

Shine like stars in the world
Philippians 2:15

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FOR THE RECORD

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Much more than toys



Volunteers from South Gate Baptist Church in Springfield, Mo., inventory Christmas gifts for some of the hundreds of Eastern Kentucky residents served through God's Appalachian Partnership. The Floyd County ministry's warehouse has been busy this month, filled with volunteers hoping to make Christmas brighter for people in need. (Photos by Terry Carswell courtesy of God's Appalachian Partnership)

Union Baptist partners with Appalachian ministry to help teach children joy of giving

By Dannah Prather
Partnerships Editor

McDowell—It is a common sight this time of year. A child selects a pair of earrings or a sweater for Mom, but it's Dad who opens his wallet at the cash register.

Still, on Christmas Day, it is likely to be the child's name after the word "from" on the gift tag.

Some parents will say this little exercise helps children, perhaps those too young even for an allowance, begin to learn the important lesson: "It is better to give than to receive."

But what happens if Dad has no money in his wallet?

This year members of Northern Kentucky's Union Baptist Church expanded its ministry to the people of Eastern Kentucky by hosting a "Christmas store" where children were the shoppers.

More than 200 children whose



PATIENCE A boy waits to get help from Beth Victor, a member of Union Baptist Church, wrapping a Christmas present he has selected for one of his parents. Union Baptist recently provided a Christmas "store" at First Baptist Church of McDowell where children in need could choose Christmas gifts for their parents or guardians. More than 200 boys and girls served by God's Appalachian Partnership heard the Christmas story and then filed into the fellowship hall of the Floyd County church to practice the joy of giving.

families are assisted through God's Appalachian Partnership walked through the fellowship hall of McDowell Baptist Church recently, selecting gifts for their parents or guardians. Volunteers then helped

boys and girls wrap the presents.

Before the special guests began browsing, a volunteer shared the biblical story of Jesus' birth and why God sent His son to earth.

Children were excited to have the



IT'S PERFECT! Having just heard the story of Christ's birth, a girl chooses an ornament from among hundreds of items at a children's Christmas "store" held recently in McDowell. Members of Union Baptist Church donated or purchased about 800 gifts for the project.

opportunity to "shop" for their parents, said Pat Durham, children's minister at Union Baptist.

To the children "it didn't matter if it was a pair of earrings or some aftershave," she said. "That was the 'awesomest' gift that was ever out there."

Many children told volunteers, "My mom's going to be so proud," Durham added.

Twice a week, GAP opens its
□ See Oak GAP Christmas ... Page 3

ARM marks decade of service to Appalachia

By Carol Pipes
North American Mission Board

Hurricane, W.Va.—Winding roads and switchback curves punctuated by tiny hamlets mark the landscape of Appalachia—a 205,000-square-mile, mountainous stretch from Alabama to New York. The region covers all of West Virginia and parts of 11 other states, including 39 of the nation's 100 poorest counties.

The steep mountains and rugged roads have kept Appalachians isolated from the rest of the country and from outsiders' involvement in their lives, contributing to a distinct mountain culture.

It's been 44 years since Lyndon Johnson declared his "War on Poverty" from a ramshackle porch in Inez. Since then, the region has seen quite a bit of progress, but the

current economic crisis in the U.S. has made a tough situation worse. More and more families are finding it difficult to make ends meet. In Clay County, for example, the median income per household is less than \$21,000 a year, with 41.9 percent of the population living below the poverty line.

But hope comes in the form of food, clothing, missionaries and volunteer labor as Southern Baptists wrap their arms around Appalachia.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Appalachian Regional Ministry. Led by North American Mission Board missionary Bill Barker, ARM combines church planting, home repair, food pantries, clothing closets, evangelism, literacy and medical missions in an effort to

□ See Appalachian Regional Ministry has served ... Page 6

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, Dec. 23

Please Remember ...
The Western Recorder offices will be closed Dec. 24-25, 28-31, and Jan. 1. Look for our first issue of the new year Jan. 12. Merry Christmas from the Western Recorder staff.

Advisory committee: Lack of baptisms linked to faithfulness

By Drew Nichter
News Director

Louisville—After a five-year plan to increase baptisms in Kentucky Baptist churches fell considerably short of its goal, a state convention advisory committee recently reached a sobering conclusion.

"The bottom line is simply that we as Baptists are not being as faithful in sharing the gospel as we need to be," according to a final report submitted by the Mission Advisory Committee charged with overseeing the original Kentucky Baptists Connect initiative.

Still, "there is much to celebrate from our first five years of Kentucky Baptists Connect" and the emphasis "has had a very positive impact on Kingdom work in Kentucky," the report stated.

The committee presented its results to Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board members at their meeting last week in Louisville.

The initial five-year Connect plan, which started in 2004 and ended Aug. 31, was born out of a recommendation from the Mission Board in 2002 to study ministry needs, objectives and resources in order for KBC ministries "to be more effective in the 21st century."

The original emphasis laid out 16 goals within six objective areas: evangelism; missions; training leaders; networking; strengthening churches; and relationships with KBC agencies and institutions.

Last December, the KBC Mission Board approved a three-year extension of Kentucky Baptists Connect that began Sept. 1 and will run through 2012.

Mission Advisory Committee vice chair Chris White, who presented the final report

to the Mission Board, said the original five-year Connect plan presented some "fairly lofty goals."

No goal was more ambitious than that of baptizing 125,000 new members by Jan. 1, 2010—an average of 25,000 per year.

"The baptism area, as many of us are finding, remains very, very difficult," White told Mission Board members.

While 2008-09 numbers won't be available until next year, baptism totals from the first four years of the emphasis fell significantly short of the 25,000-baptism mark. The totals from those years are:

- 2004-05: 17,407.
- 2005-06: 17,820.
- 2006-07: 15,503.
- 2007-08: 15,815.

White said that throughout the five years, there were many activities and events held "to provide the best encouragement we could" for church leaders to increase baptisms. He noted the Super Saturday conferences, regional youth evangelism events and other workshops, many of which were hosted by the KBC or Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union.

But as the Mission Advisory Committee's report outlined, baptisms will not increase until Kentucky Baptists make sharing the gospel a "higher priority."

"The amount of training, coaching by Mission Board staff or evangelism programs will result in more baptisms until a significant number of us take seriously our Lord's commitment to go and make disciples," the report concluded.

While the area of evangelism may have been viewed as a disappointment, the missions objective proved to be a bright spot.

Among the goals was to launch 75 new



BOARD MEETING Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board members hear reports during last week's meeting at the Kentucky Baptist Building in Louisville. (KBC photo by Brenda Smith)

churches, including 25 High Impact congregations, and to start 50 "language church-type missions," all by Jan. 1, 2010.

According to the advisory committee's report, 284 churches were planted in Kentucky from 2005-09, including 21 High Impact churches and 117 ethnic congregations.

"The great news is the outreach and work here was so great, we had to change the goals," White said.

After reaching the original 75-church plant goal in 2008, that number was adjusted to 200, which also was surpassed.

In the four other Connect objective areas, the committee's report stated that most of the ministry goals were achieved by Aug. 31.

Despite hitting on most goals and missing on others, the Mission Advisory Committee's report said, "We have seen progress as a convention and our committee believes continuing to set 'God-sized' goals is merited as we put our trust in Him."

In other business:

■ The administrative committee of the KBC Mission Board approved the appointment of Larry Baker as interim leader of the KBC's missions growth team.

Baker will replace current team leader Randy Jones, who will retire from that position at year's end. Jones will start as director of missions for Oldham-Trimble Baptist Association Jan. 4.

Baker has served as director of new work and associational missions for the KBC since 2004. Previously, he was director of missions for Christian County Baptist Association and a Southern Baptist missionary to Peru and Ecuador.

The administrative committee also approved Jeffrey Gibson to serve as the part-time campus minister at Mid-Continent University in Mayfield.

Gibson, who is a graduate of Mid-Continent, currently serves as the school's director of spiritual life, spiritual activities and career services. He also holds a master's degree from Murray State University and is a member of Trinity Baptist Church in Paducah.

■ Mission Board members heard a report from KBC Communications Director Robert Reeves about the upcoming advertising campaign that will accompany the Find It Here evangelism push.

"As you all are going out as sort of the ground forces and delivering the bags and the brochures across the state next March, there will also be 'air' support for you," Reeves said.

More than \$100,000 will be spent on television and radio ads that will air statewide. The majority of the ads will run on local broadcast TV, Reeves noted. It will target about 85 percent of Kentucky's adult population, he added.

■ Mission Board members approved two

minor changes to the KBC's funding formula for Christian education.

Previously, 50 percent of the allotted Cooperative Program funds for Campbellsville University and University of the Cumberlands was divided equally among the two schools. The other 50 percent was divided based on the number of credit hours taken by the schools' students.

Mission Board members voted to eliminate the credit-hour stipulation and divide the second half of the monies equally.

Members also agreed to round the funding distribution percentages of the four KBC institutions to the nearest half percent.

The change primarily affects Clear Creek Baptist Bible College and Oneida Baptist Institute. Clear Creek's distribution percentage increases from 14.83 to 15 percent; Oneida's increases from 9.87 to 10 percent. Campbellsville and Cumberlands each receive a 37.5 percent distribution.

■ Mission Board members approved the distribution of \$435,000 in year-end funds from unspent budget funds, unspent salary/benefits and investment income. Major allocations included \$120,000 for replacement, repairs and capital improvements of Baptist Campus Ministry facilities; \$60,000 for partnership missions efforts; and \$25,000 for hi-definition video equipment for KBC's communications department.

Garrett, 63, served 25 years at Oneida Baptist Institute

Oneida—Gary Garrett, who served in several roles as a staff member at Oneida Baptist Institute, died Dec. 10. He was 63.

Garrett joined the Oneida staff as an assistant farm manager in 1984. During his 25 years at the boarding school, he also served as a houseparent and was the school's locksmith and night watchman for many years.

In his role as a houseparent, Garrett was "a dad, a grandpa, a listener, a medic, a counselor and a friend," Oneida President W.F. Underwood said.

"Gary was here for 25 years and I'd have loved to have had him for another 100 years," Underwood added. "He was so flexible. He was a very soft-spoken, thoughtful person. He always loved his kids."

Garrett is survived by his wife, Suzi, three children and four grandchildren.

Funeral services were held Dec. 14 at Oneida Baptist Church where Garrett was a member.

International missions permeates board meeting

By Drew Nichter
News Director

Louisville—In this season of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, international missions took center stage at last week's Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board meeting in Louisville.

Several Kentucky Baptist leaders lamented the anticipated reduction of the International Mission Board's missionary force by about 600 workers by the end of 2010.

The move is due to the global economic downturn, decreased Cooperative Program giving and a \$29 million shortfall in last year's Lottie Moon gifts.

"This crisis is not manufactured; it is real," said Paul Chitwood, pastor of First Baptist Church of Mount Washington and IMB chairman.

Comparing the IMB's position to the debate over withdrawing U.S. military forces from Afghanistan, Chitwood said the agency's 2010 budget "unfortunately has set a course of troop withdrawal from around the world."

Currently, there are about 5,700 Southern Baptist missionaries serving in 180 countries worldwide, Chitwood noted. By the end of next year, he said, that total will be closer to 5,100.

Chitwood and others implored Mission Board members to give sacrificially to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions.

"We pray that this will be an opportunity for Southern Baptists to respond in giving, and the trend will be reversed," KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey said.

In his remarks to the Mission Board, Howard Atkinson, director of missions

for West Union Baptist Association and a longtime Southern Baptist missionary, challenged Kentucky Baptists to step out on faith financially.

"I want to encourage you to give a week's salary" to the Lottie Moon offering, he urged.

Atkinson called on Mission Board members "to realize that you and I are going to be called upon by God to give an accounting of the stewardship of our influence."

He said if pastors gave a week's salary to the Lottie Moon offering, it would make a statement that could have a domino effect among church members.

"I don't think we can expect anybody in our churches to ever do more than we do," Atkinson noted.

As for the IMB, Chitwood offered an update on the presidential search process. Earlier this year, IMB President Jerry Rankin announced his retirement effective July 31, 2010.

Chitwood said the search committee still is collecting resumes and will begin sorting through them at its next meeting in January.

The committee's goal, he noted, is to bring a candidate to be voted on by trustees at their May 2010 meeting and introduce the new president the next month at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Orlando, Fla.

"I don't know if we'll make that timetable, but that's what we're working toward," Chitwood said.

He noted that the search committee still is accepting candidate suggestions from all Southern Baptists. To submit a name for consideration, visit www.IMB.org.

GAP Christmas ministries focus on holiday's true meaning

Continued from page 1

doors to provide food, clothing, personal-care products, cleaning supplies and other household necessities to families in need.

Union Baptist members already were faithful supporters, organizing quarterly donation drives, summer mission projects and serving each December as "personal shoppers" to some of the hundreds of parents seeking Christmas gifts for their children.

Those "personal shoppers" never arrive empty-handed, Durham said. Getting the mountain of donations to Floyd County usually requires a church van and perhaps a rental truck, she noted.

This year, the children of the church designated their vacation Bible school offering to the Christmas project, then the children's choir raised enough money to purchase 100 Bibles for families served by GAP.

Angie Wagoner, a Mission Service Corps missionary who directs the ministry with her husband, Lynn, said the children's version of the Christmas "store" was entirely the brainchild of the Union Baptist volunteers.

Such initiative and ongoing support could not have come at a better time for GAP, Wagoner noted. The ministry has been challenged to respond to the increased number of families seeking assistance because of the recession.

"We are seeing a lot of new families that need help on a monthly basis," she said.

In November 2008, the monthly total of families served through GAP was 358. One year later that figure had risen to 428. The increased demand has depleted much of GAP's non-Christmas donations. "Our food supply continues to be low," she said.

According to statistics from Kentucky's Office of Employment and Training, nearly 13 percent of Floyd County residents are unemployed. The average rate of unemployment in Kentucky currently is 10.6 percent.

The situation is pretty much the same in Knott County where Heather Huff lives with her husband and three children, ages 3, 4 and 6.

Huff said her husband, a coal miner, has been without work "for several months" since the mine in West Virginia that employed him closed.

"The price of coal went down. His hours got cut down, then the mine shut down," she explained.

The couple and their children moved back to Kentucky and now live with family. Huff said she gets work "here and there" cleaning houses.

"It's been rough. (We're) having to live off family," she said.

Durham said she and other Union Baptist volunteers sensed sadness among some parents, especially the "first-timers," seeking help at the Christmas "store" this year.



GETTING READY Kevin Milburn, pastor of Union Baptist Church, and church member Janet Barnett organize toys for the next group of parents visiting the Christmas "store" provided by God's Appalachian Partnership. Because of the recession and high unemployment, many more people have turned to GAP for help compared to recent years, according to missionary Angie Wagoner. (Photos by Terry Carswell courtesy of God's Appalachian Partnership)

"You could tell it was tough for them to take that step and ask for help," Durham said. "There were lots of tears, lots of hugs."

Huff said she is grateful for GAP's ongoing assistance and the Christmas ministry.

"If I hadn't had this opportunity, it would probably be a poor Christmas," she acknowledged.

Despite the large number of people seeking help this year, Huff said GAP staff and volunteers always treat her as an individual.

"They wanted to get to know me," she said. "They've tried to help me in any way possible."

As important as the donations and Christmas gifts are, Wagoner said GAP volunteers and staff know they have an even greater ministry to families such as Huff's.

"Our main goal is to present the true meaning of Christmas as they receive those gifts," Wagoner noted.

The Christmas presents provide a natural springboard to the gospel, she added.

"We tell them how Christ came to give us the gift of salvation (that is) available to everyone."

The message is getting through. On the first day of GAP's traditional Christmas "store," four people made professions of faith in Christ, Wagoner said.

Angie McGeorge, a member of Union Baptist Church, said she hopes more congregations will consider partnering with missionaries in Appalachia.

"People in America, even people in Northern Kentucky as close as we are to Appalachia, recognize that there is great need in Africa or Haiti, ... but they have no idea that that level of need exists with brothers and sisters in our own state."

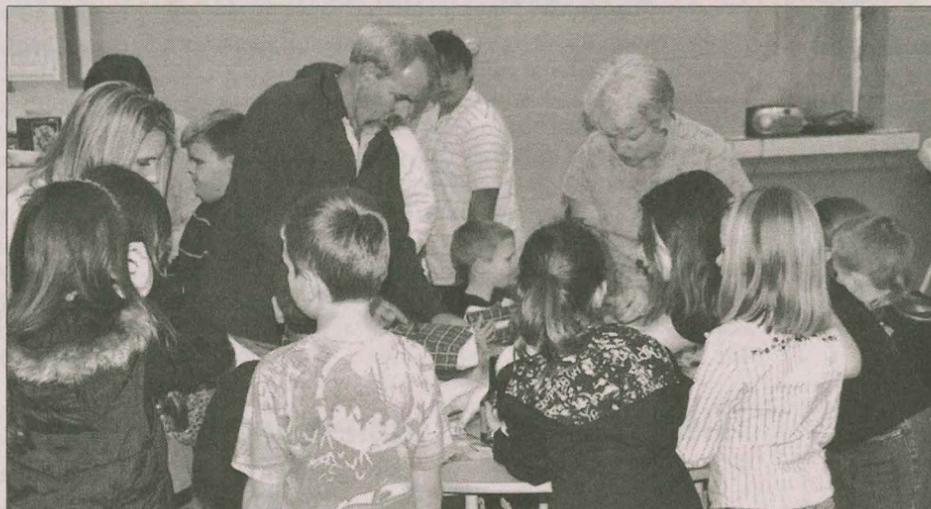
McGeorge said a frequent comment from first-time volunteers seeing the great needs in Appalachian communities is, "I had absolutely no idea."

In addition to the Wagoners, Union Baptist assists a missionary couple in Booneville. McGeorge said the church hopes to expand their support in 2010 to another mountain ministry.

"Once you go, it gets in your blood," she explained.

Durham agreed. She said she never has had a resident "shut the door on hearing more about who this Jesus is and how to have a relationship with Him."

Sharing Christ while giving people a helping hand "in my opinion is the strongest means of evangelism we have available to us," McGeorge noted.



WRAPPING MARATHON Rick and Karen Fugate, members of Union Baptist Church, perfect their gift-wrapping skills for a group of children participating in a Christmas "store" just for kids. Members of Union Baptist Church have assisted in the parents' Christmas project at God's Appalachian Partnership for several years (see photo above), but this was the first year they provided children a means to give gifts to their parents.

KBC leaders urge churches to update online profiles for Find It Here push

Louisville—All Kentucky Baptist church leaders are being encouraged to update their church profiles at SBC.net as part of the convention-wide Find It Here evangelistic campaign next spring.

During the emphasis, Kentucky Baptists will deliver a gospel brochure to up to 1.5 million households across the commonwealth. Recipients who want to know more will be directed to FindItHere.com, where they also can search for a Southern Baptist church near them.

"It's important for each church to update their profiles so visitors will have the correct information and location for the

church," said Ross Bauscher, evangelism growth team leader for the Kentucky Baptist Convention. "We want to make it as easy as possible for those in our communities to learn more about the gospel message."

To check the accuracy of a church listing and submit updates, an authorized church leader should visit ChurchSearch.net to edit the church's listing.

Identification using the church's seven-digit SBC number is required. The number is the same one used for the Annual Church Profile. Individuals who need assistance in updating their information should send an e-mail to Webmaster@SBC.net.

CP gifts ahead of last year through Nov.

Louisville—With nearly \$5.5 million given through the Cooperative Program through November, CP totals remain ahead of last year's pace by 4.6 percent.

Kentucky Baptists gave \$1,611,932 through the Cooperative Program in November, enough to keep CP totals on pace for the 2009-10 working budget.

According to Lowell Ashby, business services team leader for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, the year-to-date total of \$5,445,681 technically is \$674,319 (11.02 percent) behind the \$6.12 million needed through November to meet the fiscal year budget of \$24,480,000.

However, because of the downswing

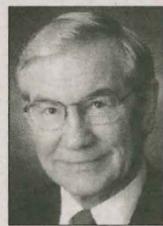
in the nation's economy, the convention is operating under an approved working budget of \$23 million for the 2009-10 fiscal year. Receipts collected so far have fallen in line with what was anticipated, Ashby said.

"In addition to their CP gifts, Kentucky Baptists have been extraordinarily faithful in giving through special offerings like the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering," said Billy Compton, KBC's executive associate for CP and resources. "A strong Cooperative Program is essential because it provides the foundation for ministry costs so special offering gifts can go directly to support missionaries."

Mission Board reports

One of the highlights of the Mission Board meeting each December for me is the worship through music. As more than 100 male and female voices joined together in song at this year's meeting, with the Baptist Building chapel was filled with the beautiful music of Christmas.

Partners in the Mission



By Bill Mackey

Another special feature this year was the final report on the original Kentucky Baptists Connect mission plan that guided us from 2004-09. Chris White, pastor of First Baptist Church of Carrollton, did an excellent job giving the report.

White was part of the original Mission Study Committee from 2002-05, composed of Kentucky Baptists, that laid the groundwork for the Connect emphasis. He also served on the original Mission Advisory Committee. This committee played a key role in Kentucky Baptists Connect by

assisting me as needed, monitoring the progress and reporting periodically to the Mission Board. The committee also was responsible for bringing the final Connect report to the Mission Board by Jan. 1, 2010.

White reported that most of the 16 goals had been met, with the exception of the baptisms and assimilation goals. However, many training and inspirational conferences were provided to continue helping Kentucky Baptists grow in these ministries.

All but one of the missions and church planting goals were exceeded, as were the goals related to leadership development, networking and strengthening churches. It is exciting to know that more than 284 churches were planted, including 117 ethnic plants, and more than 5,000 new Sunday school members were started.

Mission Board members were encouraged to focus on the Kentucky Baptists Connect extension, which will run through 2012. The extension plan includes 22 goals designed to assist local churches and associations.

Since a third of Mission Board members are new every year, orientation is provided on the morning of the first day. New members learn about the Mission Board organization and their assignment to a standing committee of the board.

One of those standing committees is the Business and Finance Committee. The audit committee members for KBC are selected from the Business and Finance Committee. They meet following the Mission Board meeting to work through the audit for the KBC and for each entity, guided by KBC auditors. This is a good learning experience as we are able to address any concerns and new accounting or audit regulations.

The Mission Board provides an excellent opportunity for KBC agencies and institutions to report on their ministries. KBC Mission Board programs of missions and ministries also report on their work. As always, these reports were informative and inspirational.

As a Kentucky Baptist and as your executive director, I am very grateful to God for the outstanding work that is being done for the glory of God.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Ky. Baptists challenged to 'step up' missions giving

For some Kentucky Baptists, it may have been hard to tell whether they were attending a state Mission Board or an International Mission Board meeting last week. Passionate appeals for sacrificial giving to world missions resounded.

Convention President Don Mathis, staff evangelist at Eastwood Baptist Church in Bowling Green, set the tone in his opening devotion: "I am indebted because of the love of Christ for me to witness for Him and to love those that He loves, and Jesus loved the world and gave Himself for it. Therefore, I am reminded that I have an obligation to the 6.7 billion people around the world to do all I can, empowered by God's presence, that these persons have the opportunity to respond to the gospel and know Jesus as Lord and Savior.



After Thought

By Todd Deaton

"And I have an obligation of love to the 4.2 million people of the state of Kentucky to share with them the gospel," Mathis continued, urging all Kentucky Baptists to "step forward to make a commitment to Jesus Christ to share the gospel around the world right here, right now, in our day."

Last year, Southern Baptists fell short of their Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal of \$175 million and "that brought some very difficult and devastating results," he remarked, referring to the fact that the IMB will field about 600 fewer missionaries next year. "What if we could have a Lottie Moon Christmas Offering of \$185 million this year?" Mathis challenged. The additional funds could help another 100 missionaries to be appointed, he said.

"I pray that we as Kentucky Baptists will find ways to send more and more of our Cooperative Program dollars beyond the state to make an impact especially through our International Mission Board and our North American Mission Board," he continued. Such suggestions may make some KBC missions leaders and agency heads a bit uneasy for past increases in the SBC's portion usually have resulted in less funds available for state missions and ministries. Yet Mathis' proposal ties an increase directly to a corresponding boost in Cooperative Program giving from KBC churches that would mean more for both state missions work and for national and international missions.

When he was KBC president about 25 years ago, the average church gave 10.19 percent of its undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program, but today it gives only 6.79 percent, Mathis observed. Meanwhile, the amount that the KBC passes along to worldwide missions causes through the SBC has increased from 35 to 38 percent. While the percentage of CP gifts that the state convention receives from its churches has decreased, the percentage it forwards to the SBC has increased, he explained.

"So even as I make a plea for us to give more and to send more outside of Kentucky, wouldn't it be wonderful if our churches could step forward and increase their CP gifts by 1 percent more?" Mathis challenged. "It would be amazing the dollars we would be providing immediately—doing all of our work that is essential here in Kentucky, but also doing more and more around the world."

Though he didn't elaborate at the time, here is Mathis' math: With the KBC's present budget of \$23.5 million, a 1 percent increase in CP giving by every church would mean a boost of \$3.35 million in the first year. If the KBC increased by two percent what it sends to the SBC, an additional \$470,000 would be sent to the IMB. The KBC's projected budget of \$26.85 million—divided according to a 60/40 formula—would retain \$16.11 million for state missions and send \$10.74 million for SBC causes. Spun out over five years, the 1 percent increase could mean about \$10 million more for the IMB, as compared to the \$4.46 million it now receives. At the same time, it would mean \$20.12 million for the KBC, as compared to about \$14.57 million, he reasoned.

Though probably unlikely all churches would increase CP giving, Mathis contended that if half did so and a few others began giving, then "we might not achieve all that I'm dreaming, but it would be a whole lot more than we are doing now."

Meanwhile, Howard Atkinson, director of missions for West Union Baptist Association, sounded a strong note for increasing individual support for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. Playing two bugle calls on his cell phone, Atkinson asserted, "I'd rather we would not be sounding 'Taps' over what we can do as Southern Baptists to reach the world for Christ. I want to hear this (charge)."

Atkinson encouraged pastors to use all of their influences for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering by sacrificially giving a week's salary: "I am convinced if we will each give a week's salary, I will make a statement and we will make an impact," he urged. "You can go back to your church and do something. You can sound the call of charge, or you can let somebody else play 'Taps,'" the former IMB missionary to Columbia and Cuba declared.

Two admirable approaches; one common goal: placing more missionaries on the field. Yet, a true Great Commission resurgence does not entail an either/or choice. Giving to Lottie Moon provides an immediate stimulus for new missionaries, but giving to the Cooperative Program sustains their work and undergirds other vital ministries, both in Kentucky and around the world. Both are essential.

'Tis the season; remember the reason

By Tom Townsend

In old London, England, a hospital was founded in the early 1300s and named for Mary of Bethlehem. The people of London soon shortened the name of the hospital to Bethlehem in their everyday conversations. By the year 1400, the Bethlehem hospital had been converted into an institution that housed people suffering from all kinds of mental illnesses. Any person diagnosed with a mental illness was placed in this hospital, locked up and neglected.

During this same period, the pronunciation of the hospital's name was corrupted to "Bedlam." The confusion and chaos produced by the patients within the walls of the hospital became synonymous with the corrupted name.

Unfortunately, the Christmas season for many people has become a time where Mary of Bethlehem is no longer the focus because

bedlam has replaced the original intent of the Creator and Architect of the celebration of Jesus. Crowded malls and stores, panic-driven shoppers and traffic issues collaborate to

heighten our lack of focus and shorten our patience. Add to that, the Christmas gift lists, cards, parties and family responsibilities, and we are exhausted from the occasion. Enter bedlam, exit Bethlehem.

So how do the sane deal with this insanity? Begin with prayer asking the Lord to remind you of the reason for the season. It's all about Him! It is about His arrival and, ultimately, about the grace that allowed the Word to become flesh and dwell among us so that we could "behold the glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

Because it is about Him, it is about us sharing that love with those around us. Because God gave us His greatest gift, His only begot-

ten Son, the greatest gift we can give is ourselves—to the Father first and to each other.

The most memorable Christmas we will experience is that gift of time and energy given to others in need. The hospitals, the nursing homes and the jails, are the places to start. Single mothers who are struggling with the pressures of life, as well as widows and widowers who are coping with the loss of a loved one could all use the gift of yourself to brighten their season. Grief, financial stress and other crises give believers a wonderful opportunity to share the love of Christ with people who would welcome the sanity of the gospel.

Come to think of it, this is the Great Commission given to us by Jesus prior to His ascension to heaven: that we become His hands, His feet and His words to a world caught up in the bedlam of its pursuits.

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Wayne Spivey, Harrodsburg;
Rodney Travis, Hopkinsville.

"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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Biblical wisdom is always right, relevant and unchanging

By Jeremy White

Amid the dominant headlines of the day, the Bible helps provide us with proper perspective. It tells us that wealth and the economy is uncertain. Consider this wisdom Paul reminded Timothy:



"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with every-

thing for our enjoyment" (1 Timothy 6:17).

Do you see the first absolute in this verse? Simply stated, wealth is uncertain. Your retirement plan, your money in the bank, your job, the value of your real estate—all of your wealth, it's uncertain.

Don't be shocked into a frenzied panic when the market goes up and down. Volatility should be no surprise because your wealth is uncertain. Don't borrow continually assuming your wealth is certain; it's not.

Paul is building toward an important contrast: wealth is uncertain. Don't put your hope in that, put your hope in God. He provides what we need. Paul is pointing toward God's certainty.

The psalmist has the same theme of God's certainty and stability. When the financial crises hit and it looks like no institution can be trusted, I like to be reminded of this passage:

"Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; my hope comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will not be shaken. My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge. Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge" (Psalm 62:5-8).

I do not like that uncertainty exists. I've added a few gray hairs to my collection as I've tried to advise clients of their best course of action. But I'm so thankful that God is my hope, my rock and my certainty.

Reprinted from WR Nov. 25, 2008. Jeremy White is a certified public accountant with Blythe, White & Associates in Paducah.

Stories of Cumberland's students radiate themes of gospel

By Dean Whitaker

Love. Joy. Peace. Hope. These four attributes of Christ are highlighted during the Advent season, celebrating Christ's coming to earth and His impending return. Reflecting back upon an incredible year of life and ministry through University of the Cumberland's Baptist Campus Ministry, these four themes were made incarnate in many lives this past year, reflecting God's radiant glory. Each story radiates the gospel: that God is love and joy and peace and hope.



Last January, BCM students welcomed everyone back to campus with a gesture of love and care—cups of coffee, drinks and ears to listen. God led one student to approach me at this outreach event with questions about how to make salvation real in his life. Through faithful, loving prayers of friends, the compelling love of God drew Brandon, a senior, into a saving relationship with Christ. On Thanksgiving Day I received a text from Brandon saying that he was growing greatly through studying Psalms.

February brought unusually damaging winds to town, but also a powerful, fresh wind of God's Spirit. Through the word being preached and through faith being lived out in the lives of BCM students, God drew 42 students into a saving relationship with Him through Christ. These students included athletes from several sports, international students and even students who had been raised around the faith but had never trusted Christ personally. God's Spirit being outpoured brought joy that infiltrated our daily walk to become disciplined followers of Christ.

After seeking God's heart through a prayer vigil, students went out in March to serve on mission for spring break. Teams served at Laurel Lake Baptist Camp, at Mountain Christian Academy, with Embrace Baltimore, and through Carver Baptist Center in New Orleans. Students took the gospel and their testimonies of faith to inner-city streets in Baltimore and New Orleans, as well as serving churches through ministry among youth and children and hands-on construction projects there and in Kentucky.

Through weekly BCM LIFE Group Ministry, more than 120 students gathered for accountability, discipleship, Bible study and support. As God's Spirit brings increase, LIFE groups have grown to 230 or so students in just a matter of months. God's peace permeates the lives of those stu-

dents who submit themselves daily to be instructed by the Spirit. From the overflow, students serve in churches with DiscipleNow weekends for youth and in revival services.

More love, joy and peace are born as students serve through UC's Appalachian Ministries and youth receive Christ. BCM students are committing their lives to serve

God vocationally through pastoring, missions and other ministries. Four students are serving as Journeymen in Africa, Asia and South America as a result of finding peace in Christ for their lives and calling. Another two students will be leaving in January to share the gospel through IMB's Hands On initiative in China and India. And there will be teams to serve in Mexico, Ecuador and Africa during spring and summer breaks.

Our BCM president, Forrest Coleman, also serves in a local church, First Baptist Church of Somerset, leading worship weekly for FBC2, a growing contemporary service that is reaching areas of Somerset which were previously unreached. A highlight of this year was participating in Forrest's ordination service at First Baptist Church of Shelbyville, his home congregation. I was asked to give testimony of God's call on Forrest's life. It was humbling and exciting to watch God encourage Forrest, two local churches and the fellowship of BCM all at the same time through that beautiful service of commitment and worship.

Finally, hope has come in many ways among our fellowship. Perhaps the greatest illustration, though, was when we were blessed to have Rose Bugusu share her amazing story of God bringing hope to the lives of HIV/AIDS orphans in her native Kenya. Only five years ago, God used Rose to start an orphanage and school for these children. Today, Tumaini (Swahili for "hope") Miles of Smiles (www.TumainiMilesOfSmiles.org) has 180 students and nearly 30 resident orphans in its care. We were blessed to have Rose and Vivian, a bright 11-year-old leader from the school, to visit our BCM. Knowing that this woman, against all odds, had been raised up by God to grow His Kingdom among the least of these was humbling and inspiring.

God's love, joy, peace and hope are evident in these stories. In response, may we worship fully, spend less, give more and love all.

Dean Whitaker is the Baptist campus minister at the University of the Cumberland.

Issue a challenge

Allow me this opportunity to challenge my fellow Kentucky Baptist pastors to help promote our Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. Our people will follow, if we promote the need and reasons for giving.



The church that I pastor gave \$3,768 to Lottie Moon in 2007. In 2008, I challenged our people to give the largest offering to Lottie Moon in the history of our church. The people gave \$10,430, and our church voted to match the amount out of the general fund, which totaled \$20,860 sent to Lottie Moon. Of course, this generated a great deal of excitement among our people.

Again in 2009, I have challenged our people to give more than last year, and our church recently voted to match whatever our people gave. We are on track to send more than \$20,860 to Lottie Moon.

Let me challenge each church to match out of your general fund or reserves, dollar for dollar to the 2009 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. The need is great and if people are encouraged and challenged to give, they will.

Pastor Rick Hatley
High Point Baptist Church
Mayfield

Lazarus, the rich man and Christmas

By Chuck Bentley

The holiday season is here, offering an almost continual opportunity to celebrate with our loved ones. Blessings are counted, gifts are given and large meals are devoured. But many people in our communities and in our own church congregations have little means with which to celebrate. This presents a great opportunity for us to model generosity and to bless those who are in need, showing them the love of Christ.

In the familiar story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), Jesus showed us two lives. One was filled with plenty, luxury and excess, while the other was filled with poverty, want and pain. The Bible does not teach that it is a sin to be wealthy, nor was the rich man condemned simply because he had much. The rich man was punished because he put his faith in his possessions, not in God. He is an example of someone living in man's economy, where wealth, power and possessions are the goals for which to strive. He missed a great opportunity to make a difference in someone's life, to serve God, and to live in God's economy, where peace, joy and eternal blessings are given. We can learn a great lesson from the rich man.

■ **See the need.** The need was right outside the rich man's door. Every day, the rich man had to pass by Lazarus, who was literally laid at the rich man's gate (Luke 16:20). Yet, the Scripture does not say that the rich man ever offered to help Lazarus. Many times, we don't need to look any fur-

ther than our own churches and communities to find a need. Take a close look around you. Once you recognize the need, you can think of ways to help fill that need. What are the needs in your sphere of influence?

■ **Share your resources.** The rich man had plenty to eat, while Lazarus longed for merely the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table (Luke 16:21). We may not think we have much to offer, but God can use whatever He has given us to fill the needs around us. Giving of our time and talents are just as important as monetary gifts. Take inventory of your resources and talents. What has God given you that you can use for His glory?

■ **Sow seeds in the next generation.** Both the rich man and Lazarus died and went into eternity—Lazarus to eternal peace in the presence of God, and the rich man to eternal torment and separation from God. When the rich man realized his fate, he begged for someone to warn his five brothers, who were still alive (Luke 16:27-28). He realized that because of the example he had lived before them, his five brothers would most certainly end up in the same place. What kind of legacy are we leaving for the younger generations? Let your children see firsthand how powerful it is to help those in need. Teach them to bless others by being generous. What can you do as a family to be generous to someone this year?

Chuck Bentley is CEO of Crown Financial Ministries and executive producer of the new God Provides™ Film Learning Experience.

Escaping ghosts of Christmas past

By Scott Wigginton

Q: At the risk of sounding like Scrooge, I hate Christmas! I grew up in a home where the holidays were a time of family fighting, marked by alcohol and overindulging. How can I learn to tolerate this time of year and make my spouse and family much happier?

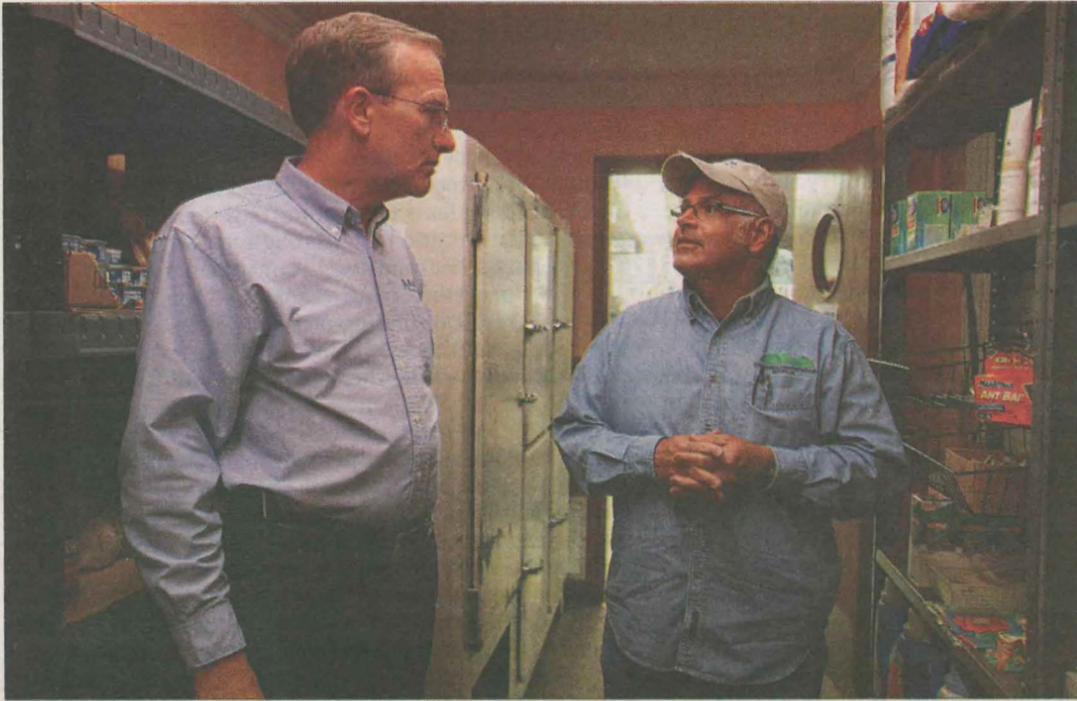


A: Freedom from the tyranny of the ghosts of Christmases past will require you to begin with embracing the truth. Jesus reminds us in John 8:32, "... you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." If you have given your heart to Jesus Christ, the truth is very simple: "Christmas is about celebrating His birthday." Beginning with this truth, God would delight in nothing more this holiday season than helping you engage in a personal "mind makeover."

Here are some truths to write on a note card and carry with you throughout December:

- Old memories do not have the power to keep me from creating positive experiences in the present.
 - Every day I have the chance to find one way to celebrate Christ's birth.
 - It's not about presents or the parties.
 - I don't have to do things the way we've always done them.
 - Saying "no" and staying home does not a bad person make.
 - I have the power to make changes in the way Christmas is celebrated and to add and subtract from holiday rituals.
 - Less is more. This is true both of stuff and being stuffed.
 - The "perfect" gift does not exist. Look for "good enough" gifts and they'll know they are remembered.
- Be reminded that you are not bound by the past or doomed to repeat it. The choices you make today are the raw materials out of which your next memories will be constructed.

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



CHECKING IN Appalachian Regional Ministry director and NAMB missionary Bill Barker (left) stops by to check on God's Appalachian Partnership in Floyd County, directed by Mission Service Corps missionary Lynn Wagoner (right), along with his wife, Angie. (NAMB photo by Carol Pipes)

Appalachian Regional Ministry has served 12-state region for 10 years

Continued from page 1

impact lives in Appalachia with the gospel. What began as the dream of one man, James Porch, executive director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, now has flourished into a network of ministries across the region.

"Traveling into the area to preach in rural mountain churches or visiting directors of missions, a consciousness prevailed and beckoned me each time I left the area," Porch recalled. "I knew we needed to find a way to be the hands and feet of Jesus to the people living in the hills of Tennessee and the rest of Appalachia."

Convention-wide partnership

From the beginning, ARM was a state convention executive director-driven ministry, working closely with the local Baptist associations and churches. Today, the ministry entails a partnership of 13 state conventions, NAMB and Woman's Missionary Union and is supported through the Cooperative Program and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions.

The people of Appalachia have an independent spirit with a deep sense of and belief in God. While religion is important, the reality is that more than 65 percent of Appalachians are unchurched—as much as 90 percent in some counties.

Decades of exploitation by outsiders has led to an understandable mistrust of strangers. But Southern Baptists have found a way to endear themselves to residents by meeting physical and spiritual needs. Barker and state convention leaders say they believe ARM shows the strength of Southern Baptists working cooperatively together.

"Appalachian Regional Ministries represents Southern Baptists at our best, ministering in one of the most challenging environments in America," said Bob White, executive director of the Georgia Baptist Convention. "The poverty of Appalachia is legendary, but Southern Baptist state conventions that border the area, in partnership with the North American Mission Board, are having a huge impact for Christ across the region."

"Bill Barker has proven to be a seasoned spiritual leader for this incredible ministry that just keeps growing under his leadership as more and more volunteers make their way into Appalachia to share Christ and as hundreds are coming to faith in Jesus Christ," White added.

The faith of Barker—himself a West Virginia native—and his love for his fellow Appalachian people continually fuel his passion for the ministry. Because volunteers are the backbone of ARM, Barker spends much of his time connecting volunteers with the many ministries dotting Appalachia.

"It's fun to watch God at work," said Barker, who has seen God open doors for ministry throughout the region. "We can't sit here and imagine the next thing God's going to do."

Barker said he has learned not to set parameters on God, "because He's way ahead of us."

Decade of hard work

In 10 years, ARM has mobilized 450,000 volunteers, who have tackled 10,000 home repairs, partnered with 100 ministry centers and assisted 100 church planters. Even as the economy has slumped, the ministry has seen an increase in the number of volunteers.

"It's a clear demonstration of what partnership can accomplish when you look at the number of volunteers, the number of professions of faith and the support of ministry centers," said Mickey Caison, leader of NAMB's adult volunteer mobilization team. "But it is still a largely unchurched and under-evangelized region. We have much more work to do."

As ARM looks to the future, Barker said the plan is to broaden its scope toward the cities of Appalachia—places like Pittsburgh where children grow up without ever hearing about Jesus. One thing ARM has done is help remind Southern Baptists that missions also is "here at home," he explained.

And Barker knows something about home missions. He was born and raised in a small coal camp in West Virginia. God called him to return home—after a 32-year absence—to serve as the ministry's director. He drives about 55,000 miles a year bringing food, clothing and hundreds of volunteers to the mountains. He said he has seen God provide in small and tremendous ways over the past decade.

Last Christmas, Barker picked up a load of clothes in Pennsylvania and drove to the Freeda Harris Baptist Center in Pike County, where NAMB missionaries Greg and Alice Whitetree have been serving the past 26 years.

"We had a little boy in our community who wanted a pair of jeans for Christmas," Alice recalled. "He'd never had new jeans before. We didn't have any jeans donated that year, and we hated to disappoint him."

The Whitetrees were surprised when Barker pulled into their parking lot pulling a trailer two days after Christmas. As they unloaded the trailer and started going through the boxes of clothes, Barker recalled: "From across the room I heard Alice whooping and hollering. We all came running." They gathered around Alice as she held up a brand-new pair of jeans, the exact size needed for the little boy. (BP)

Luke parable 'compels' church to rethink Christmas musical

By Nate BeVier
Special to the Western Recorder

Lexington—A parable from the Gospel of Luke has provided a new way for one church to think about the traditional Christmas musical.

Lexington's Ashland Avenue Baptist Church celebrated its first-ever "Compelled Christmas" celebration Dec. 13, focusing on Jesus' parable of the great banquet from Luke 14:15-24.

The passage describes a great feast that has been prepared. Yet, when the time comes for those who had been invited to come, they each begin to make excuses why they are not able to attend.

The parable says the master of the house became angry and ordered his servants to go out into the city's streets and invite the poor, crippled, blind and lame to the feast. When there still was room left, the master ordered his servants to go out to the highways and hedges and "compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."

The story—which points to a greater heavenly feast—provided the framework for Ashland Avenue's Compelled Christmas, a ministry-minded approach to the ordinary and often performance-driven Christmas musical.

The event sought not only to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with music led by the church's

choir, orchestra, quartet and soloists, but also to provide a banquet for those "poor, crippled, blind and lame" compelling them and all guests toward the greater feast to come, enjoyed only by those who trust in Christ for salvation.

Ashland Avenue worked in conjunction with Pam Pyle, a Southern Baptist missionary who directs Lexington's Irishtown ministries. The church also worked through the city's Hope Center and Salvation Army to invite a large number of needy and homeless individuals to the church.

Once there, a host of servants supplied them with a meal while sharing with them about Jesus Christ. Those who attended said the conversations around the tables were the real highlight of the evening.

After the meal, church members invited the guests to join them for the Compelled Christmas concert, a celebration of Christ's birth through song.

Church leaders urged churches everywhere to embrace the truth of the parable in Luke.

"The banquet is ready. A spread of fine cuisine unlike anything you could ever imagine has been carefully arranged with painstaking attention given to every minute detail," they said. But, "the feast still lacks one thing—people."

Nate BeVier is pastor of music and worship at Ashland Avenue Baptist Church in Lexington



SERVING MORE THAN A MEAL Several members of Ashland Avenue Baptist Church in Lexington prepare meals for homeless and needy guests at the church's first-ever "Compelled Christmas" musical and dinner Dec. 13. (Photo courtesy of Nate BeVier)

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Christian Camp and Conference Association MEMBER

Under construction

Winter means renovation time at Crossings camps

A new kind of excitement is taking place this year. After summer each year, we begin to make improvements at each property in preparation for the coming year. The winter of 2009-10 will prove to be the single largest season of improvements we ever have made.

These improvements will impact guest rooms, conference space, recreation activities, general property improvements and worship centers—yes, worship centers. This year we will complete construction on a new worship center at Cedarmore and an expanded worship center at Jonathan Creek.

Of all the improvements, I must say that the worship centers are the most exciting to me. I recently was at Jonathan Creek for the interior demolition to increase our seating capacity to more than 650. At the same time, construction continues on the new worship center at Cedarmore that will replace Byrdwell as our large-group gathering space. The seating capacity there also will be more than 650.

In spite of the great anticipation of other improvements and

the additions of many fun activities, the thought of the thousands upon thousands of individuals who will worship in these two buildings for decades to come is very humbling. The way in which God has blessed this ministry to allow for such improvements is beyond what words can describe, as is the attendance that He continues to bring to the camps year after year.

This past summer, we celebrated the 10-year anniversary of Crossings with record attendance. Honestly, I thought it would be difficult to grow much past what we experienced this summer—but God had other plans. Our current reservations are ahead of the same time last year by 34.5 percent—unbelievable by all human measures.

The summer of 2010 is going to be incredible, the numerous additions will be enjoyed by our guests. The worship centers, even though they are expanded and new, will be filled to capacity in their first year of existence. But most importantly, we are anxious to see thousands of students make eternal decisions for Jesus Christ.

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

Ky. Baptist Assemblies



David Melber

All I want for Christmas

Nearly 2,000 Kentucky kids need a family to love them

Should you ask any child placed in out-of-home care what they want most for Christmas, the overwhelming answer is "to be at home." There are a growing number of children in out-of-home care who would say what they want most in life is "a family."

At the close of our fiscal year in August, there were 6,932 children in Kentucky's child welfare system. Of this number, 1,879 children have adoption as a goal, and of that number, 566 children are legally free for adoption today. You read that correctly—1,879 children in Kentucky need a home.

The sad truth is because these children are not infants, they remain without families. Some of them do have special needs ranging from slight to severe, but most are kids who have suffered mostly from neglect. They are innocent children who desperately want to be loved, feel safe and grow up with a caring family.

The oldest of institutions is the family. God made Mom and Dad to have and care for children who grow into adulthood to repeat the process. The good and the bad of this process is children repeat the practice of parenting they experienced. Yes, there are exceptions, but children from dysfunctional families often model in adulthood what they experienced in childhood.

Adoptive families provide the intervention needed to break the cycle of abuse and neglect. A child can experience from a loving adoptive family the roles of a healthy father and mother.

During our last fiscal year, we placed 29 children with loving parents through our foster-to-adopt services. Families interested in adoption first became foster parents, then adopted the kids as their own. We placed another nine children through the regular adoptive process and aided another 13 with international adoptions.

Many couples adopt children because they can't have children or they want more. Many others see the plight of children and want to provide a home for them. Either way, there are many children in Kentucky who want a family more than anything else Santa could bring them. I applaud those who adopt from other countries, rescuing children from overcrowded orphanages. But, someone must speak up for the hundreds of kids in our state who also need an opportunity to have a home.

If you are interested in learning more about our adoption services call us toll free at (800) 456-1386. My staff and I are ready to come to your home, church or organization to share how you can give the gift of "home" to children without ever leaving Kentucky.

Bill Smithwick is president of Sunrise Children's Services. Contact Sunrise at (502) 538-1000 or www.sunrise.org

Sunrise Children's Services



Bill Smithwick

For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan



Preacher's Kids

David Ayers



Bible Crosswords

By Evelyn Boyington

Across

- 1 Poetic contraction
- 4 "The ____ of the mountains is his pasture" (Job 39:8)
- 9 ____ fried
- 12 Linking verb
- 13 "The ____ of Egypt shall be moved" (Isaiah 19:1)
- 14 Inlet
- 15 "Behold a man gluttonous ... a ____ of publicans and sinners" (Matthew 11:19)
- 17 "Charity ... is not ____ provoked, thinketh no evil" (1 Corinthians 13:4, 5)
- 19 Joke
- 20 Brownish gray
- 21 Liturgical season that coincides with spring
- 23 ____ sum (Chinese dumplings)
- 24 Man, for example
- 27 Printer's measures
- 28 "Every ____ that a man doeth is without the body" (1 Corinthians 6:18)
- 29 "When thou prayest, ____ into thy closet" (Matthew 6:6)
- 30 ____ out (tennis term)
- 31 "The ____ went before, the play-ers on instruments followed" (Psalm 68:25)
- 33 Movie rating
- 34 "Pay that which thou hast ____" (Ecclesiastes 5:4)
- 36 Singing syllable
- 37 About
- 38 Pitcher
- 39 James Herriot, for short
- 40 Driven group
- 41 "But ____ foolish questions, and genealogies" (Titus 3:9)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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49				50		51			52	
53					54				55	

Down

- 1 Boor
- 2 Stumble
- 3 Royal eras
- 4 American humorist Lardner
- 5 "____ to your faith virtue" (2 Peter 1:5)
- 6 Negative
- 7 Shine like the sun
- 8 More hirsute son of Isaac
- 9 "Jesus, made an high ____ for ever" (Hebrews 6:20)
- 10 Fare poorly
- 11 Negative, old style
- 16 Sup
- 18 Twirls
- 20 Got goosebumps

- 21 Make a getaway
- 22 "He shall surely ____ her to be his wife" (Exodus 22:16)
- 23 Noise level
- 25 Disdained individual, in Bible times
- 26 Energy unit
- 28 Caesar
- 29 TV series
- 31 "If any man ____ me, let him follow me" (John 12:26)
- 32 "Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to ____ the passover?" (Matthew 26:17)
- 35 "O Lucifer ... which didst ____ the nations" (Isaiah 14:12)
- 37 "I will ____ them from death" (Hosea 13:14)
- 39 Call on
- 40 Masculine nickname
- 42 Swedish coin
- 43 Tends to tots, tersely
- 44 Half a canine call
- 45 Reverence
- 46 Less than, with "of"
- 47 "As it was in the days of ____" (Luke 17:26)
- 48 Terminator, in a way (abbr.)
- 51 Matthew 28:19 verb

Last week's solution

1	A	M	A	N	A	12	K	I	T	E	S				
1	R	E	F	I	N	E	13	S	N	E	E	Z	E		
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18	S	T	19	D	U	S	20	T	O	21	F	F	A	L	
23	B	E	L	I	E	V	E	R	S	24	A	L			
25	B	A	R	S	27	E	N	E	28	O	H	I	O		
31	E	X	I	T	34	G	T	O	37	W	I	D	E		
33	D	E	E	R	39	F	O	L	L	O	40	A	P	E	R
41	E	R	43	Y	E	A	R	N	E	D	44	G	P		
46	R	E	47	A	N	49	E	R	50	B	I	O			
51	R	E	W	A	R	D	53	R	I	V	E	R	S		
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Appeals court allows suit over Ky. Baptist children's home to proceed

Cincinnati—The full 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals declined Dec. 16 to review the August ruling of a three-judge panel allowing a case challenging taxpayer funding of Kentucky Baptists' children's home to proceed forward.

Sunrise Children's Services planned to appeal the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court, the Louisville Courier-Journal reported last Friday.

A lawsuit filed originally in 2000 claims the ministry is using taxpayer funds unconstitutionally to indoctrinate children who are wards of the state without religion.

Plaintiffs include Alecia Pedreira, a former case worker at the Baptist home who was fired in 1998

after her employers discovered she was a homosexual, and Paul Simmons, a former professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville and chairman of the board of Americans United for Separation of Church and State.

A district court dismissed the case last year, citing a Supreme Court ruling limiting taxpayers' rights to sue over taxpayer funding of religious organizations. In August, a three-judge panel of the appellate court disagreed with the lower court's interpretation and said the question of whether \$12 million in annual state funding of the home violates the First Amendment's Establishment Clause could move forward. (ABP)

BAPTIST DIGEST

Hunt to have surgery Jan. 7—Southern Baptist Convention President Johnny Hunt will undergo surgery Jan. 7 to remove a cancerous prostate, according to a spokesman for the Atlanta-area church where Hunt serves as pastor. Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Ga., announced Nov. 23 that he had been diagnosed with prostate cancer and planned to undergo initial treatment in January. A statement released by the church's executive pastor, Jim Law, said the procedure to remove Hunt's prostate would be conducted Jan. 7 in Atlanta. Hunt and his wife, Janet, "have come to this decision after much prayer and seeking the Lord," Law said. "Dr. Hunt would like to thank so many churches and individuals who have interceded for his health these past few weeks. He is deeply grateful and has sensed the prayers and the love that has been demonstrated to him in so many ways." Hunt is the third SBC leader this year to disclose a prostate cancer diagnosis, following GuideStone Financial Resources President O.S. Hawkins in August and Dallas-area pastor Jack Graham in June.

Child baptisms rise via missions education—Southern Baptist churches that have Royal Ambassadors and Girls in Action have a significantly higher child baptism rate than churches that do not, according to analysis by the North American Mission Board. The annual baptism rate for children ages 6-11 for churches with RA ministries was 26 percent higher than churches without RAs. Churches with GAs, a mission education through Women's Missionary Union, had a similar 25 percent increase in baptisms for the same age group compared to churches without GAs. The analysis was drawn from Southern Baptists' Annual Church Profile. Jim Burton, director of mission education for NAMB, said the analysis proves that ministries like RAs and GAs "are truly the core objectives of the denomination. So it's rather natural for them to feed into key measurements like baptisms. ... We want to help churches realize that missions education is a great way to connect their children to the bigger purpose of the church—which is to baptize and make disciples," Burton added.

A 400-pound turkey!

Holiday meals at Oneida require plenty of food to serve hundreds of people

By the time you read this, our school will be closed so our students can go home for the holidays. Many of our students, however, were not able to go away for Thanksgiving. They simply live too far home or were unable to afford the travel expense.

We also have many international students, and Thanksgiving is not a holiday for them like it is here in the U.S. The only thing many of our international students know about Thanksgiving is that Americans, who naturally like to eat anyway, have created a special day when everyone is expected to eat all they possibly can. Our international students may not understand our appreciation for Thanksgiving, but they certainly agree with the concept.

Because many of our American students would rather be home for Thanksgiving but aren't able to be, we do everything in our power to make our Thanksgiving as much like home as possible. Our dining room is rearranged and decorated. The normally bare tables are covered with tablecloths. Instead of the usual blue serving trays and serving line, all of the food is placed on the tables with plates, silverware, napkins and cups.

Many faculty and staff invite their extended family and friends to join us for the feast. Some students also have family who spend the day with us. Our faculty and staff and their families are seated first, followed by students who have family members joining us. Then the rest of our students are seated.

Now, about that 400-pound turkey. No host

ever wants to run out of food. Each year just before everyone is seated, I ask the food service director if she is absolutely sure we have prepared enough food, especially turkey. Each year she confidently smiles and assures me that we have more than enough. She knows the next question will be: "How much turkey did we prepare?" This year she smiled and said, "400 pounds." Now that may sound like a lot of turkey, but when was the last time you fed 250 people, including more than 125 hungry teenagers?

This is Oneida



W.F. Underwood

The turkey was not the only item on the menu. There also were green beans, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, dressing, gravy, dinner rolls, cranberry sauce, cranberry salad and lots of desserts.

As an added treat, our faculty and staff took all of our students home for a few hours Thursday evening so they could get out of the dorms for a while. The leftovers were sent the students they had taken home for the evening. In order for our cooks to be able to get home to their families, our faculty, staff and students helped clean up after the meal. It was a really wonderful day of Thanksgiving.

You may or may not eat turkey for Christmas dinner. If you do, hopefully you won't need 400 pounds. However you celebrate the holiday, we pray it will be a true thanksgiving for our Lord's birth. It is for Him that we have given ourselves in service to young people this year. It is by His grace and with your support that we will continue to minister to hundreds of boys and girls in the year to come. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all.

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

LifeWay leaders unveil plan for Transformational Church

Nashville—This is an "opportune time" to talk about transformation, noted Ed Stetzer, director of LifeWay Research. During this season of "evangelical malaise," people are asking, "What do we need to think (about) differently?"

Stetzer (about) speaking to participants of the 2009 Southern Baptist Convention State Conventions' Summit Dec. 8-11 in Nashville. He went on to reveal the rationale and creation process of LifeWay's Transformational Church initiative, a multi-year project set to launch in mid-2010 with the release of "Transformational Church," a book co-written by Stetzer and LifeWay President Thom Rainer.

"Transformational churches make disciples whose lives are being transformed by the gospel so that the culture around them is ultimately transformed," Stetzer explained. "Transformational churches are deeply committed to the essential foundations of discipleship: worship, community and mission. They practice and make disciples through vibrant leadership, prayerful dependence and relational intentionality, and they do so in the context of a missionary mindset."

The initiative is designed based on research which will be revealed in Stetzer and Rainer's book and will guide LifeWay as it produces resources to help churches spread the gospel and promote spiritual

growth.

"The goal is not to give a church a book, tool or research that will help them make the headlines," Stetzer stressed. "Our goal is to help churches—any size, any location—make a biblical impact."

For months, LifeWay Research has been surveying thousands of churches from multiple denominations that are leading examples of spiritual transformation. Those interviews are providing a framework for the resources LifeWay is developing to guide local churches through the Transformational Church process.

"We're asking people who are doing what we want to do, how they do it," Stetzer said.

Consultant training for Transformational Church will begin in the fall of 2010, with other events and resources to follow, including pastor/staff retreats and Transformational Church training conferences. Ultimately, church leaders will be invited to involve their congregations in the Transformational Church initiative.

"The most important message is that churches are being transformed, and they are actively engaged in the transformation of people and communities," Rainer said. "Too often we've highlighted the negative realities of the declining American church, but we've missed the opportunity to magnify the God of hope and transformation."

Exercising every option

Student experiences Clear Creek in numerous ways

Senior Daniel Payne will finish his four years at Clear Creek this December. What's unique about Daniel's time here, he has utilized all the class-delivery options that Clear Creek offers.

"When I first came to campus four years ago, I had intentions of staying on campus the entire time I was here," Daniel recalled. "I was fresh out of high school and that was a big struggle for me. I had never been away from home before, but God helped me adjust. On campus, life is wonderful because there is so much to do here. There are many opportunities to really get involved in the community.

"After a while, I felt God leading me to commute back and forth from my home each week," Daniel said. "I found that commuting has some advantages, too. The schedule is great because it allowed me to keep my position as a youth minister and still go to school with the two-day schedule that Clear Creek offers.

"You also get to combine the on-campus experience with the ability to keep those ties to home," he said. "Although the drive from Ohio

was over three hours each week, I found that it was a great way for me to spend time with God as I traveled back and forth to classes each week.

"I was also able to take some online classes that enabled me to fit some classes into my schedule so I could finish in four years," Daniel pointed out. "Online classes are unique. They are not easier, just more convenient. Online classes enable you to fit other things into your schedule along with focusing on your schoolwork. You have some great interaction through the discussion portion of the classes, so you get to really interact with your classmates.

"I think the online classes really teach you discipline," he added. "You are really on your own to make the time for your classes. You learn how to discipline yourself to get your school work completed." Now that he has finished his studies, Daniel said he and his wife are ready to do whatever God has planned for them. "Wherever God takes us is where we will go."

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.cccb.edu; e-mail: dfox@ccb.edu

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

Oral Roberts, dean of Pentecostal evangelists, dies

By Lisa Singh and Adelle Banks

Newport Beach, Calif.—Oral Roberts, the pioneering TV evangelist and faith healer who became the dean of America's Pentecostal preachers, died Dec. 15 at the age of 91.

He died in Newport Beach, Calif., of complications from pneumonia, his publicist announced.

One of the nation's first television evangelists, as well as the founder of the Tulsa-based Oral Roberts University, Roberts was the author of more than 130 books, including his massive autobiography, "Expect a Miracle: My Life and Ministry."

To millions, Roberts' name was synonymous with faith healer. But it was a term Roberts himself disliked; though he once claimed to have healed 1.5 million people, he preferred to emphasize a concept of "seed faith"—the belief that something given in good faith, whether prayer or money, would be returned exponentially in the form of personal happiness.

"If God had not ... raised up the ministry of Oral Roberts, the entire charismatic movement might not have occurred," said Jack Horner, former president of International Church of the Foursquare Gospel.

Ordained by the Pentecostal Holiness Church—he joined the United Methodist Church in 1968 and left after 19 years—Roberts drew nationwide attention during his 60-plus-year career for his healing services and "discussions" with God.

Ever since Roberts came to Oklahoma's second largest city six decades ago and established what would become a \$500 million empire that included an ornate, 200-foot-tall prayer tower, he became a source of admiration to many locals who saw his university especially as a valuable economic addition to the city.

But to Roberts' critics, he was a preacher who manipulated the emotions of his audience for financial gain through claims of repeated personal visits from God. Criticism of him was often tempered by the belief that Roberts was no outright charlatan, but rather a sincere, if maybe misguided, man motivated by his theology, as well as his mounting personal tragedies. (RNS)



Democratic Senators Ben Nelson and Joe Lieberman discuss health care on CBS' Face the Nation. Nelson was holding to his pro-life convictions in opposing the Senate bill, but recently reached a compromise with Democratic leaders.

Pro-lifers pin their hopes on Nelson in health care

By Michael Foust

Washington—In the effort to see the Senate health care bill changed to include pro-life language, anti-abortion groups were increasingly pinning their hopes on U.S. Sen. Ben Nelson, who traditionally has been an ally of the pro-life community.

Nelson—who was endorsed by Nebraska Right to Life during his 2006 re-election campaign—was at the center of nationwide attention as Democratic leaders were trying to come up with anti-abortion language to satisfy him. With 60 members in the Democratic caucus and with 60 votes needed to break a filibuster, Nelson may well have been the final vote needed to move the bill forward.

Nelson and the nation's major pro-life groups said the health care bill, as it was worded, would result in taxpayer funding of abortion. He sponsored an amendment that was defeated and which would have barred federal funding of abortion in the bill. The amendment mirrored one that passed easily in the House sponsored by Rep. Bart Stupak, D-Mich.

Appearing on CBS' "Face the Nation," Nelson made clear his position. Asked if he would support the bill only if the abortion language was changed, Nelson replied, "Exactly. Exactly."

Nelson announced Dec. 19 that he had reached an agreement with Democratic leaders to tweak abortion language in the Senate's health care bill. Pro-life groups and pro-choice groups, though, are not happy with the compromise language.

The compromise, they say, forces enrollees in private insurance plans receiving government subsidies to write two checks—one for their premium and the other for elective abortion coverage—and it allows states to prohibit abortion coverage in government-subsidized plans. Insurance companies would be forced to keep the abortion coverage money separate from the subsidy money it receives from the government.

Controversy swirls around the issue because current law prohibits the federal government from funding insurance plans that cover elective abortions. The Senate health care bill would be a dramatic change in policy, pro-lifers say.

National Right to Life released a statement saying the "so-called 'firewall'" between federal money and private money "is merely a bookkeeping gimmick, inconsistent with the long-established principles that govern existing federal health programs." The organization also said "there is nothing in the language to suggest that payment of the abortion charge is optional for any enrollee."

Nebraska Right to Life said Nelson "obliterated the hope of pro-life Americans who saw him as the last man standing" in the way of "expansion of government funding." Americans United for Life said the bill's opt-out option for states "makes abortion coverage normative" and "turn[s] on its head the traditional federal approach to abortion." All the major pro-life groups are urging senators to filibuster and defeat the bill. (BP)

NATIONAL NOTES

D.C. set to OK same-sex marriage—The District of Columbia Council voted overwhelmingly—and despite vocal protests from a coalition of conservative evangelicals and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington—to legalize same-sex marriage in the nation's capital Dec. 15. By a bipartisan 11-2 vote, the city's elected representatives gave final approval to the bill, which legalizes gay marriage but also guarantees that churches will not be forced to perform or accommodate same-sex nuptials. Mayor Adrian Fenty (D) signed the bill into law Dec. 18 and Congress now has 30 days to review the bill.

Land, others urge sanctions on Iran—Southern Baptist ethicist Richard Land and 33 other religious leaders have called on congressional leaders to promote legislation imposing sanctions to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons. In a Dec. 10 letter, the coalition, named Christian Leaders for a Nuclear-free Iran, urged Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi to bring sanctions proposals to the floors of both chambers of Congress. The coalition called for sanctions on firms that conduct oil-related business with the radical Islamic regime, including the export of refined petroleum to Iran.

Medical group CEO quits AMA—The head of the nation's largest faith-based medical association has ended his membership in the American Medical Association. "I can no longer associate with or support an organization that is unscientific, unprofessional and controlled by special interests," David Stevens, CEO of the Christian Medical & Dental Associations, wrote in a letter to the AMA dated Dec. 14. Stevens cited the AMA's pro-abortion advocacy and support of embryonic stem cell research, same-sex marriage and medical marijuana—and its negotiations with Senate leaders over Medicare reimbursement rates—as AMA policies "that contradict and undermine the positions of many physicians."

Most American pastors: 'Islam is a dangerous religion'

Nashville—Two-thirds of Protestant pastors believe Islam is a dangerous religion, according to survey results just released by LifeWay Research.

While opinions vary widely based on factors such as denominational affiliation and political ideology, the survey of more than 1,000 Protestant pastors found 45 percent strongly agree with the statement "I believe Islam is a dangerous religion," and 21 percent agree somewhat.

Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research, said American Protestant pastors' agreement that Islam is dangerous could speak to various issues, however, "in one sense, Protestant pastors are a competing religion, so we should not be completely surprised by their concerns about Islam."

Scott McConnell, associate director of LifeWay Research, said LifeWay Research decided to ask this question after European headlines used the phrase "dangerous religion" to describe results drawn from a 2008 study across 21 European countries that found an "overwhelming majority" of people believe immigration from predominantly Muslim countries poses a threat to Europeans' traditional way of life.

"It appears that Protestant pastors in

America are overwhelmingly willing to use that phrase and cite Islam as a 'dangerous religion,'" McConnell said.

Additionally, a study by the Pew Research Center found that 38 percent of all Americans say Islam is more likely to encourage violence than other religions. However, studies also indicate a need for interaction. For example, data from the Gallup Muslim-West Dialogue Index shows that when given the option of labeling greater interaction between Muslim and Western worlds a threat or a benefit, 70 percent of Americans call it a benefit.

"It's important to note," Stetzer pointed out, "our survey asked whether pastors viewed Islam as 'dangerous,' but that does not necessarily mean 'violent.' 'Dangerous' can be defined in a variety of ways, including from the perspective of spiritual influence. Regardless of the definition, the numbers tell us that Protestant pastors are concerned."

The LifeWay Research study found six statistically significant differences in the belief about Islam statement among pastors:

■ Mainline denomination pastors are less likely than evangelicals to say Islam is

"a dangerous religion." While 77 percent of evangelical pastors either somewhat or strongly agree Islam is dangerous, only 44 percent of mainline pastors feel the same way, and 38 percent strongly disagree.

■ More educated pastors are less likely to agree than those with less education. While 64 percent of pastors with a bachelor's degree or less strongly agree Islam is dangerous, only 37 percent with a master's degree or more feel the same way, and 25 percent of those strongly disagree.

■ The majority of pastors affiliated with the Democratic Party are more likely to strongly disagree than Republicans or Independents. While 61 percent of Republicans and 40 percent of Independents strongly agree Islam is dangerous, only 16 percent of Democrats feel the same way, and 52 percent of Democrats strongly disagree.

■ Older pastors are more likely to strongly agree than any other age group. While overall agreement differs little by age, 58 percent of pastors age 65 and older strongly agree about the danger of Islam, contrasted with 42 percent of pastors ages 50-64, and 44 percent of pastors younger than 50.

■ Rural and smaller city pastors are more likely to agree than pastors in large cities and suburbs. A full 51 percent of rural pastors and 47 percent of small-city pastors agree that Islam is dangerous, while 37 percent of suburban pastors and 39 percent of large-city pastors feel the same way.

■ Politically conservative pastors stood in starkest contrast with politically moderate and liberal pastors. Among very conservative pastors, 78 percent strongly agree about the danger of Islam and 55 percent of conservative pastors feel the same way, contrasted with 69 percent of liberal or very liberal pastors and 38 percent of moderates who strongly disagree.

The Pew study, conducted in August 2009, asked more than 2,000 adults in the United States whether Islam is more likely to encourage violence than other faiths. While 38 percent say yes, views on the subject have fluctuated in recent years. Similar Pew studies found 25 percent answered yes in 2002, 36 percent in 2005 and 45 percent in 2007.

The Gallup study was commissioned for the World Economic Forum, and released as "Islam and the West: Annual Report on the State of Dialogue."

Students use break for missions work

Campbellsville—Groups of Campbellsville University students are using the Christmas break to do missions work in New York, Texas, Nicaragua and Northern Ireland.

"One of our strategies in praying about and planning mission opportunities is to provide possibilities in our version of 'Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost,'" said Ed Pavy, Campbellsville's director of campus ministries.

"This Acts 1:8 strategy, coupled with motivation from the Great Commission, is the perfect framework for us. Our hope is that students will develop a worldview for ministry (and) missions ... that their growth in Christ will enable to see needs and then act to meet those needs."

The mission trip to Texas took Campbellsville students to Arlington. Teams have worked with Mission Arlington in that city for 12 years.

The students helped families in need through the mission's "Christmas Store," which coordinates the distribution of clothing, food, furniture, toys and other items, Pavy noted.

New York was a new location for the student teams. Most of the work took place in local food pantries. The team also focused on ministering to individuals in the city.

While the two U.S. trips focused more on community-service ministry, the Nicaragua and Northern Ireland trips, which leave in early Jan-

uary, will focus more on teaching conversational English, leading Bible studies, working in a coffeehouse and speaking in local schools.

In Nicaragua, the students will be working with a program called "1,000 Pairs of Shoes." Students will assist in giving away shoes to individuals in need.

In Ireland, the mission teams will be involved with "Project Evangelism," a multi-faceted ministry that includes speaking about American culture, traditions and history at local school assemblies while sharing about a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Traveling outside the country allows students to get a first-hand look at how other cultures live while ministering to them at the same time.

While traveling domestically is less expensive, each student is responsible for funding their own trips. Each team worked together to raise money through events like car washes, yard sales, gift wrapping presents at Amazon, helping with banquets held on campus and requesting money from family, friends and churches.

"When first coming to CU, many students don't plan to have this experience, but after they experience mission work, it is worthwhile," Pavy said. "The trips expand your worldview and help you realize how far a little help can go."

KBC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January

- 14-16 Shepherding the Shepherd, Downtown Hilton Hotel, Lexington.
- 22-23 Region 2 Disaster Relief Recertification and Training, Second Baptist Church, Madisonville.
- 26 Pastor/Staff Forum, Living Hope Baptist Church, Bowling Green.
- 28-30 Southeast Conclave, Chattanooga, Tenn.
- 29-30 Deacon/Pastor/Spouse Retreat, Holiday Inn Plaza, Bowling Green.
- 29-30 Preschool/Children's Ministry Meeting, Baptist Building, Louisville.
- 29-30 Regional Women on Mission Retreat, Laurel Lake Baptist Camp, Corbin.

February

- 5-6 Region 4 Disaster Relief Recertification and Training, Ninth & O Baptist Church, Louisville.
- 15 Regional Church Financial Benefits Conference, First Baptist Church, Calvert City, and Oakland Baptist Church.
- 16 Regional Church Financial Benefits Conference, CrossPointe Baptist Church, Owensboro, and Versailles Baptist Church.
- 17 Regional Church Financial Benefits Conference, Baptist Building, Louisville.
- 20 Kentucky Changers Crew Chief Training, Changers Building, Louisville.
- 20 Women's Chorale Winter Retreat, TBA.
- 22-23 Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference, Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.
- 27 Region 3 and 7 RA Congress, South Fork Baptist Church, Hodgenville.

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

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

- **CADIZ**—Oak Grove Church recently called **Paxton Redd** as pastor. He previously was minister of youth at Robinson Creek Church in Campbellsville.
- **DAYTON**—Allan Daigle recently resigned as pastor of First Church.
- **FOREST HILLS**—First Church recently called **Scott Sumner** as pastor.
- **HAZARD**—Big Creek Church recently called **Joshua Mabry** as youth pastor. He previously was youth pastor at First Church of Grayson. **Daryl Jesie** is pastor.
- **PIKEVILLE**—Mark Swan recently resigned as pastor of Grace Church.

Davises to lead annual retreat for deacons, pastors, spouses

Bowling Green—Kentucky Baptist deacons and pastors, along with their spouses, will be encouraged to "Take up the Towel" at the annual Deacon-Pastor-Spouse Retreat, Jan. 29-30, at the Holiday Inn University Plaza in Bowling Green.

Guest speakers for this year's event will be Steve Davis, executive director of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana, and his wife, Diana, an author and speaker.

"Dr. Davis and Diana are a dynamic team that will inspire and bless all who hear them," said Mike James, Kentucky Baptist Convention regional strategist and discipleship assimilation coordinator. "They are very creative in their presentation, and those who participate will be equipped, refreshed and ready to serve in innovative ways."

Prior to joining the Indiana convention in 2003, Davis served as pastor of several churches in Texas. He holds degrees from Dallas Baptist University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and San Francisco Theological Seminary.

Diana Davis is the author of three books and is a syndicated columnist. Her "Fresh Ideas" column is featured in 16 state Baptist papers, including the Western Recorder. She also is a popular conference speaker.

Using the theme, "Take up the Towel," the Davises will challenge participants to better understand

and maximize their roles in serving the church.

"We desire this retreat to be a time together where attendees will be renewed in their understanding of their specific roles as deacon, pastor or spouse," James noted. "As we focus on the New Testament pattern for deacons, we pray each person will leave ready and excited to take up the towel for the cause of Christ."

The couple will together lead two main sessions for all participants, and individually will lead a total of six breakout sessions that will provide role-specific ministry. The breakout sessions will include:

- **Organize**: You get what you get ready for.
- **Energize**: 10 ways you can make a difference this week.
- **Galvanize**: Building relationships as a deacon.
- **Personalize**: Impact ministry through hospitality and relationships.
- **Mobilize**: Practical ideas for deacon ministry.
- **Supersize**: Fresh ideas to enhance ministry.

The retreat will run from 5-10 p.m. (EST), Jan. 29, and from 7:30 a.m.-12 p.m., Jan. 30. Registration is \$55 per person and includes meals and conference materials.

For more information or to register, visit www.KyBaptist.org/DPS Retreat, or call (502) 489-3581 or toll free in Kentucky at (866) 489-3581.

Special gift for ministry

University of the Cumberlands' Mountain Outreach graduate assistant Chris Tucker (left) and student coordinator Jonathan Bowman (center) accept a donated backhoe from Jerry Diehl of Slater & Diehl Equipment Transport, Inc. in Pennsburg, Penn. The backhoe was provided as a gift from Mike Hunyady, a Pennsylvania business and a longtime friend of the school. Mountain Outreach, the university's student-led construction ministry, will begin using the backhoe to prepare building sites in March or April. (University of the Cumberlands photo)



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RETREATS: Youth groups: complete 2-day ski retreat, \$99, including lifts, lesson, lodging and 5 meals. Timberline: (800) 392-0152; www.timberline-resort.com. West Virginia Wild & Wonderful.

SEEKING: Part-time director of missions for Red River Baptist Association in rural Eastern Kentucky. Send resumés to Red River Baptist Association, PO Box 130, Hazel Green, KY 41332. Questions: Lewis Faulkenberry, (606) 568-6817.

SEEKING: Full-time Southern Baptist pastor for Grace Baptist Church, Pikeville, Ky., a member of Pike Association of Southern Baptists. Submit resumé to PO Box 1485, Pikeville, KY 41502.

SEEKING: Full-time youth minister, Elk Horn Baptist Church, Campbellsville, Ky., a Spirit-led, soul-winning, life-changing church seeking a creative and experienced youth pastor who has a passion for working with young people and who can lead and minister to a diverse, multi-cultural youth group (grades 7-12). Send resumé to office@elkhornbc.org; or 3145 Elkhorn Road, Campbellsville, KY 42718.

SEEKING: Part-time student minister for Dripping Spring Baptist Church in Olmstead, Ky. For more information, see www.drippingspring.com.

SEEKING: Full-time or bivocational pastor for Flint Southern Baptist Church in rural Calloway County, Ky. (near Murray). Flint is a traditional church using KJV and Baptist Hymnal for services. We prefer a full-time pastor, but will be glad to consider bivocational candidates. Send name, address and phone to search chairman, Larry Gilbert, at larrygilbert@newwavecomm.net.

SEEKING: Part-time minister to students with a willingness to partner in our mission to serve and share. For complete job description, visit www.elkcreekbaptist.org. Send resumé and cover letter to elkcreekbaptist@gmail.com.

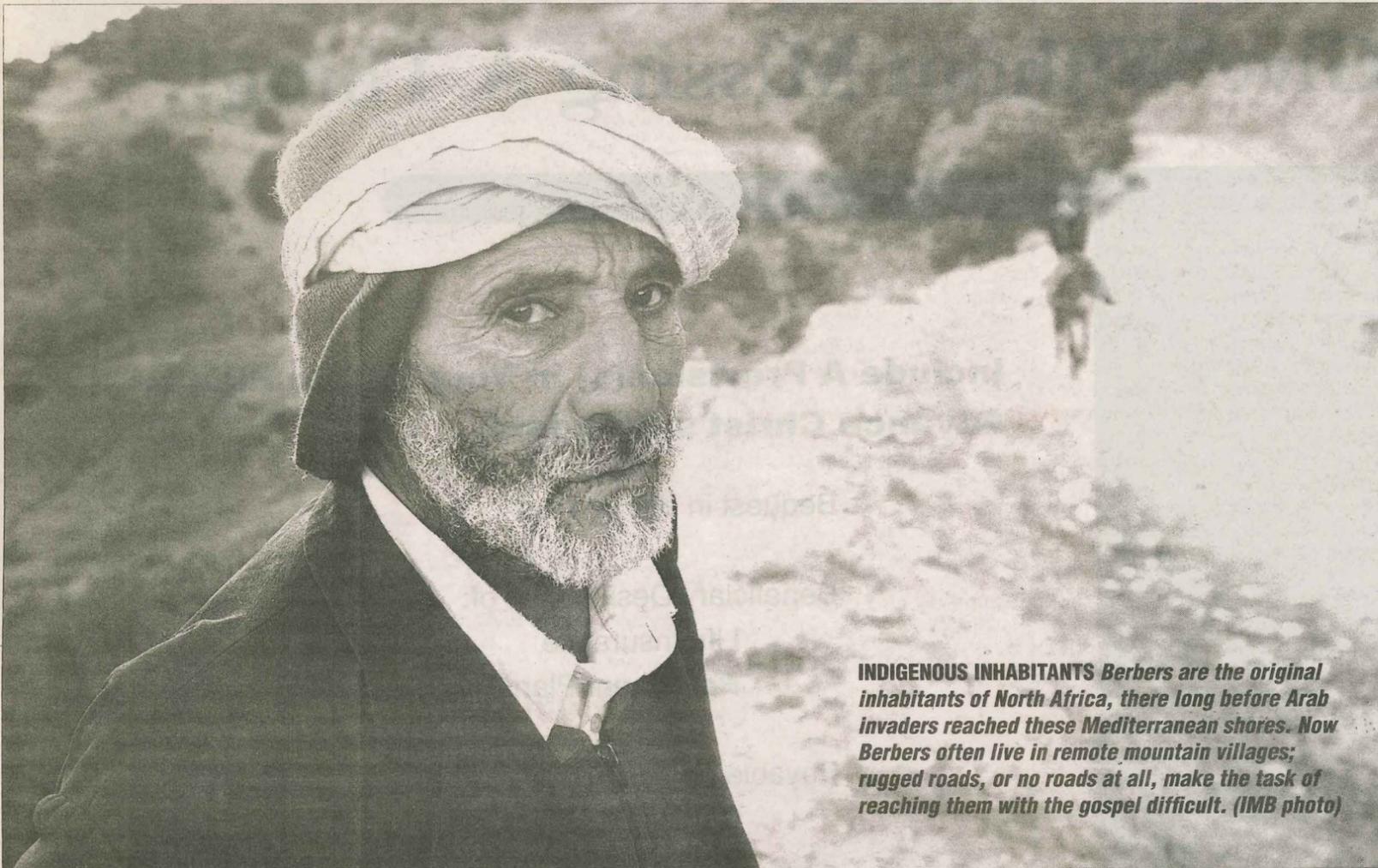
SEEKING: Pastor with 5-10+ years experience and seminary education for small church looking to grow. Send resumé to Lisa Pinkston, 1035 Cornishville Road, Harrodsburg, KY 40330.

SEEKING: Part-time music minister for Harmony Baptist, West Paducah, Ky. Send resumés via e-mail: harmonypastor@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Part-time music minister for Audubon Baptist Church. Responsible for blended-style congregational worship and choir direction. Only mailed resumés will be accepted. Mail to Linda Owen, 3205 Broeck Pointe Circle, Louisville, KY 40241.

SEEKING: Full-time activities pastor to minister to our church family and community through sports and recreation. Please send resumé to Search Committee, Campbellsville Baptist Church, PO Box 530, Campbellsville, KY 42719; or bradl@cvillebaptist.com.

Believers travel difficult road to Berbers' hearts



INDIGENOUS INHABITANTS Berbers are the original inhabitants of North Africa, there long before Arab invaders reached these Mediterranean shores. Now Berbers often live in remote mountain villages; rugged roads, or no roads at all, make the task of reaching them with the gospel difficult. (IMB photo)

Editor's Note: Every penny given to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is used to support more than 5,600 Southern Baptist missionaries as they share the gospel overseas. This year's offering goal is \$175 million. The 2009 Lottie Moon offering theme is "Who's Missing, Whose Mission?" It focuses on overcoming barriers to hearing and accepting the gospel in various parts of the world and the mission that the Great Commission gives all Christians to "go and make disciples of all nations." The 2009 Week of Prayer for International Missions is Nov. 29-Dec. 6. For resources about the offering, go to imb.org/offering.

By Elaine Gaston
International Mission Board

North Africa—The truck we were traveling in through the Atlas Mountains rounded the curve of a hillside to reveal a meadow spreading below. As the sun burnished the field with its afternoon rays, an old Berber woman and girl tended a large flock of sheep. We slowed the truck and then stopped, thinking we might photograph this pastoral scene.

We were traveling through Berber country, the mountainous home of the indigenous people of North Africa. An estimated 25 million Berbers live throughout the Maghreb ("place of sunset" in Arabic), the western region of North Africa. There are several major Berber groups, with distinctions determined in part by the geographical areas where they live and the languages they speak.

As we stood at the road's edge, the only sound we could hear was the plaintive cries of the sheep grazing below in the mountain pasture. No matter how we strained, we heard no distant rumble of traffic on a freeway, no jet overhead crossing the sky, no sound of modern life.

Land largely unchanged by time

To reach this place we had driven hours—across plains and then up

mountains, past cork oaks and Aleppo pines and finally through forests of soaring cedars at higher altitudes. And then we'd driven some more. Up here there were no electrical lines, no gas stations, no paved roads—just mountains, forests and simple Berber homes with smoke wisping out of stone chimneys, and here and there a solitary shepherd watching a flock of sheep.

In the past hour only one vehicle, a Peugeot truck, had passed us. It was altered to serve as a double-decker taxi with at least 14 men squeezed onto racks on the truck bed.

It is difficult to provide Berbers access to the gospel. While they can be found in cosmopolitan cities of North Africa as shopkeepers, restaurant workers and professionals, vast numbers live in remote mountain villages on bad roads or no roads.

So there, at this road's edge, we decided to make our way down to the two figures standing below. Because I was the only woman in our group, I went first, not sure if they would welcome our intrusion.

An old woman watched me curiously, then greeted me with a pleasant smile, her four upper front teeth missing from her grin. A girl shyly approached and smiled as well.

How odd we must have seemed to them. We wanted to take pictures of the sheep and of them. It was the golden hour for a photographer, that time of day when rich light suffuses scenes, bringing warmth and beauty to images that in other light might have gone unnoticed. And it was a golden moment. The sun glinted off the wool of the sheep as they cropped the dry grass and brought vivid colors from the girl's bright eyes and glowing complexion.

Even with our translator, we could communicate little with them, except by gestures and expres-

sions. Our translator spoke Arabic, the official language of the North African countries. But the mother, who looked years beyond her actual age, spoke only the local Berber language. Her daughter, who had attended a few years of primary school, spoke a bit of Arabic—enough to say that at 12 or 13 she was no longer in school. When we asked why, she shrugged and looked around. There in the midst of bleating sheep, in this remote place where life isn't much different than it would have been a century ago, there didn't seem to be much point to reading and writing.

Illiteracy is another obstacle to sharing the gospel here. Many people literally must be told the good news of Christ. There is no complete Bible translated for any of the several Berber languages.

Christianity can't be shared openly

Called "Berbers" by the rest of the world, these people call themselves Imazighen, which means "free men." They are, however, anything but free. Since the seventh century, when Arab invaders brought Islam along with their domination of these lands and peoples, the Berbers have been cloaked by centuries of spiritual oppression. "To be North African is to be Muslim" is the common saying here. And in these Muslim countries, Christian proselytizing is forbidden by law.

After a few minutes, two brothers appeared over the ridge and crossed the meadow toward us. The older brother understood more Arabic so we were able to converse some. We hoped to leave something with them.

We couldn't speak their Berber heart language, but we could leave them Christian materials in that language—a DVD of the "Jesus" film per-

haps, or other recorded gospel materials. But the brothers explained that they had no electricity and no television where they lived nearby. We asked if they could use a cassette tape. No, they had no cassette player, not even a radio.

This particular day was the Eid al-Fitr, the important holiday at the end of the month-long Ramadan fast. Most of the people we'd seen on this day, before we'd gotten to this back-of-the-beyond place, had been in transit to celebrate with family and friends. But here this family was, out tending sheep, as they did any other day of the week, the month, the year. The winters in these mountains, I thought, must be cold, long and dark. And isolating.

We shot more photos of the flock, some of the weathered mother, who tried her best to smile with her mouth closed to cover her missing teeth, and some of the radiant girl. I was frustrated that I didn't know a single phrase in her Berber language that could communicate to her a word of eternal value.

The girl, her mother, her brothers, may never meet another believer unless someone else takes that long, isolated road and stumbles down that hillside. Who is going to take that road and look for them?

We left the family a gift of cookies and tea. We said goodbyes and I squeezed the girl's hand. But my heart ached as we turned our backs and climbed the hillside to the truck. We paused again at the edge of the road, waving down at the now four small figures. They stood together, watching us, and waved, arms high over their heads. We started the truck engine and I looked back out the rear window as they got smaller and smaller. Finally, we swung around a curve in the road and they were gone. (BP)

Find more stories, free resources and other information on the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions at www.imb.org.



Moon used tea cakes to build relationships

According to national Woman's Missionary Union, www.wmu.com, as a way to earn the trust of the people and show her goodwill, Lottie Moon made tea cakes for the children in her village in China. After the children ate the cookies, they would take Lottie to their homes where she would share the gospel with their mothers. The children began calling Lottie "the cookie lady" instead of "foreign devil."

Plain Tea Cake

(As made by Lottie Moon)
Three teacups of sugar
One teacup of butter
One teacup of sour milk
Four pints flour
Three eggs, well beaten
Half a teaspoon of soda
Flavor to taste, roll thin, bake in a quick oven.

Adapted recipe

2 cups flour
½ cup butter
1 heaping cup of sugar
1 well-beaten egg
1 tablespoon cream
Cream the butter and sugar. Add the egg and mix well. Add the flour and cream. Dust a board with flour. Roll the dough very thin. Cut cookies with a round cookie cutter. Place on a buttered or nonstick cookie sheet. Bake at 475 degrees for about 5 minutes.

Give Without Missing A Thing!

Include A Provision(s) in Your Estate Plan to Advance Christ's Kingdom:

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 - Retirement Plan/IRA
- ◆ Payable on Death (POD) of:
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