

Shine like stars in the world
Philippians 2:15

WESTERN Recorder

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FOR THE RECORD

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Messengers of 'God's Amazing Grace'

Missionaries at home, North America, world challenge Ky. WMU to continue gospel work

By Dannah Prather
Partnerships Editor

Richmond—With the theme "God's Amazing Grace," there was no doubt that the men and women attending the 106th annual meeting of Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union would sing the great hymn, "Amazing Grace," but guest missionaries and other speakers explored the topic well beyond the familiar melody and its lyrics.

Sandy Wisdom-Martin, missions involvement director for the Illinois Baptist State Association, said God's grace can transform a stripper in East St. Louis, Ill., into a disciple of Christ who now sells cosmetics for a living.

Carolyn Dixon, who with her husband, Charles, has served in Tanzania for 15 years with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, described the outpouring of God's grace upon her as she struggled to learn Swahili.

Jonathan Barron, director of Baptist Collegiate Ministries at Eastern Kentucky University, told the approximately 900 Kentucky WMU members and guests gathered at First Baptist Church of Richmond, that God's grace had healed a young woman who had become a "cutter," striking out at herself with razor blades in response to an inner pain.

These and many other stories were shared March 27-28 as WMU members were praised for ongoing efforts at missions education, support and involvement.

For the second consecutive year, meeting attendees rolled up their sleeves, undertaking a variety of missions projects around the host city.

Also for the second consecutive year, Kentucky Baptists learned they had contributed more than \$1 million to state missions through the Eliza Broadus Offering.

□ See WMU rallies ... *Page 3*



AUTHENTIC PRAISE Jieun Kim Han, a member of the Louisville Korean Women's Choir, plays a traditional drum at the 106th annual meeting of Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union last week. (Photos by Dannah Prather)



REMEMBERED Charles and Carolyn Dixon, thank Kentucky WMU for the gifts the couple has received annually during their 15-year ministry in Tanzania.



ROLE MODELS Sisters Barbara Cheek (left) and Martha Davis pose next to photographs of Southern Baptist missionary greats Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong. Cheek is a member of Buena Vista Baptist Church in Somerset. Davis is a member of Grapevine Baptist Church in Madisonville. The photos are roughly lifesize. Moon was under five feet tall; Armstrong was more than six feet tall.



ON MISSION Above: Geoff Hammond, president of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, praised WMU and Southern Baptists for their faithful giving to missions despite the recession. Left: WMU annual meeting participants stuff plastic Easter eggs that will be used for an evangelistic outreach event in Richmond. For the second consecutive year, WMU volunteers devoted a few hours to a variety of mission projects held in the host church's community. (Photo by Todd Deaton)

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, Apr. 1.

With ice gone, disaster relief attention now on preparedness

By Drew Nichter
News Director

Louisville—In the span of less than a year, Kentuckians experienced a minor earthquake, a massive wind-storm and a devastating ice storm.

And according to Coy Webb, more is undoubtedly yet to come.

"If our Lord doesn't come back, we're going to continue to have some disasters," said Webb, Kentucky Baptist Convention's disaster relief associate.

The memory of the late January's ice and snow still is fresh in the minds of millions of Kentuckians. But thoughts now have turned from clean-up to preparation: What about next time?

"The ice storm certainly dem-

onstrated that we did some things well," Webb acknowledged. But, he added, "there were some things that we need to improve on and need to be better prepared for."

Rick Reeder, a Western Kentucky director of missions, echoed that sentiment.

"It probably exposed most every weakness that we had," the Caldwell-Lyon Association DOM said. "It showed where the weaknesses were in personal preparedness."

At a March 12 meeting of the Kentucky Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster group, Webb, who serves as the KBC's representative, said state officials explored what went right and wrong with the disaster relief efforts following the ice storm.

One overwhelming statistic he came away with: More than 80 percent of Kentucky's 120 counties were affected in some way, including every county west of Interstate 65, which runs from Louisville to south of Bowling Green and into Tennessee.

Hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses lost power. Most of those affected in Western Kentucky remained dark for weeks.

So, just what will it take for Kentucky Baptist churches and leaders to be ready the next time a natural disaster strikes?

Webb said that involvement begins with churches meeting their communities' needs through shelters.

In a letter sent to pastors and DOMs March 16, Webb encouraged church leaders to consider partnering with the American Red Cross in their sheltering efforts. He called the need critical and that many Kentucky communities lack the necessary number of shelters to sufficiently deal with another widespread emergency.

"There were not enough adequate shelters that were registered ... to handle the needs that arose from a disaster of (the ice storm's) magnitude," he said.

Webb commended those nearly 100 Kentucky Baptist churches that opened their doors for public refuge, of which only two dozen or so were Red Cross certified. "I think our □ See Disaster relief ... *Page 2*

'Find it Here' emphasis seeks to reach every Ky. household

By Robert Reeves

Kentucky Baptist Convention

Louisville—Kentucky Baptists are preparing to reach every household in the state with a gospel message and special invitation to attend church by Easter Sunday 2010.

Ross Bauscher, Kentucky Baptist Convention's evangelism growth team leader, told participants attending the state evangelism conference last month, that a combination of hand delivery to 1.5 million households of a special brochure, and the Kentucky portion of a \$1.2 million national media campaign would be used to blanket the state during the three weeks leading up to Easter Sunday 2010.

"This is going to be the largest evangelism emphasis that the Southern Baptist Convention and Kentucky Baptist Convention has ever done," Bauscher said about the national evangelism initiative in which Kentucky will participate.

The campaign is being called "Find it Here," which is the tagline to be used in media advertising geared to reach people who do not presently attend church. It is part

of the GPS (God's Plan for Sharing) initiative of the North American Mission Board aimed at fulfilling the Great Commission in North America by 2020.

NAMB President Geoff Hammond introduced the GPS initiative at last year's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Indianapolis. The strategy was developed after two years of working with convention partners and local associations.

Bauscher said there would be three main components to the campaign: prayerwalking the state in the fall of 2009; the gospel sowing distribution to 1.5 million households in March 2010; and the national media campaign.

He said convention officials are estimating that 50,000 volunteers will be needed to hand-deliver the "Find it Here" message which will consist of a plastic bag with a special "Find it Here" brochure that can be hung on a doorknob. The brochure will contain a simple gospel presentation and an invitation to attend a Kentucky Baptist church at Easter (April 4, 2010).

Bauscher said that while numbers like "1.5 million households" and "50,000 volunteers" sound intimidating at first, the process of mobilizing for the task is relatively simple.

"Essentially we are working very closely with our associations and churches to make this happen," Bauscher noted. "In each association, either the director of missions or the moderator is working with each church that wishes to participate to divide up the geographic area for the prayerwalking and gospel distribution. Any church will be able to work as large or as small of an area as it feels it can handle."

Churches also can add a brochure to the bags its members distribute. The brochure could include an invitation to a special seminar or ministry that would appeal to non-attenders.

Those receiving the bags will be able to respond immediately by filling out a card or by visiting a special Web site. The KBC will be sending each respondent a book and will notify the church assigned to that area for follow-up.

In preparation for the gospel distribution and media campaign, churches are being asked to prayerwalk their assigned areas; train members to be witnesses; prepare their facilities to make a strongly positive first impression for new guests; and make plans to follow up with prospects during the five weeks following Easter.

For the national media campaign, Bauscher said that NAMB is producing high-quality TV and radio spots in English and Spanish. The ads will feature the stories of people who found life unfulfilling until they found Christ.

The spots also will be available to churches and associations to use, he added.

In addition to the NAMB Web site for the unchurched person (www.FindItHere.com), the KBC also is setting up a Find it Here section of its own Web site (www.KyBaptist.org/FindItHere) that will be used to post downloadable resources to help churches prepare for the campaign.

"Stay tuned for more details in the weeks ahead," Bauscher told those at the Evangelism Conference. "We will use mail, e-mail, the Western Recorder and our Web site to get the information out. We are excited about what God is going to do through this and pray that every church in the KBC will participate."



Disaster relief leadership changes focus from recovery to preparedness

Continued from page 1

churches were doing a good thing. They saw a need and were just trying to respond to it."

But, as Webb pointed out, "a lot of our churches ... were not prepared to be a shelter and maybe didn't have a clear understanding of what it entailed."

Webb acknowledged in his letter that church leaders have misconceptions about what it means for a church to partner with the Red Cross. He said many feel that doing so will limit the church's ability to minister or witness to those who seek shelter there.

Webb said it's all in how a church chooses to partner with the Red Cross that makes the difference.

Loren Schanding, who handles disaster relief services for the Louisville chapter of the Red Cross, explained the three models of church partnership.

Red Cross shelter—Following a disaster, the church would come under the administrative control of the local Red Cross chapter with little to no church involvement.

Red Cross partner shelter—The church still would be under the administrative control of the Red Cross, but would primarily be staffed by church members with some Red Cross volunteers.

Red Cross supported shelter—The church would maintain administrative control of the facility with exclusive church volunteer involvement.

In all models, Schanding said the church would be expected to adhere to the Red Cross disaster code of conduct, but insisted "the Red Cross is not in the business of telling people to hide their faith."

"We don't ask churches to not practice their ministry," Schanding said. "We ask them to give people the choice as to whether or not they would like to join in that ministry."

Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville is an example of a Red Cross partner shelter.

Local businesswoman and Walnut Street member Tina Lewis spearheaded the partnership after a 2007 fire at a nearby apartment building displaced most of the senior adult residents to a school a couple of blocks away. She said she wondered why the residents were not simply moved across the street to Walnut Street's four-story activities building.

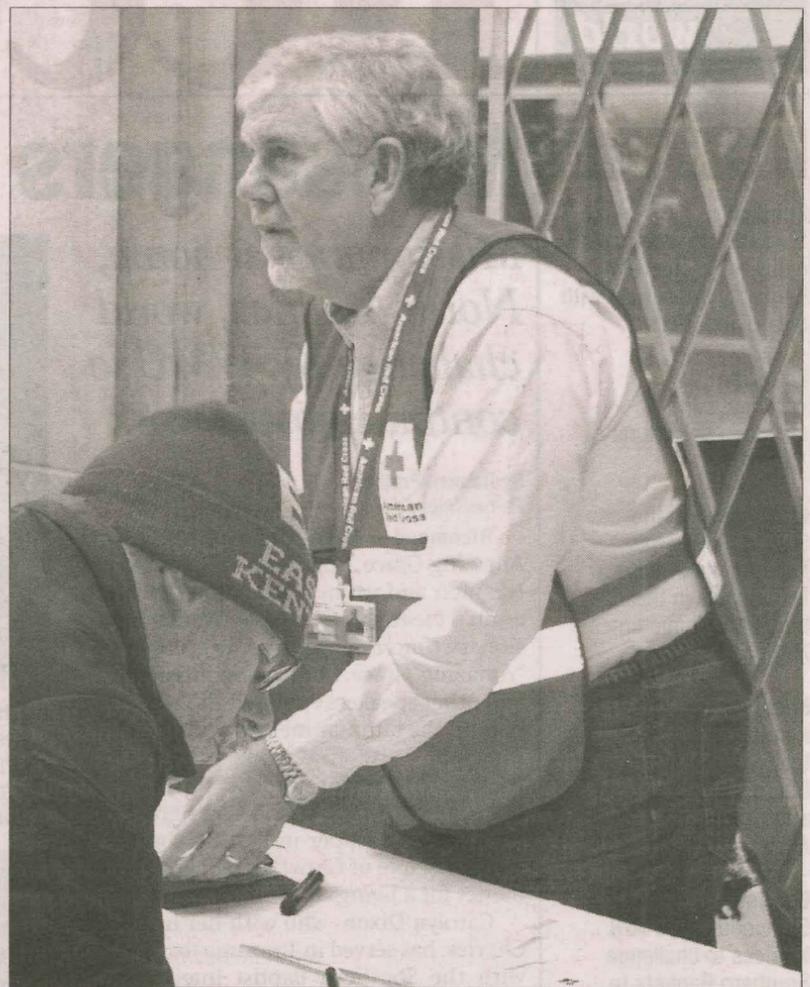
Realizing the church was not Red Cross certified, Lewis proposed the idea to Walnut Street's pastoral staff and started the process of partnering with the agency.

The church had its first opportunity to serve as a shelter following the January ice storm. More than 300 people stayed at the church over a period of nine days.

"It was more than what we were expecting," said Lewis, who also directs Walnut Street's infant resource program. "We were maxed out."

She added that the relief effort showed church members that being Red Cross certified "is something that we really do need."

But DOM Reeder noted that many churches simply opened their doors



OPEN DOOR Jim Cahoe, a member of St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville, welcomes people to the emergency shelter at Walnut Street Baptist Church following the January ice storm. Walnut Street partnered with the American Red Cross to operate the shelter which saw 300 people seek refuge at the church over nine days. Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief Associate Coy Webb has urged church leaders to partner with the Red Cross to provide more adequate shelters in times of emergencies. (Photo by Dannah Prather)

without waiting for help from an outside agency.

He said he heard many church leaders say: "If the government shows up, that's fine, but we're not waiting on them. ... We live here and we need to respond now."

That was the approach Second Baptist Church of Greenville took. With no lines of communication open to contact disaster relief authorities, Pastor Ray England said he felt like the church could not wait to open its doors to its neighbors in need.

The church has served as a Red Cross recognized shelter in the past, but did not have time to take that action once the ice storm hit. England said the church fully supports the work of the Red Cross and will be better prepared next time in partnering with them.

Personal preparedness

Of course, as Reeder explained, being better prepared for disasters is not just a church matter but extends to personal responsibility for all individuals, especially pastors.

He said the greatest need he recognized once the ice storm hit was to get his own family stabilized before tending to the 39 churches in the two counties that make up his association.

"You have that pull about jumping into action and helping other people," he noted. "But the reality is if you don't get yourself stabilized, you can't help other people."

The key for a pastor getting his family situated to get out the door to help others is in being prepared beforehand, Reeder stressed. That often is a difficult point to get across because "we have a short attention span," he added.

"The best way not to keep thinking about (a potential disaster) all the time is to get yourself prepared, and every now and then, check on your preparation," Reeder recommended.

He noted several state and federal Web sites that offer tips on how to be better prepared for emergencies, such as www.ProtectYourFamily.KY.gov and www.Ready.gov.

Reeder also said pastors must exercise patience in the days following a natural disaster because most individuals are not prepared.

"If people don't prepare for eternity—which is the most important thing—why should we expect they're going to be ready for tomorrow?" he asked.

"Just don't get upset with them," he cautioned. "Just step in where you can and start working where you find a need."

In addition to Web resources, the KBC will host a Disaster Preparedness Fair May 12 at the Baptist Building in Louisville. Several agencies and guest speakers will be on hand with presentations and information to help individuals and businesses better understand what it takes to prepare for such events as natural disasters and pandemic outbreaks.

WMU rallies members to 'pray, give & go'

Continued from page 1

Geoff Hammond, president of the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, addressed the gathering Friday morning.

"It's fun to tell people about North American missions with an accent like this," said Hammond, whose pronunciations reflect his early years in Nigeria and Zimbabwe as the child of missionaries.

"North America is just as much a mission field as Nigeria," he said, adding that the U.S. has become the second-largest Spanish-speaking country in the world, surpassing Spain. "We are the only industrialized nation that still has a population growing."

Southern Baptists mobilized more than 250,000 volunteers last year through World Changers, Mission Service Corps, and other efforts. Still much work remains. "We need missionaries who will leave their geographic comfort zones and go into people groups, raise up leaders (and) start churches," Hammond said.

Kentucky WMU Executive Director Joy Bolton reported that the current total of the 2008-09 Eliza Broadus Offering was more than \$1.025 million, nearing the goal of \$1.052 million.

Last year's funds that exceeded the goal were dedicated to gospel-sharing efforts by churches, local Baptist associations and collegiate ministries. Funds also are being used for Crossover Louisville, the evangelistic initiative held prior to this year's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 23-24 in Louisville.

Bolton shared information from a study released last year that found churches with WMU groups contribute more money to missions than churches without WMU. She also reported that in the past three months, 30 new WMU organizations have been formed in Kentucky.

Tanzania Baptist Women's Union has requested training assistance from Kentucky WMU, Bolton said. A trip is being planned for this summer and volunteers are needed.

With prayers and tears WMU members commissioned Soonsil Back, a recent seminary graduate and Kentucky WMU intern, back to her home country to continue her work with Korea WMU.

"I have learned a lot by watching you," said Back, who has lived in the commonwealth for more than two years. "I feel like Kentucky is my second home."

Back said as she studied the different roles of Old Testament leaders in the temple, she came to understand the value of individual believers working together.

"I came to realize that the story of God, His story, which is history, has been written by those who are ordinary people but faithful to God." She described the many WMU members she had observed as such servants. "I know God will remember people like those and He will continue to write His stories through their lives."

Annual meeting attendees heard ministry updates and messages of thanks from many missionaries including:

■ Charles and Carolyn Dixon who soon will retire from their mission field in Tanzania to return to Kentucky.

Charles Dixon said the IMB initially was reluctant to commission the couple. "The mission board (said), 'With your age and your family, you can't go.'" Dixon said when they finally were approved for training they found that their fellow missionary candidates "were younger than our children."

Carolyn recalled her frustration, and then success, at learning Swahili. "I can quote you more Bible verses in Swahili today than I can in English."



COME TO THE 'VILLE Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union staff members (from left) Donna Dye, Glenda Triplett and Wendy Stout sport plastic jockey hats, and Executive Director Joy Bolton (right) dons a summer chapeau, to promote the national WMU annual meeting in Louisville June 21-22 at St. Matthews Baptist Church. Bolton said the event will include a missions fair devoted primarily to ministries in Kentucky. The WMU meeting precedes the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 23-24, also in Louisville this year. Southern Baptists from across the commonwealth and the country will converge on the River City the weekend before for the evangelistic emphasis, Crossover Louisville. (Photos by Dannah Prather)



"THE TORPEDO" Sandy Wisdom-Martin, executive director of Illinois Woman's Missionary Union, holds a container once used on her aunt's farm to draw well water. Wisdom-Martin recalled how refreshing the water was but that only Christ can quench spiritual thirst.



TIME TO CLAP Emily Christian, a musician from First Baptist Church of Richmond, leads Kentucky Baptists in worship during the 106th annual meeting of Kentucky WMU.

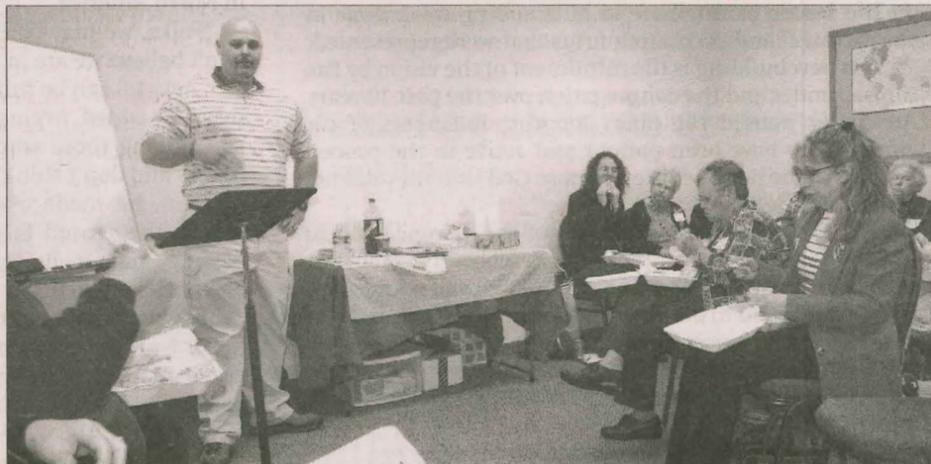


HEADING HOME Soonsil Back, a member of Korea WMU, talks about her experiences in Kentucky during the past two and a half years. Back studied at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and learned in detail about the work of Kentucky WMU. She graduated seminary last December. Members of Kentucky WMU held a commissioning service for Back during the annual meeting, sending her home with their support for her ongoing work in spreading the gospel.

■ Greg and Alice Whitetree have served as directors of the Freeda Harris Baptist Center in Eastern Kentucky for more than 25 years. They said funds from the state missions offering supply the vans that bring children to the center for activities.

■ Dewayne Waldrup, pastor of the Bluegrass Cowboy Church in Paris, said the congregation that meets at the Bourbon County Fairgrounds hosted its first vacation Bible school last year, using the "Cactus Canyon" curriculum. A youth group now is forming.

■ Teresa Parrett, missions mobilization coordinator for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, reported that there are more than 130 Mission Service Corps missionaries serving in Kentucky. She introduced two of them: Marilyn Creighton who is serving in collegiate ministries, and Travis Lynch who has opened the Gilmin Group Boys Home in Berea.



LUNCH WITH A MISSIONARY Kentucky Baptist Woman's Missionary Union members and guests enjoy a box lunch as Travis Lynch, a Southern Baptist Mission Service Corps missionary, talks about a ministry to at-risk boys he has begun in Berea. A former teacher, Lynch said he became frustrated by school board policies that prevented him from interacting more with troubled students. Serving with Lynch is his wife, Christie, and Brandon and Valerie Stinnett. Learn more about Gilmin Group Boys Home at www.GilminGroup.org. Sixteen missionaries representing local, national and international ministries talked about their work during the lunch break.

Other highlights

■ Kentucky Baptist Nursing Fellowship, a ministry group within WMU, reported that Baptists in seven states are interested in offering Kentucky's Baby Boot Camps to expectant mothers-to-be. BBCs provide moms with information on how to care for themselves and their babies, and conclude with a group baby shower. Members of Kentucky BNF traveled to Oklahoma last year to teach the BBC approach. BNF members will travel to Fort Totten, N.D., June 28-July 3 to hold a BBC at Spirit Lake Nation reservation where the teen pregnancy rate is staggering.

■ WMU members and guests contributed more than \$7,000 during the annual meeting for ongoing ministries to missionaries serving in Kentucky or those from Kentucky serving elsewhere. Funds provide Christmas and birthday gifts to

missionaries, subscriptions to the Western Recorder, and ministries to children of missionaries.

■ WMU staff encouraged Kentucky Baptists to attend the national WMU Annual Meeting June 21-22 at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville prior to the SBC annual meeting.

■ Members approved a change to the by-laws that clarifies responsibilities of the vice president if the president cannot fulfill her term.

■ Pat Reaves was re-elected president. Sandra Duguid was re-elected vice president. Cheryl Hatfield was re-elected secretary.

■ Two Kentucky WMU staff members, Denise Gardner and LaRaine Rice, were recognized for 10 years of service.

The 2009 Kentucky WMU annual meeting will be April 9-10 at Westport Road Baptist Church in Louisville.

Florence Baptist dedication

Florence Baptist Church held a wonderful dedication service for its new facilities on March 22.

The new building is located on 67 acres a few miles south of Florence in view of Interstate 75 on Mount Zion Road. The church's new logo features the tagline "Florence Baptist Church at Mount Zion."

Partners in the Mission



By Bill Mackey

The 93,000-square-foot building has a sanctuary of 1,400 theater-type seats. Adding 200 matching chairs and the choir loft brings the total capacity to 1,700. More than 1,600 were present the first Sunday in the new facility.

In addition to the centrally located sanctuary, the facility includes a large entrance area connected to hallways encircling the sanctuary, a spacious fellowship hall, children's indoor play areas, preschool and children's classrooms, youth and young adult areas, adult classrooms, a choir room, and office suites.

The property was purchased 10 years ago for about \$3 million and has been paid off. The complete new facilities cost about \$15 million. It has state-of-the-art sound, projection and lighting, as well as beautifully coordinated furnishings.

Messengers attending the Kentucky Baptist Convention's 2009 annual meeting will be asked to approve Florence Baptist Church as the site for the 2011 annual meeting of the KBC. I think it will be a very convenient location for many Kentucky Baptists and an enjoyable site for the meeting.

The building dedication service included worship through music, prayer and recognitions of public officials and denominational representatives, including Northern Kentucky Association Director of Missions Rick Robbins, Western Recorder Editor Todd Deaton and myself.

The service also included a special presentation by Boone County Judge Executive Gary Moore, a video presentation and a dedication ceremony led by Pastor Tim Alexander. The Kornerstone Kids and the Worship Choir combined to sing "Lighthouse In The Night."

The pastor paid tribute to outstanding work done by the architect and decorating firms that were represented.

This new building is the fulfillment of the vision by Pastor Alexander and the congregation over the past 10 years. Alexander praised the many longtime members of the church who have been patient and active in the process leading to the new facilities. I praise God that they did not give up on the vision.

One of the impressive features of the Florence Baptist Church family is the number of preschoolers (211), children (225), youth (169), young adults (365) and adults (257) who are enrolled in Sunday school. This speaks well of the church's effectiveness in reaching out to its community.

Please pray that all of the KBC churches will be successful in reaching new generations as well as current generations.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

America: Land of missions opportunity

At last week's annual meeting of Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union in Richmond, North American Mission Board President Geoff Hammond posed an intriguing question: How do we tell the story about North American missions to people who think missions occurs somewhere overseas and not right at our doorstep?

Hammond's distinctive accent emphasized his point all the more. Born in Ogbomoso, Nigeria, to missionary parents, he was raised in Zimbabwe. Hammond, who earned seminary degrees both from Spurgeon's Seminary in London and Southwestern Seminary in Texas, has served on church staffs in Texas, as an International Mission Board missionary in northern Brazil, as a director of missions in northwest Arkansas, and more recently on a state convention staff in Virginia.

So when someone of this transatlantic and transcontinental pedigree says, "It's time for us to wake up" to the fact that North America is a mission field, Southern Baptists need to listen.

"North America is as much a mission field" as those countries where the IMB sends workers, he declared.

In 2008, more than a quarter of a million volunteers were mobilized—many from Kentucky, he affirmed. The NAMB's contingent also includes some 2,800 chaplains who serve on battlefields, in hospitals and on police forces; and hundreds of thousands of volunteers who assist in construction and clean-up projects through such efforts at World Changers, disaster relief teams, Operation Noah and Appalachia Ministries.

Yet, "there is more work to be done," Hammond challenged Kentucky WMU. In spite of the fact that our country may be in tough economic times, Hammond insisted that Southern Baptists must increase their efforts because we are finding an openness to the gospel in North America.

"Folks, we may be in an economic recession, but I don't believe we are in a spiritual recession," he asserted. "Acts 1:8 can be fulfilled in the U.S., as well as overseas," he added, urging Baptists to "sow down the gospel" among those who "don't eat like us, don't look like us and don't think like we do."

Then, he made a staggering statement: America is now the second largest Spanish-speaking country, passing Spain itself. Our nation is now fifth in ethnic diversity, he noted.

Just moments before Hammond spoke, Eastern Kentucky University's campus minister Jonathan Barron noted that while surveys have made much of the 88 percent of students who go to college and leave their faith behind, the 12 percent who are passionate and want to remain faithful need to be supported and affirmed. "God is using them incredibly" to reach their

fellow students for Christ, he said.

Illustrating his point, Barron shared about a music student who recently started a Bible study that has grown to more than 20 students. Through campus ministry opportunities and involving students on national and international mission trips, Baptist workers are "taking students and challenging them to be better than they thought they could be in the Lord."

After Thought

By Todd Deaton

This past week, I had an opportunity to visit the Campbellsville University campus and meet with President Michael Carter; John Chowning, vice president for church and external relations; Frank Cheatham, vice president of academic affairs; and several other faculty members.

About 300 of Campbellsville's 2,300 students are internationals, many of them from Mongolia, President Carter said. While Campus Minister Ed Pavy and some students traveled to Costa Rica recently for an "Extreme Missions" trip to share the gospel in remote mountainous villages, Kentucky Baptist students have an incredible opportunity right on campus to share God's love with these internationals. In doing so, they have the potential to impact the families and friends of these international students when they return home.

Another Kentucky Baptist campus minister, Dean Whitaker of the University of the Cumberland, speaking at one of 11 Cooperative Program rallies across our state in March and April, highlighted that he had seen more than 40 professions of faith on his campus. In the audience that night were several international students from his school, representing Nepal, China and Korea. After Whitaker introduced those attending the CP rally to a Chinese student, the young woman—even though she was still struggling to grasp the English language—aptly described the change Christ has made in her heart in a single word: "Amazing." She was to be baptized at Main Street Baptist Church, Williamsburg.

Hammond is right, we Kentucky Baptists have an unprecedented opportunity for missions, right on our doorstep. And if what is happening on our college campus is any indication, Hammond is right about another thing: America is not in a spiritual recession, but is a land of opportunity, particularly in missions.

Finally, Hammond is also right that there is much work still to be done. Bolton and state WMU celebrated another significant milestone during their meeting: "Eliza is a millionaire again!" For the second year in a row, the Eliza Broadus Offering for State Missions passed the \$1-million mark.

Well done, Kentucky Baptists! Yes, the ailing economy is making it tougher for all of us, but there has never been a more opportunistic or urgent time for Kentucky Baptists to meet the Acts 1:8 challenge, starting right on our doorstep.

President extends invitation to Louisville SBC

By Johnny Hunt

I would like to encourage all my fellow Southern Baptists to join me at our annual meeting June 23-24 in Louisville.

It has been a joy and privilege serving as your president. I have traveled to many of your states and witnessed firsthand the way the Lord is moving in so many places. That has been so encouraging to me. However, we still have so many places nationally and internationally where we need to encourage, motivate and refocus on the mission the Lord has given us to reach others with the good news of the gospel.

That is exactly what we want to accomplish as we gather together in Louisville. We have sought the Lord as we have planned our program for our meeting. I believe He has helped us to do just that.

We have some incredibly encouraging worship times planned

with some musicians who truly desire to honor the Lord and lead us to the throne of God. I have invited some young men to speak to us who have never addressed our convention. They will have a special and fresh message to challenge us from the Word of God from a little different perspective than perhaps we have been accustomed.

I also have made committee appointments with many of the young men who are doing a great job in many of our churches.

As you already may have heard, I have chosen the theme "LoveLoud—Actions Speak Louder Than Words." The scripture is Matthew 5:16.

We simply have got to do a better job of showing this generation that the church of the Lord Jesus Christ not only talks the talk but walks the walk. It really is true that "people don't care what you know until they know that you care." All our time to-

gether in Louisville will be with that focus in mind.

I am asking you to make a commitment to do absolutely all you can to be present in Louisville. I realize this is a bad time with the economy and it will be increasingly more difficult for you to make the effort to come. However, we cannot be encouraged as effectively to make new strides in our efforts to reach the world as we can if we come together for those two days.

I am looking forward to seeing you in Louisville. Visit www.sbc.net and register as a messenger and bring some folks with you. Join me in praying that our time in Louisville will honor our blessed Lord. If you are not able to join us there, please log on to the Web site and watch as much of the meeting as you can. (BP)

Hunt is pastor of First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Ga., and president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

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"Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another." Romans 14:19

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Ten-ways-to-save challenge

By Jeremy White

While our family was recently looking at old photo albums, we noticed the shirt that I was wearing in a certain picture. We noticed it because the shirt in the photo was the exact same one that I was wearing as we were looking at the album. There I was in the photo holding our oldest daughter as a baby. She is now 16.

As you can discern, I am not likely to set any fashion trends. My more fashion-conscious family members were actually a bit appalled that a piece of my wardrobe had not been updated in 16 years. But, I countered, look at the money I was able to save in the college fund because I kept some clothes for a while.

With the recent economic downturn, saving money has become more fashionable. Companies are getting rid of corporate jets. People are cutting back on luxury purchases. So, perhaps my fiscally conservative tendencies are in style after all.

Most people do not have an income problem but rather a spending problem. I would like to challenge you to find 10 ways you can save money this year. Is that renting something, instead of buying it? Changing a habit? Being more creative with entertainment? What works for me may not work for you, but all of us can save money in certain areas without sacrificing much time and perhaps even improving the quality of our lives.

Saving money takes work, but the more you work at it, the easier it becomes. It tends to become more of a habit and a mindset. Being careful with your expenses ultimately allows you to do the things that you really want to do, such as going out on more dates with your spouse.

Do not try to squeeze every penny out of every dollar and make saving money into some kind of "second religion." Our family tries to be good stewards—not so we have more money, but more freedom: the freedom to give to people with needs, the freedom to be flexible in our budget, the freedom to be spontaneous in our spending without compromising our overall financial plan. Balance is the key. We may save money on the spending side, but that gives us freedom in other areas.

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

Thomas leading church to feed hungry children

"I'm hungry!" Those words evoke a compassionate heart, especially when spoken by a child.

Nelle Thomas and a host of volunteers at Elizabethtown's New Hope Community Church have such hearts. On Wednesday nights, members are going out into some of the lower-income housing neighborhoods to pick up 130 to 150 children and bring them to a "Kids Café."

Kids Café, a nationwide feeding program sponsored by America's Second Harvest, provides food for nutritious meals for the school-aged kids. As a host church in Elizabethtown, New Hope Community, a Southern Baptist congregation, serves a four-course meal in a restaurant-type setting, after which the children participate in an educational, recreational or fun activity and a Bible study, said Thomas, program director. The children also receive a sack lunch on Sundays.

After a woman from New Hope circulated a flyer in the neighborhood and 15 children attended a Vacation Bible school in 2007, the church began sending a van regularly into the community to pick children



SERVING On Wednesdays, as many as 130 kids from nearby neighborhoods are being fed by volunteers at New Hope Community Church.

Along the Way

By Todd Deaton



PARTNERS Gary Miles, executive director of Second Harvest, recognizes Herb Williams, pastor of New Hope Community Church, (right) at the grand opening of the Kids Café.

up on Wednesday evenings. When one of the children wanted to pick up an old snack off the bus floor because he was hungry, Thomas felt compelled to ask church members to help buy some pizza for the kids.

Arrangements quickly were made to begin feeding about 30 children on Wednesdays. As word quickly spread through the neighborhood, however, more and more kids began coming to eat at the church and the rising food costs led to initiating a partnership to begin a Kid's Café, which is connected with a local America's Second Harvest food bank. Since January, nearly 50 volunteers from New Hope Community Church have been filling up a 25-passenger van and two school buses every Wednesday, preparing the meals, leading the activities, and then sharing about God's love, Thomas said.

Pastor Herb Williams commented that Kid's Café is working out well for both the children and the church. "The kids get fed and we get to be Jesus to them," he explained.

Scripture is very clear about the need for Christians to reach out to the brokenhearted and downtrodden, he said. "It's time for those attending the Bible study in our churches to become the Bible study," he urged, emphasizing that through Christ, "every child has the potential to become somebody" ... along the Way.

Why Christians should pay taxes

By Howard Dayton

In the United States, April 15 is more than the middle of the fourth month. It is the deadline date that the Internal Revenue Service has set requiring that we submit our tax reports. How should Christians view tax day, or as some would ask, why should Christians pay their taxes?

Well, taxation without representation was an inflammatory issue early in American history. Although circumstances are different now and we no longer pay taxes to Great Britain, many issues—political and practical—still revolve around concerns over tax revenues.

One might wonder whether ordinary citizens actually are being represented appropriately at all when it comes to taxation. Bridges to nowhere, attempts to bail out financial institutions and save industries, and other immoderate acts by our elected representatives certainly could give one pause for reflection when it comes to paying taxes.

In fact, the idea of paying taxes at all is still a concern to many people who wonder whether they can legally get out of paying their income taxes each year. And, of course, to meet that sort of thinking, there are groups that falsely teach that we don't have to pay our income taxes.

While certain aspects of our tax system are without a doubt constitutionally questionable, the federal tax courts and the Supreme Court

of the United States have held thus far that the tax system is both constitutional and legal. And, we have adopted a form of government in which the courts—and not the individual—decide legality. Therefore, we must observe those laws and pay our taxes.

The biblical mandate of a Christian's duty to the state is found in Romans 13:1-2: "Everyone must submit to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist are instituted by God. So then, the one who resists the authority is opposing God's command, and those who oppose it will bring judgment on themselves."

Then, in Titus 3:1-2, Paul writes: "Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to slander no one, to avoid fighting, and to be kind, always showing gentleness to all people."

The Bible speaks of no requirement that the authority to which we submit be correct or righteous, but only that we obey as long as it doesn't contradict God's word. The Roman government Paul served under was far worse than we in America could ever imagine; yet these same words admonish God's children today to honor our leaders—local, state and national.

The Pharisees tried to trap Jesus with one of their questions, asking

if he thought it was lawful to pay taxes to Caesar—the state. "Jesus said, 'Why are you testing Me, hypocrites? Show Me the coin used for the tax.' So they brought Him a denarius. 'Whose image and inscription is this?' He asked them. 'Caesar's,' they said to Him. Then He said to them, 'Therefore, give back to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's'" (Matthew 22:18-21).

Jesus made no distinction between what was legal and what was unfair; he simply said to give what is due to the government and give what is due to God.

There may be legal points of the income tax laws that are constitutionally questionable. Nevertheless, we have a system in this country that requires us to obey the laws that are created by our legislators.

Whatever the legal requirement is in paying taxes, as Christians our main concern should be with the biblical responsibility to pay taxes.

Although a person should not have to pay more than is necessary, paying the federal income tax is certainly not a voluntary matter. It is the law—and as long as taxpayers are not compelled to do something outside of God's Word, Christians must obey that law.

And, while remembering the legal part of paying our income tax to "Caesar," don't forget the first part of that income belongs to God. (BP)

Dayton is co-founder of Crown Financial Ministries and the current host of Crown's radio program, "Money Matters."

Parenting children of divorce

By James Stillwell

Q: The Bible says, "God hates divorce;" I hate it, too, but the dissolution of my marriage is a present reality. How can my children come out of this experience with a minimum of pain?

A: God hates divorce because God hates what it does to people, especially children. God loves divorced people and single parent families. Children can feel loads of abandonment during and after a divorce. Doing the right things can make the experience less painful and give the children an excellent chance of success.

Resolve not to use the children as spies.

Avoid the proverbial "third degree" when they return from the other parent. Ask fun, general questions; then let it go. If the child has had a good time, if the child is safe, that is all you need to know. But also avoid saying nothing; life spent apart from you is significant because the other parent is significant to that child.

Resist the temptation to use the children as messengers. This can be a very stressful burden for a child to bear. If you can communicate with the child's other parent through e-mail, that might work well. Don't take the bait if the other parent says things that arouse your anger. Stay focused; take the high road.

Realize a loving focus on your child. "Get" what your child is all about. Practice active listening. Focus on what the child is feeling. Don't tell a child what to think or how to feel. Never criticize the other parent in the presence of your child. From the child's perspective, that parent is half of their own identity.

Approchement: Whenever possible, team up with the other parent to raise happy children. Approach it as an emotionally neutral business partner. The most important corporation in the world is Parenting, Inc., so do all you can to make it a success.

James Stillwell is minister to singles at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington, sociates in Louisville. Send questions for Family Forum to Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253 or e-mail wresrec@kybaptist.org.



Kentuckians among IMB's newly appointed missionaries

By Emilee Brandon
International Mission Board

Taylors, S.C.—“We do not have lofty goals of world success,” missionary Christine Moffett acknowledged. “Our desire is simply to live through Christ and to proclaim His message of grace and salvation.”

Moffett, a South Carolina native, was among 89 new missionaries appointed by the International Mission Board during a March 18 service at First Baptist Church of Taylors, S.C., bringing the current missionary count to 5,569. The March appointment service would have been the IMB's fourth-largest group of appointees had 14 more missionaries been able to participate. Those 14 are being delayed because their stateside houses have not yet sold.



Amy Fisher

Moffett and her husband, Andrew, who was appointed in 2002 to serve in Bolivia, now will minister in Argentina.

Before she married, God had been preparing Christine to go overseas full time—first as an exchange student in Japan, later as a journeyman missionary in Peru. She returned to the U.S. to attend seminary.

“I started seminary in New Orleans, desiring to return overseas one day,” she recalled, “but I did not want to go alone. Early in my seminary studies God called me to release the condition I had been placing on my obedience to His call.”

When she did, God brought Christine and Andrew together and confirmed their call to missions—“first as individuals, now brought together in God's timing,” she said.

Amy Fisher, a Bedford resident and member of Westport Road Baptist Church in Louisville, said she grew up learning about missionaries in the Girls in Action missions organization. But it wasn't until she served as a journeyman in Bolivia she said she understood the extraordinary need to share the gospel.

When she returned to the United States, Fisher began taking classes at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, hoping to one day return to the field. That day came sooner than expected, she said.

“I had the opportunity to finish my degree on the mission field, so I went as an International Service Corps missionary to Peru” in 2007.

While there, Fisher recalled having the opportunity to minister to people affected by an earthquake.

“An earthquake brought the hopelessness of a dying world even closer,” she said. “Now I (return) to Peru to share the hope found in Christ.”

Joining Fisher in representing Kentucky was a husband and wife who were appointed to a restricted country and could not be identified.

Overwhelming appointment

Like Fisher, Tyler and Jennifer Eiland were not planning to become missionaries until they participated in missions training in Zambia to serve for six weeks in the bush of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Jennifer admitted she was scared at first. Leaving the comfort of her home, fami-



INTO ALL NATIONS The processional of world flags into the auditorium signals the start of each International Mission Board missionary appointment service. Eighty-nine new missionaries were appointed March 18 at First Baptist Church of Taylors, S.C. (IMB photos)

ly and country to start a new life halfway around the world was overwhelming.

The couple is leaving Alabama and returning to the Congo. “God knit my heart to Africa,” Tyler said. “I left Africa, but my heart never did.”

God wants to “turn the hearts of people to what only Jesus can provide,” IMB President Jerry Rankin told the new crop of missionaries.

Speaking from Colossians 1, Rankin encouraged each individual to use the Apostle Paul's prayer for spiritual provisions as an example—pray to be filled with the knowledge of God's will, to always walk in a man-

ner worthy of the Lord and to be strengthened by His power and presence.

Being a missionary is not just a job, Rankin reminded, but rather a witness for Jesus Christ, a representative for Him in a lost world.

The most effective witness of Christians is the way they live their lives. Believers need to “demonstrate peace in the midst of adversity, joy in all circumstances,” Rankin said.

“You folks are going to go through the fire again and again and again,” he added. “But you can be certain your Lord will show up and see you through.” (BP)

Ky. pastor to IMB trustees: Challenge Southern Baptists to continue giving

By Shawn Hendricks
International Mission Board

Greenville, S.C.—“I will not accept that Southern Baptists have said, ‘Enough!’” declared Paul Chitwood, chairman of the International Mission Board's trustees. During the March 17-18 trustee meeting in Greenville, S.C., the Kentucky pastor challenged fellow trustees to encourage Southern Baptists to dig deeper and give sacrificially to missions during these difficult economic times.

Until giving increases, the IMB's missionary count will remain in the mid-5,000s, noted Chitwood, pastor at First Baptist Church of Mount Washington. More will be needed to help reach 1.6 billion people who have little to no access to the gospel, he said.

“We must shout from the rooftops and the mountaintops the news that we cannot grow our missionary force because we do not have the money to do so. ... The possibility has now become a reality.”

Trustees appointed 89 new missionaries for a total missionary count of 5,569 during their meeting. Fourteen more missionaries have been delayed in being appointed because their stateside houses have not sold. The March appointment service would have been the IMB's fourth-largest group of appointees had those 14 missionaries been able to participate.

IMB treasurer David Steverson cautioned trustees to be ready for a sobering financial report later this year, as Cooperative Program giving remains down by about 3 percent and the economy and financial markets continue to struggle.

Steverson also remained cautious in making projections for the 2008 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions.

The goal for the 2008 offering is \$170 million. The 2007 annual offering totaled more than \$150.4 million but fell short of the \$165 million goal.

In other business:

Trustees approved the appropriation of more than half a million dollars for 27 human-needs

projects.

Trustees also were reminded of the hard work and sacrifice missionaries make in honoring 43 who died last year.

His voice cracking with emotion several times, Clyde Meador, IMB's executive vice president, read the names of seven active missionaries, one volunteer, three missionary children and 32 retired missionaries.

“These (retired) missionaries served 1,015 years, for an average of 32 years each,” Meador noted.

Following a recent trip to Cuba to celebrate the centennial of the country's Western Baptist Convention, Meador announced, “God is working in Cuba in amazing ways.”

According to reports from Cuban Baptists, 70 percent of Cuba's 11 million people have received a copy of the “JESUS” film, received a gospel tract or heard a personal witness.

“Don't you wish that was true in the United States?” Meador asked.

Cuban Baptists have a vision to start 100,000 new house churches and see 1 million Cubans give their lives to Christ by the end of 2010.

“Cubans have no doubt that the Lord is going to do this vision that He has laid upon their heart,” Meador said. (BP)



TRIBUTE International Mission Board trustees honored Robert Wakefield (shown on screen) and 42 others who died last year. The tribute was held during the IMB's trustee meeting in Greenville, S.C., March 17-18.

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Estate Plan Organizer

New Web tool can simplify estate planning process

What an important time it is in history and in our individual lives to make sure our estate plans are current and properly documented.

Given the unfavorable impact in the value of most everything we own this past year, and the estate tax law changes that were effective Jan. 1, it is incumbent upon everyone to review his or her estate plans, or prepare a plan if you do not have one in place.

Statistics reveal 60 percent of people die without a will, and 70 percent of those with a will do not have a currently updated will. I know you do not want to be included in either of these statistics.

Your Kentucky Baptist Foundation is available to assist you in this very important responsibility to yourself, your family and to God. Laurie Valentine, our trust counsel, is available for private consultation at no cost or obligation.

In addition, we now have a new, innovative, simple-to-use, confidential estate planning tool available to you at no cost or obligation. It is called the Estate Plan Organizer. The EPO is an interactive tool on our Web site that will

walk you through the estate planning process quickly, easily, confidentially and from the comfort of your home. It takes about 30 minutes, but gives you the option of stopping, saving your work and returning to it at your convenience, if you cannot complete it in one 30-minute session.

Ky. Baptist Foundation



Barry Allen

The EPO is a tutorial and an information-gathering and decision-making tool. Once completed, you can take it to your estate planning attorney, send it electronically to Laurie Valentine for a telephone consultation, or just print it for your personal use.

No one has access to the information without your permission, and the process does not request any information like social security or bank account numbers.

Let me encourage you to take advantage of this simple interactive solution to the estate planning process by accessing it at www.KentuckyBaptistFoundation.org/EPO. Call us toll free if you need assistance or if you do not have access to the Internet.

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

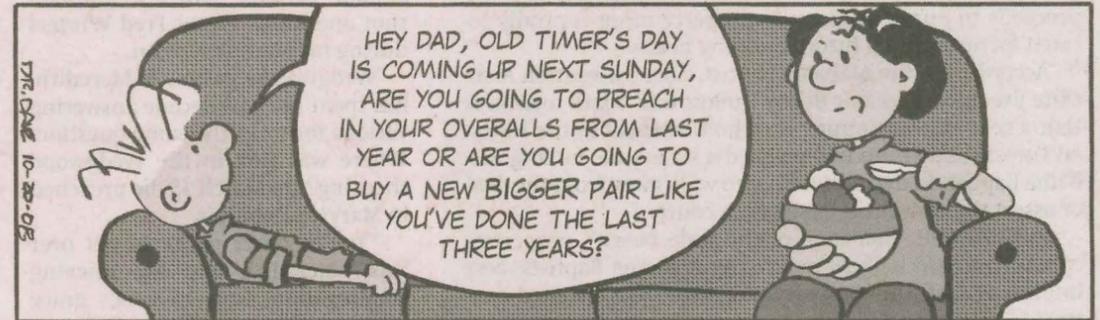
For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan



Preacher's Kids

David Ayers



Bible Crosswords

By Evelyn Boyington

Across

- 1 "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the ____" (John 20:25)
- 6 "Bring forth ... every living thing ... that they may ____ abundantly" (Genesis 8:17)
- 11 "Take heed and beware of the ____ of the Pharisees" (Matthew 16:6)
- 12 Occupied an apartment
- 14 More than a kernel
- 15 Wife of Abram
- 17 Tavern brew
- 18 Mideast dialect (abbr.)
- 19 "____ up a child in the way he should go" (Proverbs 22:6)
- 20 Buffalo college
- 21 "The ____ of the temple was rent in twain" (Matthew 27:51)
- 24 "This gospel ... shall be preached in all the world ... and then shall the ____ come" (Matthew 24:14)
- 25 1,061, to Claudius
- 27 Bloopers
- 29 "Ye shall appoint you cities ... of refuge ... that the ____ may flee thither" (Numbers 35:11)
- 31 Cereal grain
- 32 Son of Bela (Numbers 26:40)
- 33 Grouped together
- 36 Claudius ____, who wrote a letter to Felix on Paul's behalf (Acts 23:26)
- 39 ____ is more
- 40 The Gilded Age, for one
- 42 Say "whoa"
- 43 Printer's measure

	1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	
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47		48		49						50		
51			52				53		54			
	55							56				

- 44 Shasta ____
- 46 Hawkeye state (abbr.)
- 47 Red, for one
- 49 "I am ____ and Omega" (Revelation 22:13)
- 50 Put it in writing
- 51 English or western, in the tack room
- 53 Item to do
- 55 "The angels shall come forth, and ____ the wicked from among the just" (Matthew 13:49)
- 56 Tizzies
- 10 Super-duper
- 11 "For thou wilt not ____ my soul in hell" (Psalm 16:10)
- 13 King of Eglon (Joshua 10:3)
- 16 Headed for the hills
- 22 Golfer's gear
- 23 Large quantities
- 25 Mystery writer Ngaio
- 26 Seller of purple from Thyatira
- 28 Highway (abbr.)
- 30 "Now I ____ me down ..."
- 33 "I will ____ thy name for ever and ever" (Psalm 145:1)
- 34 Man sick with the palsy for eight years (Acts 9)

Down

- 1 "Now is our salvation ____ than when we believed" (Romans 13:11)
- 2 Rhine tributary
- 3 Patient adjunct, in hospital (abbr.)
- 4 For fear that
- 5 "But they (other nations) shall be ____ and traps unto you" (Joshua 23:13)
- 6 "French" is one style of these
- 7 Slow down or stop
- 8 Fourteenth letter of the alphabet
- 9 Greek letter

- 35 Wheeler follower
- 36 Speaks angrily, with "out"
- 37 Not citizens
- 38 "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to ____ against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11)
- 41 Tear
- 44 Roy's partner
- 45 Storyteller's specialty
- 48 Summer drink
- 50 Almost too reasonable, as an excuse
- 52 Wounded ex-soldier (abbr.)
- 54 Eastern U.S. state

Last week's solution

1	M	A	R		4	C	H	O	P		6	R	A	R	E		11
12	E	R	E		13	H	A	R	E		14	E	R	I	E		
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25	W	O	M	E	N		26	L	E	E		27	F	E	D		
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46	N	E	A	R		48	E	L	S	E		50	E	R	R		
51	O	N	L	Y		52	N	E	E	D		53	D	A	Y		

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Alabama Baptists head to court over property dispute

Montgomery, Ala.—Alabama Baptists are going to court to resolve a dispute with Montgomery, Ala., homeowners whom Baptist leaders claim are unreasonably hindering development of land the state convention is trying to sell.

The Alabama Baptist newspaper reported recently that the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions voted Feb. 23 to seek a declarative judgment against a homeowners' association. The homeowners are in a subdivision that neighbors property the state convention purchased more than 20 years ago as a building site for future relocation.

Two years ago, the convention voted to instead sell the land in the eastern part of Alabama's capital city and use proceeds to purchase cheaper property more centrally located for anticipated future building needs.

According to the Alabama Baptist, state convention Associate Executive Director Bobby DuBois told board members that a year of negotiations with homeowners in the Halcyon Forest subdivision had reached a stalemate, forcing Alabama Baptists to decide whether to walk away from the deal or assert the convention's rights in court.

Rusty Sowell, chairman of the state board's properties committee, said he believed it is in Alabama Baptists' best interest to "sell this property when we have a signed contract."

Deed restrictions on developing the land reportedly require approval by the association's architectural review committee, but specify that such approval cannot be "unreasonably withheld."

Baptist leaders said they offered concessions worth \$1.7 million to seek ways to allow a developer to build properties including a four-story hotel, two upscale restaurants and two small retail centers, but the homeowners' association turned them down.

State convention leaders voted overwhelmingly, with only a smattering of opposition, to take the homeowners to court.

Baptist leaders said the state convention had no immediate plans to move its headquarters from the current Alabama Baptist Convention State Board of Missions Building at 2001 E. South Boulevard in the southern part of Montgomery, but they were planning ahead for future building needs. (ABP)

Texas pastor shares wisdom, experience with grieving Illinois Baptist congregation

By Karin Hamilton

Fort Worth, Texas—A decade ago, several hundred people at Wedgwood Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, watched in horror as a gunman released 200 rounds of ammunition into a church youth rally, killing seven and injuring seven more before taking his own life.

On March 8, First Baptist Church of Maryville, Ill., was the scene of similar carnage when a gunman shot and killed Pastor Fred Winters during his Sunday sermon.

Wedgwood's pastor, Al Meredith, has spent the past decade answering various forms of the same question: Where was God in the Wedgwood shooting? On March 15, he preached in Maryville's pulpit.

"You're never going to get over this," Meredith told the grieving congregation, "but by God's grace you're going to get through it."

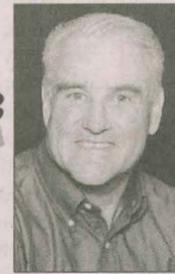
How did the shooting 10 years ago impact your church?

It called us to deeper commitment and more prayer; to hold onto others more closely; and to cling to the truth of God's word, which gives meaning when life falls apart.

What was the healing process like?

It's still going on. It's long and laborious, continual, cyclical. You think you've dealt with it and then another crying attack starts. There are people now just getting into counseling who were kids when it happened, and issues arising that have their roots in the shooting.

10
Minutes
With ...
Al Meredith



What is life like now for you and those who were affected by the shooting?

Life goes on eventually. The good thing about things like (March 15) is that one of the last stages in grief recovery is when you're thankful that you can provide help and comfort for those going through similar experiences.

What steps has your church taken to secure yourselves after the shooting?

We pray harder. If we had had an armed guard at the door, there just would've been another dead police officer. What good would having armed guards at the door do? Screen people? We're having enough trouble getting people to come through the doors. I don't want to set up more barriers.

What did you hear from the people at First Baptist of Maryville?

They were still in shock. Some were in denial; some mistakenly thought things would go on just the way they were. I had to warn them that things would change.

They've already changed. They were just grief-stricken and sorrowful at the death of their pastor, wondering what hope they would make of this mess.

What message did you bring them?

Romans 15:13: "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." I shared stories from our situation, how God had given us hope.

What advice did you have as they start the healing process?

One was that things are going to change. Two: Jesus never changes. Three: Now more than ever, it's going to take commitment on their part to make it through.

What does a traumatic shooting do to a sanctuary?

You can look at it as a killing field. Or you can look at it as holy ground where martyrs shed their blood, and go back and reclaim it as soon as possible for God's kingdom.

People have asked you where God was 10 years ago at Wedgwood. Where was God in Maryville?

Same place as ours. God is on the throne. That office is not up for reelection. He knows what it's like to have His only Son tortured and murdered. He grieves with His people. He's a broken-hearted parent. I don't understand all the whys, but I've learned to resign my position as general manager of the universe and let God be God. (RNS)

Meet the Class of 2009

'Will' proves a student's success is not always measured by traditional means

Some things are much easier to measure than others. If you need to know the weight of something, you can weigh the object to see how many pounds and ounces it is. If you want to know how long something is, you can measure it in inches, feet, yards or miles.

Some things, however, are not easily measured. How does one measure progress? Measuring academic progress can be done by quickly surveying grades before and after. But what about success?

Take "Will" for example (not his real name). Some may find it a little difficult to measure his success. Will enrolled when he was in the sixth grade. He knew he was adopted but I have never heard him blame any of his problems on that. In fact, despite the many challenges he has presented us with, he never has tried to shift blame to someone else.

On more than one occasion with Will, we have been tempted to throw in the towel and just say, "Enough is enough." Academically and in other areas, he simply has not applied himself.

Recently we recognized students on the 'A' or 'B' honor roll. I anxiously watched Will during chapel to see if he made the honor roll. I am sure he really wanted to be up on the stage with the 76 percent of the senior class who had earned honor-roll status.

When it became clear that his name was not going to be called, I went to sit by Will. A big smile appeared on his face. I asked him why he was not up there with the rest of the honor-roll students. His reply was simple and truthful: "I should be."

Since Will came to us in the sixth grade, there is no reason for him to not be on the honor roll. If you use academics to measure progress, he would not be considered a success. However, the very fact that Will is still here is an indication of his success and the patience of our faculty and staff.

I have been in meetings about Will when nearly every person—including Will himself—agreed there was little excuse for his lack of progress academically and in other areas. As usual, Will would smile but not offer an excuse. He also knew that if it were not for the instructions we are given to forgive "70 times 7" he would have been sent home long ago.

I do not know what the future holds for Will. Like a lot of students who make it a little difficult to measure their progress—at least on the surface—Will has not given us much to gauge his success. But he is graduating! He has been able to navigate through a rather difficult maze of

personal issues, some of which he could have managed much better.

I believe that even though he has not made as much progress as he could have, most of my faculty and staff would agree that both he and this ministry have succeeded. He is graduating and we have gone well beyond the second mile to help him reach this goal.

The things Will has learned during the past seven years will be a part of his life for many years to come. We simply have to trust that he will continue to grow and explore his potential. Real success is well within his reach.

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

Why Clear Creek?

A personal account of one student's path to CCBBC

The following is an essay written by first-year student Jeremy Glenn for his English composition class. The essay has been reprinted with the author's permission and edited for space purposes.

"It was about 1 p.m. on Aug. 1, 2008, when we arrived on the campus of Clear Creek with a U-haul truck filled with most of our possessions.

"I flashed back to our first trip here about 10 months earlier. My wife and I had experienced the peace that comes only from God when you know that you are where He wants you to be. I remembered as our visit came to a close our then 7-year-old daughter summed it all up in her tears as she cried, 'I want to stay here. I don't want to go home.'

"As Southern Baptists, we were drawn to Clear Creek because it is a Southern Baptist Bible college. As I read more about the school, I was impressed with how prospective students are required to provide evidence of their personal salvation and their call to ministry. This showed me the school was taking steps to ensure that each individual student was truly called by God, not their own accord.

"I discovered that Clear Creek

was the best financial choice for our family. I had looked at other Southern Baptist colleges but Clear Creek's tuition and housing costs were much more affordable. I was relieved to find out that Clear Creek didn't want you to go into debt, therefore they do not participate in federal student loan programs, but rather offer Pell Grants and scholarships that do not have to be repaid.

"I was also attracted to Clear Creek because of its smaller size which I felt would allow opportunities to develop personal relationships with faculty and staff. Although I am here to complete all the requirements for my degree

that is not my only intention; I also hope to be mentored and learn from the faculty and staff.

"As I drove the U-Haul truck onto the campus that August day, I felt that feeling only God can provide; a true sense of peace. I knew Clear Creek was now our new home. We had arrived here and our year-long preparations had come to an end—but the real journey had just begun."

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

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

Religious groups worried Obama's tax plan will affect giving

By Karin Hamilton

Washington—President Barack Obama's proposed 2010 federal budget contains a 7 percent cut in charitable tax deductions for the nation's wealthiest taxpayers. Some religious groups are asking how that will affect their bottom line.

The answer: It depends on who you ask.

Here's what it means in real terms for the 5 percent of Americans whose household income exceeds \$250,000 a year. Those families currently can save \$350 in taxes for every \$1,000 donated to charity; under Obama's plan, that amount would drop to \$280 per \$1,000 donation.

"By doing this, you raise the cost of giving," said Robertson Williams, a senior fellow at The Tax Policy Center, a Washington think tank.

By Williams' calculations, the change will result in a 10 percent drop in charitable giving by wealthy Americans, who typically contribute about 20 percent of all charitable dollars. In real dollars, Williams projects a decline of about \$6 billion in charitable donations because of the change.

At the same time, Williams said religious institutions may be spared because most wealthy Americans funnel their biggest donations to education, the arts and health care. Think campus buildings, art museums and hospital wards with family names attached.

"My guess is that religious groups will not see nearly the drop that other charitable recipients will see," Williams noted.

That leaves religious groups at the mercy of rank-and-file members and donors who have been tightening their belts in the economic downturn. For now, experts say, religious groups are probably on fairly safe ground.

Sylvia Ronsvalle, executive vice president of the Illinois-based Empty Tomb research organization, has studied economic data over time and said religious groups often fare better than most.

"There does not seem to be an immediate economic relationship between church giving and the economy," she noted. Translation: When times get tough, people still give to their houses of worship.

Indeed, in 2007, Americans directed

61 percent of their charitable gifts to religious organizations, according to a study by Bank of America. By contrast, high net-worth households spent just 15 percent on religious causes; the bulk went to education.

"Our research of church member giving in past recessions found no direct relationship between recession years and church member giving," Ronsvalle explained. "In five of six first-year recession years, giving went up. In the six recessions, giving went up in three and down in three."

Still, some religious groups worry that the tax deduction change is coming at a bad time.

White House Office of Management and Budget Director Peter Orzag said the tax changes, if passed by Congress, would not kick in until 2011, and he is confident the economy will have recovered enough by then to offset any potential losses in charitable giving.

"The best way to boost charitable giving is to jump-start the economy and raise incomes—and the purpose of the (\$787 billion economic stimulus package) was to

do precisely that," Orzag said in a White House statement.

He also pointed out that between 2002 and 2003, the top income tax deduction for charitable giving was reduced from 38.6 percent to 35 percent, but individual charitable contributions actually increased.

The 2007 Bank of America study also offered reasons to reassure religious groups. When asked how their charitable giving would be affected if they received zero income tax deductions, 52 percent of respondents said their giving would stay the same; 37 percent said their giving would decrease, and only 10 percent said it would dramatically drop.

All of this may be moot by the time Congress takes up the budget later this summer. Sen. Kent Conrad, the North Dakota Democrat who chairs the powerful Senate Budget Committee, already has indicated there may be trouble ahead.

Conrad told U.S. News and World Report that he already has heard so many complaints about the proposal that he could "absolutely be sure we can't pass this budget." (RNS)

Workers flock to N.D. as river overruns banks

By Erin Roach

Fargo, N.D.—Residents in the twin cities of Fargo, N.D., and Moorhead, Minn., which are separated by the Red River, were facing a record flood last week as the river rose past 40 feet, topping a 112-year record and threatening to overtake homes and businesses.

The Red River runs from south to north, from South Dakota to Manitoba, Canada, so the southern part of the Fargo-Moorhead area is facing the brunt of the river's force, Morgan Medford, associational missionary for the Dakota Northland Baptist Association, told Baptist Press.

Medford, who lives in Moorhead, was among the thousands of volunteers frantically stacking sandbags and building dikes to keep the water from destroying property. He and his son, who lives in St. Cloud, Minn., worked long hours in temperatures that didn't rise above 20 degrees.

Originally, experts predicted the river would crest around 40 feet, prompting residents to build dikes to handle a 40-foot rise, Medford said. Days later officials warned the river could rise to at least 43 feet.

"To add the extra ... height you have to broaden the base. So it's a whole big operation to keep raising the dikes," he noted.

Medford was housing some friends who were urged to evacuate their area of Moorhead, but he said he would have to flee his home soon.

He lives on higher ground, but officials were not able to predict where the water might flow.

Medford explained that the Fargo area experienced an uncharacteristically wet fall and the soil there lacks sand. When it rains, the water sits on top of the ground for a while before it sinks in and a significant amount of water froze on the ground when the temperatures dipped in winter.

"That made the moisture content of the ground itself extremely high. Then we had the snowiest December that we've ever had," Medford said.

Recently, the temperatures reached the 50s for two or three days, he recalled, causing the snow to melt rapidly. On top of that, the region received rains that normally would not come in March.

"So it put a lot of water out there, and what's going to happen is because we're so flat, when the river crests ... it's going to stay at that level for three to five days before it goes down," Medford said last Friday.

Relief teams ready

Durwood Garrett is pastor of Temple Baptist Church in north Fargo, where the North American Mission Board had planned to stage Southern Baptist disaster relief feeding and shower units.

"As far as our church is concerned, we've been involved in helping people that we know," Garrett

told BP. "Across the community the work to prevent the flooding is pretty much done. ... There's a lot of anxiety."

Garrett said he doubts he will have to evacuate unless the water and sewer systems become unusable. The church is on a Red Cross list as a possible shelter, but as of last Friday schools and other public facilities were sufficient in meeting those needs, he said.

"I've been out working with the community volunteers, just participating as a fellow volunteer, and the attitudes that I've seen and the people I've worked with have been very positive," Garrett said. "The difficulty hasn't really hit everyone yet. It's like the adrenaline before. We're working hard to do what we can. Every individual is helping every place they can."

Medford and Garrett both expressed gratitude for the vast array of volunteers who have traveled hundreds of miles to help save the cities. College students in the surrounding towns were out in full force, Medford said, and people were not hesitating to pitch in.

Garrett asked for prayer for the civic leaders of Fargo and Moorhead who are making crucial decisions.

"They're already running on few hours of sleep and they've been working hard, so if people would just pray for those leaders I think that would be a tremendously important thing," he said. (BP)

Groups talk abortion reduction with White House

Washington—Leaders from several prominent conservative Christian groups met March 24 with the head of the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships to discuss ways to reduce abortions.

Concerned Women for America President Wendy Wright sought the meeting with Joshua DuBois, executive director of the revamped White House office.

"It was cordial and there's an opportunity for future meetings," Wright said after the meeting,

which lasted more than half an hour. "He did seem interested in the kinds of programs that are helping women and children."

Conservative Christian groups have criticized the Obama administration for early policy actions such as opening federal funding to embryonic stem cell research and international family planning groups, and moving to rescind conscience protections for health-care workers.

Wright, who called the freedom of conscience "fundamental to the American way of life," said she

brought up the conscience issue with DuBois and several White House staffers who attended the meeting. They also discussed programs that encourage men to be good fathers.

The White House did not respond to requests for comment. When the overhauled office was announced in February, the White House said its four target areas would be to poverty reduction, abortion reduction, responsible fatherhood and fostering interfaith dialogue with world leaders. (RNS)

NATIONAL NOTES

Vt. governor pledges veto of gay marriage bill—Vermont Gov. Jim Douglas announced last week he will veto a proposed gay marriage bill if it reaches his desk. A bill that would legalize same-sex marriage passed the state Senate by a veto-proof majority and currently is before the House Judiciary Committee. Until last week, Douglas had not taken a stand on the bill, although he had said he opposes gay marriage. Democratic leaders have made the bill a priority and placed it on a fast track in an attempt to make Vermont the first state to voluntarily legalize the practice. The bill passed the Senate during a special session, 26-4, far more than the two-thirds majority needed to override a veto. The House vote is expected to be closer.

Court rules against Christian student group—A federal appeals court has upheld an "open membership" rule for student organizations at a University of California law school, making a Christian student group ineligible for recognition because the group requires adherence to a faith statement and denies membership to gays. The Christian Legal Society at the university's Hastings College of the Law had sought official recognition (and school funding) as a student organization but was denied because of its membership requirements. Nell Newton, chancellor and dean of the law school in San Francisco, said the school's board of directors determined that the CLS group's membership rules violated the school's nondiscrimination policy. The organization has said it is considering an appeal.

Senators push for church pension bill—Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas has introduced a bill related to church pension boards which will protect and strengthen church plans. The bill would respect the congregational polity of churches like that of Southern Baptists and also would facilitate the use of automatic enrollment features that encourage broader participation in church plans. Democratic Sen. Benjamin Cardin of Maryland has signed on as a co-sponsor. O.S. Hawkins, president of GuideStone Financial Resources, applauded the measure. "The implementation of this legislation will enable us to better serve those who are serving the Lord throughout this great nation and the world," he said.

Judge: FDA must revisit age limit for pill—A federal judge has ordered the Food and Drug Administration to re-evaluate its age restriction on the non-prescription sale of Plan B, making it possible pre-teens may have access to a "morning-after" pill that has abortion-causing qualities. In his March 23 ruling, Edward Korman of New York directed the FDA to make the drug available over the counter to 17 year olds within 30 days. He also instructed the agency to decide "whether to approve Plan B for over-the-counter status without age or point-of-sale restrictions." Before Korman's decision, Plan B was available without a prescription for use by women 18 and older. Females 17 and younger needed a prescription, a requirement for women of all ages until a rule change in 2006.

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

- Pray for the Acts 1:8 Challenge conferences, which will be held March 31-April 4 in Bowling Green, Hazard, Owenton and Salem.
- Pray for those interested in missions mobilization who will be attending the Acts 1:8 SENT Conference being held April 17-18 in Houston.
- Pray for those from Tates Creek Baptist Association who soon will travel to Panama for a vision trip looking at ways the association can be involved in missions there.
- Pray continuously for the new Christians and churches that have resulted from the Kentucky Baptist Convention's missions partnership with Brazil.
- Pray for all of the volunteer teams that are participating in Spring Break missions projects.
- Pray that God will provide a Southern region prayer coordinator for Operation Bended Knee.

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

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

- **BUFFALO**—Buffalo Church will hold revival services April 5, 11 a.m. & 7 p.m.; April 6-8, 7 p.m., with **Curtis McGehee**, pastor of Mercer Church in Central City, as evangelist. **Rodney Troutman** is pastor.
- **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Saloma Church will host a Maundy Thursday communion service April 9, 7:30 p.m.
- **DANVILLE**—Willow Grove Church will host **The Anchormen Quartet** in concert April 4, 6 p.m. **Chris Blevins** is pastor.
- **FRANKFORT**—Crestwood Church will present the musical "Raise the Crown" April 5, 6 p.m.; April 6, 7 p.m. **Wallace Kent** is pastor.
- **PRINCETON**—Caldwell Blue Spring Church will hold revival services April 6-9 with **Kennon Roark**, pastor of Salt Gum Church in Scalf, as evangelist. **Patrick Yates** is pastor.
- **SONORA**—First Church will hold revival services April 5, 11 a.m. & 7 p.m.; April 6-8, 7 p.m., with **Kenny Marr** as evangelist. **Wally Mantooth** is pastor.

Spotlight on ...

Campbellsville



Campbellsville University's Piano Ensemble, directed by music professor **Wesley Roberts**, will hold its spring concert April 6, 8 p.m. at the school's Gheens Recital Hall. The university also will host singer/songwriter **Buzz Cason** in concert April 7, 8 p.m., at the Gheens Hall. Cason is an author, publisher and recently was appointed as a Campbellsville trustee. Both events are free and open to the public. For more information, call the School of Music at (270) 789-5237.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April

- 3-5 Collegiate Leadership Training Conference, Cedarmore Conference Center, Bagdad.
- 4 RA Congress Region 5, Macedonia Baptist Church, Dry Ridge.
- 14 Iron Sharpening Iron, Mr. B's Pizza and Wings, Henderson.
- 16 Iron Sharpening Iron, Georgetown College.
- 17-18 4:GO, Central Baptist Church, Corbin.
- 17-18 Exalt, Central Baptist Church, Corbin.
- 18 Get Small, Georgetown College.
- 20 Senior Living Celebration, Zion Baptist Church, Henderson.
- 20 Iron Sharpening Iron, Jenny Wiley State Resort Park, Prestonsburg.
- 21 Understanding Other Beliefs, Casky Baptist Church, Hopkinsville.

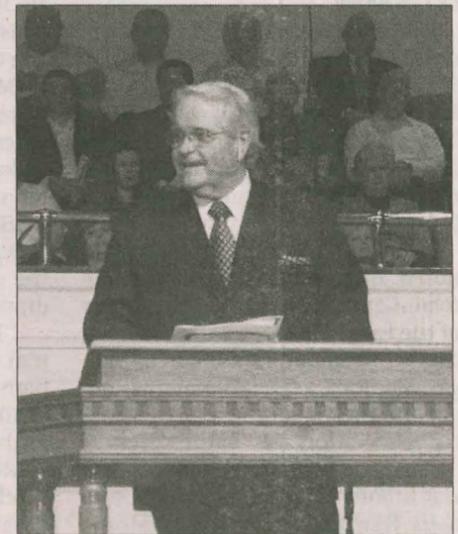
- 21 Senior Living Celebration, Rich Pond Baptist Church, Bowling Green.
- 21 Developing & Managing People, Baptist Building, Louisville.
- 21 Launch One, Memorial Baptist Church, Murray.

May

- 1-3 Equestrian Trail Ride, Mammoth Cave National Park.
- 1 Children's Bible Drill, First Baptist Church, Somerset, and Reidland Baptist Church, Paducah.
- 2 Children's Bible Drill, First Baptist Church, Bowling Green, and First Baptist Church, Madisonville.
- 4-5 KBC Mission Board Meeting, Cedarmore Conference Center, Bagdad.
- 6-8 DOM Leadership Event, Cedarmore Conference Center, Bagdad.

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

Florence Baptist dedicates new \$15 million facility



NEW FACILITY Above: Pastor Tim Alexander leads the members of Florence Baptist Church in a litany of dedication for their new 95,000-square-foot facility March 22. **Left:** Completed at an estimated construction cost of \$15 million, the new facility includes a 1,700-seat worship center, fellowship hall, 24 adult classrooms, eight student classrooms and a preschool and children's wing. The Kentucky Baptist Convention intends to hold its annual meeting at Florence Baptist Church in 2011. (Photos by Todd Deaton)

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Petrey Memorial Baptist Church in Hazard, Ky. Send resumé, along with tape or DVD, to Pastor Search Team, 141 Alto St., Hazard, KY 41701. www.petreymemorial.org.

SEEKING: Part-time campus pastor for the Franklin campus of Woodburn Baptist Church in Franklin, Ky. Primary responsibilities involve leadership in pastoral care ministry, worship, proclamation and Christian education. Complete job description may be downloaded from www.woodburnbaptist.org. Submit cover letter and resumé via mail to Personnel Committee, Woodburn Baptist Church, PO Box 38, Woodburn, KY 42170; or via e-mail to warrenweeks@woodburnbaptist.org before April 17, 2009.

SEEKING: Senior pastor for First Baptist Church, Grayson, Ky. Send resumé, along with tape or DVD, to Pulpit Committee, PO Box 577, Grayson, KY 41143.

SEEKING: Minister of music and youth. For info, visit www.oakstreetchurch.net; or call (423) 332-2300.

SEEKING: Part-time music minister for Audubon Baptist Church. Responsible for blended style congregational worship and choir direction. Only mailed resúmes will be accepted; mail to Linda Owen, 3205 Broeck Pointe Circle, Louisville, KY 40241. All resúmes must be post-marked by May 18, 2009.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Gap Creek Missionary Baptist Church, a conservative member of Cumberland Gap Baptist Association in Claiborne County, Tenn. Experience is preferred. Gap Creek has an active membership of over 300 and is growing. If possible, send a CD or DVD of sermons along with a resumé to Gap Creek Baptist Church, PO Box 177, Arthur, TN 37707, Attn: Troy Poore. You may e-mail resumé to troypoore@hotmail.com; or fax to (423) 869-8777.

CLASSIFIED ADS

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SEEKING: Senior pastor with character described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, has a Master's degree from a Southern Baptist seminary, has a minimum of 5 years full-time pastoral experience, and is approximately 35 to 50 years of age for growing church. Please send resumé plus a non-returnable video, CD or DVD to the Pastor Search Committee, Kings Baptist Church, PO Box 380, Mt. Washington, KY 40047. For more info, check the church's Web site: www.kingsbaptist.net.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music for First Baptist Church, Hazard, Ky. Send resumé to FBC, 560 Main St., Hazard, KY 41701; or e-mail to hazardfbcpastor@windstream.net.

SEEKING: Full-time individual to coordinate and minister to youth (grades 6-12) at Eubank Baptist Church, Eubank, Ky. This individual also will assist pastor in other pastoral duties. Interested individuals are encouraged to submit resúmes. E-mail: Shelby.Reynolds@eubankbaptist.org. Church phone: (606) 379-2122.

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

SEEKING: Interim director of missions for Campbell County Baptist Association in LaFollette, Tenn. Please send resúmes to: Interim DOM Search Committee, CCBA, PO Box 162, Jacksboro, TN 37757, Attn: Gary Hatmaker. Resúmes will be accepted until April 15, 2009.

SEEKING: Senior pastor. Calvary Baptist Church of Princeton, Ky., led by its Pulpit Committee, is seeking the leader God has already chosen for His church. If God has spoken to you, please send a resumé and/or a DVD to: Pulpit Committee, 121 Kentucky Avenue, Princeton, KY 42445.

SEEKING: Full-time, Christ-centered worship arts minister for First Baptist Church, Hodgenville. Master's degree and experience in worship arts-related church required. More info at www.fbc.hodgenville.org. Mail resumé to 730 Tonieville Road, Hodgenville, KY 42748; or e-mail to sally@fbc.hodgenville.org.



RECLAIMED PRAISE Andrew Pressley, a student at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, leads worship at Leavell Chapel with Kimberly Merida. Pressley and Merida are part of a new worship project that offers resources to congregations. (NOBTS photo by Boyd Guy)

Students' 'Praise Project' offers worship resources

By Paul South
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

New Orleans—Many recording artists release albums with a single goal in mind: to sell CDs. But for New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary student Andrew Pressley and his fellow musicians, the release of "Reclaimed Praise Project" is more spiritually inspired.

Pressley points specifically to the Apostle Paul's encouraging words to the churches at Ephesus and Colosse.

"Paul encourages us to sing 'psalms, hymns and spiritual songs,'" said Pressley, a Greenville, S.C., native, quoting Colossians 3:16.

Thus, the first Reclaimed Praise album focuses on the Psalms.

The project includes much more than just arranging songs and recording a CD. Pressley and company also offer a Web site filled with free resources. The site, www.ReclaimedPraise.com, provides lead sheets, chord charts and other resources to help worship leaders share the songs with their congregations.

"The purpose of the Web site is to offer resources. The CD supplements those resources, rather than the resources supplementing the CD," Pressley said. "The purpose is to get the songs out for people to use in worship rather than to sell CDs."

Early on, Pressley said he wanted to record his own material. Instead, he opted to partner with other musicians, many of whom have ties to New Orleans Seminary. The musicians on the tracks include Bill Nesbit, Jason Britt, Kimberly Merida, Courtney Veasey, Jason Wagner, Daniel Savage and Stephanie Screen.

Nesbit, a New Orleans native, adds a jazz feel to some of the tracks, Pressley pointed out. Most perform as part of the worship team at the seminary's chapel services.

"I opened it up to some others, and they stepped up to the plate

and provided some really good stuff," Pressley noted. "There's a big variety on the CD. If it was just my stuff, it probably would have been pretty similar throughout. Bringing other people's take on the Psalms was a helpful thing."

The Reclaimed Praise Web site notes the historically inconsistent treatment Christian groups have given the Psalms. Part of the purpose of the project is to reinvigorate Psalms for contemporary use in worship.

Reclaimed Praise also seeks to strike a balance between contemporary worship and traditional hymns, Pressley explained. That balance is meant to appeal to a diverse set of worshippers and reflect the diversity of creation.

"We hope that we found a pretty good balance," he said. "Some of the songs can be done with just piano or piano and organ. Some of them really need a rhythm section and others don't. We hope that eventually there will be a lot of different styles on the Web site that will communicate the diversity in God's creation and in our expressions of worship."

The recording process offered its own set of challenges, Pressley added. For ensemble recordings, all the musicians usually record together. In the case of Reclaimed Praise, individual musicians were recorded as they were available. Sessions were held anywhere from living rooms to buildings at New Orleans Seminary campus. For the musicians, it was a learn-as-you-go process.

"The trick for us was just to have a general idea of how the songs were to go from the beginning. Really they developed as we recorded them," Pressley said. "The whole point of this CD was to get the ball rolling on the Reclaimed Praise project and to have something in print so that we were committed to doing the project. Now that there is a little bit of interest in the project, we hope to be more polished the next time around." (BP)

Boyce College student proclaims biblical doctrine through hip-hop

By David Roach

Louisville—What do English Puritan John Owen, pastor John Piper and theologian Wayne Grudem have in common with rap music?

This trio of theological heavyweights inspired Marcus Williams Gray to write and record a Grammy-nominated album of hip-hop songs that communicate gospel truths.

Gray, also known as Christian rapper FLAME, is a student at Boyce College, the undergraduate school of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. He has broken into the world of rap music with a style that is as potent as it is unusual within the genre: sound biblical doctrine.

On the surface, the two seem a discordant mix—the violence and sex-saturated ethos of hip-hop music and the otherworldly ethos of biblical Christianity—but FLAME has wed the two in a way that is proclaiming the gospel on a bold new frontier.

"A lot of people say, 'That music is of the devil,'" Gray said of rap. "Well, I agree. The message can definitely be demonic or anti-Christ. But the power in rap music in and of itself is massive. So when you take the gospel message and you marry it to rap music, it's a dynamic that can't be duplicated."

Gray's latest album, "Our World Redeemed," translates the Reformed theology of Owen, Piper and Grudem into a musical study of redemption. The album was nominated for a Grammy in the Best Rock or Rap Gospel Album category and has many people listening to the gospel who would not otherwise be interested.

"When people, especially those who love rap music, when they hear Christian rap, it's just an automatic respect if the quality is good," Gray, a biblical counseling major, said. "People stop in their tracks and they lend you an ear. It's almost like Mars Hill, the Areopagus. It's just this marketplace where people want to hear your ideas."

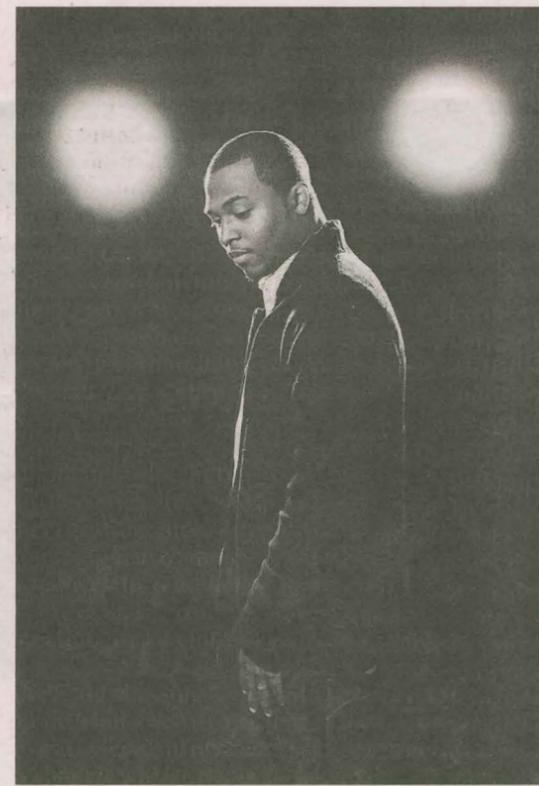
Though he is careful not to equate rap with preaching, Gray said the Holy Spirit has used rap to convert sinners to faith in Christ.

"When they hear relevant metaphors and similes that are from the culture but are affiliated with God's Word and the Bible, it's just a wonderful tool in the hands of God," he acknowledged. "And I've seen so many people, I've just seen their jaws drop and I've seen the Holy Spirit dig inside of their heart and start to remove that stony heart. And they hear the gospel through rap music."

Growing up in the inner city of St. Louis, Gray was influenced by hip-hop culture from a young age. He started rapping in fifth grade, addressing positive and benign topics. But as he aged, Gray turned darker both in his music and his lifestyle. Gangs, drugs and a party atmosphere—the more standard elements commonly associated with the hip-hop lifestyle—became fixtures of his life.

At age 16, God got his attention: A car accident involving an 18-wheeler nearly took Gray's life. When he asked his grandmother why God allowed the accident to happen, she told him God was trying to catch his attention. A week and a half later his grandmother died, and Gray felt broken.

When a friend invited him to church, the gos-



'FIRE IN HIS BONES' FLAME, aka Marcus Williams Gray, who wrote and recorded a Grammy-nominated album of hip-hop tunes that communicate gospel truths, is a student at Boyce College, the undergraduate school of Southern Seminary in Louisville.

pel captivated him.

"When I heard the gospel, I just wept because (I realized) the purpose for which God created me: to worship Him," Gray recalled. "Hearing the gospel and His love for sinners and the call to repent—all of that just kind of gripped my heart."

"It was through that experience I remember just shedding tears, man, and asking the Lord to forgive me for all the things I had done in my past and at that point in my present. And He saved me."

Immediately God began removing vices from Gray's life. He said he recognized that "the Lord was changing me and cleaning me up."

As part of his devotional life, Gray wrote raps to God and sang to Him during quiet times. Though he had no plans to become a recording artist, Gray said he began to listen to other Christian rappers and realized the potential power of the medium for ministry. Through a series of providential encounters, he began producing albums.

Among the topics his music has addressed are the Trinity, hermeneutics, the fall of man and the false teaching of the prosperity gospel.

Though he gained the name FLAME before becoming a Christian, Gray said it now describes the "fire in his bones" to spread God's Word.

"People can get a full and a broad perspective of the whole counsel of God in one album," he noted. "You take 74 minutes, and you can flesh out the whole counsel of God and people can get a short synopsis of the entire Bible in 74 minutes. So it's a powerful platform." (BP)

Fans to have say in 2009 Dove Awards

Nashville—For the first time, fans will get to vote for Artist of the Year and New Artist of the Year for the Gospel Music Association's 40th annual Dove Awards.

Nominees were recently announced and the show will be broadcast live from the Grand Ole Opry House in Nashville April 23.

Fans can vote at www.DoveAwards.com and the cumulative fan vote will account for one-third of the total vote in those two categories.

The seven nominees for Artist of the Year are Casting Crowns, Steven Curtis Chapman, Fire-

flight, Marvin Sapp, Third Day, TobyMac and Chris Tomlin.

Tomlin, a three-time Male Vocalist of the Year, is the top nominee with seven nominations, including Song of the Year.

Natalie Grant and newcomer Francesca Battistelli each received five nominations, as did Casting Crowns.

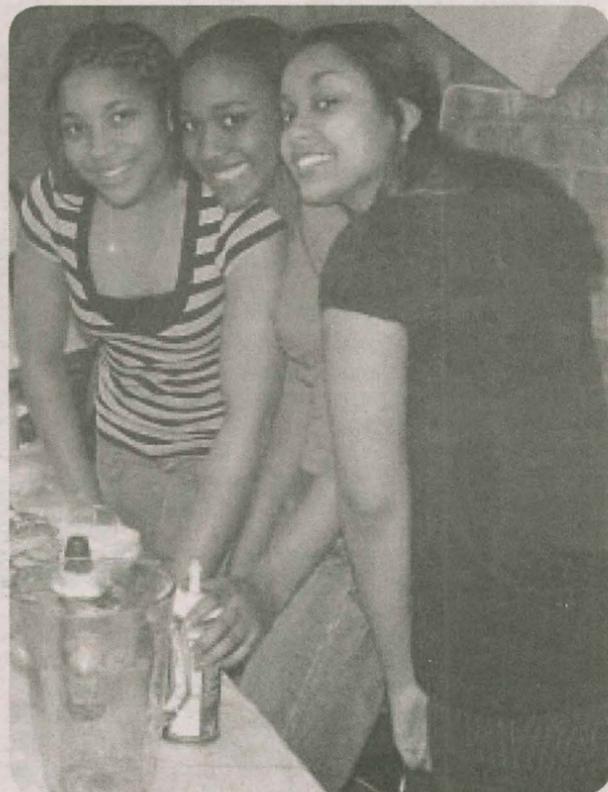
"Christian and gospel music expresses itself in many different ways and we applaud all nominated artists for their unique contributions to the music landscape," said GMA President John Styll.

WE CELEBRATE DIVERSITY EVERY DAY.



On average...

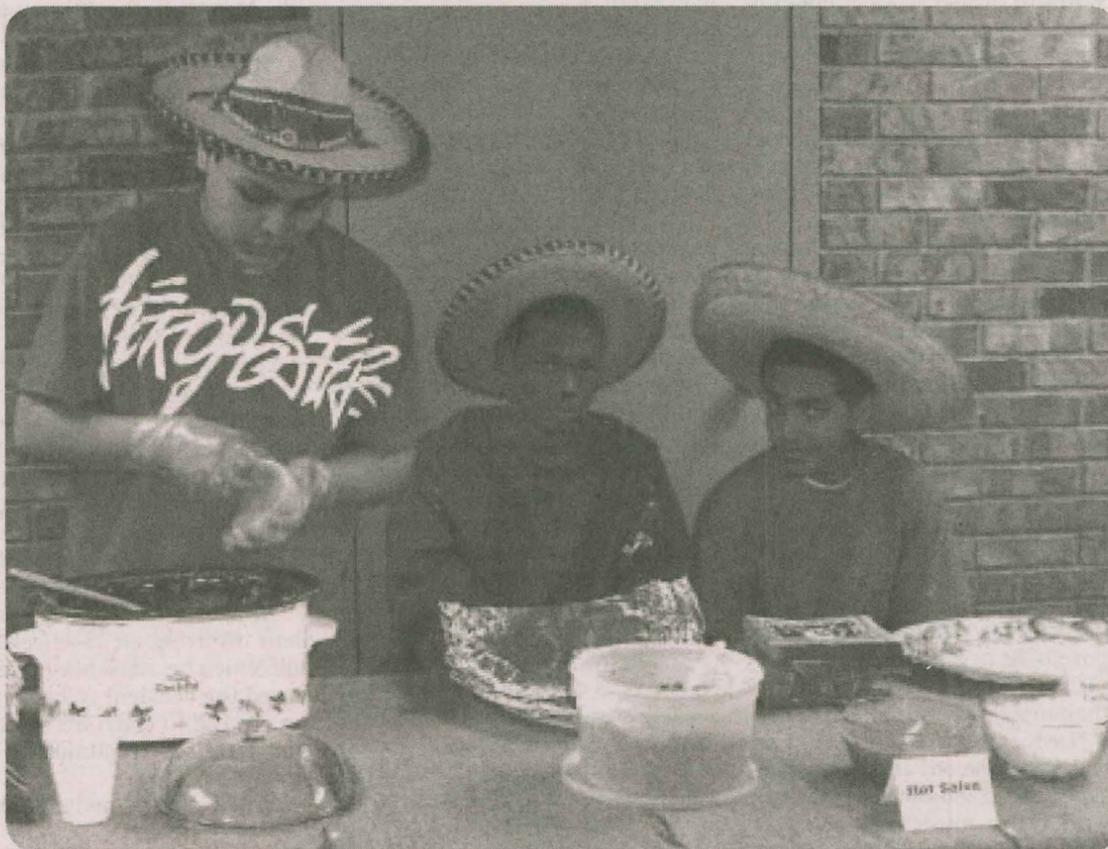
- 60% of our students are from Kentucky
- 25% are from other states
- 15-18% are international students
- 60% of our student body is Caucasian
- 40% are students of color, including many of our internationals
- 55% of our student body are boys
- 45% are girls



And each one is a gift God sends our way. Pray for us as we share Christ's love with young people from around the world.



Photos from 2009 OBI Culture Fair



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