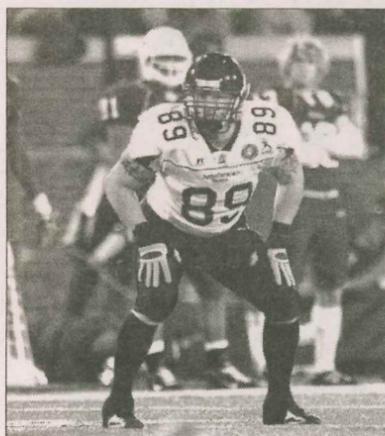
Stokes, 27, found himself at East Carolina University in 1998 as his parents were ending their marriage. Academic struggles and an injury during his first summer of football practice led to a medical release from school.

He spent the next two years working as a short-order cook, washing cars, distancing himself from his family and hanging out with the wrong crowd.

"One morning I woke up at 7 a.m., the electricity had been turned off and I had no money," Stokes recalled. "I decided I was tired of living that way. I knew I needed something in my life to drastically change it, more than anything I could do."

In his four years of service with the Marines, Stokes rose to the rank of sergeant and took part in peace-keeping missions in Kosovo, humanitarian efforts in Kenya and fighting in Afghanistan before moving on to Iraq.

Stokes attended church only once while at East Carolina, but when he got to boot camp he didn't miss a Sunday. He became seriously com-



FIELDS OF BATTLE Brian Stokes helped lead the Appalachian State University Mountaineers to two national football championships after he found security in Christ by way of military duty in Iraq.

mitted to changing his life and making his family proud of him.

"I asked God to protect me and my friends. With God beside me, I had no fear in combat," he said. "I also focused on my family that had been missing in my life for two years. I knew if I dedicated it to Him, I would get back to them."

Iraq experience

In retrospect, what Stokes witnessed on the ground in Iraq led him to believe the mission was worthwhile.

"Iraq needed something. What we as soldiers experience on the frontline during battle is what the

Iraqi people experienced daily under Saddam Hussein," Stokes said. "I felt like I was on another planet."

Stokes said he believes the media fails to report many of the positive stories emerging from Iraq. He cited the humanitarian efforts that the U.S. continues to support and the provision of generators for towns without electricity. There is now running water in communities where there was none before, he added.

A sense of dignity has been restored to the Iraqi people, Stokes said, and the presence of American troops there reminded him that there is still good in the world.

Back on the field

When he joined the Marines, Stokes had a goal of earning enough money to go back to college. So when he left the military in October 2004, he did just that, earning a spot as a walk-on with the Appalachian State University football team in Boone, N.C.

After eight years away from the game, Stokes proved his worth and became an integral member of the Mountaineers' special teams unit and a tight end.

Under the direction of head coach Jerry Moore, Stokes thrived on the field, executing several crucial tackles on kickoff returns. He also performed well in the classroom, becoming a member of the school's academic honor roll. With his help, the team won back-to-back NCAA Di-

vision I-AA Football National Championships and held the nation's longest winning streak at 14 games last season.

Stokes said the confidence he gained in the military changed the way he played football from his days at East Carolina to his championship seasons with Appalachian State.

"Serving in the military gave me confidence—confidence to not let hard times get the better of me," he said. "Overcoming some pretty deep holes that I've been in, that started with Christ."

His coach noticed that Stokes was an inspirational role model in the locker room and provided insight into game strategies.

"Brian Stokes brings a hands-on respect to the team," Moore said. "The players have a great trust and respect for him, a Christian respect. There's no doubt what he stands for."

Because of his age, Stokes' college football eligibility ended in 2006. He is now focused on completing his degree in criminal justice and is considering a career in federal law enforcement.

But he and his Mountaineer teammates still meet for their weekly Bible study on campus. Recalling how he drifted away from Christ before his time at Appalachian State, Stokes credits the study and his teammates with showing him he should never be too busy to spend time with Christ each day.

Clear Creek Baptist Bible College

300 Clear Creek Road Pineville, KY 40977

(606) 337-3196

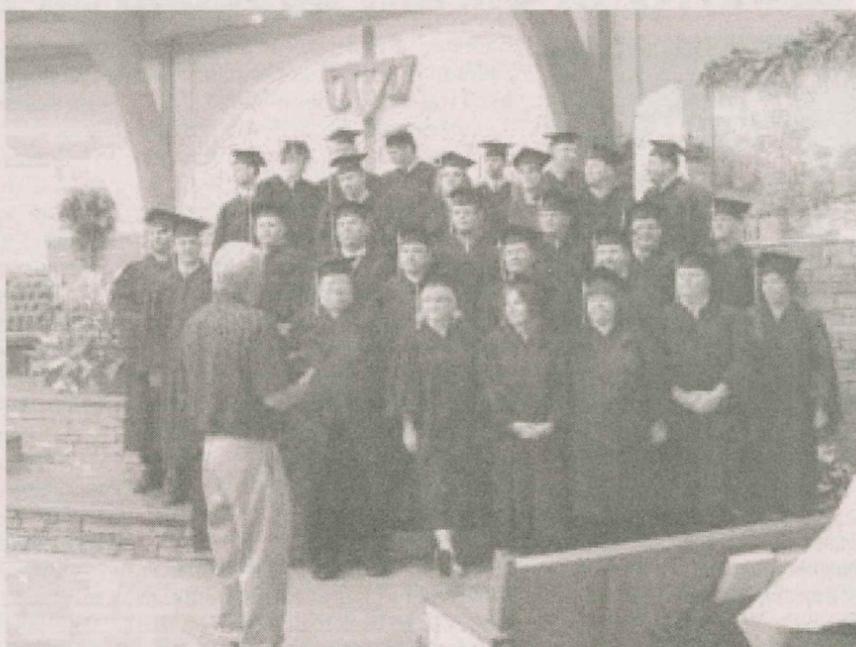
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When he found out I was a Bible college graduate, one preacher said, "I got what I needed down by the creek."



"Me too," I replied.



"So did we."

**Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. Education for Christian service.
Now accepting applications.**

Clear Creek Baptist Bible College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097; telephone number 404-679-4501) to award the Associate of Arts and Bachelor of Arts Degrees. Clear Creek is also accredited by the Association for Biblical Higher Education (5575 S. Semoran Blvd., Suite 26, Orlando, FL 32822-1781; telephone number (407) 207-0808), an institutional accrediting body recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education.