

Shine
like
stars
in the
world
Philippians 2:15

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Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, Feb. 10

Kentucky Baptists return from Haiti



The Kentucky Baptist disaster relief team wrapped up its work in Haiti last weekend. According to reports from team chaplain Butch Vernon, the doctors and nurses treated as many as 600 patients daily at a makeshift hospital in Port-au-Prince. **Above:** Kentucky Baptist team members Tom McKechnie (right, blue scrubs), an emergency room doctor, and Chris Lee (left, brown scrubs), an emergency room nurse, both from Louisville, help unload a young patient brought to the hospital by ambulance. **Right:** John Brickey, a surgical tech from Louisville, sutures a man's head wound at the makeshift hospital. (Photos by Butch Vernon) For more photos of the Kentucky Baptist medical team at work, see page 6.

GCR chair says IMB/NAMB merger not in group's plans

By Mark Kelly

Jacksonville, Fla.—The much-discussed merger of Southern Baptists' two mission boards will not be among the recommendations presented to the Southern Baptist Convention at its June meeting in Orlando, Fla., the chairman of the SBC's Great Commission Resurgence Task Force said last week.

Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Baptist Church of Springdale, Ark., made the comment in an afternoon panel discussion about the task force's work during a pastors' conference at First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla.

Shortly after the GCR Task Force was formed, speculation at one point ran so high that the group might recommend to dismantle the North American Mission Board or to merge it with the International Mission Board that task force member Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, addressed it on the BetweentheTimes.com blog site as one of eight "myths" spreading among Southern Baptists. The idea that the task force was planning "to abolish" the IMB or dissolve it into the IMB was a matter of "intense discussion and interest" among Southern Baptists, Akin acknowledged in that article, but "a myth as it relates to the current work of the GCRTF."

SBC President Johnny Hunt, also a task force member, addressed the subject during one of the earliest listening sessions—an Aug. 26 panel discussion at the Church at Pinnacle Hills in Rogers, Ark. Hunt said at the time it was "poor journalism" that suggested the task force would consider disassembling NAMB and added: "There is absolutely no quote whatsoever to go with that. It is ludicrous."



Ronnie Floyd

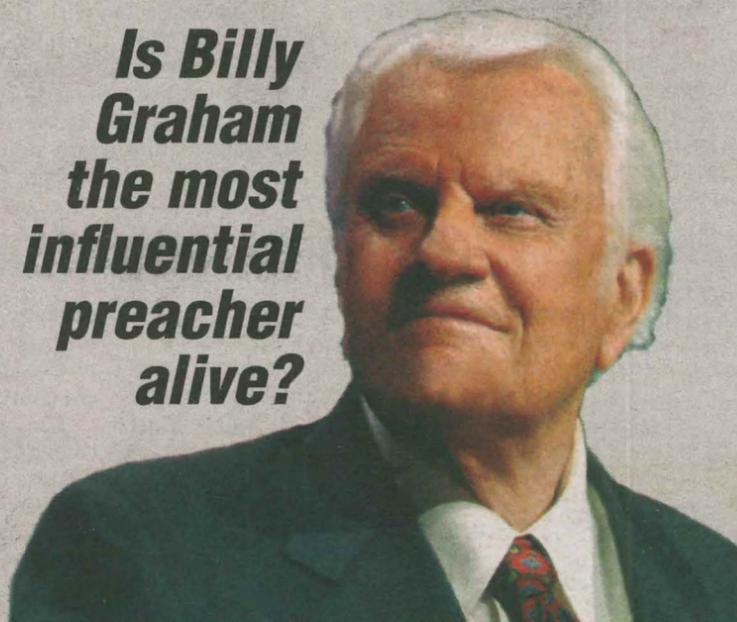
During the Feb. 1 event in Jacksonville, however, Floyd acknowledged the task force had weighed the option of changing the SBC's two-board arrangement.

"Our sights are set on having the North American Mission Board, and our sights are set on having an International Mission Board," Floyd told the group. "There was great, great, great discussion, study, planning and even to the point of having strategic formation of the possibility of the other. But we just really sensed in our heart that wasn't right at this time," he added in response to a question from Jeff Callaway, a Cleveland church planter.

Not proposing a radically different approach to organizing Southern Baptist missions this year doesn't mean the idea is not right "for a later day—five years from now, 10

See ... Page 3

Is Billy Graham the most influential preacher alive?



LifeWay Research poll says 'yes'

By Rob Phillips
LifeWay Christian Resources

Nashville—He has preached the gospel to more than 200 million people in 185 lands and, at 91, still maintains that his one purpose in life is "to help people find a personal relationship with God, which, I believe, comes through knowing Christ."

Billy Graham, whose crusade in Los Angeles in 1949 vaulted him into the public square, is far and away the top living preacher that has most influenced Protestant pastors, according to a recent survey by LifeWay Research.

In telephone interviews conducted last November, Protestant pastors were asked to "name the top three living Christian preachers that most influence you." Twenty-one percent of pastors surveyed said Graham—that's nearly three times the number who named Charles Swindoll, prominent pastor, author and host of the radio Bible-teaching ministry *Inspiration for Living*.

Graham, who served as a pastor early in his ministry, has led major evangelistic campaigns around the world, authored 27 books and

See Graham tops ... Page 8

Pastors call on Ky. lawmakers to sign Manhattan Declaration

By Drew Nichter
News Director

Frankfort—Under the dome of the Capitol Rotunda in Frankfort, dozens of church leaders and state lawmakers gathered to pledge their support for the Manhattan Declaration.

At a rally last week, Frankfort pastor Herschel York led the charge in urging Kentucky pastors and legislators to sign a statement of solidarity to the document that addresses perceived cultural threats.

Released last November, the Manhattan Declaration, described as a "call of Christian conscience," was drafted by Catholic, evangelical and Orthodox Christian leaders. The document specifies three "fundamental truths" that must be defended.

They are:

- The sanctity of human life.
- The dignity of marriage as the conjugal union of husband and wife.
- The right of conscience and religious liberty.

Just as the framers of the U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence appealed to and acknowledged God as judge and creator, York said those who stand behind the Manhattan Declaration do the same.

"We're not just saying we agree with these principles; we're saying that we are willing to venture everything on these principles," he emphasized.

York, who is pastor of Buck Run Baptist Church and a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, organized the rally, gathering dozens of pastors from churches across denominational lines. He also called on state legislators to be present, as well as those candidates who will oppose them in upcoming elections.

York urged all who were present—lawmakers especially—to sign a notebook affirming a "Kentucky Statement of Solidarity" in accordance with the Manhattan Declaration.

It called on signatories to unite with "like-minded Christians throughout the United States and the Commonwealth of Kentucky in proclaiming our dedication to values that cannot be violated without



TAKING A STAND Above: Frankfort pastor Herschel York urges pastors, lawmakers and others gathered at the Capitol Rotunda Feb. 1 to pledge their support for the Manhattan Declaration, a document drafted by Christian leaders in response to cultural "threats," such as abortion and same-sex marriage. **Right:** Rep. Stan Lee, R-Lexington, signs his name, indicating his endorsement of the statement. (Photos by Drew Nichter)

dire consequences to our society."

Specifically, York called upon those legislators who claim to be Christians and look to churches for their support to sign the statement.

"If they are going to name the name of Jesus and claim to be a follower of His, then they should lead and legislate and live according to those Christian principles," he said.

Legislators support pledge

In an interview with the Western Recorder days after the rally, York said the exact number of Kentucky lawmakers who signed the solidarity statement still was being compiled. However, several who were present at the rally signed the pledge and spoke out in support of it.

"If Christians who call themselves by that name in state government would stand up for these principles, we would be the most pro-life state in the union," declared Tim Moore, a Republican representative from Elizabethtown.

Sen. Katie Stine, R-Fort Thomas, encouraged Christians statewide to get involved in government and the election process.

"We must work to ensure that we have moral and just laws that elevate and enable our human beings," she noted. "We must stand for truth and liberty, recognizing that our fundamental rights are given to us not by government, but by God."

York said he invited members of all three branches of the state government to attend the rally. He did receive word from the governor's office that Gov. Steve

Beshear would not be able to attend the rally. York said he didn't know if that meant the governor intended to sign the solidarity statement at a later date.

However, York did call on those legislators who opt not to sign the declaration to offer an explanation why.

"What part of this statement do you have a disagreement with?" York asked. "And we have a right to know that, too—you claim to represent us; we want to know."

David Prince, pastor of Ashland Avenue Baptist Church in Lexington, who spoke at the rally, said those legislators who claim to be Christians must be held accountable for how they legislate.

"Christian values must be more than a slogan," Prince stressed, "it must be a responsibility of how you do what you do when you're in office."

In addition, churches and pastors bear the task of upholding the moral standards espoused in the Manhattan Declaration, according to John Mark Toby.

"These are the principles that we can agree on across denominational lines, that we can come together on as brothers and sisters in Christ and as churches," said Toby, pastor of Beacon Hill Baptist Church in Somerset and Southern Baptist Convention first vice president.

"Many of the problems that we're talking about, I believe, would go away if the church would be the church and preach the word," he added.

York said that the names of all of the individuals who signed the solidarity statement at last week's rally will be added to the list of signatures on the Manhattan Declaration Web site.

Currently, there are more than 420,000 signatures on the document. Notable Southern Baptist signatories include: Daniel Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary; Richard Land, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission; and Albert Mohler, president of Southern Seminary.

For more information or to sign the Manhattan Declaration document online, visit www.ManhattanDeclaration.org.

Clarification

To further clarify a story in last week's Western Recorder, "Mission Board staff to get modest raises," the approval of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's salary administration plan—used by KBC staff to prepare their budgets—by the KBC Mission Board's administrative committee at its Jan. 28 meeting must be voted on by the Mission Board's business and finance committee at its meeting in March. If approved, it then will go to the full Mission Board in May for its approval.

Davis urges deacons: 'Take up the towel,' pour water on fire

By Todd Deaton
Editor

Bowling Green—The threat of an approaching snowstorm may have kept some away, but about 135 deacons and their spouses who attended a Jan. 29-30 retreat in Bowling Green still were inspired by Jesus' charge in Acts 6:1-7 to "take up the towel."

"One's influence as a deacon is not gained by position or status, but by service," challenged keynote speaker Steve Davis, executive director of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana. Each participant was presented a towel during the first session of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's annual Deacon-Pastor-Spouse Retreat as a reminder of their call to servanthood.

Davis, who served as pastor of four Texas churches prior to assuming the top Indiana Baptist post in 2003, emphasized that the original meaning of the word "deacon" provides a word picture of a servant attitude—"to stir up dust while waiting on tables."

Acts 6 helps the church understand the heart of what a deacon is to be, Davis said. "In the life of the church, they are to be servants," he

explained. "But what deacons do varies from church to church, because no two churches are alike and different churches have different needs."

The seven men who were selected as the first deacons were chosen because of their discerning, spiritual ability; and they were asked to fill a ministry need so the apostles could focus on their primary task of prayer and spreading the word, Davis noted. The end result was that harmony was restored in the church, a problem was resolved, everyone was unified, and the church began to grow again, he observed.

After noting that the first deacons were not a board of directors, Davis drew attention to the fact that they were servants who helped with solving a fellowship problem in the church by meeting a ministry need.

When deacons focus on helping maintain unity and harmony, they bring great honor and dignity to their office and become a great asset to the church's ministry, Davis maintained. "You are never closer to being like Jesus than when you serve."

Explaining that the word for "complaining," which described members of the early church, refers

to the buzzing sound made by the wings of bees when they are mad, Davis quipped, "That's a pretty good description of complaining isn't it?"

"It's that attitude when there's a mumbling under one's breath; there's this behind-the-back moaning and groaning," he remarked.

Unfortunately, in many of today's churches, pastors are overworked in taking care of hundreds of little things that will make no difference in eternity, while they are underemployed in the basics of prayer, preaching, teaching and equipping, Davis charged. "Jonah was swallowed by a big fish, but most of our pastors are being nibbled to death by minnows."

"Here's the worst thing: When people are grumbling and complaining about each other and at each other, their best energies for ministry are not being utilized," he pointed out.

Deacons, instead, are to help solve these problems, not create or fuel them, Davis reiterated. "Every deacon carries around two buckets: One filled with water; one filled with gas," he illustrated. "Which one you choose to put on a church fire—a

problem in the church—is up to you.

"But consider," he continued, "if you've made a commitment to the Lord, your pastor and the church to be a deacon, then you've made a commitment to always choose the bucket filled with water and never the bucket of gas."

Davis encouraged deacons to serve alongside their pastors as friends, helpers, encouragers and fellow servants. "Stand side by side, shoulder to shoulder in the ministry," he urged.

If deacons are committed to their role of serving and keeping the fellowship, the church will be harmonious, the pastor and staff will be helped, and the congregation will be healthy, Davis affirmed.

During the retreat, Davis also led breakout sessions on organizing for deacon ministry, building relationships, and mobilizing for effectiveness, while his wife, Diana, a popular conference speaker and author, whose column appears in 16 state Baptist papers, including the Western Recorder, led workshops for the spouses on ways to make a difference and impacting ministry through hospitality.

Southern Baptist volunteers in Haiti charged with kidnapping

Group members to go before judge, face up to 15 years in prison

Port-au-Prince, Haiti—A Haitian prosecutor Feb. 4 charged 10 members of a Baptist volunteer team with child kidnapping and criminal association for allegedly not following the law in attempting to transport 33 children into the Dominican Republic.

Haitian Deputy Prosecutor Jean Ferge Joseph then handed the case to an investigative judge, Reuters news service reported.

"That judge can free you but he can also continue to hold you for further proceedings," he told the group, comprised of five men and five women who were arrested Jan. 29.

The charges carry prison terms of up to 15 years, according to The New York Times.

The case has garnered national and international attention and has adoption and Christian aid agencies concerned it could tarnish their work. The 10 volunteers maintain they are innocent.

A Haitian pastor who assisted the team told the Associated Press that the volunteers had permission from parents of children in the group who were not orphans to transport them into the Dominican Republic and to an orphanage there. The pastor, Jean Sainvil, described the controversy as a misunderstanding stemming from the volunteers not having the needed paperwork for the children. Sainvil said the Baptist volunteers were acting "with a good heart."

Prior to the hearing last week, group leader Laura Silsby told a group of reporters, "We're just trusting God for a positive outcome." Southern Baptist Convention leaders, including SBC President Johnny Hunt and Executive Committee President Morris Chapman, have urged Southern Baptists to pray for the jailed volunteers.

Gil Lain, pastor of Paramount Baptist Church in Amarillo, Texas—where one of the volunteers, Jim Allen, is a member—said in a statement last week on the church's Web site that the volunteers' goal simply was to "take care of 'the least of these' (Matthew 25:40), just as Jesus said." He also discounted accusations that the 10 volunteers knew what they were doing was wrong.

"Here's what you may not have heard or read: They spent three days getting the proper paperwork in order," Lain noted. "The problem arose when they got to the border and still lacked something due to a change in the laws."

Allen's wife, Lisa, told CNN's "Larry King Live" she has not spoken with her husband since he was arrested.

"I think it's a big misunderstanding that's kind of been blown out of proportion," she said. "Their intentions were to go there and help the kids that were in need."

The volunteers' families released a brief statement Feb. 3 that read in part, "Our hearts and prayers continue to go out to our family members who are being held in Haiti. We are concerned and worried about them, but the two governments need time to work this out."

P.J. Crowley, a spokesman for the U.S. Department, was quoted in a CNN.com report as saying American and Haitian officials are "working to try to ascertain what happened (and) the motive behind these people."

Silsby was seen in several video interviews Jan. 31 and Feb. 1, which were permitted by authorities, as stating that the group had thought their plans were in order for transporting the children into the Dominican Republic until they were stopped by Haitian guards at the border between the two countries.

Silsby, in an interview with a CNN reporter, said, "We believe that we have been charged very falsely with trafficking, which of course that is the furthest possible extreme."

Of the 33 children the volunteers were seeking to help, Silsby said, "They really didn't have any paperwork. This is, again, probably a misunderstanding on my part, but I did not really understand that that would really need to be required."

Told by the CNN reporter that at least 10 of the children had a mother or father and a telephone number, Silsby said, "I can tell you our heart and our intent was to help only those children that needed us most, that they had lost either both mother and father, or had lost one of their parents and the other parent had abandoned them."

Silsby is a member of Central Valley Baptist Church in Meridian, Idaho, as are group members Charisa Coulter, Carla Thompson and Nicole and Corinna Lankford. Three detainees are from Eastside Baptist Church in Twin Falls, Idaho: pastor Paul Thompson, his son, Silas, and church member Steve McMullen. The other detainees are Allen and Drew Culbert, a firefighter who also is an assistant youth pastor at Bethel Baptist Church in Topeka, Kan., the local church not affiliated with the SBC. (BP)

STORY AT A GLANCE

All 10 members of a Baptist volunteer group have been charged with kidnapping and remain in police custody in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

The group of five men and five women was arrested Jan. 29 after being stopped by Haitian guards while trying to take 33 children to an orphanage in the Dominican Republic.

Group leader Laura Silsby has said in interviews that the group only wanted to help the children and that she believes the ordeal is a misunderstanding.

The group is expected to appear before a judge soon. If the charges are upheld and the volunteers are convicted, they face up to 15 years in prison.

Nine of the 10 volunteers are members of Southern Baptist Convention-affiliated churches in Idaho and Texas.

IMB/NAMB not part of GCR Task Force's plans

Continued from page 1

knows for now, you know, 20. Who knows? Only God knows," Floyd said. Then he added: "We're going to find a way to do some things together, which I think that's going to be revolutionary."

While the task force's full report will not be released until May 3, Floyd said his presentation at the Feb. 22-23 SBC Executive Committee meeting in Nashville would "unveil a great part" of the final document.

Prior to the panel discussion, Floyd had challenged the pastors in attendance to "face the facts" about lostness in America and around the world. Of 306 million people in the United States, at least 254.6 million are lost, he said. And of the planet's 6.8 billion people, 4 billion have little or no access to the message of salvation in Jesus Christ.

The "massive lostness" of the world requires pastors to begin

thinking like missions strategists, Floyd suggested.

"Do you realize there are places in your region where the gospel has never yet been?" Floyd asked. "We need to find those places and we need to go fishing there. We need to discover the ponds of lostness, the tanks of lostness ... and take the gospel there, advance the gospel where the gospel has never been."

Serving as chairman of the task force the past seven months has changed both his life and his ministry, Floyd said.

"I wish I knew 20 years ago what I know today," he noted. While he can't go back and change the way he did things in the past, Floyd said, "I am setting the course for the future in a different way, to give my life to advance the gospel, to penetrate the lostness of this world."

Floyd said the group's research has led him to a sad discovery: "the

lack of urgency in our churches, and by the leaders of our churches, and our denominations, ... about advancing the gospel."

"That has to change," Floyd declared. "To the degree that we understand and embrace lostness, intellectually and theologically, (that) will be the degree (to which) we operate our lives and our ministries with urgency."

Floyd pointed out that in the moments following the massive Jan. 12 earthquake in Haiti, people turned the backs of pick-up trucks into ambulances and doors into stretchers.

"You know why?" Floyd asked. "Urgency called them to do it. If we want to penetrate lostness, we have to have an urgency that is unprecedented—in your life, in my life, in your church, my church, and all evangelical churches that want to penetrate lostness with the gospel." (BP)

'Black eye' for adoption movement?

By Bob Allen

Louisville—A Southern Baptist seminary professor said the kidnapping charges brought against a group of Baptists from the U.S. accused of trying to remove children from earthquake-stricken Haiti without proper documentation could give a black eye to a budding movement of evangelicals who view adoption as a means of spreading the gospel.

Russell Moore, senior vice president for academic administration and dean of the School of Theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, recalled his reaction to hearing the news that 10 Americans charged with kidnapping were members of Baptist churches on the "Albert Mohler Radio Program" Feb. 1.



Russell Moore

"I thought, 'Oh no, this is going to cause all kinds of derision to the orphan-care movement and to what the Holy Spirit is doing in churches all across America and all over the world in having a heart for orphans,'" Moore said, sitting in as guest host for Mohler, Southern Seminary president.

Last year, Moore published a book titled "Adopted for Life" calling on Christians to adopt children as a "Great Commission priority." On Feb. 26-27, the seminary in Louisville, is sponsoring an Adopting for Life conference aimed at creating "a culture of adoption" in families and churches.

"The Bible tells us that human families are reflective of an eternal fatherhood (Ephesians 3:14-15)," according to a Web site promoting the event. "We know, then, what human fatherhood ought to look like on the basis of how Father God behaves toward us. But the reverse is also true. We see something of the way our God is fatherly toward us through our relationships with our own human fathers. And so Jesus tells us that in our human father's provision and discipline we get a glimpse of God's active love for us (Matthew 7:9-11; Hebrews 12:5-7). The same is at work in adoption."

Moore, the father of two children adopted from a Russian orphanage, said while all the facts are not in about the motives and methods of the mission team, he has heard from many individuals stirred by images of suffering asking what they can do to help Haitian orphans.

Particularly following tragedy, Moore said couples seeking international adoption can feel frustrated by the seemingly endless process of filing and processing papers. But he said a certain amount of red tape is necessary to ensure that children have no surviving relatives able to care for them before they are removed from a home, and that they receive proper care from their new parents.

"I'm worried that this news is going to give a black eye to the orphan-care movement in the same way that some of the really rambunctious, lawbreaking aspects of the right-to-life protest movement did to the pro-life movement," Moore said on Mohler's program. "You had people who were saying for instance, 'Unless we have a constitutional amendment right now outlawing all abortions in every situation, then we can't do anything.' Well that hurt, I think, the pro-life movement in many ways."

Moore said backlash to what is being reported as well-intended but poorly executed action by the church group "is going to cause people to have increased skepticism toward what I think is a genuine movement of the Spirit of God among God's people."

During the segment, Moore interviewed Jedd Medefind, president of the Christian Alliance for Orphans and a keynote speaker at the upcoming adoption conference.

"I think those of us who care passionately for the cause of orphans ... are just deeply embarrassed by this, and I think frankly it will have the potential to do some really pretty significant long-term harm to the cause of both Christian care in country as well as the cause of adoption," Medefind noted.

"I think some folks who really oppose our approach to caring for children will kind of point to this very mistakenly as Exhibit A of reasons why a focus on adoption is not healthy and why you should leave caring for orphans just to governments and not allow ordinary people in the church to be involved."

Moore said there are some people who comprise "kind of an anti-adoption movement out there that would say every adoption is abduction. ... I can just see those people saying, 'See, this is what we're talking about.'" (ABP)

2010 begins well

The year 2010 is off to an excellent start for Kentucky Baptists, thanks to several outstanding training events and generous gifts to missions work.

Partners in the Mission



By Bill Mackey

In early January, the Shepherding the Shepherd Conference provided great encouragement for 242 ministers and their spouses. This renewal experience strengthens each participant's relationship with God and with his or her spouse.

We are so grateful for our partnership with Baptist Healthcare System that makes this conference possible. When we help these church leaders, we are also impacting their churches and communities.

Participants heard from leaders in Kentucky, along with the well-known H. B. London of Focus on the Family. The leaders were transparent about their challenges and told of how God has been gracious in sustaining them and working miracles.

I am grateful for the KBC Leadership Development Team and especially to Leadership Development Department Director Richard Adams and Ministry Assistant Diane Pitts for their excellent service. The team spends much time in prayer and preparation to make sure needs are met and participants are free to worship God together.

The Deacon-Pastor-Spouse Retreat was also a wonderful experience for many of our church leaders. Steve Davis and his wife, Diana, led this powerful retreat and provided the most resources I have ever seen for deacon/spouse ministry. Now serving as executive director for the Indiana Baptist Convention, Steve shared resources he developed while serving as a pastor. He had 100 deacons in his last church and God worked through their development to enable the church to experience tremendous growth and reduce debt. We are grateful for the strong leadership over this event given by Mike James, discipleship and assimilation coordinator, and Cheryl Frerman, ministry assistant.

I also want to thank Kentucky Baptists for continuing to support ministries like this through your Cooperative Program gifts. We have been inspired and blessed by your faithful giving in the midst of challenging economic times.

One example of this generosity comes from Cherry Hill Baptist Church in Central City which recently received a large estate gift from Marie Nicholson, a retired school teacher who loved her church, missions, evangelism and the Woman's Missionary Union. Her niece, Carol Noffsinger, had been a staff member for Kentucky WMU.

Because of Nicholson's request that most of her gift go to missions, Cherry Hill was able to give \$121,550.58 through the Eliza Broadus Offering for state missions; \$121,550.58 through the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American missions; and \$243,101.16 through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for international missions. We indeed are blessed as Kentucky Baptists to have faithful believers among us like Marie Nicholson who are truly committed to the Great Commission.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Appreciating those who 'take up the towel'

Deacons sometimes bear the brunt of jokes and jabs, occasionally even from the pulpit. Most are just good-natured ribbing, but some remarks do little to foster healthy, harmonious relationships. As a pastor's son who has served as a deacon at three different churches, I have been privy to this humor from both perspectives. For the most part, however, the deacons who I have known love their churches deeply, support and appreciate their pastors, want to be actively involved in ministry, and truly desire to see their churches grow.



After Thought

By Todd Deaton

Consider for a moment these 10 Commandments for deacons offered by those attending a KBC Deacon-Pastor-Spouse Retreat in Bowling Green: 1) Be a servant. 2) Be quick to listen, slow to speak. 3) Ask questions of older deacons. 4) Pray continually and with spouse. 5) Endure hardship; hang in there through the tough times. 6) Spend time with your family. 7) Understand and respect confidentiality. 8) Discover your spiritual gifts and use them. 9) Be visible in the church's ministry. 10) Be available to the pastor.

Likewise, consider the core values of the church that these deacons identified: involvement in small groups, participating in missions, making disciples and helping them grow in their faith, responding to needs in the church and community, practicing personal stewardship and intercessory prayer. All of these deacons most assuredly agreed with keynote speaker Steve Davis' admonition: "If we are going to be deacons, we ought to step up to the plate and realize we have to be involved in the ministries and programs of the church. If you are not in worship, it shows; if you are not in your place in Bible study, it shows; if the church is gathering for revival and you are not there, it shows; and if you are not there for a time of prayer on Wednesday nights, it shows." Deacons who are not involved in the ongoing ministries of their churches soon lose credibility, he keenly observed.

Indeed, deacons are at their best when they see themselves functioning as they were first intended: serving others. Davis, executive director of Indiana Baptists, described how deacons can "galvanize" unity in the congregation by encouraging the pastor and church staff. Rather than acting as a board to discuss administrative or operational questions, these deacons prefer to see themselves as ministers—an extension of their church's pastoral care ministry. Davis is

right: "From all indications in the New Testament, a church is only limited by the number of active, dedicated ministers it has." That's why it is imperative that deacons ensure personal ministry is taking place in the life of the church by discovering and exercising their spiritual gifts and encouraging others toward a greater commitment to their Lord.

At the retreat, Davis shared about one of his favorite deacons, Bill, who—though he wasn't really eloquent—had a passion for being a soul winner. Bill taught a fifth grade Sunday school class for boys and never missed a Sunday in 57 years. His goal was to see each boy come to faith in Jesus before he entered the sixth grade. "That was his prayer every year," Davis said. Bill made it a point to go visit in the home of every boy. "He not only wanted to be a witness to that boy, but also to his parents and any other family members he had as well," Davis explained. For just about every year that he taught, the Lord honored Bill's prayer.

Davis recalled how all of the boys through the years held Bill in high regard. One Sunday, after Bill had an operation, they were concerned that he would have to miss for the first time. So, the boys asked their parents to take them to his hospital room so they could meet with their beloved teacher.

After Bill's death, while visiting in his home, Davis noticed a fish on the wall with the inscription "wishin' I was fishin'" underneath. In an old tackle box nearby, Davis thought he would find lures. Instead, he found Bill's witnessing tracts and marked New Testaments. With them was a notebook in which Bill had kept track of every boy he had taught, when that boy had prayed to receive Jesus, when he was baptized, and where he was today. He had tried to keep up with them as best he could, Davis explained. He challenged the deacons: "Wishin' I was fishin'—if God would burn that passion in your hearts, then our churches, our communities would be transformed."

His story brought to mind one of my own favorite deacons. As a youth, I, too, had a Sunday school teacher, Ed, who was of the same mold. Yes, there are always a few who garner our attention by sowing discord but, by and large, there are far more Bills and Eds out there—humble servants, doing the true work of a deacon: sharing Christ and caring for others day in and day out. This Sunday, speak a word of appreciation to those who "take up the towel."

Putting a face on Facebook

Just over one year ago I went over to the darkside. I joined the club. I became trendy. I went on Facebook.

How I found myself on Facebook is more complicated than actually finding me on Facebook. It's kind of a long story, a story of cultural rebellion and anti-cool defiance. But, I caved. I caved in to peer pressure and I caved in to convenience. It's easier to tell someone to look you up on Facebook than it is to give them one of my three different e-mail addresses.

But it's more than that. I think Facebook might be biblical. After all, John predicts the rise of this Internet giant in his third epistle: "I had many things to write to you, but I am not willing to write them to you with pen and ink ... we will speak face to face" (3 John 13-14).

I'm taking some liberties with the text, and I certainly wouldn't preach this text as a predictive affirmation of the Facebook phenomena. However, John's desire to see someone face to face does speak to the increasing interest in Facebook as a social networking site.

I've been told repeatedly since joining Facebook, that it is addictive. I can see how someone could spend many hours chatting with long lost friends and newly found friends. We do it, as John says, that we might see someone face to face.

Facebook puts a face on the faceless Internet. You can post photos of yourself, your family, your fanaticism. And, as you respond and place your mark on someone's "wall," you have a face to put with the "person" with whom you're "talking," albeit in short sentences. That's the attraction, I think. That's the basis of the addiction. As humans, we long for relationship. Facebook feeds that need.

Biblically speaking, we were created for relationship. Part of the "imago Dei," the image of God, in man must be the ability and desire for fellowship with others. God in His Trinitarian essence enjoys eternal relationship with the other Persons in the Trinity (see John 17:5 for example). On the human side, Adam without Eve was incomplete (Gene-

sis 2:18). Adam with Eve was made whole and together they made one (Genesis 2:24). A key part of being human, therefore, is communication, the sharing of company with others.

For all the good that it does, for all the fulfillment that it brings, Facebook and social networking Web sites bring the potential for communal failure. To that end, we must conclude with a few words of caution.

Electronic communication must never be allowed to take the place of face to face conversation. In sensitive matters of affection or rebuke, we must speak face to face. In love, what kind of love is it if we can't tell those we love what we mean to their face? In rebuke, what kind of spineless jellyfish exercises discipline or correction via the information superhighway?

Remember, it is not good for man to be alone. To that end, let Facebook serve its purpose. Use it to keep you in touch over the miles and years. However, don't let it take the place of face to face conversation. As John says, a letter is good. Being there in person is lightyears better. (BP)

Peter Beck serves as an assistant professor of religion at Charleston Southern University in Charleston, S.C.

WESTERN Recorder

Box 43969
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Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. Romans 14:19

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Single adults looking for work

By James Stillwell

Q: A recent USA Today article pointed out that the unemployment rate is higher for single adults. What do you say to single adults struggling in a difficult economy?



A: Linda Hardin, single adult consultant for the Church of the Nazarene, offers the following thoughts about dealing with unemployment:

1) Grieve, acknowledge the losses. "Disenfranchised grief" includes losses not generally recognized as grief-worthy.

When you lose your discretionary income, you may not be able to participate in church activities that require a fee. When you lose your self-esteem, it is hard to know with whom you can share your struggles.

2) Seek help from others. Get involved in Christian single adult community where you can know your friends as "family." Put it "out there" to those who might be able to be part of the answer to your prayers.

3) Acknowledge that you are job hunting. Spend every bit of the time you would have spent at work in looking for a job.

4) Recognize that not getting a job feels like rejection. Watch for signs of depression. Find a counselor or trusted friend with whom you can vent.

5) Network. As you let others know of your plight, some people will know of others who have job openings. Expand your circle of influence by making phone calls, sending e-mails and talking with people.

6) Stay connected to God. Do not neglect your spiritual resources; rather, use this time to dive into them. Allow the stories of how God has been faithful to His people in the past give you encouragement.

7) Laugh. Smile. Be positive. Laughter is great medicine, so watch a funny movie or read a funny book.

8) Share time with friends. Allow others to be your companion on the journey. Remember, "when one falls down, his friend can help him up" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

James Stillwell is minister to singles at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington.

Journalist finds moments of hope in Haiti relief efforts

By Alan James

I didn't want to go. The trip seemed too rushed, too difficult to plan and, honestly, too dangerous.

The 7.0 magnitude earthquake hit Haiti Jan. 12, and the next day the International Mission Board's media department decided to send a team to report on the devastation and relief efforts. We wanted churches to know as soon as possible how they could respond.

But there seemed to be too many unanswered questions. How would we get into the country? What would we do for transportation? Where would we stay when we got there? What about food and water? We needed a good plan, but we didn't know how many logistical details we would have to nail down after we got there.

Getting down there within a week of the disaster didn't seem realistic. I prayed, "Lord, if You want us down there so soon, then You're going to have to make this happen."

The next day we got a tip about Tim Dortch, a bivocational pastor in Camden, Miss. Dortch has more than 15 years of volunteer missions experience in Haiti and owns a compound in the Dominican Republic. His compound had electricity, running water, food, supplies, Internet access and trucks to take us into Haiti. Suddenly everything had fallen into place. A peace came over me. I couldn't wait to get to Haiti.

When we arrived in Port-au-Prince, we were assaulted by a variety of smells—dust, urine, food and death. The sight of thousands of people living in makeshift camps scattered around the city was overwhelming. People were sleeping, bathing, going to the bathroom right out in the open.

Our team encountered a woman rolling around in the street, screaming, "I can't take life in the street anymore." Though Haiti is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, most of the people there had homes before the earthquake. They had jobs and access to water and food.

Life as they knew it is now gone.

Still, there were moments that confirmed to me God was there.

A pregnant young woman sat quietly against a monument in one of the camps. A Bible rested in her right hand. As she read, she raised her left hand toward the sky.

It was a quiet moment in the middle of chaos.

So many Haitians had lost everything. But when they borrowed something as insignificant as a pen, they were mindful to return it to its owner. IMB missionary Mark Rutledge delivered their contact information to a Southern Baptist disaster relief assessment team, which was sending four medical teams to Haiti the next week.

Then there were the children. Many of them were quick with a smile when they saw cameras and outsiders entering their world. Some played soccer. A couple of boys playfully chased each other through the crowd. Others flew homemade kites made out of plastic plates.

Many of the young ones seemed oblivious to the devastation around them. The toughest part was seeing collapsed buildings, especially schools, where we knew bodies of children remained beneath the rubble. More bodies—ones no one had claimed—were in the street.

On the final night of our trip, our team visited a clinic just beyond the Haitian border in Jimani, Dominican Republic. The clinic looked more like a war zone.

Wounded Haitians lay all over the facility. Some were resting on mattresses on the clinic floor or in the grass outside because that was the only space left. Some had limbs amputated. Many others had bandages on their heads or pins in their broken legs or arms. Volunteer doctors and IMB missionaries serving as interpreters were bleary-eyed and exhausted from days with little sleep. They walked among the injured, providing whatever medical help and comfort they could.

Again, we found a moment of peace and hope amid the chaos.

An elderly woman was resting on a bed in the lobby. Claire's hip was broken and she was waiting for surgery. Looters had stolen everything from her abandoned home. And some of her family had died in the earthquake.

Despite all of this, Claire couldn't stop smiling. "I have hope in God," she said in Creole through an interpreter. "God will get me through this."

People like that give me hope for Haiti. I left Haiti with a feeling that good things were on the horizon for the country. Not bad for someone who initially didn't want to go there. (BP)

Alan James is a writer for the International Mission Board.

Campbellsville students, church partnering to reach Ngabe

By Ed Pavy

About 10 years ago, Campbellsville University was seeking alumni who might be serving on the international mission field.

We located Bill and Linda Egbert in Costa Rica. They had graduated in the 1980s and had been serving with the International Mission Board since the mid-1990s. The Egberts were living in a small town called San Vito in southern Costa Rica. Bill had identified an unreached people group called the Ngabe, an indigenous tribe that had been placed on various reservations. Their initial effort was to the Ngabe living on the LaCasona reserve.

We wanted the Egberts to know that when their next stateside assignment rolled around, we would be more than happy to host them through our Missionary-in-Residence program. We arranged for them to join us for the 1999-2000 school year. It was a great time for them to get re-acquainted with their alma mater and for building personal relationships. Bill even went on one of our spring break mission trips; he was an interpreter for a team that did campus ministry in Puebla, Mexico. We also used that year to strategize about how Baptist Campus Ministries could assist them.

The next spring we sent a co-ed sports ministry team to play soccer with the Ngabe and "earn the right to be heard." It was an incredible experience, and it opened the door to future mission trips. Over the past few years, the men's soccer team has returned to play exhibitions, teams of students have led worship services,

prayer-walked, distributed Scripture, given their testimonies while doing door-to-door visitation, built or painted buildings, camped and hiked all over the LaCasona reserve.

At this point, it should be mentioned that the Egbert family attended Campbellsville Baptist Church while on stateside assignment. They returned as our MIRs in 2004-05 and again briefly in 2007-08 as their son, Matt, began his collegiate career. As the church has come to know them over the years and as it has heard stories about spring break mission trips, the question began to be raised, "When are you going to get a trip together for our church to go to Costa Rica?"

In the fall of 2006, the discussion became more direct and plans were made to send a team from the church to work with the Egberts in June 2007. This team would lead a vacation Bible school—something never done among the Ngabe—and finish construction of a church/conference center. The church has followed that trip by sending teams to lead VBS five more times, build another building, begin construction of another church, and provide free vision care.

Over the past two years, we began to discuss a more specific strategy to aid the Egberts in reaching the Ngabe with the gospel. Four Campbellsville Baptist Church staff members have been to Costa Rica on mission. Church staff (Skip Alexander, David Johnson, Dave Collie and Brad Lauer), Bill and Linda Egbert and I have spent time in prayer with Christian Ngabe leaders and talked at length about the needs

among the Ngabe. We talked about what our best strategy might be to coordinate our efforts to meet the needs discovered on the LaCasona reserve. We identified five primary villages to strengthen or establish Bible study/churches: Villa de Palacio, Copey, Betania, Alto Union and Paraiso.

We decided to enter into a formal partnership to signify our commitment to this effort. This past October we all signed the written document. We will work together to share the gospel: build buildings, lead Bible studies, join in worship, construct cisterns and run water lines, lead VBS, dig outhouses, go into new villages, lead pastor training sessions, visit the homes while sharing our testimonies, and walk up and down the mountains to tell the Ngabe about Jesus.

The Egberts have long had a place in our hearts. Now the Ngabe do as well. This spring a student team will venture into the Conte Reserve, the next reservation identified on our needs list. They will hike and camp through the Costa Rican rainforest, stopping at houses along the way to share their testimonies. At night they will show a video dubbed into Nóbere, their tribal language. Maybe the people will see the "Jesus" video. Maybe they will see "La Esperanza" (The Hope).

For many of the Ngabe of the Conte Reserve, it will be the first time they have seen an American. For many it will be the first time they have heard about Jesus. But they will see and hear for the first time because Christ has sent us. We must go.

Ed Pavy is campus minister at Campbellsville University.

Reforming health care costs

By Jeremy White

I know I am taking a risk of readers fleeing an article with this title, but perhaps what we're sick of is hearing about health care reform. It is too early to know when or how the details of health care legislation will affect us. In the meantime, focus on being wise stewards with health care dollars.

Generally, we can divide a family's health care spending into three categories: preventative, corrective and cosmetic. The preferred allocation between these would be spending more on preventative in order to spend less on corrective. Cosmetic should be optional.

If you have limited dollars, spend more on preventative—physicals, screenings, working out at a gym and eating right—than waiting until something goes wrong. Given our tendencies toward vanity and laziness, it is tempting to spend less on preventative efforts. Avoiding bad habits not only can make you feel better but also improve your wealth care. Smoking, for example, results in expenses for cigarettes, taxes, extra dry cleaning, more carpet cleaning, higher auto and life insurance premiums, and more dental and doctor visits.

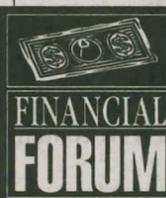
Despite efforts to stay healthy and avoid bad habits, accidents happen or a hereditary condition results in needing corrective health care. The best way to address this potentially large expenditure is maintaining the right medical insurance.

Here are other tips to minimize health care costs:

- Stay informed about what your insurance plan covers and what it doesn't.
- Contribute to a flexible spending plan or a health savings account for the maximum tax benefit.
- Buy generic prescriptions where you can.
- Utilize health screening fairs.
- Research ailments on the Internet to be more prepared to describe symptoms and ask questions of your health care professionals.

Jeremy White is a CPA with Blythe, White and Associates in Paducah.

FAITH ON CAMPUS



Ky. Baptist medical team returns from Haiti

Chaplain's daily e-mails offer glimpse of team's struggles, triumphs

Hey gang,
I'm writing to you on our last night in Haiti. Our prayer this morning in the van on the way to the hospital was that we might finish strong. Praise God He allowed us to do just that!

We had three babies born this morning and it was crazy hectic. My day was really different. The doctors suggested that I take pictures of the wounds up close so that we might use them later on in clinics to teach Haitians how to do their own clinics. To say I was out of my comfort zone as fingers and toes were amputated would be an understatement. However, God didn't send me here to be comfortable, He sent me here to be obedient.



There is a picture here of a little girl named Linda. She is about 15. Linda came in today malnourished and despondent. We found out that she had been buried in the rubble of her home for two days before being dug out. When she was finally freed, she discovered that her family of 11 was all dead. Since then, she has been wandering the streets with nowhere to go and no one to take care of her.

The little girl in the arm cast and leg cast was also involved in the quake. She was injured but treated. She came to us because the wounds were dirty. We cleaned them, but even before we started she was crying hysterically. We couldn't figure out what was wrong. We eventually got the idea that she thought we were going to amputate her leg. She never truly settled down until after we gave her some toys and gifts and allowed her to limp off with all her limbs intact.



(continued)

Port-au-Prince, Haiti—Last week, as the Kentucky Baptist disaster relief medical team helped thousands of Haitians still suffering from injuries from the devastating earthquake Jan. 12, team chaplain Butch Vernon relayed daily e-mails about the team's successes and struggles.

The doctors and nurses

worked at a makeshift hospital outside a large tent city in Port-au-Prince. Vernon, who is pastor of Thoroughbred Community Church in Nicholasville, said the team saw as many as 600 patients each day.

At left is Vernon's e-mail sent last Saturday after the team completed its final day at the hospital.

(continued)

We had another little boy who came in complaining of an earache. We couldn't get him to allow us to touch it so we had to sedate him. The doc dug in his ear and pulled out a bean that had gotten stuck in the canal. It was one of the few light moments of the day.



Just as we were closing up and sitting around cutting up to release built-up pressures, we heard all kinds of screaming and hollering, and suddenly people were being rushed into the room. We found out that there had been a knife fight and four people were injured. It reminded us that we must always be ready to respond to what God sends our way.

It is a relief that as we leave there are other teams already in place to fill the gaps. Slowly but surely things are settling down to the point that we might be able to begin planning on sending other teams in. Please be praying that God would work out the logistics so that we can reach out to the Haitians while they are still the most receptive. May God continue to allow His Holy light to shine upon the people of Haiti.

In Christ's Service,
Butch Vernon



GOD'S HANDS Above: Kentucky Baptist medical team member Nancy Clark, a nurse from Louisville, helps patients at the makeshift hospital in Port-au-Prince. Below: Team chaplain Butch Vernon checks on a patient. (Photos courtesy of Butch Vernon)



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How can we celebrate CP Sunday?

CP Sunday can easily be incorporated into your normal church service on April 11 (or any Sunday). Free promotional resources and celebration suggestions are available at www.kybaptist.org/cpsunday.

President Obama calls for end to 'erosion of civility'

Washington—President Obama challenged Washington politicians to prayerfully restore civility to governing at last week's National Prayer Breakfast.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was the keynote speaker of the Feb. 4 event. Tim Tebow, the 2007 Heisman Trophy winner and outspoken Christian who recently completed his football career at the University of Florida, offered the closing prayer.

Obama, speaking at the annual event for the second time since entering the White House, called for a spirit of sacrificial service in U.S. politics that matches that shown by Americans who have acted compassionately to help Haitians following the earthquake that struck the poverty-stricken Caribbean country.

While "democracy has always been messy," the president said, "there is a sense that something is different now, that something is broken, that those of us in Washington are not serving the people as well as we should."

He noted there are times when it "seems like we're unable to listen to one another, to have at once a serious and civil debate. And this erosion of civility in the public square sows division and distrust among our citizens."

"Empowered by faith, consistently, prayerfully, we need to find our way back to civility," Obama told an audience of legislators, administration officials, foreign diplomats, religious leaders and others gathered at a Washington hotel ballroom.

The president urged individuals to leave their comfort zones to over-

come the divide. Among those who have done so, he said, are conservative pastors seeking to reform immigration, evangelical leaders urging care for the environment, and progressives who increasingly recognize "government can't solve all of our problems."

Obama acknowledged he is "not always right. ... But surely you can question my policies without questioning my faith or, for that matter, my citizenship."

"It is this spirit of civility that we are called to take up when we leave here today," the president said near the end of his 17-minute speech. "That's what I'm praying for."

Hillary Clinton, in her keynote address, urged people of various faiths to do good.

Clinton, who was reared as a Methodist, said she carries with her in her travels the following quote from John Wesley: "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."

She called it "a good rule to live by, with the appropriate dose of humility."

Sens. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., and Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., co-chaired this year's breakfast. Members of Congress read Scripture, prayed and shared about their weekly prayer meetings during the event.

The National Prayer Breakfast, which is sponsored by an evangelical Christian organization, began in 1953 during President Eisenhower's first administration. (BP)

Land urges Congress to reject 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' repeal

Washington—Southern Baptist public policy specialist Richard Land called on congressional members Feb. 2 to oppose legislation that would overturn the ban on open homosexuals serving in the United States military.

Writing to 79 selected members of the House of Representatives, Land told them the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission strongly opposes the Military Readiness Enhancement Act.

Land's letter was sent the same day Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Michael Mullen told a Senate committee they support President Obama's intention to repeal what is known as the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy.

Enactment of the bill would harm troop morale and potentially result in a significant loss of service members, Land told the House members.

"The military is a place where individuals are often required to be in intimate contact with each other for extended periods of time," Land said. "The admission of openly homosexual individuals into the military would engender sexual tension and thereby negatively impact troop morale."

Land said conversations with

many members of the military cause him to be concerned a reversal of the law "will result in the resignation of large numbers of personnel who are currently serving in our all-volunteer services, and that it will be extremely difficult to recruit their replacements."

Obama declared during the recent State of the Union address he would work this year "with Congress and our military to finally repeal the law that denies gay Americans the right to serve the country they love because of who they are." Gates told the Senate Armed Services Committee that the Pentagon is working toward implementation of such a repeal, but acknowledged reversal of the ban is up to Congress.

The 1993 law enacted by Congress and signed by President Clinton prevents homosexuals from serving openly. The policy also prohibits the military from asking recruits up front if they are homosexual.

The proposed legislation would bar discrimination by the armed services based on the sexual orientation of a member of the military or anyone seeking to become a member. The measure also would allow re-entry into the military of individuals who have been dismissed because of "homosexuality, bisexuality, or homosexual conduct." (BP)

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Graham tops LifeWay survey's list of most influential living preachers

Continued from page 1
counseled many U.S. presidents. His appeal to both religious and secular audiences is evidenced by the wide range of organizations that have honored him, including the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and the George Washington Carver Memorial Institute.

Lack of diversity 'surprising'

While Graham's position at the top may have been expected, the list as a whole was a bit surprising for its lack of diversity, according to Ed Stetzer, director of LifeWay Research. "Considering our sample includes liberal and conservative, all races and ethnicities, mainline and evangelical, we were surprised that the list looked like mainstream Christian radio and publishing and was not more representative," he said. "Of course, the majority who answer drive the final numbers, but I was expecting more diversity in the responses."

Rounding out the Top 10, after Graham and Swindoll, were:

■ Charles Stanley, senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta and founder of In Touch Ministries.

■ Rick Warren, senior pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., and author of the best-selling book, "The Purpose-Driven Life."

■ John MacArthur, pastor-teacher of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, Calif., and president and featured teacher of the Grace to You ministry.

■ Barbara Brown Taylor, religion teacher at

Piedmont College in Northeast Georgia and author of 12 books, including "An Altar in the World."

■ David Jeremiah, founder of Turning Point Radio and Television Ministries and senior pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church in San Diego County, Calif.

■ Max Lucado, minister of writing and preaching

at Oak Hills Church in San Antonio and the recipient of three Christian Book of the Year awards.

■ John Piper, pastor for preaching at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis and author of more than 30 books, including "Desiring God."

■ Andy Stanley, senior pastor of North Point Community Church, Buckhead Church and Browns Bridge Community Church—all in the Atlanta area—and founder of North Point Ministries.

"Studies like these can help us see

who is shaping the thinking of Protestant pastors today," Stetzer noted. "Since survey participants are not picking from a predetermined list, the people named must be widely known. Knowing who is shaping Protestant thinking shows us what type of direction to expect from the nation's pastors."

Participants in the survey also were asked to "name the top three living Christian leaders that most influence you." Graham again topped the list, but other names emerged as well, including James Dobson and Desmond Tutu. For complete results and more information on the survey, visit www.LifeWayResearch.com.



No. 2: Swindoll



No. 3: Stanley



No. 4: Warren

'Do you think we'll have school on Monday?'

During wintertime, new students often discover how unique Oneida really is

If you read my column every week, you have heard this story before. In fact, my Feb. 17, 2009, article also was about a new student asking about having school since it had just snowed.

The backdrop for this question was the Culture Fair, sponsored by our Student Government Association. Each year we are treated to an afternoon of eating some unusual foods cooked by our international students. One of the most difficult adjustments an international student makes is eating "American" food. So, in order to give our U.S. students an opportunity to enjoy the flavor and type of food our international students are used to eating, we have a Culture Fair every year.

Many friends of this ministry are a little surprised to discover just how many different nationalities are represented on our campus. This past Christmas, our WOM had their annual International Christmas banquet. To the best of their ability, our WOM prepared dishes that were a little more like the traditional food eaten by our international students. This year we had students from Canada, China, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Japan, Kenya, Liberia, Mongolia, Nigeria, Russia, Sierra Leone, South Korea, Tanzania, Thailand and United Kingdom. Since then we have added a new student from Germany.

At the Culture Fair, the air was filled with a dozen different aromas from around the world. Many of our international students were adorned in their traditional dress. The special ingredients had been purchased a few days earlier so they could prepare their favorite dishes. Some of the

ingredients were not difficult to acquire, but others required a lot more effort. Mrs. Underwood and our daughter, Missy, traveled to Lexington to purchase food from the specialty stores. After years of doing this, they know where to get the spices and other special ingredients needed by our students.

Our faculty and staff offer their kitchens to our students so they can prepare their dishes. I have to tell you that it may take a week for our staff to get their kitchens back in order.

Early Saturday afternoon—while it was still snowing—our staff began bringing the students and their meals to the dining room. Tables had been rearranged so the students could go down the serving lines to select the foods they wanted to try. We had to limit the amount of food each student gets or there wouldn't be enough for everyone. I am sure you know that some foods are highly seasoned. In fact, some will simply curl your tongue!

I was helping to control the number of students allowed in at a time. While waiting for his turn, one of our newer students asked me if I thought we would have school Monday. He didn't understand why the other students and I were laughing at his question.

Finally, he asked a second time, "What's so funny? Dr. Underwood, do you think we will have school on Monday?" He was not happy to hear my reply: "In the last 30 years, we have only closed school two days because of bad weather, and you can trust me that this Monday will not be the third day." It's now Monday and yes, we are having school!

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

This is Oneida



W.F. Underwood

SBC Pastors' Conference lineup announced, Web site launched

Orlando, Fla.—The 2010 Southern Baptist Convention Pastors' Conference will focus on "Greater Things," according to Kevin Ezell, pastor of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville and president of the pastors' gathering to be held in June 13-14 in Orlando, Fla.

Ezell also announced the launch of the conference's Web site, www.SBCPC.net, as well as the lineup of speakers. Among them are:

■ Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

■ Francis Chan, pastor of Cornerstone Church in Simi Valley, Calif.

■ Tony Evans, pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas.

■ Steve Gaines, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn.

■ Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

■ David Platt, pastor of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, Ala.

■ Andy Stanley, pastor of North Point Community Church in Alpharetta, Ga.

■ David Uth, pastor of First Baptist Church of Orlando, Fla.

■ Ravi Zacharias, founder and chairman of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries in Atlanta.

Ezell said the Pastors' Conference leadership team chose the theme of "Greater Things" to encourage participants to be thankful for the past and to strive for the "greater things" yet to come in their personal walks with the Lord, in leading their families and churches, and in their work for world missions. (BP)

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Listening to God through obstacles

Student perseveres to arrive at the Clear Creek campus

Benny Williams is one of a growing number of Clear Creek students that come to us from Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute in Hendersonville, N.C. Fruitland is a two-year institute that offers an associate's degree. Clear Creek has a partnership with Fruitland that allows their graduates to transfer all their credits here to complete a bachelor's degree.

"I truly came to know Jesus Christ as my Savior in 1998," Benny recalled. "After I was saved, I began attending and became active in a local church there in North Carolina where I met my wife and got married. I began to feel that God was calling me into the ministry—but I ran from the call. I continued running and would not listen to God until I was literally flat on my back and facing back surgery. Before I went into surgery, I told God I was finally ready to listen and that whatever it was he wanted me to do that I would do it."

Benny eventually ended up at Fruitland and later made the decision to come to Clear Creek to continue his education. It's a wonder, though, that Benny even made it to our campus after some of the obstacles he again faced just trying to

visit us.

"I came to know about Clear Creek when some of the administrative staff visited our campus at Fruitland and talked to us about continuing our education here," Benny said. "My wife and I prayed about continuing on and felt that

God was leading us to check out the campus.

"We scheduled our first trip ... and left on Friday night for a Saturday visit. We didn't get very far on the trip before our car caught on fire. The car was totally destroyed in the fire and we didn't have any insurance, so we were left without a vehicle to travel in.

"About a month later, we borrowed a vehicle to make the trip again," Benny continued. "We got about 20 miles from the campus when the starter went out on that vehicle.

"My family is having a wonderful experience here," Benny said despite their struggles getting to Clear Creek. "As hard as the devil fought to keep us from here, we know that this is where God wants us to be."

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

Stuck in a snowstorm

Blizzard is reminder that God is always in control

Due to a snowstorm outside of Nashville, I find myself writing this article from a hotel room. Along with three other staff members from Crossings Ministries, we are attempting to return from a youth pastors' conference in Chattanooga, Tenn., where we have been promoting our Crossings Camps summer programs.

We knew on the day we left that snow was fairly probable, yet having to stay an additional night out of town due to icy conditions was not part of our plans. A week earlier, the weather prompted a delay in the construction of the new zip lines at Jonathan Creek. While I certainly am not complaining about these two instances, they simply are reminders that we are not in control of our circumstances.

In each of these cases, I have come to realize that no matter how hard we push and try to overcome issues, we, as frail beings, are without power when it comes to the forces of nature and circumstances. Times such as these are great reminders of how utterly dependant we are upon God

and His provision and power at all times in our lives.

Currently, days in the Crossings office are filled with dozens of staff members working on a multiple-paged task list as we prepare for another summer of camp at Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek. While we have gifted and very capable people filling each position, the reality is that without God, we can accomplish nothing.

The ability to rest peacefully day in and day out is tied directly to our willingness to trust in God. This summer, we will see thousands of youth who are desperately seeking peace in this world and who are in the midst of very challenging life circumstances. Please continue to pray for us as we prepare to point them toward God and the peace that only He can provide to His children—even on those days we find ourselves stuck in a snowstorm.

Ky. Baptist Assemblies



David Melber

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

Author worries Facebook and other online communities hurting real ones

By Nancy Haught
Portland Oregonian

Portland, Ore.—When it comes to Facebook, Jesse Rice sees an immensely popular social networking site that's great for sharing photos and keeping in touch with friends.

He also sees something that encourages attitudes and behaviors that don't work as well in real life.

Rice is the author of "The Church of Facebook: How the Hyperconnected Are Redefining Community." A former worship leader at an evangelical megachurch in California, he has degrees in organizational communication and counseling/psychology and—just as important to his readers—a sense of humor.

On a video he uploaded to YouTube, he explains his credentials for writing the book. "I can look at various parts of an organization, at the flow of communication back and forth within the independent structure, and I can identify all the ways that it's your parents' fault," he quips.

And "I have an actual Facebook account with well over 100 friends." Yes, he acknowledges that some people have 6 million fans on a Facebook fan page.

"But, back off, Vin Diesel," he snarls. "It is possible to be too fast and too furious."

Actually, being too fast to judge others and too furious to write a well-considered post are two ways Facebook thwarts meaningful community, according to Rice, who argues that Facebook redefines the term altogether.

"Our definition of community has shifted," he said. "Now it's a continuum, with 10 being your best friend and 1 being people you just sort of bump into online. But it's all community."

Facebook has its bashers, especially in Christian circles. While some believers say they find genuine community online, others insist that face-to-face interaction is essential to a life of faith. Some users find satisfaction in building and sharing their profiles, but others worry that Facebook breeds an all-about-me attitude and is eroding the capacity to listen and empathize.

Don Pape of David C. Cook, a Colorado publisher of Christian books, was looking to help curious pastors and parents who aren't on Facebook learn more about it. Another writer suggested Pape take a look at Rice's manuscript. "I was hooked from the beginning," the publisher said.

In broad strokes and funny asides, Rice creates a context for Facebook and connects it to Christian experience. It's too early to tell how the book will do, Pape pointed out, but sales have surpassed 5,000 copies and the publisher is preparing a second printing.

"Facebook has become part of our lives," he said. "And we're just beginning to learn how to be human in it."

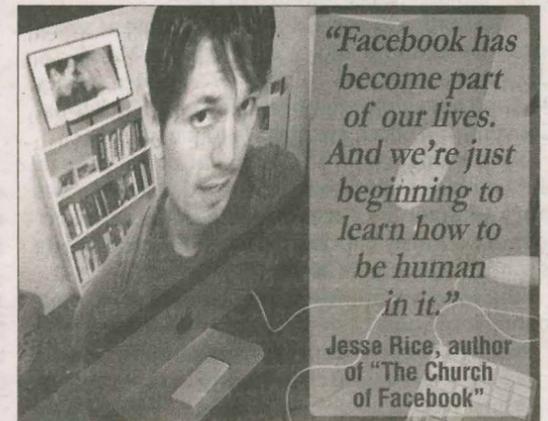
\$2 per member buys effective ministry tool

Nashville—A church's best witnessing tool might cost less than \$2.

That tool could be LifeWay magazines, which churches can buy in bulk for their members at less than \$2 per subscription.

"More than 26,000 churches place bulk orders for HomeLife and Mature Living for their members," said Woody Parker, LifeWay's editorial project leader for adult magazines and devotionals. "By ordering in bulk, they pay \$1.55 per issue, a significant savings off the single copy cover cost. In addition, it's convenient for the churches since they can order the magazines along with their Sunday school materials."

"Churches that go to the effort and expense to get these magazines for their people can see a tremendous return," said David Trammel, a LifeWay regional consultant. "People told us they use these



"Facebook has become part of our lives. And we're just beginning to learn how to be human in it."

Jesse Rice, author of "The Church of Facebook"

"Online, we have power over how we express ourselves. You can take the time to choose your words carefully, edit your responses, PhotoShop a picture until you get it just right. Real conversations, real relationships don't allow that. They include awkward silences."

Rice said he has seen people give up on "embodied relationships" because they feel freer on Facebook. "People do argue that there's a richness to relationships online," he noted. But it could be that they don't know what they're missing. "We don't feel that hunger anymore."

Rice said he figures his readers—he also blogs at ChurchofFacebook.com—mostly are pastors and parents wondering how Facebook fits into the lives of people they care about.

In a little more than 200 pages, Rice recalls the brief history of Facebook and compares it to other technological achievements that have transformed modern life: Air conditioning, for example, changed where and how Americans lived, ate, worked and spent their leisure time. Facebook shows signs of

doing the same.

But Rice draws on his counseling experience to argue that prolonged hyperconnectivity shortens attention spans; that fear of missing out tethers people to technology and undermines their sense of control; that creating a Facebook profile turns some people into celebrities and their friends into an entourage or audience.

Rice is sparing in his Christian references, lest he alienate non-Christian readers. But he uses the New Testament story of Jesus asking a Samaritan woman at the well for a drink of water. Rice said Jesus approached the woman with "intentionality, humility and authenticity." Those qualities transform an ordinary encounter into a life-changing experience, Rice explained.

While he still has concerns, Rice said Facebook in many ways is just the latest version of an age-old concern.

"Whatever technology that's in front of us always challenges us," he noted. "Our parents thought we listened to the radio too much." (RNS)

magazines as a means of sharing Christ and the church with other people. Telling someone about an article they read or passing on the magazine is easy and non-threatening."

Barbara Battarbee, a member of South Main Baptist Church in Pasadena, Texas, said Mature Living has been a blessing to her. She takes the magazine to her 96-year-old mother at the assisted living facility where she lives. The magazine then is passed on to someone else who reads it and then it is passed along to others.

Mature Living "has been helpful to me a lot of times in understanding the phases (my mother) is going through," Battarbee noted. "Reading about how other people have dealt with their parents has helped me to deal with our own situation."

For more information about LifeWay magazines, visit www.LifeWay.com/Magazines.

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Youth choir, orchestra auditions set

Louisville—Kentucky Baptist high school students seeking to refine their musical talents can audition for the Kentucky Baptist All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra March 6 or 13.

Auditions will be held across the state at seven locations March 6 and at six locations March 13. High school students who have completed grades 9-12 and are active members of a Kentucky Baptist Convention church are eligible to participate.

Approximately 90 students will participate in the combined choir and orchestra, which meet every summer for a retreat, followed by a concert tour of Kentucky Baptist churches. This year's tour is scheduled for June 20-27.

The March 6 auditions will be held at the following locations:

- Central Baptist Church in Corbin.
- First Baptist Church of Hazard.
- First Baptist Church of Walton.
- Lewis Lane Baptist Church in Owensboro.
- Lone Oak First Baptist Church in Paducah.
- Rich Pond Baptist Church in Bowling Green.

■ Southern Seminary in Louisville.
The March 13 auditions will be held at the following locations:

- First Baptist Church of Bowling Green.
- First Baptist Church of Mount Sterling.
- First Baptist Church of Walton.
- Lewis Lane Baptist Church in Owensboro.
- Lone Oak First Baptist Church in Paducah.
- Parkland Baptist Church in Louisville.

All auditions will be held from 10 a.m.-noon local time. Youth who are selected and participate do not have to re-audition each year, as long as they remain a KBC church member in good standing.

Registration for auditions is \$10 per person and must be completed two weeks prior to the audition date. Those selected for the choir and orchestra must pay a total of \$395 for the eight-day concert tour in June.

For more information or to register for an audition, visit www.KyBaptist.org/ASYCO or contact the KBC's worship and music department at (502) 489-3524, or toll free in Kentucky at (866) 489-3524.

National marriage event coming to Lexington

Lexington—Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington will host a Love Worth Fighting For marriage event March 6.

The conference, described as a marriage enrichment event, will feature actor Kirk Cameron and musical guest Warren Barfield.

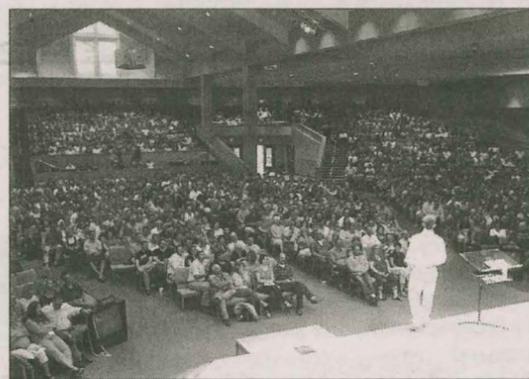
Cameron starred in the 2008 surprise hit film "Fireproof." The movie, produced by Sherwood Baptist Church in Albany, Ga., details the marriage struggles of a firefighter and his wife.

Barfield wrote and performed the song "Love Is Not a Fight," which was featured in the film.

The event has two identical sessions to attend. The afternoon session begins at 1 p.m., while the evening session kicks off at 7 p.m.

The Love Worth Fighting For tour is sponsored by Feed Your Faith, a Knoxville, Tenn.-based ministry that promotes events featuring Christian speakers, authors and performing artists. Proceeds from Feed Your Faith events go to local missions and ministries.

Tickets for the Lexington seminar are \$25 per person or \$45 per couple for general admission



LOVE WORTH FIGHTING FOR Kirk Cameron speaks to 4,000 people who attended a Feed Your Faith marriage enrichment event last year at Sevier Heights Baptist Church in Knoxville, Tenn. (Photo courtesy of Feed Your Faith)

seating; \$35 per person or \$60 per couple for reserved seating. To purchase tickets or to get more information, visit www.FeedYourFaith.org.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February

- 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, Baptist Building, Louisville.
- 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

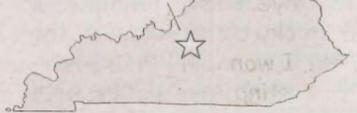
COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **CAMPBELLVILLE**—Campbellville University's chamber choir will present a Valentine's Day concert Feb. 13, 7 p.m. at Living Grace Church in Campbellville. The event also will feature a dessert buffet. Tickets are \$15 for couples, \$5 for individuals or \$10 for Campbellville student couples. For more information or to buy tickets, call **Frieda Gebert** at (270) 789-5193.

■ **IRMO, S.C.**—Longtime Kentucky Baptist pastor **E.T. Wright** died Jan. 21. He was 89. A graduate of Georgetown College and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wright served as pastor of nine churches over more than 30 years, including Canmer Church; Millersburg Church; Mount Gilboa Church in Raywick; Newman Church in Owensboro; Rolling Fork Church in Boston; Salvisa Church; Sand Run Church in Hebron; Smith Mills Church; and Vine Hill Church in Coxs Creek. Wright also served on the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Executive (now Mission) Board. He is survived by his wife, Mary Ella, two daughters, three grandchildren and

Spotlight on ...

Cox's Creek



Bill Lewis recently announced his retirement as pastor of Hobbs Church. He has served the church for more than 30 years.

four great-grandchildren. Funeral services were held at First Baptist Church of Irmo, S.C.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Forest Park Church will host its annual Valentine's Day Dinner Feb. 12, 6:30 p.m. The cost is \$35 for couples and \$20 for singles. For more information or to register, call **Patty First** at (502) 239-0101 or (502) 500-9808.

■ **WALTON**—First Church recently called **T.J. Francis** as pastor. He previously was pastor of South Jefferson Church in Louisville.

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SEEKING: Part-time minister of music for Gethsemane Baptist Church in Danville, Ky. We are a conservative Southern Baptist church with a blended-type of service. All resumés may be sent to the church at 123 Quisenberry Ave., Danville, KY 40422.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for First Baptist Church, Olive Hill, Ky. Send resumé to: First Baptist Church, PO Box 568, Olive Hill, KY 41164.

SEEKING: Pastor with 5+ years experience, seminary degree, to lead a Southern Baptist church in a key location with great opportunity to grow. Send resumé to Ira Linville, chair, Crestwood Baptist Church, 1043 Tamworth Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister for Lowell Avenue Baptist Church in Campbellsville, Ky. Seeking individual with a passion for youth and a desire to see them grow in Christ. Candidates must be associated with a Southern Baptist church. Please send resumé to: Lowell Avenue Baptist Church, 420 Lowell Ave., Campbellsville, KY 42718; or e-mail resumé to lowellabc@windstream.net.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister for Ghent Baptist Church. Youth minister will be responsible for leading middle- and high-school-age youth. Formal religious training is preferred, but not mandatory. Experience working with youth is important. A parsonage is available for housing. If interested, submit a resumé to Ghent Baptist Church, PO Box 457, Ghent, KY 41045, Attn: Pastor Graham Reynolds.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor of worship. Applicant must be a worship leader experienced in working with various styles of music. Zion is a dynamic, growing church that currently averages a total of 750 in two blended Sunday morning services. Candidate must have strong spiritual maturity and leadership skills, must be able to lead all aspects of worship ministry including congregational worship, praise team and band, choir of all ages, and creative arts ministries. Requires a seminary degree with at least five years experience. Send resumé, references and letter of interest to: Zion Baptist Church, 8158 Hwy 351, Henderson, KY 42420, Attn: Worship Pastor Search Committee.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for New Harvest Baptist Church in central Kentucky. Please contact Brad Cummings at bcummings76@windstream.net for more information.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music for Red House Baptist Church, Richmond, Ky. Bachelor's and seminary degrees preferred, as well as prior experience in music ministry; must be able to work with choirs as well as worship teams. E-mail Alex Poulter, wapbear@insightbb.com.

SEEKING: Bivocational minister of children and bivocational minister of music for CBF church in Western Kentucky. Positions can be combined or fulfilled separately. Contact Chris Hopgood, 311 Rudy Ave., Henderson, KY 42420.

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: Youth pastor. Youth group seeks awesome youth pastor: Do you love Jesus? Could you love us; disciple us; lead us in serving Him? Located in rural community 45 minutes north of Louisville, we are a great mission field and your ministry potential is unlimited. We can offer only a part-time opportunity, but if you feel led to contact us, please send a resumé to Bedford Baptist Church, 1425 Hwy. 42 East, PO Box 277, Bedford, KY 40006, Attn: Youth Pastor Search Committee; or e-mail dawn.haney@trimble.kyschools.us.

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.

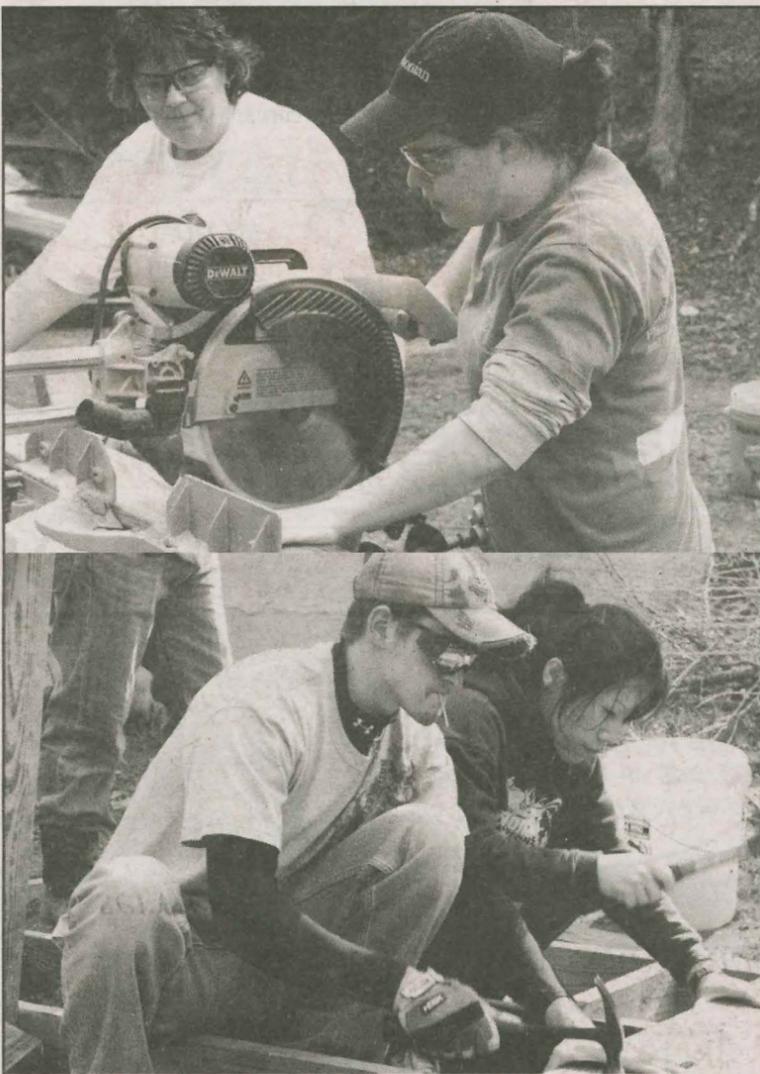
SEEKING: Full-time activities pastor to minister to our church family and community through sports and recreation. Please send resumé to Search Committee, Campbellsville Baptist Church, PO Box 530, Campbellsville, KY 42719; or bradl@cvillebaptist.com.

SEEKING: Senior pastor. Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Independence, Ky. (www.HickoryGrove.net) is seeking an educated and experienced minister with SBC background. Candidates should demonstrate strong leadership, communication, follow-through and evangelism. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, HGBC, PO Box 640, Independence, KY 41051. No phone calls or e-mails please. Applications will be accepted through 2-27-2010.

SERVICES: Web ministry. Spread the gospel and make disciples through the Web 24/7. www.hostmyministry.com.

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