

Shine  
like  
stars  
in the  
world  
Philippians 2:15

# WESTERN Recorder

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## FOR THE RECORD

**Kentucky**  
State church planters share vision for starting new churches. *Page 2.*

**Kentucky**  
University of the Cumberlands launches state church planting center. *Page 3.*

**Editorial**  
Will the Great Commission Resurgence statement make any real impact? *Page 4.*

**Financial Forum**  
Giving to the church in a depressed economy. *Page 5.*

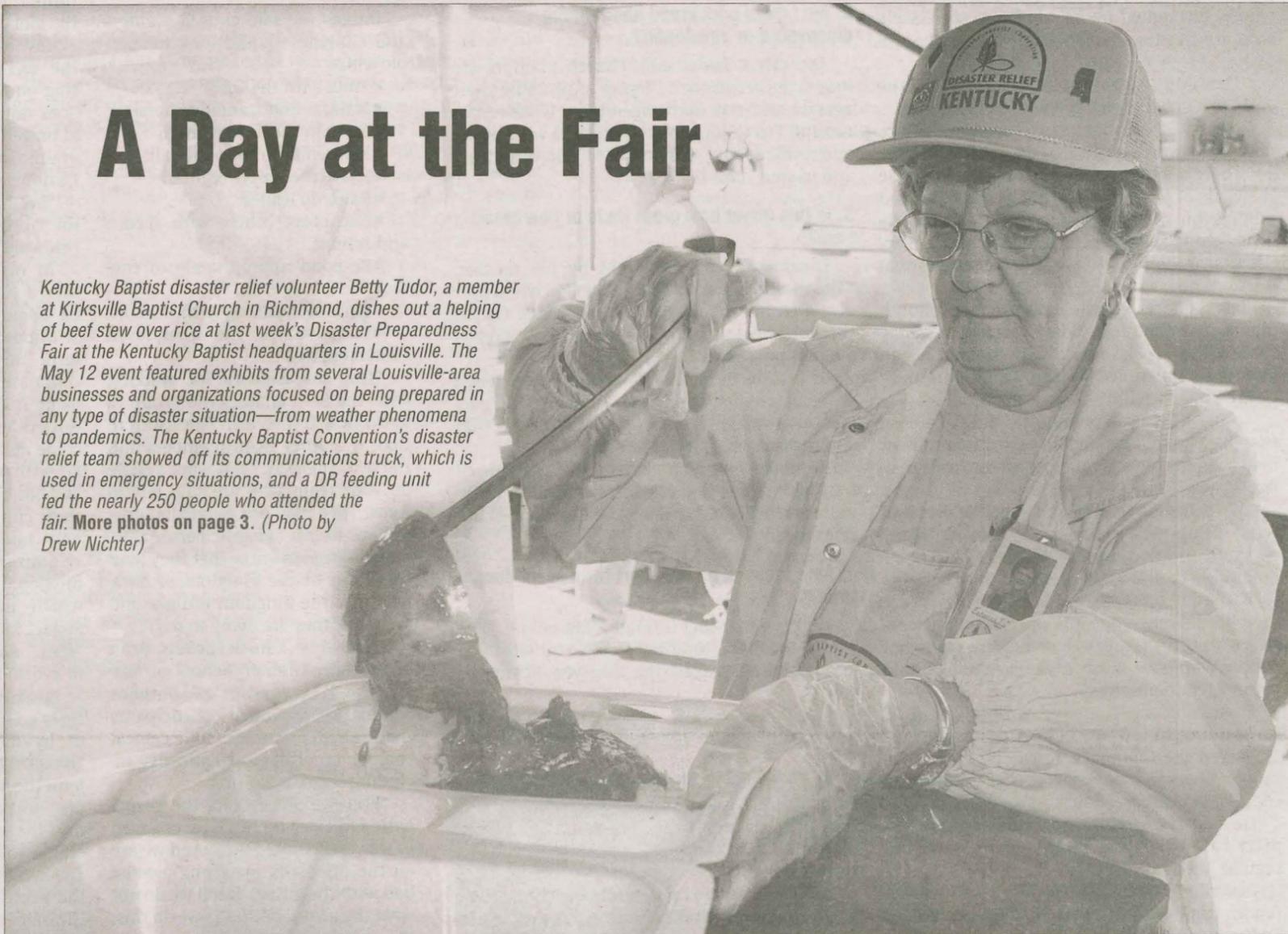
**Baptists**  
Pastor of Louisville's Highview Baptist to be nominated as SBC Pastors' Conference president. *Page 6.*

**Baptists**  
SBC President Hunt: Church is 'king' to bureaucracy's 'prince.' *Page 8.*

**Nation**  
Does the National Day of Prayer's political makeover imply Christians' waning impact in Washington? *Page 9.*

## A Day at the Fair

Kentucky Baptist disaster relief volunteer Betty Tudor, a member at Kirksville Baptist Church in Richmond, dishes out a helping of beef stew over rice at last week's Disaster Preparedness Fair at the Kentucky Baptist headquarters in Louisville. The May 12 event featured exhibits from several Louisville-area businesses and organizations focused on being prepared in any type of disaster situation—from weather phenomena to pandemics. The Kentucky Baptist Convention's disaster relief team showed off its communications truck, which is used in emergency situations, and a DR feeding unit fed the nearly 250 people who attended the fair. **More photos on page 3.** (Photo by Drew Nichter)



## Strong April giving to CP slightly trims sizable budget gap

Louisville—Cooperative Program receipts received in April exceeded \$2 million for the second time in the current fiscal year, and have narrowed the budget deficit to 3.26 percent.

Kentucky Baptists gave \$2,129,676 through CP last month, bringing the total dollars received to \$15,478,385 eight months into the 2008-09 fiscal year. That amount leaves the budget deficit at \$521,615.

The CP budget for the 2008-09 fiscal year is \$24 million. According to KBC's Business Services Team Leader Lowell Ashby, \$16 million was needed through April to stay on budget.

The April receipts accounted for the second highest month in the current fiscal year, surpassed only by the more than \$2.6 million received in January.

Despite strong receipts in April, CP giving remains behind last year's pace by \$422,817 (2.7 percent). Kentucky Baptists gave more than \$15.9 million through CP over the same period last year.

At the May 4-5 Mission Board meeting, Ashby reported that projections showed Cooperative Program receipts likely would fall short of the \$24 million budget by about \$1 million for this fiscal year.

## Southern Baptist leaders challenge young church planters at Louisville conference

Stetzer, Lawless, state pastors among featured speakers at last week's four-day gathering

By Garrett Wishall  
State Correspondent

Louisville—Every church and denomination is prone to an anti-missional mentality that must be combated for the sake of reaching the lost with the gospel, Ed Stetzer said last week at the Missional Church Planting conference in Louisville.

Dozens of students, church planters and church leaders learned from Stetzer and current and former pastors and church planters at the event, May 11-14 at Sojourn Community Church in Louisville. The conference was co-sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention and Campbellsville University.

Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research, warned all churches must guard against a tendency to become inwardly focused.

"The mission of God is supposed to drive us outward; it is supposed to drive us to serve. Churches and denominations that are thinking rightly have this focus," Stetzer, author of "Comeback Churches" and "Planting Missional Churches," told participants. "Over time though, the focus is increasingly shifted to what is going on in the church: the nursery, the children's ministry, etc. Instead of being a machine, we are now servicing the machine. This happens on the church level and the denominational level."

Several elements can feed the problem of churches not planting other churches, Stetzer noted, such as a large church mentality. "When it comes to church planting, big is not necessarily better ... The goal is not big, it is gospel transformation."

He said when it comes to church planting and missions, far too many churches have the mentality, "Pay, pray and get out of the way." Instead, church planting should be in the fabric of every church, he insisted.

"I would like for every church and every small group or class within that church, to adopt a people group that is unreached and adopt a church planter that is just getting started," Stetzer urged.

J.D. Payne, director of the Church Planting Center at Louisville's Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, identified eight characteristics to look for in potential members of a church planting team. Payne further develops these characteristics in his book, "The Barnabas Factors: Eight Essential Practices of Church Planting Team Members."

While many individuals plant churches on their own, Scripture presents a model of team planting, he explained.

"There are too many lone rangers out there and that is not helpful," Payne said. "Sure, God has used many people who have planted churches by themselves. The Lord does work through that. But I think that throughout the New Testament—particularly with the apostle Paul—the believers there worked as a team."

□ See State, national Baptist leaders ... *Page 2*

# State, national Baptist leaders encourage church planters

## Kentucky planters share vision for new churches

By Drew Nichter  
News Director

Louisville—"I see dead people."

That, of course, is the famous line from the hit movie "The Sixth Sense" about a young boy who is tormented by his ability to see people who are dead walking among those who are living.

"They don't know they're dead," he tells the child psychologist charged with helping him.

To Larry Baker, that scene embodies the lostness of the world today.

"There are many, many dead people outside the walls of this building that are walking and talking, but nevertheless, they are spiritually dead," said Baker, director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's new work and associational missions department.

Baker addressed the reasons why church plants are essential in today's world during day three of last week's four-day Missional Church Planting Conference at Sojourn Community Church in Louisville.

Lostness "is overcoming our state" and nation, Baker explained, adding that the problem may be even worse than most evangelicals realize.

"We believe ... that you must have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ," he said. "Many of those people who are labeled 'Christians' don't have that as a basic tenet of their belief."

Baker noted that many so-called believers are merely adherents—"people who have some contact with Christianity ... but they are really not people who have given their lives to God and committed themselves."

Discussing the numerous surveys and studies that look at lostness in North America, Baker lauded the Glenmary Research Center's Religious Congregations and Membership report that is compiled every 10 years.

He said the organization studies three primary categories: adherents, membership and regular attendance.

According to Baker, Glenmary's most recent report from 2000 showed that 53 percent of Kentucky's population had a connection with a church or religious group. Of that number, only 33 percent of bluegrass residents were members of a church. From there, Glenmary determined that only 12.5 percent of Kentuckians regularly attend church on a specified day of worship.

By the most liberal estimates, Baker suggested that at least 85 percent of Kentuckians are involved in a church. On top of that, he added, not everyone who is in church has made a profession of faith. "It's a gloomy picture."

Today, with Glenmary preparing to begin its 2010 study, Baker said he is concerned.

"What I think is that—and I pray I'm wrong—when they come out with the 2010 information, we're going to see we're in worse shape than we were in 2000," he noted.

That is why church planting is so important, Baker insisted.

"The church plant is the most evangelistic tool we have," he said. "Church plants can reach new people. They can reach lost people better than anybody."

Yet, before a church planter can lead a new work, he must know he has heard from God, according to Daniel Lucas, pastor of Crosspoint Church in Morehead.

Lucas, who planted Crosspoint in January 2008, led a breakout session addressing the five questions that all potential church planters must ask themselves before getting started:

### 1. How much time do you spend listening to God?

"Some of you all need to quit praying and start listening," Lucas urged.

There are many church plant success stories, but there are more that failed. "I don't under-

stand why God would initiate a movement in His name to advance His Kingdom to cause it to fail," Lucas observed. "I wonder if these people really are hearing from God."

### 2. Am I more concerned about being discovered or developed?

Too often, Lucas said, church planters are more concerned with "trying to promote their agenda and not God's agenda. ... If we're not careful, I'm telling you, we will fall with pride, and it will destroy the work of God in your heart and in your life."

### 3. Is this about how great He is or how great I am?

Lucas recalled being told by his mentor, "The most dangerous thing that God could ever give a church planter is success." Once that is thrown into the mix, "it becomes how great I am, not how great He is."

In just 16 months, Crosspoint has reached a weekly average attendance of nearly 500 people. Lucas said he is often asked, "What is it that you're doing that God is blessing?"

He noted four characteristics of the church that he believes God has blessed: radical faith, radical obedience, striving for excellence, and relevance.

### 4. Am I focused on the short term or the long term?

"Church planting is tough," Lucas said. "Are you in it for the long haul? You will be if you know God has called you and you heard His voice."

### 5. Am I allowing God to sow His vision into my life?

God's vision is bigger than yours, Lucas pointed out. "It's not about your church and your little tribe of Israel," he said, "it's bigger than that. (God) said, ... 'I want the nations to know who I am.'"

Lucas encouraged potential church planters to "do whatever it takes," as long as people are being saved.

"I don't want to pastor a church, I want to lead a movement of God," he said.

No matter what form a church plant takes, it is not "successful" unless it fulfills the Great Commission, said Keith Menshouse, pastor of LifeSong Church in Ashland.

"Jesus' definition of success was to reach and teach," Menshouse noted.

The church planter pointed out statistics from George Barna's research that indicates 81 percent of Kentucky's unchurched are de-churched—those who used to attend church, but no longer do.

Menshouse said there many barriers put up by traditional churches that church plants must avoid if they are to be successful. Doing that will develop "a genuinely open and inviting atmosphere" for those previously turned off by church, or those who never have attended.

Some of the methods Menshouse suggested include:

- Choose a site that is secular, not sacred.
- Think through every facet of your church plant from the viewpoint of a first-time visitor.
- Help people to be physically at ease, not comfortable.
- Use greeters, not guardians.
- Take the emphasis away from outward appearances in the way you dress.
- Create an atmosphere that is upbeat and expectant.
- Consider inviting people to follow Christ in ways that encourage the seeker process.
- Provide a safe zone for anonymity, such as auxiliary viewing areas and no "fellowship" time.
- Give people a reason to return.

Continued from page 1

Payne said in developing church planting teams, you need to refrain from using the "air-love test": If someone breathes in air and loves Jesus then they are automatically welcome on your church planting team.

Instead, he said church planters and churches should look for people who:

- Walk with the Lord.
- Maintain outstanding character.
- Serve in the local church.
- Remain faithful to the call.
- Share the gospel regularly.
- Raise up leaders.
- Encourage others with speech and actions.
- Respond appropriately to conflict.

Payne said walking with the Lord is foundational to the other seven characteristics.

"The characteristic of walking with the Lord enables the group to know how to live in relationship to God, the other team members and the lost," he said. "You want people on your team who are sold out to Jesus. They may not be in the lime-light or have a dynamic personality, but you need to know that they have come out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light and every day they are dying to self."

Meanwhile, Chuck Lawless, dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism at Southern Seminary, reminded participants that spiritual warfare is a central component of all gospel ministry, including church planting.

"Every time we share the gospel with a lost person, we have engaged in war," he pointed out. "And we are on the offensive, marching against hell with the gospel. But if we do not wear the armor of God as we do this, the enemy will shut us down before we ever get started."

The enemy of all believers, particularly those actively engaged in gospel ministry, is a spiritual one: the devil and his forces. Lawless said Paul makes this clear in Ephesians 6. The enemy's goals are simple: to cause Christians to mess up, give up and/or get puffed up.

"The enemy wants us to mess up: he wants us to fall into sin," Lawless, author of "Spiritual Warfare," noted. "If we fall into sin, we lose our

witness. Or, he wants us to give up: we are fighting for righteousness and trying to plant this church and nothing is working. Or he wants us to get puffed up: maybe God does bless your work and He is using you a mighty way. The enemy wants us to think it is about us instead of about the glory of God's name."

Lawless suggested combating the tactics of the enemy by putting on the full armor of God. This does not mean praying an "ethereal prayer" every morning, but by ingraining God's armor into one's life, he noted.

"We have to read the Word, love the Word and pray for each other in this war," he said.

In his fourth of eight sessions over a two-day period, Stetzer talked about redeveloping a missional mindset for North America. The term "missional" carries a variety of connotations, depending on who is using it and the context in which it is used. Stetzer said the word has become an "ecclesiological junk drawer" with people often using the word as a descriptor for what is lacking in their church: "We need to become more missional."

Stetzer based his definition of missional on the term "missio dei," which means "sending of God." Stetzer said to be missional is to live "sent," and being missional means to live on mission for God.

"God is a God who is on mission. He is a God who sends; He is a sender by nature," Stetzer explained. "Isaiah was sent by God and for God. John the Baptist was sent to bear witness to the One who would come into the world. Sent is used in reference to Jesus more than 40 times. The sending God sent His Son into the world to reconcile the world to Himself."

Those who will be church planters must have a vision from God to plant a church and where and how they should plant it. By vision, Stetzer said he does not mean hearing a voice from God, but instead knowing that God wants you to plant a church.

Stetzer said planters also must be willing to adjust the vision as they learn more about their ministry context. A vision should always exist to serve the advancement of the gospel, he noted.

## Pair of Kentucky teens earn national WMU missions honor

Birmingham, Ala.—Two young women from Kentucky were honored recently by the national Woman's Missionary Union for their strong involvement with missions.

Brandie Hagerman of Living Faith Baptist Church in Hartford, and Savannah Hines of South Fork Baptist Church in Hodgenville were among seven Acteens participants selected as 2009 National Top Teens by the Baptist women's organization.

Joining them as this year's Top Teens were Rachel Bond of West Side Baptist Church in Hamilton, Ohio; Megan Lee and Aman Majok, both of First Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas; Morgan Shepherd of Humble Area's First Baptist Church in



Brandie Hagerman



Savannah Hines

Humble, Texas; and Rebecca Wells of White Springs Baptist Church in Attalla, Ala.

Acteens is the WMU missions organization for teenage girls in grades seven through 12. (BP)

## Church planting center launches at Univ. of the Cumberlands

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

**Williamsburg**—A second Kentucky Baptist church planting center has commenced operations, with the newest aimed at supporting planters of High Impact churches.

The new center is part of the religion department at the University of the Cumberlands, which hosted an organizational meeting in late March. The meeting attracted nearly 20 people, including 7 of the 19 planters of High Impact churches in the state convention.

Part of the Kentucky Baptists Connect emphasis, these churches aim at reaching non-believers and those who have dropped out of church involvement.

In addition to the KBC investing \$100,000 in High Impact churches over three years, they receive additional support from established congregations. Each has a five-year attendance goal of 250 people.

Bob Dunston, chair of the university's religion and philosophy department, said the school is honored to provide a forum where planters can share ideas and discuss solutions to their challenges. Later this spring, it plans to post a Web site to improve communication and offer resources.

"We also hope to bring church planters and our students together so they can learn about planting High Impact churches," Dunston noted. "We had some students there who caught the contagious excitement for church planting. It's given me a broader vision of the work God has given us

to do in the world and what we can do to experience His Kingdom."

The Williamsburg program joins the state's other center, based at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. Its director, J.D. Payne, was the keynote speaker at the organizational meeting.

Although there is no official partnership between the two schools, Payne said Southern Seminary is interested in what Cumberlands is doing and discussing how the two schools can work together.

"Their efforts toward training their students as church planters have great potential to result in (Kingdom of God) expansion," Payne said. "Kentucky Baptist work throughout this state is likely to benefit greatly from their program."

The center emerged from discussions between Dunston; Rick Fleenor, the university's church relations director; David Aker, director of missions for South Union-Mount Zion Baptist Association; and Jason Hutchinson, pastor and planter of Mountain Community Fellowship in Paintsville.

### "Each one plant one"

Formerly mountain missions director for the KBC, Aker credited Hutchinson with the idea. He said the young pastor felt a need for fellowship, encouragement and sharing of ideas among church planters in Appalachia.

Part of the vision for the center is to highlight the need for an "each one plant one" mentality, Aker noted, which they

hope will spark missions across Eastern Kentucky and the region.

"I am thrilled this idea is coming to fruition," said Aker, whose bout with illness prevented him from attending the meeting. "It's gratifying to see Dr. Dunston give such dynamic leadership to this idea, and to see him work in (cooperation) with these planters and potential planters."

The center may be of great benefit to the South Union-Mount Zion Association, the DOM added, since it may be among those who receive new workers with a passion for developing missions.

The center plans to host two meetings a year, with the next one scheduled for Oct. 5-6 in Williamsburg. Trent Holbrook of Epoch Fellowship in Monterey and Tony Wright of River Pointe Church in Munfordville are helping to plan that session.

One possibility under discussion is arranging student internships through the North American Mission Board, possibly starting next year.

Steve Canter of NAMB's church planting group (and a 1997 Cumberlands graduate) said the agency maintains a student missionaries program that helps provide stipends and travel expenses.

Nearly 400 students are serving internships during the spring semester, with 140 in church planting roles.

Some interns already are working in High Impact churches. They come from Southern Seminary, Boyce Bible College and the state convention's collegiate min-

istry department.

"It's still in the process of being arranged," Canter said of internships for Cumberlands students, adding that the program helps students think strategically and benefits local churches.

### Unique program

While most Southern Baptist seminaries have a church planting emphasis through the Nehemiah Project—a cooperative venture with NAMB—there aren't that many centers elsewhere across the convention.

Those that do exist teach students to develop character, help them to learn to rely on the Holy Spirit and provide them insight in a new field, Canter pointed out.

"Most schools help develop people for traditional ministry, but not church planting," Canter said, adding that students who get instruction in the latter "are steps ahead of guys who don't."

Larry Baker, Kentucky Baptist Convention's director of new work and associational missions, was unable to attend the organizational meeting because of a prior commitment.

However, he said he hopes that the new center will have a positive impact on church planting in general, noting that High Impact starts only represent 10 percent of KBC congregations planted since 2005.

Baker said the convention hopes to see 25 High Impact churches in operation by the end of this year, and nine more formed during 2010-12.

## Disaster relief teams active in eastern counties

**Richmond**—Teams of Kentucky Baptist disaster relief volunteers have helped residents in Madison County recover from a tornado, and additional teams are aiding areas of Eastern Kentucky affected by recent floods.

KBC Disaster Relief Associate Coy Webb said more than 15 volunteers from Bates Creek Baptist Association recently served in Madison County after deploying May 9 to clear debris and complete chainsaw jobs. Several chaplain volunteers also served, he noted.

The Madison County effort wrapped up last Friday, Webb reported.

The KBC also is organizing relief efforts for areas of Eastern Kentucky affected by recent flooding. Webb said the KBC is targeting its efforts in Floyd, Owsley and Pike counties, where volunteers are assisting with mud-out and feeding. Units also are stationed in Floyd County and local volunteers are working in Jackson.

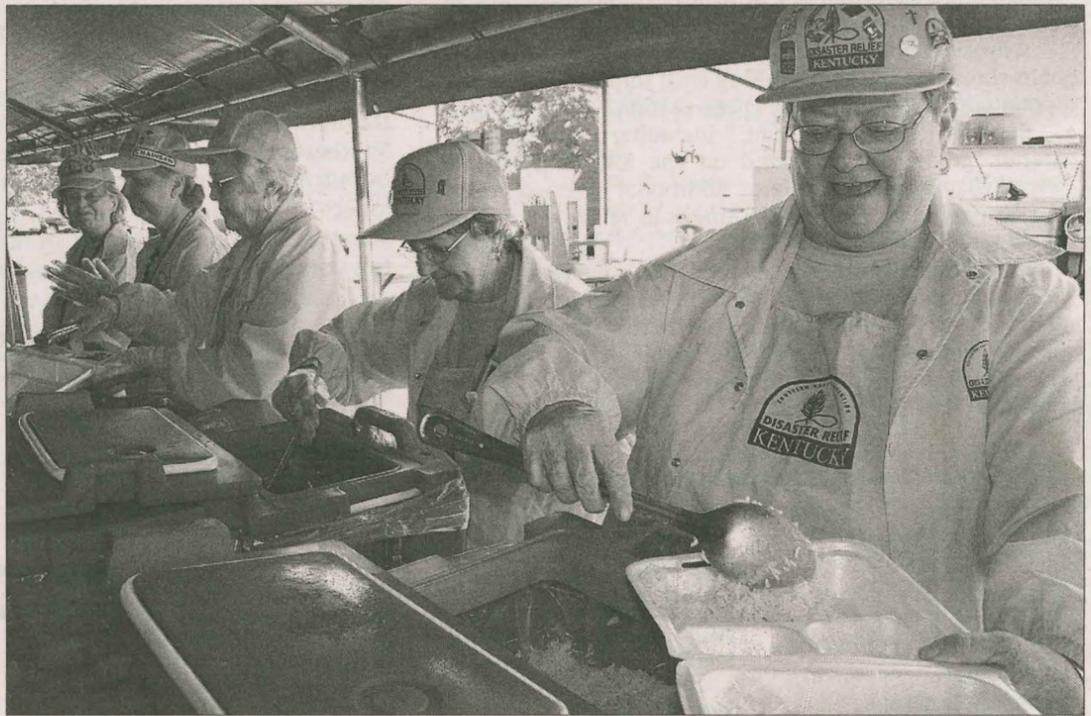
Volunteers serving in Madison County were stationed at First Baptist Church of Richmond. The Pike County team is based out of McVeigh Baptist Church, and Floyd County volunteers are stationed at Maytown Center in Langley.

Volunteers still are needed for the work in Eastern Kentucky. Contact the KBC Baptist Men on Mission office at (502) 489-3527, or toll free in Kentucky at (866) 489-3527.

## KBC's Disaster Preparedness Fair



**STORM CHASER** Kevin Harned, a meteorologist from WAVE-3 TV in Louisville, explains to fair participants how weather phenomena such as thunderstorms, tornados and ice storms occur, and the importance of being prepared for such events.



**Above:** Kentucky Baptist disaster relief volunteers keep the food line moving. They are (from right) Wilma Rhodes and Betty Tudor, both of Kirksville Baptist Church in Richmond; Frances Smith and Stella Coleman, both of Immanuel Baptist Church in Pikeville; Peggy Cable of Broadway Baptist Church in Lexington. **Below:** Rita Pate, (seated) owner of Practical Care and Elder Care Solutions in Louisville, talks with a pair of Disaster Preparedness Fair participants. (Photos by Drew Nichter)



**COMMAND CENTER** Disaster relief volunteers show off the Kentucky Baptist Convention's mobile Command & Communication unit. The trailer is designed to allow disaster relief workers to remain in constant contact with other relief agencies and teams while activated during disaster situations.



## Assoc. emphasis: 'Find It Here'

This is Associational Emphasis Week, which gives us a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the ministries of associations in partnership with the Kentucky Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention. The importance of associations is especially evident this year as they play a pivotal role in a national evangelism emphasis designed to deliver the gospel to every home in 2010.

### Partners in the Mission



By Bill Mackey

"Find It Here," an evangelistic campaign to reach 1.5 million households in Kentucky, is being conducted jointly and in close cooperation between local associations, the KBC and the North American Mission Board. It is part of the GPS (God's Plan for Sharing) strategy that NAMB is using to reach every home in North America with the gospel by 2020.

Through "Find It Here," associations will divide their geographic areas so that every street and home is assigned to a participating church. The church will then deliver a specially designed brochure in a plastic bag to each household just before Easter Sunday on April 4, 2010.

The brochure contains a gospel presentation based on an acrostic of the word "cross" and directs the reader to the FindItHere.com Web site for more information or to call a toll-free number where they can receive spiritual counseling. The brochure also has a mail response card that individuals can return to receive a free book or to request more information.

Each church also is encouraged to include in the bag an invitation to its Easter services and information about special events or ministries that would appeal to unchurched individuals.

The door-to-door gospel distribution will be supported by a national and state media campaign from March 6-21, 2010.

Beginning this fall, churches are encouraged to prepare for the gospel distribution and media campaign by prayer-walking their communities and providing witness training to members. This will be a great opportunity to equip the sower of the seed of the gospel. Each church member should understand and be able to discuss the gospel presentation being delivered and share a personal testimony.

A five-week follow-up emphasis also has been planned to help churches continue working with individuals who respond positively to the gospel presentation.

Resources for "Find It Here," including a church preparation guide, can be found on the KBC Web site at [www.KyBaptist.org/FindItHere](http://www.KyBaptist.org/FindItHere). Additional resources also are available from the North American Mission Board at [www.gps2020.net](http://www.gps2020.net).

I encourage you to get involved with your local association and encourage your church to become a partner in "Find It Here." If KBC churches partner in this emphasis, 30,000 to 40,000 volunteers could be mobilized for sowing the gospel and preparing to receive the harvest that God provides (Matthew 9:37-38).

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

## Will the GCR statement make any real impact?

Much has been made of the Great Commission Resurgence's call for streamlining the structures of the denomination's agencies, state conventions and associations since Southern Baptist Convention President Johnny Hunt released the declaration April 27. The document, which drew heavily from a chapel message by Southeastern Seminary President Daniel Akin, has been endorsed by key SBC leaders, four former SBC presidents and eight state convention presidents. Concern about implementation and the original document's harsh characterization of the SBC as "bloated and bureaucratic" led to a softer revision, which simply urges "more faithful stewardship of the funds entrusted them." Yet, if the Great Commission Resurgence's purpose is "so that we may be a more effective people to carry the good news of the gospel to the ends of the earth," then we may be missing the greater issue here: "Will the GCR make any real impact in the lives of Bob and Betty Baptist?"



### After Thought

By Todd Deaton

While much of the document appears primarily aimed at pastors and denominational leaders—with appeals for biblical inerrancy, the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message, sound biblical preaching, and methodological diversity—the GCR declaration issues several challenges specifically for God's people, encouraging them to be effective stewards, witnesses and servant leaders. Indeed, to reverse the trend of falling baptisms and church membership numbers, our main focus must be on equipping disciples, leading them to be more involved in missions and ministry. As the document aptly states, "Jesus Christ must be our passion and priority and we should aspire to both know Him and love Him more fully." Anything else and we have allowed ourselves to become distracted by peripheral issues that will cause us to "miss our most important priority and fail in all of our other pursuits." In this regard, the GCR declaration has much to offer Bob and Betty Baptist:

**Gospel-centeredness**—By making the gospel central in their lives, their churches and their ministries, Southern Baptists will promote a grace-filled salvation by putting on display the beauty of the gospel in every aspect of their lives. This allows the believer's life to shine for Christ in a dark and sinful world by jettisoning traditions, legalism, personal preferences and un-

helpful attitudes that push unbelievers away.

**The Great Commandments**—Our witness has been devastated when "many of us have lost some of our love for God and others somewhere along the way."

The GCR is a keen reminder that "if we are to love Jesus as we should, we will love sinners as we ought and pursue them as He did." Not only does this mean working toward racial reconciliation, but it also means being watchful in our relationships, guarding against pride, arrogance, jealousy, hatred, contentiousness, lying, selfish ambition, complacency and other

hurtful attitudes.

**Biblically healthy churches**—While warning Baptists to be wary of worldliness, faddishness, heterodoxy and arrogant sectarianism, the GCR asserts: "Mission is not a ministry of the church, but is at the heart of the church's identity and essence. We must encourage our churches to see themselves as the missionary bodies that they are." It further calls on church leaders to teach and model for Bob and Betty how to be missionaries in their community and vocations.

**Distinctively Christian families**—Parents are urged to build gospel-saturated homes in which children are seen as a gift from God and as a primary mission field. The GCR declares, "We believe that biblical truth is loved, taught, and lived out in healthy Christian homes. We believe that godly families cast a vision for spiritual greatness and equip every member, including children to live for God's glory and pursue great things for His name's sake." Indeed, every Christian home should be characterized by love, fun, service, humor, faith and fellowship.

Henry Blackaby is right on it: "If we want to have a resurgence in the Great Commission, there's got to be a refocusing on the priorities for Christ for discipleship" (see page 5). What impact will the Great Commission Resurgence statement have on Bob and Betty Baptist? Not much—if they perceive it to be the latest evangelism program or yet another attempt at rearranging the denomination's deckchairs. But it just might trigger increased baptisms and membership growth if Bob and Betty come to see it as a call to an authentic, vital relationship with the living Lord. For as Blackaby insists, "Anybody coming under the lordship of Christ, automatically has a God-given DNA to be on mission with the Lord to touch a lost world."

## Fishing for the Great Commission coin

By Ed Litton

In difficult economic times our minds naturally become focused on the top priority of the bottom line.

This is true in budgeting for a family, a business, a church and even for our Southern Baptist entities. I know that I am not alone in

my concern for the Cooperative Program and how it is impacted by this challenging economy.

The danger is that we can unintentionally lose our focus. It can be a subtle but powerful shift as we trim down, press the pause button and hold on tight, hoping for better times, not realizing that we now have a different focus.

The answer for a declining church budget and perhaps the endangered CP is not in merely cutting back or getting lean. Being forced to rethink our budget adds pressure, but it has an intrinsic value.

While observing His disciples under financial strain, Jesus tells Simon to Go fish! "... Go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours" (Matthew 17:27).

When His disciples were feeling real financial pressure Jesus told Peter to go fishing. Why not simply check beneath the cushions of His couch or pull the dresser away from the wall and find a forgotten coin?

Why fish? The disciples were called to be fishers of men and in their simple act of obedience to this first priority they found relief from the pressures that want and need bring.

Today, the coin still is in the fish's mouth. We are fishers of men, not economists or Wall Street deal-makers. We are called of God to fish for the souls of people.

In difficult economic times our mission remains unchanged. Jesus makes it plain that our supply is met in the obedient doing of His will.

The Great Commission lived out in the local church is the answer to a declining Cooperative Program. The coin still is in the fish's mouth.

If my church fills up with people who experience the transformational power of Jesus Christ through the word of God, our greatest challenge will be how to use an abundance of mission dollars.

The answer for our Southern Bap-

tist challenge also is found in the local church. Southern Baptists on the national, state and associational level may need to reorganize and downsize, but the local church must constantly hear our Lord and in simple obedience, rediscover her calling. We are fishers of men.

Remember, however, that the fish and not the coin remains the goal. If the coin becomes the goal, I will be tempted to hoard it. The supernatural supply flows from our obedience to the Lord Jesus.

The goal of Southern Baptists must be to encourage and help local churches in reaching the unsaved for Christ. Our best investment would be to send more resources to the mission and use the rest to encourage local congregations to be stronger fishers of people.

These tough economic times, social and moral upheaval and uncertain standing in the world have put most Americans in a place open to the influence of the gospel. Who then will throw the line into the water and witness the faithfulness of God? For God's people, that is the most important economic question. (BP)

Litton is pastor of First Baptist North Mobile in Saraland, Ala, and president of the 2009 Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference.

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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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## Giving in a depressed economy

By Doug Strader

For the past several months, all of us have been inundated with the bad economic news in the newspaper, on the radio and television, and from those who have lost their jobs. And the news does not seem to be getting better. In fact, we have learned that the economic downturn is global. What does this have to do with our churches? I certainly do not know all the answers, but there are some issues that we need to be dealing with as finance committees and churches.

In a recent issue of Christianity Today magazine, one article addressed a survey recently conducted about the economy and giving expectations for this calendar year. The survey found that most people still were planning to give as much this year as they did in the past. In fact, about 40 percent said that they were planning to give more than they did last year.

So what does all this mean to churches?

- Many Christians still are faithful to their financial giving to the Lord's work even in difficult economic times. However, we should not assume that we would not experience some budget shortfalls when the economic conditions are depressed.

- Finance committees should talk about their local economic landscapes and be ready to make adjustments in the disbursement of funds, especially if the local economy is depressed because of high unemployment conditions.

- If your church does not already have a financial plan in place, the finance committee should devise such a plan and present it to the church for approval if budget receipts fall short of the budget goal. Included in the plan would be a priority listing of the budget items that are to be paid if there is a budget shortfall.

- Churches always should be looking for ways to say "thank you" to those who financially support the Lord's work. Thanking people needs to be a priority when the economy is depressed.

- If you know of people who have a relevant testimony during economically hard times, it would be good to have them share a testimony in the worship service.

*Doug Strader, retired director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's stewardship department, is pastor of Farmdale Baptist Church in Louisville*



## Blackaby: 'Great Commission Resurgence' fueled by relationship

By Mark Kelly

If Southern Baptists want to see a "Great Commission Resurgence," Henry Blackaby believes they need to focus on the relationship between disciples and the living Lord Jesus, not launch a new emphasis on evangelism.

"I have felt for a long time that Southern Baptists have focused on evangelism and missed discipleship," Blackaby told Baptist Press. "The most important part of the Great Commission is 'teach them to practice everything I have commanded you.' That's discipleship and that's the heart of the Great Commission. If we want to have a resurgence in the Great Commission, there's got to be a refocusing on the priorities of Christ for discipleship."

Blackaby, a longtime pastor, college president and co-author of the "Experiencing God" series of Bible study materials, said declining baptism and membership statistics in the Southern Baptist Convention reflect not so much a lack of passion for Christ's command to make disciples as a lack of relationship with Jesus Christ.

"When you hear the Southern Baptist leadership being concerned about baptisms and all that, those are a byproduct of discipleship," Blackaby said. "When you lead a person ... into a relationship where Christ is Lord, everything else follows. You don't have to convince them they need to spend time in God's word or prayer or in the fellowship or on mission. That's a spontaneous response to a relationship to the living Lord."

Issuing a call for a resurgence of

commitment to the Great Commission triggers the wrong response in Christians who are focused on religious activity, rather than a relationship with Christ, Blackaby added.

"Southern Baptists are program-oriented. We are missing the relationship," Blackaby said. "When you make a statement like (that), the first thing most pastors look for is, 'What program's going to come down the pike to help me do that?' You don't need a program to help you do that. You just need the relationship to the living Lord."

### The reason for decline

Substituting activities for relationship also is why many churches are in decline or on a plateau, Blackaby said.

"We are not leading people into that immediate relationship with the living Lord. If you listen to most sermons, that intimate personal relationship is missing," Blackaby said. "If you talk to many church members, they feel they are in the right relationship to God when they attend all the worship services, they tithe, they go on a mission trip. And many a pastor would evaluate a member, not from the intimate relationship with the Lord, but for how faithful he is in all the activities of the church. And does he tithe?"

"It's activity. Many of God's people have moved from the relationship to religious activity," Blackaby added. "We are content to live without the manifest presence, power and activity of God."

Witnessing to the lost is supposed to be a spontaneous response to a relationship with Christ, not an

activity, Blackaby added.

The Bible "doesn't say, 'You are to do witnessing.' It says, 'You are witnesses unto Me,'" Blackaby said. "'Out of the relationship with Me, you will have an enormous witness unto Me.' If you're not doing it now just out of relationship to the Lord, don't look for a program that would help you do what you ought to be doing spontaneously."

### "The greatest single need"

What would most help Southern Baptists to experience renewed passion for the Great Commission is solid biblical teaching about Christ as head of the church, Blackaby contended.

"I would say the greatest single need is to return to the absolute lordship of Jesus Christ and all of the implications that come from that," Blackaby said. "If a church is in a spiritual mess, the only thing that can get them out of that is a good, solid biblical exposition that leads them into the deepest and most profound relationship with the living Lord."

When church members begin living in a vital relationship with Christ under His lordship, baptisms and membership growth will take care of themselves, Blackaby said.

"Anybody coming under the lordship of Christ automatically has a God-given DNA to be on mission with their Lord to touch a lost world," Blackaby said. "It's not a matter of trying to get our churches back on the program of the Great Commission, but rather into the relationship with the living Lord who is on mission in our world. (BP)"

## Church needs 'old-timey' revival, Anne Graham Lotz says

By Joni Hannigan  
Florida Baptist Witness

Anne Graham Lotz didn't really know what to think 12 years ago when it appeared her life was "unraveling."

Lotz's three children married within eight months of each other, her house was ravaged by a hurricane, her son was diagnosed with cancer, her mom experienced five life-threatening hospitalizations and her husband's 30-year dental practice burned to the ground.

"My cry to God was, 'I don't want to take a vacation and go and get rested and come back and hit the same mess. And I don't want to escape through drugs or alcohol.' I didn't even ask God for a miracle," Lotz said. "The cry of my heart was, 'Just give me Jesus.' I wanted a fresh touch from heaven."

In an interview before her "Just Give Me Jesus" revival in Jacksonville, Lotz told the Florida Baptist Witness it was at that point she was burdened to offer "Just Give Me Jesus" revivals because much of what is offered for women seemed "superficial."

"God opened my eyes and it was like,

'Anne, if you, Billy Graham's daughter, have a desperate need for a fresh touch from heaven, then maybe there are other women out there who do, too,'" Lotz said.

Lotz, founder of AnGeL Ministries, has held more than 30 revivals for women in the United States and internationally since 2000. Marked by almost stark simplicity, Lotz said the program is intentionally uncluttered.

"The pressures of life, our responsibilities, the things going on in the world, can be oppressive to your spirit," Lotz said. "Women have so much responsibility. Sometimes in our busyness, we don't mean to push God to the side, but we do because we are so busy and we succumb to the tyranny of the urgent."

One of the aims of the revival is to put the focus back on God's Word, Lotz said, recognizing that being a godly woman is not something

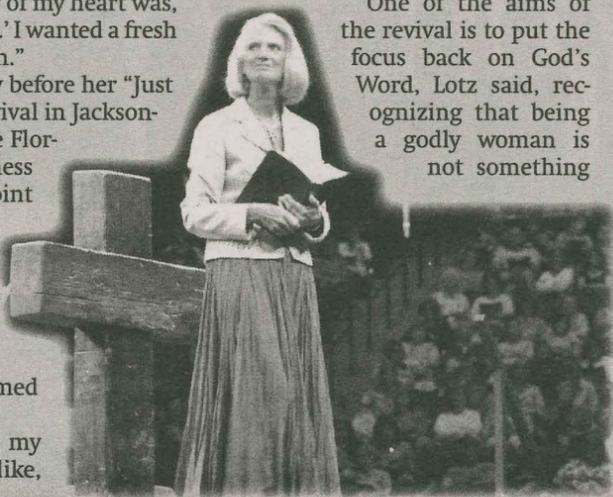
women should strive to be, but something that results when they are rooted in the Word.

"It can be a struggle if you are trying hard to be a godly woman, but if you are a godly woman, you're just being who you are. It's got to come from the inside out, and it has to come from a vibrant personal relationship with God," Lotz said.

Lotz, a Southern Baptist for 43 years—as long as she has been married to husband, Daniel—is a member of Southbridge Fellowship in Raleigh, N.C. The daughter of evangelist Billy Graham and Ruth Bell Graham, Lotz said although she was saved as a little girl, she believes God allowed her to experience certain situations so she could offer to other women the reassurance they can find Christ in a "fresh way."

Finding God in a fresh way, means the church—both men and women—needs to wake up and get back to the basics, she said.

"We need to experience old-timey revival," Lotz said. "We need to talk about hell. We need to talk about heaven. We need to talk about the fact that there's only one way to God and that's through faith in Jesus. We need to get back to some of the basics of the gospel and then God's call in our lives and how He would use us to reach a lost world." (BP)



## Leading while not following Jesus

By Scott Wigginton

**Q:** My husband of 10 years was baptized five years ago and has become a leader in our church. He is a deacon, serves on a number of committees, and people are always coming to him for advice. I do not understand how he can be so respected at church and still be such a jerk at home. He seldom has time for our children or me, spends late nights surfing the Internet on questionable sites, and constantly seems irritable. People at church see him as the ideal husband and father. What can I do?

**A:** Your husband's Christian commitment appears to be only skin deep. Assuming that his baptism five years ago followed a sincere conversion, it appears that there is significant incongruence between his stated spiritual commitment and his emotional immaturity. Simply said, he appears to be leading while not really following Jesus in the ways that would be transforming.

In "Emotionally Healthy Spirituality," Peter Scazzero states that "it is not possible for a Christian to be spiritually mature while remaining emotionally immature." Unfortunately, there are too many such inconsistencies among so-called Christian leaders today:

- Leading hundreds at church while being insecure, defensive and unteachable at home.
- Being a gifted speaker in public but unloving and uninvolved with one's family.
- Being outwardly cooperative and warm while secretly nursing grudges and plotting angrily behind the scenes.
- Spending hours counseling others while spending little time in the Word or prayer.

Pray for your husband and talk with him privately and respectfully about your concerns. Working out his salvation "with fear and trembling" will require that he first realize the truth of Jeremiah 17:9: "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick."

*Scott Wigginton is associate professor of pastoral ministries and counseling at Campbellsville University and minister of counseling at Campbellsville Baptist Church.*



## BAPTIST DIGEST

**Kan.-Neb. searching for new executive director**—The Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists has launched a search for its next executive director ahead of the impending retirement of Rex "Peck" Lindsay, who has led the convention since 1977. Steve Holdaway, the convention's president, said the executive director essentially is tasked with planning, coordinating, budgeting and communicating while leading the overall missions ministry of the two-state convention. Lindsay, meanwhile, will step down from the position later this year to pursue other ministry opportunities. Resumes may be e-mailed to Carol Moore at [cmoore@kncsb.org](mailto:cmoore@kncsb.org) before May 22.

**New SBTS program names director**—Esther Crookshank, Ollie Hale Chiles Professor of Church Music at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, has been named director of the seminary's new Academy of Sacred Music. Approved by trustees last month, the academy will serve as a think tank for the conservation of Christian hymnody and music by sponsoring lectures, performances, recitals and symposia along with other programs and initiatives. Seminary President Albert Mohler said the academy will help students to remain conversant with the rich musical and hymnological traditions of the church.

**N.C. church calls second female pastor**—A North Carolina Baptist church has called its second woman pastor. Providence Baptist Church in Hendersonville, N.C., a Cooperative Baptist Fellowship congregation, voted unanimously May 3 to call Julie Merritt Lee as pastor. Lee will begin in July. A 2005 graduate of Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary, Lee currently works as a pastoral resident at Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas. Many female ministers in moderate Baptist life run into what has been termed a "stained-glass ceiling" that blocks them from achieving the role of senior pastor. Providence Baptist Church is an exception; Gail Coulter became Providence's first pastor in 2002.

**WMU names Acteens panel**—Each year, Woman's Missionary Union recognizes a select group of Acteens to represent the missions organization and serve on a national panel. The following teens have been named to the 2009 National Acteens Panel: Kelly Burdett of First Baptist Church of Spring Hill, Tenn.; Mary Caitlin Clark of Galeed Baptist Church in Bladenboro, N.C.; Jessica Frasure of Glenrock Baptist Church in Fort Mill, S.C.; Kati Miinch and Larissa Petzoldt, both of First Baptist Church of Jackson, Mo.; and Sydney Saffel of First Baptist Church of Waverly, Tenn. The 2009 Acteens panelists serve from Feb. 1 to Dec. 31 and each receives a \$1,000 scholarship from the Jessica Powell Loftis Endowment for Acteens from the WMU Foundation. As national panelists, the young women will be featured during the WMU missions celebration and annual meeting in Louisville June 21-22, prior to the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting. Throughout the year, they will write articles for *The Mag*, the missions magazine for Acteens, and for the Acteens Web site. In addition, they will work together as a focus group to help shape the future of Acteens.

**Hunt, Litton encourage 40 days of prayer**—A prayer guide to lead Southern Baptists in 40 days of prayer for the upcoming Pastors' Conference and annual meeting now is available at [www.SBCPC.net](http://www.SBCPC.net). Southern Baptist Convention President Johnny Hunt and Ed Litton, president of the Pastors' Conference, are calling on Southern Baptists to prepare spiritually for the Louisville meetings with 40 days of prayer concluding June 20. The 40-Day prayer guide, along with other information about the Pastors' Conference, is located under the "Pray" tab at [www.SBCPC.net](http://www.SBCPC.net). Information about the SBC annual meeting is available at [www.SBCAnnualMeeting.net](http://www.SBCAnnualMeeting.net).

**Baptist groups in U.S., Canada form DR group**—Several Baptist denominations in the United States and Canada have established a formal disaster relief network to coordinate efforts among the various groups, according to a press release from Baptist World Alliance. BWA-supportive denominations in North America—including the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, American Baptist Churches USA, Canadian Baptist Ministries and the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc.—began close cooperation on disaster-relief efforts in the wake of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Officials in the denominations agreed to create a more permanent network in order to coordinate resource allocation and avoid duplication of efforts. It also will serve to coordinate planning for future disaster responses between the various denominations and fellowships.

## Louisville pastor Ezell to be nominated as SBC Pastors' Conference president

Louisville—Kevin Ezell, pastor of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, will be nominated as president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference during its June 21-22 meeting in Louisville, Florida pastor Hayes Wicker announced last week.

"Dr. Ezell is one of our finest young leaders and is biblically authentic and incredibly innovative," said Wicker, pastor of First Baptist Church of Naples, Fla., and 2007 Pastors' Conference president.

Adding that his daughter's family attends Highview, Wicker said, "My firsthand involvement with (Ezell) and his church helps me to have great confidence that he will lead us to experience renewal in an encouraging Pastors' Conference. He is a stellar example of the 'new breed' of balanced leaders."

Wicker said Ezell's heart for missions encompasses his birth in Germany into the family of an Air Force father; two children from China and Ethiopia among his five children; and his leadership in a "A Million for Missions" Highview initiative for global outreach.

Highview, in its proximity to



Kevin Ezell

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, adds to Ezell's ministry as a mentor and model who invests time and resources into interns, students and hurting pastors, Wicker explained. In Southern Baptist life, Ezell has served as chairman of the SBC's Committee on Committees and as chairman of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's board of trustees.

Regionally, Highview has seven campuses in three counties in Kentucky and Southern Indiana. Since he arrived at the church in 1996, Highview has nearly tripled its worship attendance and doubled in Sun-

day school, Wicker pointed out. The church is dually affiliated with both the Kentucky Baptist Convention and State Convention of Baptists in Indiana.

According to the 2008 Kentucky Baptist Annual Church Profile, Highview Baptist Church reported 128 baptisms and \$226,467 (3.5 percent) of undesignated receipts given through the Cooperative Program from total undesignated receipts of \$6,529,724. According to the ACP report, the church's total mission expenditures were \$1,112,514. Church administrator Chip Evans said Highview actually gave more than \$1.2 million to missions in 2008, and that a portion of those mission funds were given through the Kentucky and Indiana conventions.

Ezell, a native of Paducah, also has led churches in Illinois, Tennessee and Texas and is a graduate of Union University in Jackson, Tenn.; Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas; and Southern Seminary.

Ezell is the first announced nominee for the Pastors' Conference presidency. (BP)

## Missouri convention attempts to revive lawsuit

Camdenton, Mo.—The Missouri Baptist Convention will try once again to reclaim the land owned by Windermere Baptist Conference Center—as well as property the agency once owned—by amending and re-filing a lawsuit that was recently dismissed.

The move comes against another recently failed lawsuit in which the convention attempted to regain control of Windermere's trustee board.

On May 6, MBC attorneys filed a request to submit an amended version of a suit the convention originally filed against the center in Camden County, Mo., Circuit Court

in 2006. A judge dismissed that case April 9.

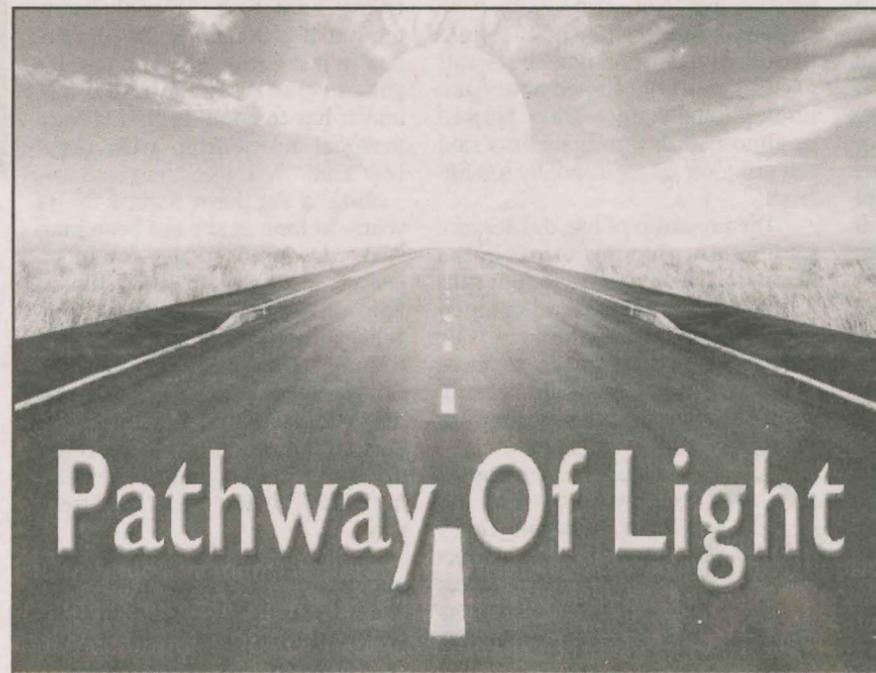
Under the state's court rules, the convention had two options—to appeal the judge's decision to a higher panel or to ask the lower court for permission to file an amended petition.

The amended petition in Camden County seeks return of 1,300 acres, which includes 943 acres Windermere transferred to a bank in late 2005 as part of a debt-restructuring plan. The bank sold the property to Windermere Development Co. Inc.

It also requests damages from former MBC executive director Jim Hill for breach of fiduciary duty. The convention claims Hill facilitated transfer of the Windermere property from the convention to the Windermere corporation in 2001 when the conference center incorporated itself separately from the convention after the convention approved the action. In the past, the center was governed by an MBC committee.

The revised case also requests a jury trial.

A hearing in the case is scheduled for June 9 in Camden County. (ABP)



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## Remembering someone special

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### Ky. Baptist Foundation



Barry Allen

Give KBF Trust Counsel Laurie Valentine and me the privilege of assisting you in your consideration. There are a variety of tax-wise giving methods available to you. In addition to cash gifts, gifts of appreciated securities and real estate have specific tax advantages. You may have a cash value life insurance policy, the original purpose for which you purchased it no longer exists. Gifts of life insurance also provide an excellent way to make a memorial gift and to receive a tax benefit.

A beneficiary designation of a retirement account also offers some important tax advantages. In fact, for those 70 and a half or older, there is a special window of opportunity in 2009 to make tax-free memorial gifts up to \$100,000 from IRA funds. A charitable gift annuity, charitable remainder trust and a bequest in your will also are ways to make memorial gifts at your death.

Call Laurie toll free for the details. Happy Memorial Day!

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

A memorial gift is a way for you to establish a legacy in memory of that special one and, at the same time, provide financial resources to one or more charitable organizations for the effective fulfillment of their missions.

As you approach Memorial Day, I encourage you to prayerfully consider making a memorial gift in honor of someone who was special in your life. Consider the focus of your gift to be a living memorial to further the mission of Christ through one or more of the organizations with which you and/or that special person have been affiliated.

## For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan



## Preacher's Kids

David Ayers

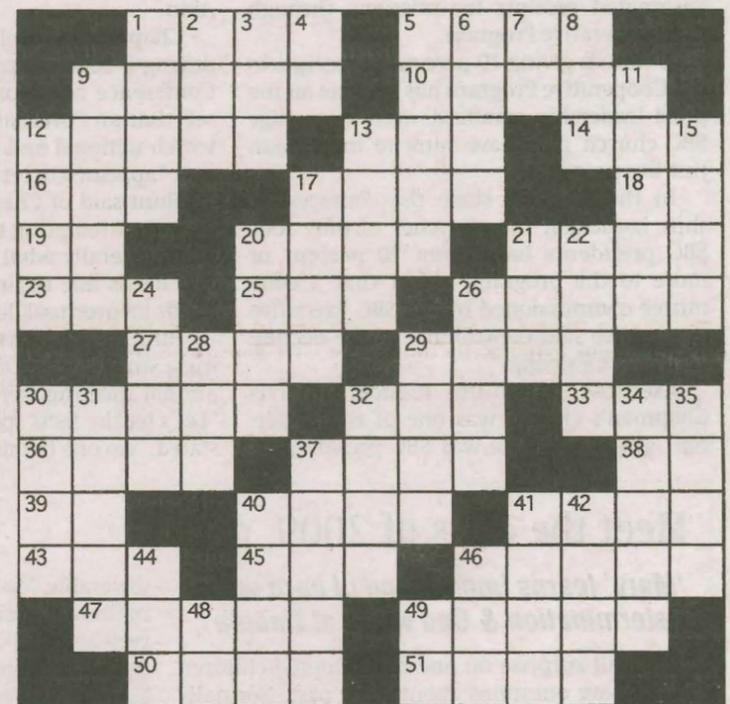


## Bible Crosswords

By Evelyn Boyington

### Across

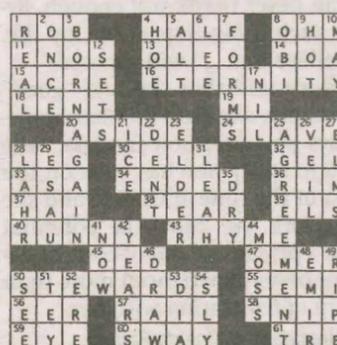
- 1 Spelunker's domain
- 5 "Out of his belly shall \_\_\_\_\_ rivers of living water" (John 7:38)
- 9 Majorette's must
- 10 "Ye are all children of \_\_\_\_\_" (1 Thessalonians 5:5)
- 12 Tendon
- 13 "I will come in to him, and will \_\_\_\_\_ with him" (Revelation 3:20)
- 14 At present
- 16 Chemical suffix
- 17 Off one's rocker
- 18 "There is none righteous, \_\_\_\_\_, not one" (Romans 3:10)
- 19 Biblical exclamation
- 20 \_\_\_\_\_ Western Reserve University
- 21 VCR button
- 23 "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the \_\_\_\_\_ of the world" (Matthew 28:20)
- 25 Orthopedists' org., and many others (abbr.)
- 26 "They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than \_\_\_\_\_" (2 Samuel 1:23)
- 27 Latest fad
- 29 "Yet \_\_\_\_\_ of you keepeth the law" (John 7:19)
- 30 Stock in trade
- 32 Family room, formerly
- 33 "A time to rend, and a time to \_\_\_\_\_" (Ecclesiastes 3:7)
- 36 Mammoth
- 37 Meat paste
- 38 Bar Harbor state (abbr.)
- 39 Preposition
- 40 "Dear \_\_\_\_\_:"
- 41 "\_\_\_\_\_ up the gift of God, which is in thee" (2 Timothy 1:6)



- 43 Summer, en Paris
- 45 Coop denizen
- 46 For \_\_\_\_\_!
- 47 Ancestor of Jesus; father of Achim (Matthew 1:14)
- 49 Tows away
- 50 Cantered
- 51 "The coast turneth to Ramah, and to the strong city \_\_\_\_\_" (Joshua 19:29)

- 21 "For the wages of \_\_\_\_\_ is death" (Romans 6:23)
- 22 Appendages
- 24 Bore (colloq.)
- 26 Unattached
- 28 Linking verb
- 29 "They straightway left their \_\_\_\_\_, and followed him" (Matthew 4:20)
- 30 If the \_\_\_\_\_ fits ...
- 31 Pursues with a vengeance
- 32 Mend a sock
- 34 "The \_\_\_\_\_ dwelt therein in times past, a people great" (Deuteronomy 2:10)
- 35 Existed
- 37 \_\_\_\_\_ de resistance
- 40 "Your feet \_\_\_\_\_ with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (Ephesians 6:15)
- 41 "Abraham journeyed ... and dwelled between Kadesh and \_\_\_\_\_" (Genesis 20:1)
- 42 "We spend our years as a \_\_\_\_\_ that is told" (Psalm 90:9)
- 44 What the high priest's servant lost in the Garden of Gethsemane, temporarily
- 46 Have one's \_\_\_\_\_
- 48 "Let him eschew evil, and \_\_\_\_\_ good" (1 Peter 3:11)
- 49 Kin to alt.

### Last week's solution



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## May is Foster Care Awareness Month

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## Great Commission Resurgence

## Hunt: Church is 'king' to bureaucracy's 'prince'

By Norman Jameson  
North Carolina Biblical Recorder

Woodstock, Ga.—Part of the reason Southern Baptist Convention President Johnny Hunt was ready to "shock the system" with a strongly worded call to a "Great Commission Resurgence" is that he and other leading Southern Baptist pastors feel a large denominational structure that depends on gifts from churches is not flexible enough to appreciate churches that sometimes do missions outside of that structure.

Hunt shared his feelings on a podcast conducted by Doug Baker, public relations director for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, and posted last week on the convention's Web site.

Hunt said in Baptist life, "the church is king," but "some in our denomination feel the church can be king in word only."

Hunt's congregation, First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Ga., gives millions to missions and has started numerous other churches. But he received criticism last year, when running for the SBC presidency, over Woodstock's giving just 2.2 percent of its undesignated receipts for missions through the Cooperative Program.

A church giving 10 percent of receipts to the Cooperative Program has become an implied leadership standard, even as average SBC church gifts have sunk to more than just five percent.

In the 30 years since the conservative shift launched, the churches of only four SBC presidents have given 10 percent or more to the program, a fact that a committee commissioned by the SBC Executive Committee said contributed to the decline of overall CP giving.

Executive Committee President Morris Chapman's church was one of the 10-percent givers when he was SBC president in

1991-92 and pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas.

"I feel sometimes ... that bureaucracy is speaking down to (the) church and holding us accountable, such as, 'Here's what Johnny Hunt gives through the Cooperative Program. Question mark. Would we want someone to lead who has no greater commitment to CP?'"

"There we have speaking down to the pastor. Now this is an opportunity for us to speak back up to the state and ask, 'What is fair?'" he said. "Should it be the church holding the denomination accountable ... or should they be holding us accountable?"

"If the church is king, anyone else that speaks to us is a prince speaking to the king."

Hunt emphasized that the 10 commitments called for in the Great Commission Resurgence document reflect "what we hear from grassroots pastors and grassroots leaders of local churches across America," and are not just his feelings and those of the document's primary author, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary President Danny Akin.

Chapman himself raised the possibility during a 2004 address at a Baptist Identity Conference at Union University in Tennessee that an "overhaul" of the processes by which national and state conventions function "appear(s) to be an absolute necessity."

Hunt said of Chapman's remarks, "I am literally attempting to lead the SBC to do literally, literally what he said. If he said the SBC needs fine tuning, let's tune it up. If it needs an overhaul, let's tune it up."

Hunt said he favors messengers approving a study committee during the 2009 SBC annual meeting, set for June in Louisville. "Let's let the facts speak for themselves," he stated. "No one in our denomination should

have to be afraid of what we discover if indeed we discover the facts. I want to know this denomination does a better job of serving the churches."

Hunt acknowledged Southern Baptists have more resources, pastors and churches than ever before, but the denomination's primary measure of effectiveness—baptisms—is at its lowest rate since 1972.

"We should be doing more," he insisted. "Why are we not? It's time to take a look."

He said "the church is king" and "we should be giving proper leadership to denominational staff" to "help us to experience the 'Great Commission resurgence.'"

Hunt expressed gratitude for state convention executives and "those in Nashville," home offices of the Executive Committee and several other SBC agencies, but wants accountability to begin at the local church. From there, he said, he wants a committee to study the national system of associations, state conventions and national agencies and institutions so Baptists can "do the best we can with what God has entrusted to us."

Hunt said he is not going to break fellowship over "non-essentials," adding that "a team from across denominational life" could "help us determine what are these first things."

Hunt admitted that some say his call for a Great Commission resurgence—particularly Article 9 of the manifesto, which refers to "commitment to a more effective convention structure" and a willingness to streamline at all levels—is threatening the SBC.

He said trust is "really missing in this denomination" and asked if either he or Akin had given any evidence that they would "desire anything other than God's best for the denomination."

"If Southern Baptists as a convention win, we all win," Hunt said. (ABP)

## Biker rally set for Memorial Day weekend in N.C.

Ridgecrest, N.C.—Christian motorcyclists from around the country are planning to converge on Ridgecrest Conference Center near Asheville, N.C., over the Memorial Day weekend, May 22-25.

Retired Lt. Col. Oliver North will be the featured speaker for the fourth edition of the annual rally, Sunday morning, May 24, according to Ron Pratt, national event planner for LifeWay Conference Centers. North is a former member of the U.S. National Security Council staff and served as the federal government's counter-terrorism coordinator from 1983-86. He now hosts a Fox News Channel documentary series, "War Stories with Oliver North."

Holding the event over Memorial Day weekend gives riders an opportunity to honor the sacrifice so many of America's military personnel have made to ensure the country's freedom, Pratt said. "That freedom guarantees our right to worship Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior."

In addition to North, speakers include Dave Burton, evangelism director for the Florida Baptist Convention, and Christian comedian Jeff Allen. Participants also will enjoy rides along the winding back roads of the Great Smoky Mountains.

More information about Rally to Ridgecrest is available from Ron Pratt at (615) 251-2065 and Ron.Pratt@LifeWay.com, or by visiting [www.LifeWay.com/MotorcycleRally](http://www.LifeWay.com/MotorcycleRally).

## Meet the class of 2009, part 5

## 'Mary' learns importance of hard work, determination &amp; God while at Oneida

It will surprise no one that adopted children often have questions about their past. Normally they don't know who their birth parents were, and there are lingering questions about why the parents stepped out of their lives. Some students have trouble navigating the emotional maze adoption presents.

"Mary" (not her real name) was in foster care before being adopted. Her new family provided the parents she needed and also three siblings. She experienced the normal bonding issues that many adopted children experience, but it appeared to her parents that she simply refused to bond with the family. Her mother told us that Mary was "hanging out with the wrong crowd, having chronic arguments, resisting structure, is a negative influence on the other siblings, lies and has trouble making friends."

When we interviewed Mary, she admitted to most of the things her parents had told us. She also said that on a scale of one to 10—one being lowest and 10 the highest—when it came to getting along with her parents she gave her father a "6" and her mother a "4.5."

Mary admitted to "slamming doors, throwing things, pushed mom once and would often scream." When asked about her goals for coming to Oneida, Mary indicated better study habits and learning to control her anger. She was not as excited as we would have liked her to be about coming to OBI, but she agreed to give it a try. Here is part of her senior essay:

Before "I enrolled at Oneida ... I had 'good' grades (and) lots of friends. ... However, ... I was

miserable. My home life was getting worse. ... One night my parents and I started arguing and (it) got very heated. I ... went to my room and didn't come out until morning. Three weeks later, my parents asked me if I wanted to 'try' a boarding school. After much thought, I said, 'Yes.'

"Being at Oneida has been a journey. I have not only seen how with hard work, determination and God you can achieve anything, I've actually done it myself. I realize that I have changed while at Oneida. I've also come to realize that not everyone is meant to go to college. When I was a junior, my parents told me that I may not be ready for college and I immediately yelled at them saying that of course I was. Now, a year later, I've decided that they were right."

"Oneida has not only helped to prepare me for my future, it also helped me settle my past. I've always had a horrible temper. But I've learned to control it better and I've learned to appreciate others."

I appreciate everyone's support and their dedication to not only me, but also to the other students. To the faculty, I can never thank you enough. Everyone has made such a big impact on my life. Thanks to you, I believe that ... I will succeed."

Even though Mary said that she had "good" grades at her old school, she didn't do her homework, didn't always pay attention in class, talked a lot and hated to study. She has been on the 'B' honor roll most of the time at Oneida and she does her homework. We know the potential has been there for episodes of out-of-control behavior, but we have never experienced more than the normal amount of frustration with her.

W.F. Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, Box 67, Oneida, KY 40972; [www.oneidaschool.org](http://www.oneidaschool.org); e-mail: [president@oneidaschool.org](mailto:president@oneidaschool.org)

## This is Oneida



W.F. Underwood

## In his own words

## Graduating senior Catron offers one final goodbye

Our seniors conduct the last chapel service of each academic year. The following words are from senior Nick Catron from Monticello who shared some final thoughts about his graduation from Clear Creek during the senior chapel service.

"This is a long-awaited day for me and a day I will never forget. It's a day that a part of me dreads because my time here at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College has been some of the best times of my life."

"My mind goes back to the year 2002 when I first started taking classes at an extension center that Clear Creek started in Monticello. The classes were actually taught through a video system where we could see each other and actually talk back and forth to the professor who was in Pineville."

"It was a wonderful opportunity and God began to use that class to draw me to the campus as a full-time student. ... It was the beginning of my walk with Clear Creek that would last for seven years and be fulfilled with my graduation today."

"When I came to Clear Creek I had in mind that I was going to be a missionary to Poland. Just two

years later, though, God would lead me to another area of ministry to prepare to serve as a pastor of a local church. So, I changed to a pastoral major. Now here I stand about five years later and I have been serving as a pastor of a local church now for almost a year.

"I will always cherish the countless times at Clear Creek when people have literally taken me by the hand and led me to the prayer chapel to pray for my family and some of the struggles we were facing at the time."

"God is in this place, but He has not called us to stay here as students. He has called us to go out and share the Good News of Jesus Christ."

"I look forward to my graduation but I do not look forward to missing the friends and fellowship that I have gained over these seven years."

"Thank you Clear Creek faculty, staff and fellow students—I love you with all my heart."

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

## Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

## Does Day of Prayer's political makeover imply Christians' waning impact in D.C.?

By Adelle Banks

Washington—Evangelical leaders who gathered for the annual observance of the National Day of Prayer May 7 prayed for President Obama but criticized his decisions to not mark the day with a White House event or send a representative to their annual gathering.

Observers say the change of plans from previous years demonstrates that conservative Christians have less influence in the halls of Washington with a new Democratic administration. The Obama administration issued a proclamation instead of holding a public event.

"I am sad to say this morning that this is the first time since the year 2000 that there has not been a prayer service in the White House," said Shirley Dobson, leader of the National Day of Prayer Task Force and wife of Focus on the Family

founder James Dobson.

"I feel a void that the executive branch is not represented here."

In his proclamation, Obama said that American leaders like President Lincoln have long called the country to prayer. "Throughout our nation's history, Americans have come together in moments of great challenge and uncertainty to humble themselves in prayer," he said. "Let us also use this day to come together in a moment of peace and good will."

At a news conference May 7, White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs noted that while the president had chosen to publicly observe the day solely with the proclamation, "privately he'll pray as he does every day."

For the last eight years, President Bush had welcomed the Dobsons and other supporters to the East Room for a ceremony marking

the day. When the task force did not hear from the White House this year, they moved their Capitol Hill event, traditionally held in the afternoon, to a morning time slot.

"In many ways, it validates an assumption that a lot of evangelicals have felt over the last few months, which is they are not going to have as easy an entry to the halls of power in Washington as they have over the last eight years," said Michael Lindsay, assistant professor of sociology of Rice University in Houston.

While the change in prayer plans may reflect the ebb and flow that occurs when the White House changes political parties, it also may show that "culture warrior" evangelicals may be losing prominence while other religious groups may be gaining it.

Michael Cromartie, director of the Ethics and Public Policy Center's Evangelicals in Civic Life program, said he thinks evangelicals still have significant influence outside the Washington buildings equated with power.

"It's not declining influence as much as it is lack of access to the halls of power," he suggested. "Their numbers haven't gone down. It's just their access has gone down."

Far from leaving the scene, he predicted that evangelicals will regroup and continue to speak out on issues ranging from same-sex marriage to the next Supreme Court justice nominee. (RNS)



**LIMITED ACCESS**  
James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family, with his wife, Shirley Dobson, chair of the National Day of Prayer Task Force, speaks at a press conference in the Cannon House Building after a National Day of Prayer event May 7 in Washington. (RNS photo by David Jolkovski)

## President's 2010 budget calls for end to abstinence funding

Washington—President Obama's proposed budget for 2010 would eliminate federal funding for abstinence education programs in public schools, replacing them with so-called comprehensive sex education programs that promote the use of condoms and other contraceptives among the nation's teenagers.

Under the plan, released May 7, Obama would cut more than \$100 million in spending on abstinence-only education and create a new \$110 million "teen pregnancy prevention initiative." Another \$50 million would be directed to states for pregnancy prevention programs that rely on condoms.

Valerie Huber, executive director of the National Abstinence Education Association, told Baptist Press the new proposal does not make sense.

"As you know, teen births are starting to inch up again and (sexually transmitted disease) rates are continuing to be at an epidemic level for teens, with at least one in four teen girls having at least one STD," Huber said. "Why would we at this time in particular, take away anything that would provide teens with the skills to avoid that risk?"

A report from the Department of Health and Human Services in December noted that for every dollar being spent on abstinence education, \$4 was being spent on comprehensive sex education in the nation's public schools.

"What the president is suggesting is that we completely zero out the primary prevention approach and just add even more dollars for risk reduction or whatever you want to call it that has a pretty poor record for effectiveness," Huber said.

But, Huber insisted, local support for abstinence education will enable it to continue.

"The question is at what level. It will be very difficult for local and state governments that are already financially strapped to replace the funding that is currently being provided with these federal funds," she said.

The NAEA plans to continue meeting with members of Congress in an effort to see this portion of Obama's budget proposal defeated. (BP)

## Christian radio advertisements urge support for climate change legislation

Washington—Radio ads in eight states will encourage Christians to view climate change as both a moral issue and a matter of national security.

A media campaign by the American Values Network will saturate Christian radio stations in key congressional districts in Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Virginia and Ohio, according to Katie Paris, program and communications director for Faith in Public Life. The progressive group advocates for faith in the public square.

"This campaign provides a moral and national-security framework for supporting action on climate change, and it demonstrates that the faith and military communities will stand behind and encourage undecided members of Congress to support a climate bill that protects the most vulnerable and makes America more secure," she said in a conference call with reporters May 5.

Along with radio ads, the campaign includes e-mails to more than 5 million evangelicals and Catholics in four states.

"Security and our values are connected in this issue of climate change, because America is strong

when we remain true to our values," said Jim Ball, president of the Evangelical Environmental Network.

An ordained Baptist minister, Ball praised efforts by Reps. Heath Shuler (D-N.C.) and Tom Perriello (D-Va.) to work for legislation that reflects values of fairness, compassion and freedom.

Ball said compassion means "as a country we help those in need."

"Climate change will hit the poor and poor countries the hardest, and remaining true to the compassion within us means helping the most vulnerable adapt or cope with the consequences of climate change," he explained. "We are a compassionate people, and we should address this problem of climate change precisely because we are compassionate."

Ball said climate change is an issue of freedom because its impact on the poor "will rob them of opportunities to create better lives for themselves and their children."

"Overcoming global warming is the next great cause of freedom, and we need legislation that reflects these values," he said. (ABP)

## Christian Children's Fund drops 'Christian' from name

Richmond, Va.—Christian Children's Fund, an organization that helps needy children across the globe, has decided to change its name to ChildFund International as part of its plan to broaden its outreach.

"We are now part of an alliance of 12 organizations around the world who have the same goal of working to help deprived children in developing countries," said Anne Lynam Goddard, president of the Richmond, Va.-based charity. "All members of the alliance are taking on the same name, ChildFund."

Goddard acknowledged that "some people are concerned about the name change." But she said some supporters who have phoned and e-mailed the charity have welcomed the new name, saying it is more inclusive.

The charity was founded in 1938 by a Presbyterian minister and originally called China's Children Fund. One of the first organizations to offer "sponsorships" of individual children, it changed its name to Christian Children's Fund when it broadened its work beyond China. The name change will take effect July 1. (RNS)

Mississippi Baptist Minister to Host

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## PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Pray for the more than 4,000 families that have been displaced by flooding in Teresina, Brazil, in the state of Piauí, where the Kentucky Baptist Convention maintained a missions partnership from 2004-08.

■ Pray for Executive Secretary Moses Mboya as he leads the Baptist Convention of Tanzania.

■ Pray for the first-ever Baptist Convention of Tanzania building which currently is under construction with the help of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

■ Pray for the leadership training teams that will be traveling to Tanzania in July, August and September.

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

## MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **ASHLAND**—Central Church recently called **Darrell Clark** as interim pastor.

■ **GRAYSON**—Wilson Creek recently called **Joed Rice** as pastor. He previously was pastor at Central Church in Ashland.

■ **LONDON**—Liberty Church recently called **Larry O'Bryan** as pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Cloverleaf Church will host the **Toney Brothers Quartet** in concert May 24, 7 p.m. For more

information, call (502) 367-0218. **Geoffrey Lacefield** is pastor.

Highland Church recently called **Emily Hull** as minister to young adults. **Joe Phelps** is pastor.

■ **OWENSBORO**—Wing Avenue Church recently honored Pastor **Anthony Cobb** for his five years of service. The church also ordained **Zachary Dean** and **Joshua Johnson** as deacons.

## Campbellsville nursing graduates participate in pinning ceremony

By Joan McKinney  
Campbellsville University

**Campbellsville**—"So one final prayer, Lord, we send up to You tonight: Keep us beneath Your wings as we go to fight the good fight."

Tiffany Shaw, one of Campbellsville University's 18 nursing graduates, recited a poem she wrote titled "A Graduating Nurses' Prayer" during Campbellsville University's School of Nursing pinning ceremony May 7.

Pins were awarded and hands were blessed during the ceremony, which featured several presentations from students and members of the School of Nursing faculty.

"The pinning ceremony is a tradition that nursing schools observe to welcome the graduating students to the profession," said Beverly Rowland, interim dean of the nursing school. "When I place this pin on the students, they are no longer my student but my colleague. I hope that each student here knows the pride and warmth that I share with them tonight."

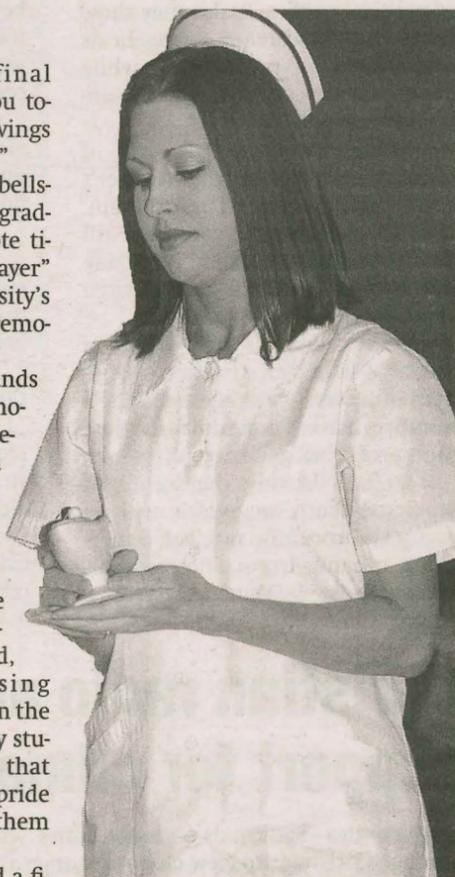
In her address, Brown issued a final "care plan," for her fellow nurses, saying, "We are a diverse group of individuals. We are wives, husbands, fiancés. We are new mothers, new fathers and someone's child; but above all of that we are caring compassionate nurses."

"We felt more like a family to each other than we did a class as the time went on," she continued, "and we learned that to get through this we needed to be able to lean on each other."

"As a class and as an individual I can proudly say that our class, the 2009 graduating class of Campbellsville University School of Nursing, has been there for each other. We have come a long way from the first day and I know that now as individuals we will go even further."

Brown also asked the nurse graduates to stand and applaud those who had helped them during their journey because "each of you out there is why each and every one of us is here. Without your kind words of encouragement (and) proofreading of papers, ... we could not have accomplished this."

Campbellsville President Michael Carter told the graduates that the university is "very proud of you." He discussed the history of the School of Nursing when planning began in 2001 with the late Tom Smith, a health care professional from Dan-



**LIGHTING THE WAY** *Casy Wimberly of Vine Grove waits to light her lamp during the recent pinning ceremony at Campbellsville's School of Nursing. (Campbellsville photo by Christina Miller)*

ville and member of the university's board of trustees, and the late Jerry Bennett, also a member of the board, who worked to get the nursing program started.

Carter announced at the ceremony that the nursing school building would be named in their honor.

### Hands blessed

James Jones, a special assistant for Campbellsville's Church Relations Council, blessed the hands of each graduate by anointing them with oil.

He told the students that as pastor of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Campbellsville, he often visits Taylor Regional Hospital. "Nurses, you don't realize how much a nurse means to patients. You are always blessed by God in one of the great professions in the world."

He urged the graduates to follow Jesus' teachings and healings and have a spirit of gentleness, compassion, courage, openness, understanding and respect.

"Your hands are an extension of the divine wisdom of God's healing," Jones said.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### June

6 Church Weekday Education Seminar, Crestwood Baptist Church, Crestwood.

13-20 Kentucky Changers, Princeton.

14-21 All-State Youth Choir/Orchestra Retreat & Tour, Campbellsville University.

15-19 Mission Adventure Camp for Girls, CedarCrest Camp, Bagdad.

19-20 Mother/Daughter Overnight, CedarCrest Camp, Bagdad.

22-26 Mission Adventure Camp for Girls, CedarCrest Camp, Bagdad.

25-27 Pursuit Student Leadership Academy, Campbellsville University.

26-27 Acteens Splash, Jonathan Creek Conference Center, Hardin.

26-27 Girls in Action Camp, Jonathan Creek Conference Center, Hardin.

26-27 Mother/Daughter Overnight, Jonathan Creek Conference Center, Hardin.

26-27 Catch the Excitement State Missions Event, Kentucky Speedway, Sparta.

27-7/4 Kentucky Changers, Frankfort/Lawrenceburg.

29-7/1 Express Mission Adventure Camp for Girls & Boys, CedarCrest Camp, Bagdad.

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

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**FOR RENT:** 2BR/2BA ground floor condo in Destin, Fla. Fully equipped kitchen, courtyard, carport. Across road from beach. Available: May 30-June 13; July 18-Sept. 16. (502) 396-8397.

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

**SEEKING:** Bivocational minister of music for Rosebower Baptist Church. If you are interested, please send resumé to: Search Committee, Rosebower Baptist Church, 1120 Tyree Road, Paducah, KY 42003.

**SEEKING:** Part-time ministry assistant for Victory Baptist Church, Lexington. Outstanding relational, organizational and general office skills. Need computer skills in communication, church information system and document production (Adobe InDesign experience preferred, not required). Position will begin in early June. Send resumé to [office@vbclex.org](mailto:office@vbclex.org) by May 26.

**SEEKING:** Pianist or organist for Central Baptist Church, Paris, Ky. Responsible for three Sunday services, Wednesday evening prayer meeting and worship choir rehearsal. Pay based on experience. Send resumé to: Central Baptist Church, 829 High Street, Paris, KY 40361, Attn: Rev. Matthew Crook; or e-mail to: [mattcbc@bellsouth.net](mailto:mattcbc@bellsouth.net). For more information, call (859) 987-3951, ext. 23.

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for Glens Creek Baptist Church in Versailles (bivocational pastor also would be considered). Please send resumé to Search Committee, Glens Creek Baptist Church, 4678 Steele Road, Versailles, KY 40383.

**SEEKING:** Full-time children's pastor to lead our loving and growing congregation in preschool and children's ministries to community and church families. Please send resumé to Children's Pastor Search Committee, Campbellsville Baptist Church, PO Box 530, Campbellsville, KY 42719; or e-mail to [BradL@cvillebaptist.com](mailto:BradL@cvillebaptist.com).

**SEEKING:** Part-time minister of music and worship. Experience in blended style with creative multi-media worship. Responsible for a comprehensive worship ministry that includes all ages, with a particular focus on leadership of large adult choir, as well as praise team and musicians. Applicant should possess the character, skills and personality to lead others in meaningful worship experience through a variety of ways. Westside Baptist (SBC) is a progressive congregation with average attendance of 500. Submit resumé before June 1, 2009, to 207 Robertson Road South, Murray, KY 42071.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister of youth and children for First Baptist Church, Prestonsburg, Ky. Send resumé to: Search Committee, First Baptist Church, PO Box 756, Prestonsburg, KY 41653. E-mail: [jcw8855@bellsouth.net](mailto:jcw8855@bellsouth.net).

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister of youth (7th-12th grades) for conservative SBC church. Ministry experience needed. Please e-mail your resumé to [fbchr@brick.net](mailto:fbchr@brick.net); or mail to 2735 High Ridge Blvd., High Ridge, MO 63049. [www.fellowshipbaptisthr.org](http://www.fellowshipbaptisthr.org).

**SEEKING:** Senior pastor for Steubenville Baptist Church, Monticello, Ky. Send resumé to Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 1553, Monticello, KY 42633; or e-mail resumé to [sbcpastorsearch@hotmail.com](mailto:sbcpastorsearch@hotmail.com).

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

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor with the capacity to preach sound biblical doctrine and cast a vision for a 1,000-plus-member church, as well as lead and mentor a highly capable, competent and motivated staff at Parkway Baptist Church, Bardstown, Ky. Please submit resumé to PO Box 755, Bardstown, KY 40004.

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## 'God can use kids'

### Girl inspires others toward missions

By Lisa Sergent

Springfield, Ill.—A mission trip to Africa by a 10-year-old girl inspired two Illinois Girls in Action members to collect more than 300 pairs of shoes for impoverished children in Zambia.

Ten-year-old Rebecca Stallard and her mother, Nancy, both members of Bethel Baptist Church in Troy, Ill., went to Zambia on a mission trip in the summer of 2007. The two led vacation Bible schools and shared Christ with orphans being helped by the Christian organization African Vision of Hope.

Their lack of what Americans see as basic necessities saddened Rebecca.

"I saw that I have so much, and

they have so little," she wrote in an e-mail. "It made me very grateful for all I have here in the States. It has made me want less stuff and to give them more."

She shared her missions experience with other girls at the Illinois Baptist State Association GA Day last October in Springfield. Rebecca's story about her trip made a big impression on Katie Bohnenstiehl and Avery Reed, both 10-year-old members of Sterling Baptist Church in Fairview Heights.

They were particularly struck by a story Rebecca told about a young Zambian boy who stood in line for two hours to get a pair of shoes only to find there were no boy's shoes left.

"She said he wanted shoes so

badly that he went and stood in the girls' shoe line and picked out a pair of bright pink shoes," Avery said. "That's how desperate he was for shoes."

Katie and Avery, the GA group's only members at the time, began talking with their GA leader, Gail Loesch, about ways they could help the children in Zambia.

"On their own initiative, the girls went to their school principal in November and asked if they could have a display at school for collecting shoes," Loesch said.

Permission was granted and they collected 318 pairs of new and gently worn children's shoes.

Their teacher was so inspired by the girls' efforts that she submitted their names to a program called "Do the Right Thing of Greater St. Louis," which recognizes children for their community contributions. The organization honored them for their efforts at a ceremony in St. Louis in January.

When their school collection site closed, the girls opened collection sites at their church, a Christian bookstore and a warehouse shopping club until African Vision of Hope shipped the shoes to Zambia.

Their mission project has taught the girls how God can use people of all ages to help others.

"If you have time and really want to help somebody, you can do anything and it can benefit people," Katie said. "Even if your friends don't think it's cool, you can do it, you can help people."

It's a message Rebecca said she hopes other children hear, too.

"God can use kids for sure," she said. "He has worked through me to talk to lots of GAs at camp and GA Day, and some of those girls got so excited about missions." (BP)



Ten-year-olds Avery Reed (right) and Katie Bohnenstiehl show the pairs of shoes they collected for needy children in Zambia. Their effort was inspired by the mission trip of another 10-year-old to Zambia. Alana Wiechert (center) recently joined their GA group at Sterling Baptist Church in Fairview Heights, Ill.

## Wheelchair no hindrance to ministry

By Gary Hardin  
The Alabama Baptist

Aliceville, Ala.—Peggy Gentry may be bound to a wheelchair, but her service to Christ knows no bounds.

"The Lord gave me a desire to go, and I just want to keep on going," said Gentry, who has been limited to her wheelchair since she was stricken with multiple sclerosis in 1970. MS is an incurable disease of the central nervous system that disrupts communication between the brain and other parts of the body. Most MS patients experience muscle weakness and difficulty with coordination and balance.

But physical affliction hasn't kept Gentry from staying faithful in her church attendance at First Baptist Church of Aliceville, Ala., and participating in mission trips to Thailand, Guatemala and Venezuela.

"Peggy and her wheelchair have gone all over the world for the cause of Christ. She has not allowed her physical limitations to hinder her," said Landon Williams, minister of music and youth at the church. "Sugar (a nickname given to Peggy by a grandson) never misses Sunday

school and worship. Never."

Gentry's husband, James, a retired physician and lifetime trustee of Judson College in Marion, Ala., shares his wife's commitment to missions. The couple has participated in numerous projects sponsored by Baptist Medical Dental Fellowship, an organization that coordinates dental and health-care missions domestically and internationally.

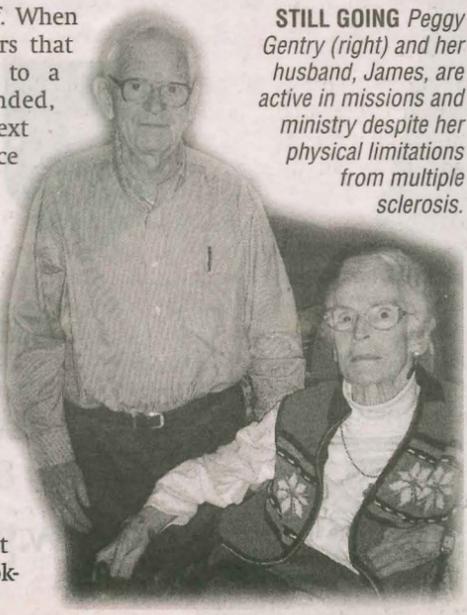
James participated in his first BMDF project by himself. When he shared with organizers that his wife was confined to a wheelchair, they responded, "Bring her with you the next time. We can find a place for someone in a wheelchair."

Though faced with unremitting hardship, Peggy set an example of determination. "Everywhere Peggy went, people marveled that she would come such a long distance in a wheelchair," James recalled. "She's made friends on every trip. People see things in Peggy that change their ways of looking at life."

The Gentrys' pastor, Charles Wilson, said Peggy's resolve to keep going is noteworthy and an example to others.

"She is the most faithful, committed and compassionate woman I have ever known," Wilson noted. "She has a heart for the local church and for the church triumphant, as well as a heart for missions. God's had Peggy's heart for a long time." (BP)

**STILL GOING** Peggy Gentry (right) and her husband, James, are active in missions and ministry despite her physical limitations from multiple sclerosis.



Michael Allen, pastor of Uptown Baptist Church in Chicago and a North American Mission Board missionary, prays with Denise Davis, chief of staff for a Chicago city alderman. (NAMB photo)

## Chicago's diversity makes for exciting mission field

By Mickey Noah  
North American Mission Board

Chicago—Michael Allen could have been the guy who comes to install or repair your computer. Originally, that was what he was trained to do.

Instead, his work today takes place in uptown Chicago, about a mile northeast of Wrigley Field's ivy-covered outfield wall. The church he serves as senior pastor, Uptown Baptist, is close to the corner of Sunnyside and Sheridan, or "Blood Alley"—famous locally for its unsolved murders, rapes, gangs and prostitution.

None of this deters Allen, who also has served as a North American Mission Board missionary the past three years.

"I like it here because it fits who I am, fits my journey and fits the vision that God has given me for my life," Allen said. "It allows me to be Jesus to so many different kinds of people."

It's hard to say what's more diverse in Allen's life—his ministry or his congregation.

When Allen is not preaching sermons and shepherding his multicultural flock of 180 at Uptown, he's leading a "Men's Fraternity" discipleship group for businessmen in downtown Chicago; overseeing a Monday night meal for up to 350 homeless men, women and children; directing a shelter for 50 women; managing a church staff of six; counseling; serving on the board of Pacific Garden Mission; and serving as moderator of the Baptist association of which Uptown is a member. And in his spare time, he and his wife, Marla, homeschool their four children.

"As pastor of Uptown, one day I can be in a suit and tie at a press conference with the mayor of Chicago and other movers and shakers, and later that day be on the street talking to somebody who just gave his girlfriend AIDS or to a drunk," Allen said.

"It's a powerful thing and an amazing thing," he said, getting choked up. "It's God at work changing people's lives, and I feel like a pawn on God's chess board. It's just remarkable to be His piece being moved into position wherever He wills, and

being available wherever He wants you on that board."

The Uptown area of the Windy City, like the church Allen leads, is diverse by any measure: ethnically, economically, educationally, gender, age.

"There must be at least 80 or 90 languages spoken in the public schools here in Uptown, so it's a fun place," Allen said. "There's not a dull or boring day in ministry, in business, in school or in government because of that diversity."

"There are still so many more ethnic groups out there that are not represented in our church right now. We might have 10 or 15 different ethnic groups in church on a Sunday morning," he said. "But there is much more to be done and we're just beginning."

*"It's a powerful thing and an amazing thing. It's God at work changing people's lives, and I feel like a pawn on God's chess board. It's just remarkable to be His piece being moved into position wherever He wills, and being available wherever He wants you on that board."*

Born in Jamaica, Allen grew up in a Christian home and accepted Christ in a Nazarene church at age 9. After earning a computer electronics degree and working as a technician in South Florida, he was called to the ministry as a member of First Baptist Church of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., in 1989. Allen holds a Bible degree from Trinity College in Miami, and a master of divinity degree from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Ill. He also has served as a staff member at Moody Church in Chicago and Sagemont Church, a Southern Baptist congregation in Houston.

Allen is one of more than 5,600 North American Missionaries supported by Southern Baptist gifts to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions and the Cooperative Program. (BP)

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