

Shine like stars in the world
Philippians 2:15

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FOR THE RECORD



Kentucky
KBC and Southern Seminary team up to collect Buckets of Hope for Haiti. Page 2.

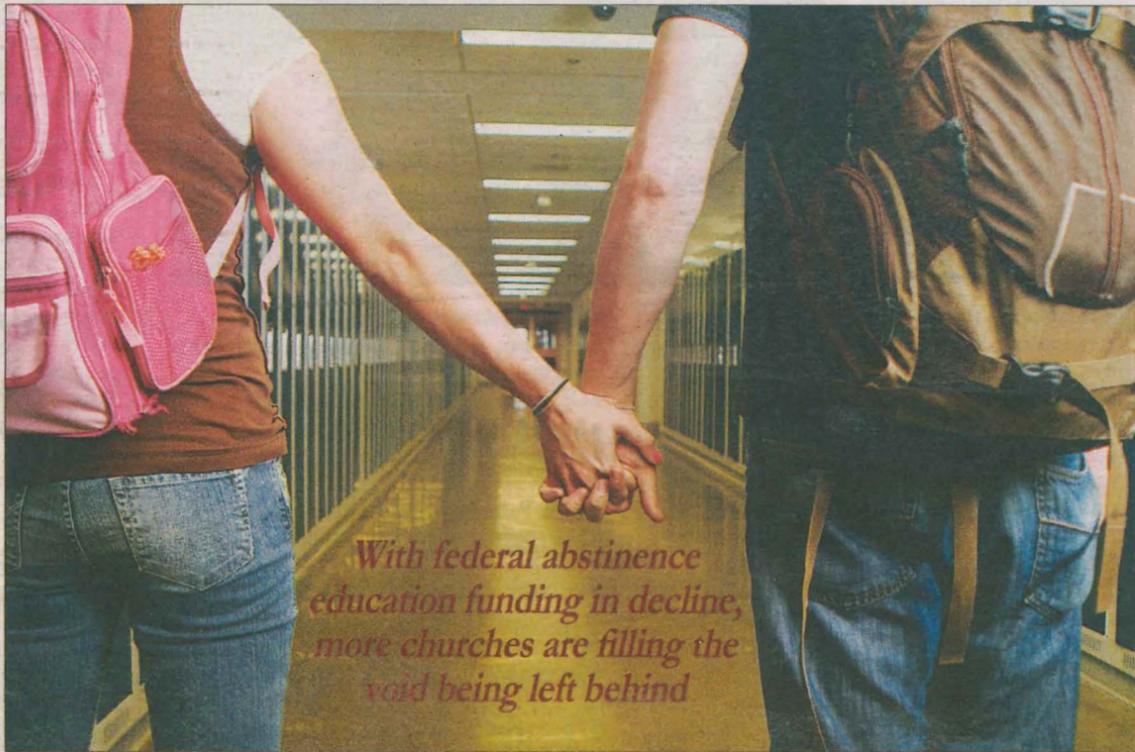


World
Southern Baptists finalize long-term strategy for Haiti efforts. Page 3.



Winter Olympics
Christian athletes take center stage at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. Pages 8 & 9.

Churches, Teens & Sex



With federal abstinence education funding in decline, more churches are filling the void being left behind

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

Hopkinsville—Although Wendy Westerfield teaches abstinence in four Western Kentucky counties, last month marked the first time she led a True Love Waits class at Hillcrest Baptist Church in Hopkinsville.

"Every table was full," she said of the 100 students in grades 6 through 12 who showed up for the first session. "We talk about pornography, 'sexting,' and boundaries. Our first lesson was on sex and what God created it to be."

True Love Waits is a program created by LifeWay Christian Resources in 1993 to encourage teens to abstain from sexual relations until marriage.

Hillcrest's final class in "The Power of Sex" will be held Feb. 24. A concluding ceremony where participants make a public pledge to maintain their purity is scheduled for Feb. 28.

Cause for involvement

Though Westerfield said churches often shy away from explicit discussions, there is evidence that Kentucky Baptists need to get involved in providing more faith-based teaching about sex.

Not only is federal funding being reduced for ab-

stinence education in public schools, this remains at a time when Kentucky's teen birth rate remains 10 percent higher than the rest of the nation.

According to the state Cabinet for Health and Family Services, the commonwealth's birth rate declined 0.9 percent from 2006 to 2007. However, the birth rate of 53.1 per 1,000 (or 7,443 births) is compared to a national rate of 43 per 1,000.

"Unfortunately, in Kentucky we lead in some categories we don't want to," said Andy Elliott, a member of First Baptist Church of Prestonsburg.

A deacon at First Baptist, he and his wife, Myra, are leading the church's youth group until a new youth pastor arrives.

A dentist who takes continuing education courses in HIV and AIDS, Elliott said some things that go on in schools would shock many parents.

Last year, a health department representative leading a course recalled a sixth grader in Kentucky asking if he could get AIDS from having oral sex with his girlfriend.

Such stories illustrate why parents need to get involved in teaching purity to middle schoolers and not wait until high school, Elliott said.

"This is one of those areas where you'd hope the

See Kentucky Baptist churches take lead ... Page 6

Freed detainee asks for focus to return to Haiti's residents

By Michael Foust

Amarillo, Texas—A Baptist volunteer who was jailed in Haiti for nearly three weeks said he hopes people will once again focus on the plight of the citizens of the earthquake-ravaged country.

Jim Allen, one of eight detainees flown back to the U.S. Feb. 17, said in a statement released on the Web site of his home church—Paramount Baptist Church in Amarillo, Texas—that he thanks "the many people around the world who prayed for me."

"I hope (the Feb. 17) actions will allow everyone to focus again on the dire conditions that remain in Haiti," Allen said. "People are still suffering and lack basic necessities. Please find it in your hearts, as I did in mine, to find ways to give to those in need. For those whose cases have not been resolved, we will continue to pray for their safe return."

Two volunteers from the 10-member team remain in a Haitian prison for further investigation: Laura Silsby and Charisa Coulter, both members of Central Valley Baptist Church in Meridian, Idaho. Three other members of that church were released last week, as were three members of Eastside Baptist Church in Twin Falls, Idaho. A member of Bethel Baptist Church in Topeka, Kan., the only church not affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, also was freed.

The 10 members were charged with attempting to transport 33 Haitian children into the Dominican Republic without proper documentation. The 10 had planned on taking the children to an orphanage Silsby was establishing across the border. The eight volunteers were released after Haitian parents told Judge Bernard Saint-Vil they had freely given their children to the American

See Freed detainees return ... Page 3

KBC to send four more teams into earthquake-stricken Haiti

Louisville—Kentucky Baptist disaster relief is sending four more volunteer teams to Haiti March 11-19 to continue providing relief to those affected by the deadly Jan. 12 earthquake.

Two teams of medical professionals and two teams of chaplains and assessment volunteers will be traveling to the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince and serving for seven days, according to Kentucky Baptist Convention Disaster Relief Associate Coy Webb.

"These 24 volunteers are highly skilled professionals because all requests for teams are still for very specialized volunteers," Webb noted. "The situation in Haiti is still very volatile and fluid."

The volunteers on the chaplaincy/assessment teams will seek to minister to individual homeowners, Webb said. Assessors will work to evaluate the safety of homes, and the chaplains will seek to provide spiritual counseling to residents.

"Thousands of Haitians are still sleeping on

the ground even though their homes are safe because they are afraid to go back into the homes," Webb said. "The Voodoo religion is very common and is making people afraid of spirits. Our hope is that our chaplains can alleviate those fears and share the hope of Christ with them."

The medical teams will be focusing primarily on treating infectious diseases, the primary medical concern amongst Haitians right now, Webb said.

He also reported that Kentucky Baptist volunteer Tom Westerfield has been deployed as part of the Southern Baptist disaster relief incident command team in Haiti. Westerfield, a Crofton resident, will be assisting in the coordination of Southern Baptist volunteers in Haiti and will serve through March 6.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention is one of 10 Southern Baptist state conventions currently in the process of sending teams to Haiti for medi-

cal or chaplaincy/assessment work, Webb noted. A national Southern Baptist disaster relief strategy for Haiti recently was finalized, outlining the KBC's role in the long-term response, he added (see related story on page 3).

The KBC is encouraging those who wish to help to give monetary donations through the KBC's fund designated for the Haiti relief effort. Contributions may be mailed to the KBC, P.O. Box 856300, Dept. 124, Louisville, KY 40285-9900. Please note "Haiti Earthquake" in the check memo. Online donations also are being accepted at www.KyBaptist.org/DR.

Trained Kentucky Baptist disaster relief volunteers who are interested in serving on a team should express their interest by sending an e-mail to Cindy.Henderson@KyBaptist.org. Candidates should indicate their availability, contact information and what type of volunteer work they are able to do.

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, Feb. 24

KBC, SBTS team up for Buckets of Hope effort

By Kristie Randolph
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Louisville—Southern Baptist Theological Seminary will play a key role in the collection of Buckets of Hope for Haitians, a major relief effort being coordinated through the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Baptist Men on Mission department.

Kentucky Baptists who wish to help Haitians affected by the Jan. 12 earthquake can participate in the effort by purchasing five-gallon buckets and filling them with specified food items. Completed buckets must be delivered by March 4 to one of the participating Kentucky Baptist associations, according to Coy Webb, KBC's disaster relief associate.

From there, the buckets will be taken to one of 15 "cluster points" across the state, where they then will be transported to the Southern Seminary campus in Louisville. Volunteers from the seminary will pack the buckets onto pallets and shrink wrap them together in preparation for transportation.

The seminary is donating the shrink wrap and volunteer time toward the effort, and a local vendor in Southern Indiana has agreed to supply the pallets at no charge, noted Bob Perkins, director of campus safety and security for Southern Seminary.

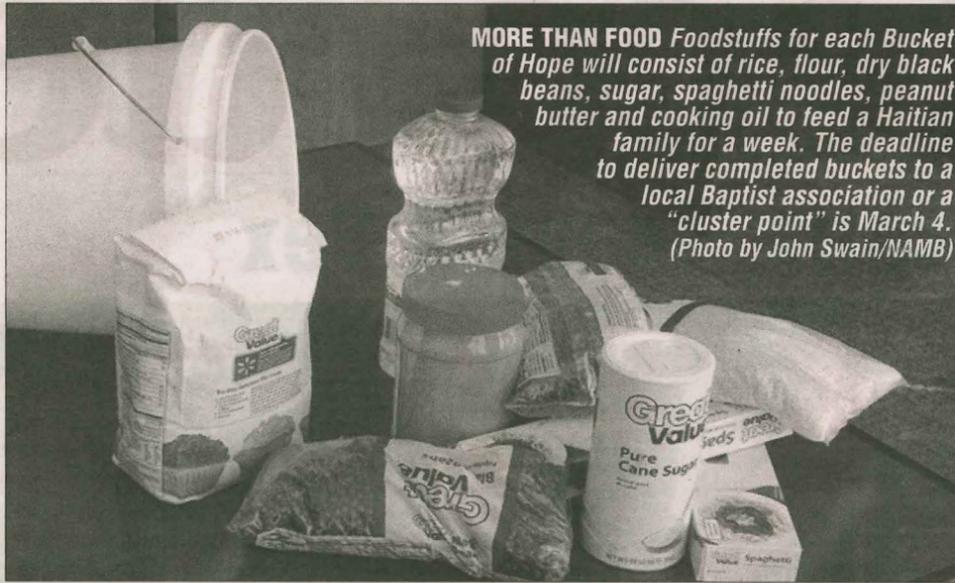
"We are so pleased that the KBC and Southern Seminary are going to work together on this project," Perkins said. "Many of us here at the seminary wanted to be a part of this effort, so we asked how we could help. It's really an answer to prayer."

After the buckets have been prepared for shipment at the seminary, the North American Mission Board will arrange for the buckets to be transported to Miami where they will be packed in cargo containers and shipped to Haiti. NAMB is overseeing the Buckets of Hope initiative.

Each bucket will be packed with a gospel tract in the French Creole language and a label indicating that the bucket is a gift of Christian love and support from Southern Baptists.

According to Webb, the KBC currently is estimating the Kentucky Baptist Buckets of Hope project to produce approximately 10,000 buckets, based on the feedback it has received from participating associations.

"We very well could even exceed that number," Webb noted. "When you add that



MORE THAN FOOD Foodstuffs for each Bucket of Hope will consist of rice, flour, dry black beans, sugar, spaghetti noodles, peanut butter and cooking oil to feed a Haitian family for a week. The deadline to deliver completed buckets to a local Baptist association or a "cluster point" is March 4. (Photo by John Swain/NAMB)

figure to what might come from the other 42 participating Southern Baptist state conventions, it's exciting to think about such a tremendous number of buckets being sent to hurting people in Haiti."

Each bucket and its contents cost approximately \$30 to assemble, Webb said. An additional \$10 cash contribution is requested for each bucket to help offset the cost of transporting the buckets to Haiti.

The buckets will contain non-perishable food items such as rice, beans, flour and peanut butter. Detailed instructions for the project are available at www.KyBaptist.org/DR.

Churches and individuals packing buckets should take them to a participating Baptist association near them, or to one of the 15 cluster points across the state.

According to Webb, most Kentucky Baptist associations across the state are serving as collection points. A complete list of participating associations is available at www.KyBaptist.org/Buckets. Churches and individuals also may contact their local associations to find out where the collection is taking place, he added.

The cluster points for bucket collection include:

- Blood River Association in Hardin.
- Bracken Association in Mays Lick.
- Daviess/McLean Association in Owensboro.

- Elkhorn Association in Lexington.
- Freedom & Wayne County associations in Monticello.
- Greenup Association in Ashland.
- Knox Association in Gray.
- Little Bethel Association in Madisonville.
- Long Run Association in Louisville.
- Northern Kentucky Association in Erlanger.
- Pulaski County Association in Somerset.
- Pike Association in Pikeville.
- Severns Valley Association in Elizabethtown.
- Three Forks Association in Hazard.
- Warren Association in Bowling Green.

Participating in Buckets of Hope is just one of the ways Kentucky Baptists are responding to the devastation in Haiti. The KBC recently sent a medical team to Haiti, and additional medical and chaplain/assessment teams are scheduled to serve in Haiti March 11-19.

The KBC also is accepting monetary donations through a designated fund for the Haiti relief effort. Contributions may be sent to the KBC, P.O. Box 856300, Dept. 124, Louisville, KY 40285-9900. Please note "Haiti Earthquake" in the check memo. Online donations also are being accepted at www.KyBaptist.org/DR.

Longtime pastor Denney, 79, was church 'pioneer'

Lawrenceburg—Travelers on U.S. Hwy. 127 near Lawrenceburg often could see the lighted cross of Alton Baptist Church for miles when driving at night.

"I know that cross, as people would pass by, sure meant a whole lot to a whole lot of people," said Mickey Hyder, who served as an associate and interim pastor at Alton Baptist for several years.

It was during Tyre Denney's lengthy tenure at the Anderson County church when that cross was built. Denney died Feb. 14 at the age of 79.

Despite having "retired" in 1996 after 29 years at Alton Baptist, Denney remained a pastor to the end. At the time of his death, he was serving as pastor of Lighthouse Baptist Church in Shelbyville, to which he had been called last September. He also led North Benson Baptist Church in Frankfort from 1996-2006.

Denney was actively involved with the Kentucky Baptist Convention having served on the state Mission Board three times and as KBC second vice president in 1994-95. He also served with the Kentucky Ethics League for many years.

An Alabama native, Denney was a graduate of Samford University in Birmingham. Friend and fellow pastor Jeff Eaton mentioned how Denney commuted from Alabama to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville by train every Monday and returned home every Thursday to prepare to preach at the church where he was pastor. "That's just a picture of him," said Eaton, pastor of Hope Community Church in Lawrenceburg.

Both Eaton and Hyder, who now is pastor of David's Fork Baptist Church in Lexington, described Denney as a devoted husband, father and a man with a great sense of humor. They also called him a "pioneer," doing things years earlier that are common in churches today.

"He was doing two services when nobody else was," Eaton recalled. "He led his church to do that and you'd never heard of that."

Hyder also said Denney utilized local radio and television to broadcast Sunday morning services in the Anderson County area before anybody else thought to do so.

"He was a man that was very well respected," Hyder said of Denney. "I think probably just about everybody in Anderson County knew him. He's going to be greatly missed."

Denney is survived by his wife, Betty Ann, six children, 13 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held Feb. 18 at Hope Community Church in Lawrenceburg. The family has requested that contributions in memory of Denney be made to the J. Tyre Denney Memorial Fund through Kentucky Baptist Foundation.

January gifts to CP narrow 2009-10 working budget gap

Louisville—Kentucky Baptists gave \$2,191,737 through the Cooperative Program in January, bringing totals for the fiscal year 1.8 percent ahead of pace for the Kentucky Baptist Convention's working budget of \$23 million.

Five months into the 2009-10 year, those gifts also represent the highest amount given during any month this fiscal year.

Kentucky Baptists have given a total of \$9,756,480 so far this fiscal year, which began in September and will end in August. That amount is \$173,147 (1.8 percent) ahead of the \$9,583,333 needed through the end of January in order to keep pace with the working budget, said Lowell Ashby, KBC's business services team leader.

According to Ashby, January gifts also narrowed the fiscal year deficit to \$443,520 (4.35 percent) behind the original 2009-10 budget of \$24,480,000. Because of the challenging national economy, the KBC is operating under the approved working budget of \$23 million for the fiscal year, he said.

"It's exciting to watch God at work in and through the lives of Kentucky Baptists as they faithfully serve in ministry and generously give through the Cooperative Program," said Billy Compton, KBC's executive associate for Cooperative Program and resources. "Our relief efforts in Haiti this past month are just one of the many examples of how God is changing lives through Kentucky Baptists and through CP."

Former Bush adviser Karl Rove to speak at UC leadership series

Williamsburg—Karl Rove, former adviser to President George W. Bush, will be the speaker for the 2010 Forcht Group of Kentucky Center for Excellence in Leadership event April 6 at University of the Cumberlands.

Rove is the former deputy chief of staff and senior adviser to President Bush; author of the book "Courage and Consequence;" a Fox News contributor; a columnist for Newsweek; and writer of a weekly op-ed piece for the Wall Street Journal.

"We are honored to have speakers of such caliber visit our campus annually to address issues of leadership," said Cumberlands President James Taylor. "Through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Terry Forcht of the Forcht Group of Kentucky, this is the fifth year that we have had the opportunity to host this exceptional leadership event, which is a valuable ex-

perience not only for our students, but also to the community and region. We are especially pleased to welcome someone with such national prominence, and we all look forward to Mr. Rove's insight into this year's topic, "Leadership in Today's Economy."

Established in 2005, the Forcht Group of Kentucky Center for Excellence in Leadership provides programs and activities that enhance the development of leadership, character and citizenship.

Like all Center for Excellence in Leadership events, "Leadership in Today's Economy" will be free of charge, but tickets are required. The event starts at 7 p.m. in the O. Wayne Rollins Center at the Williamsburg campus. To reserve free tickets, call the University of the Cumberlands ticket line at (606) 539-4432.



Karl Rove

Southern Baptists finalize long-term strategy for Haiti relief

By Carol Pipes
Baptist Global Response

Alpharetta, Ga.—Southern Baptists' long-term relief response to the Haiti earthquake will be led in Haiti by a six-member coordination group, making plans that will be implemented by a team of experienced disaster relief specialists working through Haitian Baptist churches.

That decision was made Feb. 11-12 by representatives of four Southern Baptist organizations meeting at the North American Mission Board headquarters in Alpharetta, Ga. The relief effort will be coordinated by representatives on the ground from Baptist Global Response, the Florida Baptist Convention, International Mission Board, NAMB and two Haitian Baptist conventions.

Fritz Wilson, Florida convention's disaster relief director, will serve as the incident commander on the ground in Haiti. Wilson's team, which will include experienced Southern Baptist disaster relief volunteers, will implement a countrywide ministry strategy set by the coordinating group, according to Jim Brown, U.S. director for Baptist Global Response.

"The coordination group will begin working immediately on identifying specific projects and locations, which in turn will determine specific volunteer needs," Brown said. "They will be in constant communication with the incident command team as decisions are made. There are still many internal logistics issues to be resolved—lodging, security, transportation and translation—before teams can begin working on the ground."



LOOKING AHEAD Leaders of Southern Baptists' response to the Haiti earthquake met Feb. 11-12 in Alpharetta, Ga., to discuss plans for a long-term relief effort. (Photo by John Swain/NAMB)

Based on reports from the disaster relief efforts in the past few weeks, five priorities for urgent and intermediate response have been identified: food distribution, shelter, water purification, medical teams and chaplains.

A "mirror" team in the U.S. will provide communication and mobilize resources, both functional and human, for projects identified by the coordination group, Brown added. In addition, the Port-au-Prince airport reopened to commercial traffic Feb. 19, making it possible for volunteers to travel directly into Haiti, rather than driving in from the Dominican Republic.

Haitians remain hopeful

During the meeting, Wilson, who recently returned from an assessment trip to Haiti, recalled the sound of familiar hymns sung in Creole rising above the rubble as Haitian Christians gathered for worship one Sunday morning.

"Churches all across Port-au-Prince, Carrefour and other communities were meeting outside the walls of their buildings because they were either destroyed, damaged or the fears of the people prevented them from going inside their buildings," Wilson said.

Many of the camps where displaced Haitians have set up shelters are located near Haitian Baptist churches, he noticed.

"Time and time again, we reported that where there was a cluster of people living in tents, God had left a church intact to minister to those people," Wilson said. "We have a divine opportunity to come alongside Haitian Baptists in order to meet the needs of those affected by the earthquake. Our response has to be done through the Haitian church, there is no doubt."

The incident command team will help identify ministry locations and resource them with volunteers. They also will work with leaders from the two Haitian conventions to coordinate volunteer housing, transportation, ministry visits, security and other in-country logistics.

The group wrestled with the challenges of placing volunteers on the field where housing and transportation are limited and security remains an issue.

NAMB's Disaster Operations Center will open Feb. 15 to support the undertaking, said Mickey Caison, NAMB's team leader for adult volunteer mobilization.

Medical and well-drilling teams already have begun work in Haiti, Caison noted. Once logistics are in place and the incident command team is on the ground, more teams will be able to enter to work on wa-

ter purification, food distribution and temporary shelters.

Southern Baptist Disaster Relief Network leaders said volunteers need to be spiritually, as well as physically, prepared. Plans are being made to give volunteers training that is specific to the Haiti response.

"God is doing something amazing among the churches in Haiti, and we are coming alongside them to strengthen them and help them share the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the country," said Bruce Poss, NAMB's disaster relief coordinator. "We've got to tie the gospel of Jesus Christ and the transformation of life to all that we do."

Long-term effort needed

Disaster relief leaders continue to emphasize that helping Haitians rebuild their lives and communities will be a long-term effort.

Already, SBDR has sent 77 volunteers to Haiti including six medical teams. Volunteers have distributed 20 tons of rice, given medical treatment to 6,482 patients, assisted 100 pastors, made 2,475 ministry contacts and have seen nearly 100 professions of faith.

"This is bigger than any of us," Caison said. "We are just a small part of a much larger thing that God is doing in Haiti. Our effort will undergird church planting, evangelism and leadership development in order to transform lives with the gospel of Jesus Christ and ultimately transform Haiti."

With additional reporting by James Dotson and Mark Kelly

Freed detainees return home, two to remain in jail during inquiry

Continued from page 1

group. They were released without bond after promising to come back to Haiti if further questions arise, the Associated Press reported.

At Eastside Baptist Church in Twin Falls, associate pastor John Martinez said the news of the detainees' release was a "big relief." Martinez has been preaching in absence of pastor Paul Thompson, who was part of the group. Thompson's son, Silas, also was a member of the group, as was church member Steve McMullen.

"We were just so thrilled," Martinez told Baptist Press. "This is what we've been praying for and going before the throne of God for day after day. Our church has been on its knees."

God used the incident to unify the church and to "grow us and teach us and mature us," Martinez noted. He said the past few weeks could best be described as a "roller coaster" in light of various news outlets that inaccurately reported that the detainees would be released.

The other freed members are Carla Thompson and Nicole and Corinna Lankford. Both are members of Central Valley Baptist Church. (BP)



HONORED Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Director Bill Mackey (right) offers a few words of appreciation to Morris Chapman (left), who will retire Sept. 30 after 18 years as president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, during the Fellowship of State Executive Directors annual meeting. Chapman is joined by his wife, Jodi.

State Baptist execs, editors honor retiring SBC leaders

Coeur d'Alene, Idaho—Joint resolutions by the Fellowship of State Executive Directors and the Association of State Baptist Papers honored the service of two Southern Baptist Convention leaders who will retire this year.

In statements Feb. 10, the groups represented 42 state conventions honored Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, and Jerry Rankin, president of the International Mission Board.

Chapman, who is set to retire Sept. 30, is completing 18 years of service in his leadership position and 50 years in the ministry. Rankin will have served 17 years as president of the IMB and 40 years total with the entity when he steps down July 31.

Tribute was given to Rankin for leading the IMB during a period of remarkable growth in the number of missionaries and in the number of previously unreached people groups who now are engaged by Southern Baptists.

The statement also recognized Chapman's leadership as president of the SBC's Executive Committee during a time when the convention settled its consensus theological convictions with the passage of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000; streamlined SBC entities through the Covenanted SBC for a New Century; took important steps in racial reconciliation; and initiated "an invigorated emphasis on the Cooperative Program and stewardship, and a focus on healthy church growth." (BP)

BAPTIST DIGEST

Clinton prosecutor Starr named Baylor president—Kenneth Starr, the independent counsel whose long-running probe led to the impeachment of former President Bill Clinton, has been named the new president of Baylor University, the world's largest Baptist university. Starr, who has been the dean of the law school at Pepperdine University since 2004, was chosen unanimously by Baylor's board of regents Feb. 12. Starr, a Texas native and former Church of Christ member, told the Texas Baptist Standard that he expects to "readily, cheerfully and enthusiastically" join a Baptist church before he begins his post June 1. While Starr is known for his controversial investigations of Clinton's sex scandal involving White House intern Monica Lewinsky, the Waco, Texas, university has faced controversy for its infighting. Starr succeeds John Lilley, who was fired as president in 2008, a decision the school said then was "necessary in order to unite Baylor's many constituencies."

Hunt's church raises CP giving 90 percent—In the past, some have questioned the percentage of giving to Southern Baptists' Cooperative Program by First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Ga., led by Pastor Johnny Hunt, president of the Southern Baptist Convention. When he arrived at First Baptist, Woodstock in 1986, the church was struggling to survive and gave \$30,000 to the Cooperative Program. In 2009, the church gave \$525,000 to CP—an increase of more than 1,600 percent. For 2009-10, the church has budgeted \$900,000 for the Cooperative Program—a 90 percent increase in just one year. That will put the church near the top of all Cooperative Program giving churches nationwide.

CBF accepting applications for Haiti volunteers—The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is accepting applications for limited volunteer opportunities for groups and individuals to prepare a staging area for future service opportunities like clean-up and rebuilding in Haiti. Prospective volunteers may sign up on the CBF Web site. Officials will match skills and resources with needs as they develop on site. The Fellowship's long-term-disaster-response plan includes working with ministry partners to provide medical services, access to clean water, spiritual formation and pastoral care. Efforts also will include work with children and orphanages, micro-enterprise development among women, and construction of earthquake-resistant housing.

Infiltration evangelism

During a recent meeting of state executive directors, Jeff Iorg, president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, addressed the topic of "Personal Responsibility in Evangelism." Iorg said he grew up steeped in the conviction that every Christian was responsible to witness for Jesus, but this conviction seems to have been lost in many Baptist churches. Those reasons include:

Partners in the Mission



By Bill Mackey

- Witnessing has been redefined as "living an attractive life."

- The focus on aggressive apologetics has intimidated many believers.

- The decline in discipleship and witness training has weakened personal responsibility.

- The post-modern perspective on tolerance implies that witnessing is intolerant.

He said churches largely focus on attraction and engagement to communicate the gospel. The attraction strategy is a Christian event or program designed to accommodate unbelievers and introduce them to Jesus Christ. An engagement strategy is an event or program designed to involve unbelievers and introduce them to Jesus Christ. Iorg believes both are needed. However, an infiltration strategy is more effective. An infiltration strategy, he said, is one that deploys believers throughout the culture to introduce unbelievers to Jesus Christ in their context.

For example, starting a church softball league for the community is an attraction strategy; playing in a community-sponsored league is an engagement strategy; joining a company softball team is an infiltration strategy.

Infiltration strategies are more challenging because we cannot control the venue or conversation. Christians are sometimes afraid of being tainted by the culture and also may lack the courage of a robust faith to stand up in the marketplace. Generally, believers are not encouraged and celebrated for what they do outside the church.

The obvious reality is that believers already are dispersed throughout the culture. But believers must be deployed with the purpose of sharing Jesus. Iorg suggested that leaders can do a number of things to engender an infiltration mindset:

- Model the process. Iorg serves as chaplain for the San Francisco Giants.

- Share the conviction that every believer is responsible for witnessing.

- Clarify that witnessing is sharing a verbal witness in the context of interpersonal relationships.

- Support simple strategies for equipping witnesses.

- Support church planters with the expectation that every member will witness.

- Intensify discipleship that produces a robust faith with a passion to share.

- Model strength in the face of increasing criticism for our passion that Jesus is the only way of salvation.

Read Paul's request that he might be a fearless and appropriate witness in Ephesians 6:18-20 and Colossians 4:2-6.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Embracing the call to reach young adults

In "Lost and Found: The Younger Unchurched and the Churches that Reach Them," LifeWay Christian Resources researcher Ed Stetzer explores how churches can reach and engage young adults for the cause of Christ. "Lost and Found," which draws on extensive research focusing on one of the most critical issues facing churches, recently was named to the 2009 Golden Canon, Leadership journal's annual list of the 10 books most valuable to church leaders. Stetzer's work is right on target and implementing its recommendations certainly will enable us to be more effective in reaching this generation of young adults.



After Thought

By Todd Deaton

One of Stetzer's associates, Jason Hayes was a student at Morehead State University and was very involved in its Baptist Campus Ministry, where Gene Parr undoubtedly played a formative influence in his life. Perhaps this is one reason that although three out of four 20-somethings believe Christianity today is more about organized religion than about loving God and loving people, Hayes, now young adult ministry specialist at LifeWay, still maintains that this is a generation that God could use to change the course of history.

"For both church and unchurched young adults, we have found that they recognize that their choices make a difference, and they want to improve the world around them," Hayes told participants at a "Connect Conference" sponsored by the Threads young adult initiative of LifeWay. "As a result of this heightened sense of responsibility, we can help create a door for service and evangelism." Young adult leaders must teach the Bible in depth, foster authentic discussions and answer the difficult questions of faith, Hayes urged.

The four markers of this young adult generation set forth in "Lost and Found" resonate with the experiences of many campus ministers, according to Keith Inman, director of the collegiate/young adult ministry group of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. "This generation is hard wired for relationship," Inman believes. "However, their relationship skills create quite a few 'short circuits.'" In their defense, though, positive relationship skills have not been modeled very well in their homes or otherwise, Inman said. However, the desire for healthy relationships provides a key opportunity for churches; it drives young adults to seek environments where they experience a strong sense of community.

Stetzer's research found that "this sense of feeling there is something more, something missing, in the way

we relate to one another," is a common theme among unchurched young adults. Community building in the church or within a campus ministry takes a huge commitment of time, Inman acknowledged. Yet allowing young adults to connect in everyday experiences of being Christian and being a family is essential. Their strong desire to connect with others enables church leaders to bring out unrealized spiritual potential, leading young adults to experience the fullness of life promised by walking authentically with Jesus and one another, Inman explained.

Depth of content—another marker—was a key component in seeing the young adult ministry explode several years ago at Crestwood Baptist Church, where Inman was serving as young adult Bible study leader. "Strong preaching, worship, teaching and community nurtured and inspired many of us to be honest in our struggles, open in our grief, and driven to connect with someone to take us further down the road of what it meant to be a follower of Jesus," he recalled.

Another marker, responsibility, is so true of these young adults, according to Inman. "One might think this is ironic given some of our impressions about this generation and responsibility," he allowed. "Every year, however, we have students who are compelled to answer the call to minister deliberately or spontaneously to the needs around them. There are many untold stories where students have taken personally the call to be the hands and feet of Jesus."

A key to reaching young adults, then, is creating an atmosphere that allows them to connect in sharing the gospel through service and participating in powerful experiences that have the potential to transform their understanding of faith. "Nothing in the world encourages the losing of one's personal ambitions as does the gain of knowing and experiencing the life that comes from serving in the name of Christ," he explained. This, indeed, is a great task of the church, and one that all young adults must come to embrace.

Believing our college campuses historically have been places where God has awakened our nation and revived the church, several campus ministers are initiating an effort to revitalize a Collegiate Day of Prayer on this Thursday, Feb. 25 (see www.CollegiateDayofPrayer.org for more information). Join them in praying for God to engage the hearts and minds of young adults and guide them into becoming the leaders He intends.

Who is the object of your love?

By Chuck Bentley

Valentine's Day is an occasion when people traditionally give to their "sweethearts" cards, flowers, candy or other expressions of their love. As Christians, we know that the ultimate source of love—and the One who truly gives it meaning—is God.

The Bible tells us that we know love because the Father first loved us (1 John 4:19). It tells us that God is love (1 John 4:8). It is not just what He does, but who He is. And the Bible also tells us who are the objects of God's love—us! We can probably all quote John 3:16 by heart, which begins with, "For God so loved the world." Because God loved us, He gave us Jesus, who died for our sins. Let's look at another person from the Bible who loved and gave.

A faith established

Abraham is probably one of the most famous people in the Bible. We know him as many things—the father of the nation of Israel, a friend of God, a man with great faith. Genesis 12 begins with God telling Abraham (then called Abram) to leave his home, all that was familiar and to travel to another country. God didn't even tell him the destination, just that He would show him where to go. What kind of amazing faith

did it take for Abraham to obey?

This was the beginning of a great journey for Abraham—not just a physical journey but a spiritual, mental and emotional one as well. Abraham's faith was tested many times along the way, but perhaps his greatest test was yet to come.

A promise fulfilled

God promised to make a great nation of Abraham's descendants, a great promise considering Abraham and his wife, Sarah, had no children and both were beyond their child-bearing years. But they believed God, and many years later, at the appointed time, they had a son, Isaac.

A sacrifice required

One day, God gave Abraham another great command—to sacrifice his son, Isaac, on an altar to the Lord. Isaac was Abraham's beloved son, a treasure and a gift from God. Abraham knew what it meant to sacrifice—it would mean killing Isaac, his only hope for descendants. Was God going back on His promise?

Abraham had a long history of trusting God to fall back on. He had seen God provide many times in his past. He believed that Isaac was the fulfillment of God's promises, and God had never broken His promises.

And Abraham loved God. So because he loved, he gave. He took

Isaac and journeyed to Mount Moriah to make the sacrifice as God had commanded. He built the altar, laid Isaac on it and raised his knife to kill his only son, his beloved son.

A divine provision

God called to Abraham and told him not to harm Isaac. God was testing Abraham's obedience and love for Him. The Lord said, "Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son" (Genesis 22:12).

It would be easy for Abraham to love Isaac more than God, to put his son in first place and God in second place. But Abraham proved that he did love God more than his most beloved possession.

In Isaac's place, God provided a ram for the sacrifice. Abraham called that place Jehovah Jireh, which means "God provides." He had given his most important possession to God, and God had provided for him.

What do we love more than God? Have we put our money, home, job or even our family in first place in our lives? Carefully examine your heart and see if God still has first place. God may not ask us to give up any of these, but it's good to know that we could. What better way to show our love than to give? (BP)

Chuck Bentley is CEO of Crown Financial Ministries.

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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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What is trend-savvy parenting?

By David Garrard

KAGOY. Rewinders. Cyber bullying. Mousers. Game-Pad Dads. Do you know what these are? Trend-savvy parents do, and knowing can make a huge difference in your ability to relate to your kids. Mary Manz Simon's terrific little book, "Trend-Savvy Parenting,"

provides an insider's guide, which will help you understand societal trends that are shaping your child's world—and help you know how to respond.

Our kids are growing up in a world very different from the one we grew up in. Some trends are harmless, but others have the potential to affect children and families in negative ways. Parents need to know what is going on.

"Trend-Savvy Parenting" consists of 35 short chapters, each dealing with a particular trend. The chapters answer three questions: What is it? Why should I care? What can I do? I ordered my copy directly from Focus on the Family for \$5, including shipping. I'm not sure why it was so inexpensive because it is chock-full of great information.

KAGOY—Kids Are Growing Up Younger (also known as age compression). This trend can trick us into thinking development needs have changed. They haven't.

Rewinders—Grandparents who provide primary care for grandchildren.

Cyber bullying—High-tech harassment whose impact continues to grow due to the access kids have to technology.

Mousers—Infants and toddlers who use lapware, also known as software for pre-readers. There are lots of unanswered questions regarding the benefits and possible downsides of this growing trend.

GamePad Dads—Fathers who play video games with their children—a uniquely 21st century parent-child bonding opportunity.

Be a trend-savvy parent and help your child respond to their world in positive, God-honoring ways.

David Garrard is minister to children at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville.



Baptist higher education entails 'missions in action'

By Michael Carter

Campbellsville University was established in 1906 as a result of the commitment of a group of Baptist visionaries who realized the great need for Christian higher education in South Central Kentucky. In the decision to begin Russell Creek Academy (now Campbellsville University), the leadership of Russell Creek Baptist Association fulfilled a vision that had been in play for nearly three decades. The founders of Campbellsville University understood the need for Baptist higher education in the early 20th century in this part of the commonwealth, and they gave sacrificially of themselves and their resources in what they considered to be a part of fulfilling the Great Commission. They approached this daunting task as "missions in action" as they worked to prepare a generation of Christian servant leaders and to bring quality education, steeped in the Baptist tradition, to young men and women of the region.

Campbellsville continues in that same tradition of approaching Christian higher education as a means of missions. In fact, this approach to higher education has most recently been affirmed, perhaps stronger than ever, in "Vision 2025: Preparing Christian Servant Leaders."

Vision 2025 is a bold blueprint for the next 15 years, establishing a path to becoming one of America's premier Christian universities. This plan outlines strategies for growth of enrollment, expansion of the institution's footprint, initiation of new academic and student life programs, and implementation of a series of capital fundraising campaigns to provide the financial support required.

Vision 2025 calls for all CU family members to become even more engaged in servant leadership, missions and outreach, and ministries in the community and world. It is our stated goal, by action of the board of trustees in approval of Vision 2025, to engage the world of the 21st century with the gospel of Jesus Christ by producing a generation of godly men and women and a movement of Christian servant in their professions. We firmly believe that Baptist higher education is missions in action. How else are we going to reach

the world for Jesus Christ if we do not prepare servant leaders who are able to bring the gospel "to bear" upon a secularized and changing world?

Vision 2025 speaks specifically of our commitment to the "integration of faith and learning." While the school of theology, office of campus ministries and the office of church and external relations are integral to our Christian mission to equip faithful ministers and maintain vital connection with the churches, the vision is inclusive of the whole institution. The following is a statement from the clearly communicated this: "Being a Christ-centered higher education institution in the Baptist tradition and committed to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20) and the 'whoever will gospel' (John 3:16)." A commitment to servant evangelism and service learning also is outlined in Vision 2025.

This commitment to mission-related education and living is a part of the university's tradition. Throughout the institution's history, we have been producing world changers—pastors and youth ministers, music and worship ministers, career missionaries, bivocational pastors, denominational leaders and Christian leaders in many other professions who have served and honored Jesus in their respective fields.

Missions in action is the legacy of Campbellsville University for 103 years. Missions in action is the commitment of the future as stated in "Vision 2025: Preparing Christian Servant Leaders." It is missions in action as we host the largest number of international students (around 240 from more than 30 countries) among Kentucky's private institutions and as we share the gospel with our international students. It is missions in action as we implement our Servant Leaders program, which engages all students in missions and ministries during their first two years here.

Thank you for your support of missions in action at Campbellsville University through your prayers, financial support through the Cooperative Program and encouraging students to attend Campbellsville University. Michael Carter is president of Campbellsville University. On Feb. 28, Kentucky Baptists observe Baptist Higher Education Sunday.

FIRST PERSON

"Throughout the institution's history, we have been producing world changers."

Martin, KSU queen, conveys story of hope, unity

By Curtis Woods

"The people of God are not merely to mark time, waiting for God to step in and set right all that is wrong. Rather, they are to model the new heaven and new earth, and by so doing awaken longings for what God will someday bring to pass," says Philip Yancey. This quote well captures the mission of the Baptist Campus Ministry at Kentucky State University: "Keep the Savior's priorities our undying passion."

We summarize this purpose statement by teaching our students to "love God and love people." In fact, one could say that our principle unit of thought concerning missional thinking and discipleship is pursuing "omnigenous" (all people)—rather than homogeneous (one people)—relationships. This has proven an extremely difficult task in light of the "racialized society" in which we live.

I borrow the phrase "racialized society" from a book by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, associate professor of sociology at Texas A&M University, "Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States." The word connotes "a society wherein race matters profoundly for differences in life experiences, life opportunities, and social relationships." Put another way, it's a society that has socially structured walls of separation, which keep image-bearers from experiencing the beauty of unity in the midst of ethnic or economic diversity. A society that shuns the Lord's high priestly prayer that we become "one" as He and the Father are one united by the Spirit (John 17:22).

FAITH ON CAMPUS

What are we to do? Give up and long for the return of Christ without playing our role in bringing all people to the throne of grace in intimate relationships? May it never be. Rather, we must use our influence on our campuses to change hearts and minds for God's glory and our good.

Last year, I saw a glimpse of heaven on earth as students from multiple states and countries came together under the umbrella of unity to campaign for one of our former student leaders, Elisabeth Martin, who felt led by God to run for the most-coveted prize at KSU: University Queen. This may not seem like much to the casual reader until you understand that Elisabeth, a young Caucasian female from Waddy, believed that she could serve as the first Anglo-American queen at Kentucky State University, a historically black institution. She trusted God and her peers enough to attempt what many labeled as "dreaming the impossible dream."

As an active BCM member and international student leader, she believed that campaigning on the cross-cultural platform of love and unity would give her a chance to be heard and fully known by her peers. The campaign week was arduous. Her campaign manager and spokesperson, Casper Camau, a former BCM president and native of Kenya, provided Elisabeth with the nuts and bolts to become politically dexterous, meet-

ing with and loving on students from urban centers and rural areas around the world. They believed in her dream and passion, even though she made it known that she believed that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God.

As a Baptist campus minister, it brought great delight to my heart to observe her resolute commitment to the one true God in the public forum—a rare quality, indeed, for those who desire political correctness over Christian orthodoxy. Humbling! Inspiring!

The sea of multi-ethnic students, who worked in one accord to assist Elisabeth, waited on election day with anxious expectation. They wondered what would take place. The votes were counted, and she won by a landslide. I believe it was around midnight when I received the call. It was the voice of Elisabeth Martin, panting and cracking as a result of tears of joy. She said, "Brother Woods, Brother Woods, we won."

Once I reflected on it the next day, the impact of her words hit me: "We won." Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice. Justice at its best is love correcting everything that stands against love."

The BCM intentionally seeks to build relationships with all to introduce them to the blessed hope of the gospel found in Jesus Christ alone. This is our ultimate joy.

Curtis Woods is Baptist Campus Ministries director at Kentucky State University.

She trusted God and her peers enough to attempt what many labeled as "dreaming the impossible dream."

What to know about credit cards

By Don Spencer

Use credit cards carefully. Credit cards offer convenience of not having to carry cash. However, it has been proven through studies that individuals spend as much as 25 percent more when they use credit cards. If you use them, be aware of this tendency and exercise self-discipline. If you don't, costs from fees and interest, or damage to your credit record could be significant.

Choose carefully. Don't automatically choose a credit card just to get freebies because there is no annual fee. Look for the card that best fits your spending/borrowing habits. For example, even though you know you shouldn't, if you expect to carry a balance from month to month, it's important to look for a card with a low interest rate and/or a generous "grace period."

Pay as much as you can to minimize interest charges. Your goal should be to always pay your bill in full each month. Paying only the minimum means you'll be paying excessive interest. Some folks who pay only the minimum end up paying more in interest than for the product purchased.

Pay on time. Late fees typically are \$35 or more. That's a high price to pay for being a few days late. Continued late payments may be reported to credit bureaus as a sign of problems handling money. If your credit rating gets lowered, your credit card company could raise interest rates, reduce the credit limit or cancel your card. Late payments also can be a mark against you the next time you apply for a job or an apartment.

Protect your credit card numbers from thieves. Never provide the number, expiration date or security code in response to an unsolicited phone call, e-mail or other communication you did not originate. If using your card online, make sure you're dealing with a legitimate Web site that encrypts data during transmission. Credit card companies also are offering more protection by providing "zero-liability" programs. Don Spencer is a certified financial planner and directs the Kentucky Baptist Convention's church financial benefits department.



Kentucky Baptist churches take lead on abstinence education

Continued from page 1

church and parents are stepping up to the plate," noted Elliott, who has a 21-year-old daughter. "We tend to give up some of our responsibilities as parents teaching our children."

First Baptist, Prestonsburg's instruction includes reviewing "Flood," a DVD-based series that addresses various issues, including teen pregnancy.

Elliott recently began teaching a class for boys on character development, while his wife leads a session for girls on understanding relationships.

First Baptist Church of Lawrenceburg got parents involved in sex education this winter through a video-and-workbook series called "Next."

After meeting with parents in January, youth pastor Rich Smith encouraged them to review materials and discuss them with their children. The youth pastor held a second meeting with parents earlier this month.

He said he hopes frank conversations between parents and children continue long after the study.

"This needs to be coming from home," Smith explained. "One-day rallies don't build a worldview of purity. If it's taught at home, they're able to get a lot more out of it. I try to get parents to influence students."

First Baptist Church of Mayfield started its latest True Love Waits class Feb. 10. Youth pastor Jeff Keith started the annu-



COMMITMENT Families from First Baptist Church of Lawrenceburg participate in a purity ring ceremony Valentine's Day. Students pledged to remain sexually pure until marriage. Pictured is Andy and Mondie Kirby (left) with their son, Mitchell, and Sean and Beth McCreary with their sons Evan and Jarrett. (Photo courtesy of Rich Smith/First Baptist, Lawrenceburg)

al emphasis after he came to the church three years ago.

Keith recently received a message from a freshman at Murray State University, relating how she was following principles learned in the youth group to guide a relationship with another student.

"Parents appreciate the process," Keith said. "I tell them we want to partner with them to raise children in a sex-deprived world."

Although Westside Baptist Church in Murray isn't doing True Love Waits this year, youth pastor Scott Douglas plans to review biblical views of modesty and purity before students leave for spring break trips.

Last fall, he led boys through a 10-week study of "Every Young Man's Battle" while his wife reviewed the book, "Lies Young Women Believe," with girls.

Open door for churches

Reduced government support for abstinence teaching presents churches with an opportunity to emphasize positive values, Douglas said.

"I don't believe the government has a place to teach morality," Douglas said. "I believe this is reserved for families first, in

partnership with the teaching ministry of the church. It's an opportunity to provide a Christian voice."

Still, Westerfield expressed concern about the funding reductions, which may affect courses she teaches as abstinence coordinator for the Alpha Alternatives crisis pregnancy center.

A grant administered through the county health department has enabled them to provide free textbooks each year to 2,000 seventh and ninth graders. The pupils take a six-session class in "Choosing the Best," curriculum produced by a publishing firm based in Atlanta.

Westerfield said the health department doesn't know whether the grant will be renewed for the 2010-11 school year.

Although that could force Alpha to stop handing out books or cut other elements of the program, she said the situation means churches need to do more to instill Christian-based values among teens.

"The church should step up," said Westerfield, who is leading True Love Waits because Hillcrest currently is without a youth pastor. "We're not just teaching abstinence, we're teaching character building and responsibility."

Purity movement afoot in Ky. Baptist churches

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

Hopkinsville—Briauna Smith will be decked out in an ivory dress with a coral-colored sash at this weekend's "Purity Ball" at Hopkinsville's War Memorial building. Her father, Chuck, will wear an ivory-colored shirt and a boutonniere that will match the colors in his daughter's corsage.

A member of Hillcrest Baptist Church in Hopkinsville, Smith said he plans to make this year's ball even more special by joining several other fathers to rent a limousine and take their daughters to dinner beforehand.

"She asks once a week when it is," said her mother, Kelley. "She loved the one-on-one time with him last year and loved dancing. It was a special time for them."

Sponsored by Alpha Alternatives, a crisis pregnancy center, there actually are two dances. Friday night is for fathers and daughters who are in kindergarten through fifth grade. Saturday night's dance is for those in grades 6-12.

Last year's inaugural events attracted about 350 girls, fathers and male mentors, including many from Kentucky Baptist churches.

The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Some mothers have asked if Alpha would sponsor a mother-son dance, said Wendy Westerfield, the center's abstinence coordinator.

She said the ball spotlights the important role fathers play in their daughters' lives.

"One reason girls choose sexual activity is because they haven't had that father role in their life," said Westerfield, True Love Waits leader at Hillcrest. "A lot of times they look for it in somebody else."

"So for fathers to take a step, get out of their comfort zone and come dance with their daughters brings that love that they want from a man. Their daddy is able to give them that, encourage them and tell them they look beautiful."

Fathers definitely profit from the evening, Smith maintained.

"My daughter is 100 percent a momma's girl, but that night is with Dad and that's an awesome feeling," Smith said. "It's one night of the year that I get her to myself."

"One thing I got out of last year's (dance) is realizing how quickly my daughter is growing up. If I don't do things with her, time is going to get away from me."

Part of a team that stages "Experiencing God" weekends around the state, Smith often works with youth at those events.

What he said he sees happening with young people concerns him. Teens have to deal with widespread immorality and much worse temptations than when he attended high school in the first half of the 1990s, Smith pointed out.

"The Bible warns about that," he said. "The more dads we get on board the better it will be. It depends on what kind of legacy we want to leave for our children."

Hopkinsville's dance is just one of numerous events focusing on purity as churches and parachurch organizations put a spotlight on sexual abstinence during February and March.

First Baptist Church of Lawrenceburg chose Valentine's Day for a purity ring ceremony that concluded its winter emphasis on abstinence.

The Feb. 14 ceremony included several dozen parents and children. Students pledged to remain pure until marriage, while their parents committed to pray for their children and their future spouses.

First Baptist, Lawrenceburg's abstinence initiative parallels a church-wide effort to teach parents how to fulfill their roles, starting when their children are infants.

"If I can help our parents be what God wants parents to be, our students will be better off," said youth pastor Rich Smith.

First Baptist Church of Mayfield is concluding its Truth Love Waits emphasis with a purity ceremony during the March 21 morning service.

Although acknowledging it is easy to feel overwhelmed by society's immorality, youth pastor Jeff Keith said he believes abstinence teaching and these special events remind people of the power that lives within them.

"Through God's Word He shows us that through the power of the church we can overcome," Keith said. "We can exercise the Christ within us. It's an exciting thing."



DADDY-DAUGHTER TIME Chuck Smith and his daughter, Briauna, pose for a photo at last year's Purity Ball in Hopkinsville, sponsored by Alpha Alternatives, a local crisis pregnancy center.

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Study: Abstinence-only programs effective in delaying sex

Philadelphia—A recent study by the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine shows that abstinence-only sex-education programs are effective in getting some preteens to delay having sex.

The study, which appeared in the Feb. 1 edition of *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, divided 662 African-American students in grades 6 and 7 into classes held on Saturdays in four public schools.

Students were randomly assigned to classes using abstinence-only, safe-sex and comprehensive sex-education approaches. Another group received general education about health issues not related to sex.

After two years, researchers found that 33 percent of young teenagers in the abstinence-only program reported sexual activity. That compared to 52 percent of those taught condom use and 42 percent of those instructed in both approaches.

Researchers said they found no significant differences among the groups of the numbers of youth did become sexually active. They eventually did using condoms when. A common criticism of abstinence-only programs is that they discourage condom use and thereby actually may contribute to teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases in those who break purity vows.

The abstinence-only program used in the study did not suggest sex until marriage, a feature of faith-based programs like the Southern Baptist Convention's popular True Love Waits, used by an estimated 2.5 million teenagers and college students since 1994.

Previous studies have questioned the effectiveness of relying solely on sex-education programs in which teenagers pledge to remain virgins until they are married. Despite that, the Bush administration pumped millions of dollars into abstinence-only sex education.

After declining for more than a decade, teen pregnancy rose 3 percent in 2006, according to recent figures released by the Guttmacher Institute. At the same time, teen births grew by 4 percent and teen abortions by 1 percent.

President Obama's proposed 2011 budget eliminates funding for abstinence-only programs and shifts funding to programs

for "evidence-based" comprehensive sex-education programs shown to prevent teen pregnancy.

Observers expect the new study, the first to compare various approaches in a controlled setting, to reignite the policy debate over funding of sex education in public schools.

The fact that this latest study received federal funding and wasn't backed by con-

"The results of this randomized controlled trial are promising," the authors wrote. "They suggest that theory-based abstinence-only interventions can have positive effects on adolescents' sexual involvement. This is important because abstinence is the only approach that is acceptable in some communities and settings in both the United States and other countries."

The study did not use a moralistic tone

said the study "demonstrates that the invitation to abstinence works best when it is not diluted by other messages."

"But in the church our approach must be different," noted Ross, a professor of student ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Texas. "Helping teenagers consider pros and cons is fine. But their commitment to total life purity is exponentially greater when their primary motivation is the person of Christ. Those who adore Him and welcome the power of His Spirit stand the best chance of coming to their wedding day in innocence."

Jimmy Hester, who also helped to start True Love Waits, said the study is "verification of what we have known all along."

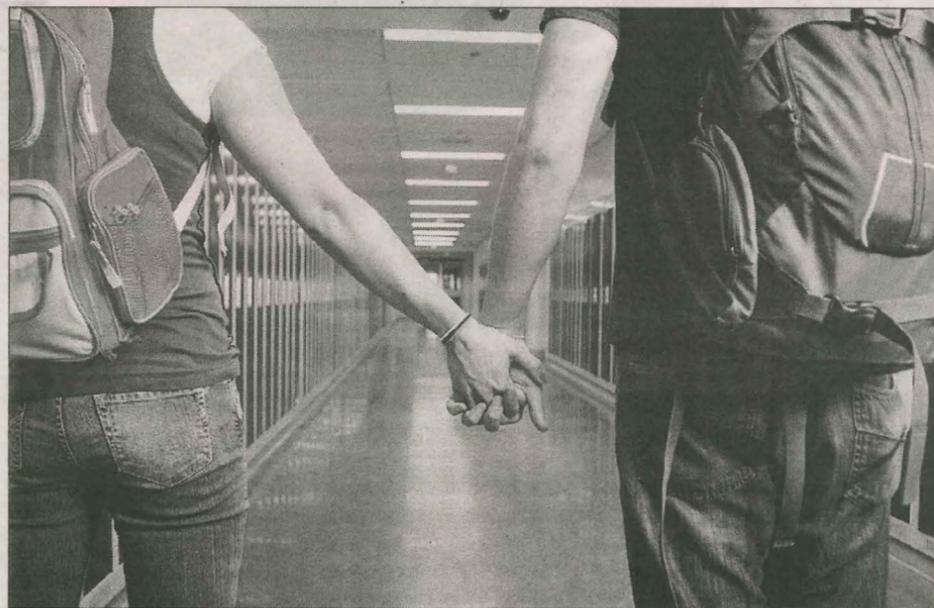
"Promoting abstinence among teenagers makes a difference when it is presented properly," said Hester, who coordinates the True Love Waits program at LifeWay Christian Resources. "Teenagers can recognize the value of practicing abstinence when they are not subjected to contradictory messages."

"Some adults say to teenagers, 'Abstinence is good but we know that you are going to be sexually active, so here are ways to physically protect yourself.' When they make that statement, they compromise the abstinence message," Hester explained. "This study shows that when abstinence is affirmed and presented as the appropriate lifestyle, students will choose to live that way."

But Hester, like Ross, said the True Love Waits program differs significantly from any abstinence program that would receive federal funding.

"True Love Waits calls on teenagers to make a commitment to God, family and friends, future mate and children, and themselves," Hester said. "These relationships listed in the True Love Waits commitment communicate that sexual abstinence is important physically but also for spiritual, moral and social reasons. And it increases the effectiveness of the commitment to abstinence by providing further encouragement and support for appropriate sexual behavior."

Compiled from reporting by Associated Baptist Press and Baptist Press



"Promoting abstinence among teenagers makes a difference when it is presented properly. Teenagers can recognize the value of practicing abstinence when they are not subjected to contradictory messages."

Jimmy Hester, True Love Waits co-founder

servative-leaning groups is significant. The authors—John and Loretta Jemmott of the University of Pennsylvania and Geoffrey Fong of the University of Waterloo—plainly state that other sex education approaches should not be abandoned and that studies should be conducted to see if abstinence education would have the same positive impact on older teens.

But the authors also claim that, contrary to what critics have argued, abstinence education deserves a place at the table.

or portray sex in a negative light, but encouraged abstinence as a way to eliminate the risk of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Jemmott said the study indicated that such programs can be effective in persuading youth to delay their first sexual encounter until they are older, when they are more mature and better equipped to resist peer pressure and understand the negative consequences of having sex.

True Love Waits co-founder Richard Ross

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Barna: Tebow Super Bowl ad well-received but confusing

Ventura, Calif.—Focus on the Family's Super Bowl ad featuring star quarterback Tim Tebow may have gotten a lot of press but left many viewers with "confusion regarding the commercial's meaning and sponsor," according to a leading Christian research firm.

"The downside from the standpoint of the commercial's sponsors is sure to be that the main message and organization behind the ad were lost to a majority of viewers," said David Kinnamon, president of the Barna Group.

When asked to describe the main message of the commercial, one in five viewers could not venture a guess; 38 percent described it as an anti-abortion message; and 19 percent said it was about being "pro-family" or "expressing that family is important."

The ad generated controversy before it ever aired after CBS shifted its policy to allow an advocacy ad. Abortion-rights groups said the Super Bowl was an inappropriate venue for a hot-topic issue like abortion.

The commercial's sponsor also was lost to most viewers. While 78 percent could not identify the organization behind the Tebow ad, only 14 percent correctly stated Focus on the Family. Six percent guessed some other organization or group, and 3 percent remembered the name of the campaign, "Celebrate Family, Celebrate Life."

"On the positive side, it was widely held and remarkably well-received, even among those who hold fundamental differences of opinion on abortion with the pro-life sponsors, Focus on the Family," Kinnamon said. (RNS)



2010 Winter Olympics Vancouver



THANKFUL FOR DO-OVERS U.S. speedskater Rebekah Bradford said she feels like God has used moments in her life to bring her closer to Him, and that the second chances He's afforded her have blessed her with success on and off the ice. (Photo courtesy of U.S. Speedskating)



Rebekah Bradford

Women's Speedskating

Buoyed by 2nd chances in sport, with God

By Tim Ellsworth

Rebekah Bradford knows about second chances.

She received one at the U.S. speedskating championships in December when she fell with only 30 feet to go in her last race. Bradford rebounded in her reskate to post a personal best and qualify for the 2010 Winter Olympics.

But an even greater rebound came five years earlier when Bradford, who had been raised in church before abandoning her Christian roots, decided that what she had been taught about Christianity was indeed true. She gave her life to the Lord and has since seen God work in her life through her speedskating.

"It's not just a sport to me," Bradford said. "It's taught me so many life lessons. I feel like God uses our talents to bring us closer to Him, and He's used speedskating to bring me to His heart."

Skating was a part of her family's life as Bradford was growing up in Minnesota. She began with figure skating but at age 13 took up speedskating because she wanted to be

like her two brothers who were heavily involved with the sport.

She moved to Utah when she was 18 to continue her training. As she left home, she also left behind the Christian beliefs and doctrine she had been taught. She knew the Bible but decided it was just a story with no relevance to her life.

"I think it was just mostly a hard teenage heart and not really seeing the big picture," Bradford noted. "At that point, skating was my religion. That's what gave me status and merit."

Bradford, however, had a void in her life that she tried to fill with anything she could find, resulting in what she described as a tormented lifestyle.

"I was actually in this relationship, and one of the things that ended it was that this gentleman called me a Christian," Bradford recalled.

"I'm not a Christian," she told him. "You don't call me a Christian. This relationship is over."

A few months later, on a whim, she attended a service at The Rock Church in Salt Lake City. As she sat

there listening to the sermon, Bradford said she had a sense that God was speaking to her, affirming that everything she had learned about Christ as a child was true. That was the moment of her conversion, and she was baptized a week later.

Life became more joyful for Bradford, her tormented lifestyle now a thing of the past. She said she now sees speedskating as a form of worship in which she can feel God's pleasure in using her talents to glorify Him.

"In my prayers I actually ask God, as if He's my coach, what I should do," Bradford said. "He'll sometimes place thoughts in my head of what I need to work on or what to focus on. It's helped me with my relationships with my coaches, with my teammates, my work ethic."

That work ethic has led her to the Olympics, where she finished 29th in the women's 1,000 meters.

"It's more of a performance goal I have for my race," Bradford noted. "Mostly I just want to go there and represent God well and I want to be able to race my heart out." (BP)

Kelly Clark

Women's Snowboarding

Faith made her snowboarding 'a lot more free'

By Tim Ellsworth

Kelly Clark wasn't about to sit back and let her life fall to pieces. The Olympic athlete should have been excited about the direction her life was taking, but she wasn't. So one night, she walked up to a fellow snowboarder's hotel room and knocked on the door.

"My name's Kelly," Clark announced. "I think you might be a Christian, and I think you need to tell me about God."

That was the start of a five-month journey in 2004 that led Clark, a 2002 Olympic gold medal winner and member of the 2010 U.S. Olympic snowboarding team, from despair and hopelessness to faith and freedom.

"I thought being a Christian was going to church and following rules and all sorts of religious things," Clark said. "But it's about having a relationship with Jesus."

Growing up in the mountain town of Mount Snow, Vt., snowboarding became Clark's passion early in life. At age 18, she won gold at her first Olympics in Salt Lake City in 2002.

"I had every successful thing going for me," Clark said. "I'd won every major snowboard event you could ever dream about winning. I thought that when you are successful, you're happy. From an outside perspective I was living the dream. I had all the success and all the things you could ever dream about. But I found that it wasn't very fulfilling."

During a competition in 2004, Clark sat in her hotel room

writing in her journal. If this is what life is, she wrote, if this was everything it had to offer, she didn't want to do it anymore. She didn't care if she woke up the next day and didn't think anyone else cared.

That's when an encounter at the competition changed her life. Clark qualified for the finals; but when a fellow competitor failed to qualify, Clark overheard a conversation when a friend reassuringly said, "Hey, it's all right. God still loves you."

That statement, made innocuously, had an impact on Clark, she recalled, and began stirring something in her that she couldn't deny. She went back to her hotel room and opened up the Bible placed there by the Gideons. She started reading but didn't know where to begin and wasn't sure what she was reading. That's when she walked down the hall and knocked on her competitor's door.

After that encounter, Clark said she spent the next several weeks thinking about the Lord and investigating the claims of Jesus Christ.

"I was getting my self-worth from what I did, and my identity was really wrapped up in snowboarding and the success that it brought me," Clark explained.

But after becoming a Christian, she learned she didn't have to do anything for God to love her or for her life to have purpose.

"It ended up freeing up my snowboarding more so than ever," Clark acknowledged. (BP)

SKY HIGH Snowboarder Kelly Clark competes in the Women's Snowboard Halfpipe qualifying round last week at the Winter Olympics. She went on to win a bronze medal in the event.



(Photo by Martin Bureau
AFP/Getty Images)

Chad Hedrick

Men's Speedskating

Skater's blade carries reminder

The message isn't written for the worldwide audience to see, but solely as Chad Hedrick's reminder to himself.

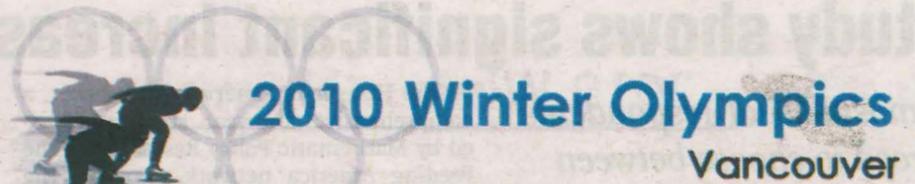
On the top of his skate's blade, the U.S. speedskater has written the letters "CGIM," which stands for "See God in me." As he looks down at his skates when he's competing, Hedrick is intent on thinking about his demeanor and the way he conducts himself.

"It's me going out there understanding ... how many people are watching out there," Hedrick said. "It's not about going out and winning. It's about presenting myself well."

The reason for Hedrick's growth is his recent conversion to Christianity, and he wants others who are struggling to know that there's hope for them as well.

"I won my gold medal (in Torino in 2006) when I felt like the world was trying to crush me," Hedrick said. "During a high point like that in your life, people can feel that way."

"I just feel good about myself and I want people to know that even the best athletes in the world—even the people that look the happiest in public—go through that as well." (BP)



Jinelle Zaugg-Siergiej

Women's Hockey

Every time she laces up her skates, she is mindful of God

By Tim Ellsworth

When she was growing up in Wisconsin, Jinelle Zaugg-Siergiej may have played on the boys' team at her high school—but she wasn't exactly one of the guys.

"I give them most of the credit for me being the player I am today," Zaugg-Siergiej said. "They challenged me daily." But, she noted, "The first two years were very rough in the sense that the guys didn't always want a girl on the team."

She fared better during her last two years of high school as the coach gave her opportunities to play and the team made it to the state semifinals her senior year. The guys even began to accept her—and she even ended up marrying one of them.

Now Zaugg-Siergiej has taken her game to the next level, making it to the Winter Olympics as a forward on the U.S. women's hockey team. Her ability and her place on the team roster she credits solely to the Lord.

"There's something about lacing up your skates and going out and playing with your friends," Zaugg-Siergiej said. "It's like using your God-given talent. I feel very blessed to have been given a talent and to be able to use it for Him and go as far as I have."

Zaugg-Siergiej started playing hockey at age 6, joining her brother's team when she was 8 because they needed more players. Raised in a Christian family, Zaugg-Siergiej was homeschooled until high school and credits her parents for giving her a strong biblical foundation.

"I accepted Christ as my Savior when I was really young, but it wasn't until be-

tween high school and college when it became my own faith," she recalled. "It was a choice I had to make and not necessarily what my parents wanted."

Zaugg-Siergiej, who played on the women's hockey team at the University of Wisconsin, said her college years were a turning point in her life, during which her faith grew strong (she was actively involved with Athletes in Action) and she learned a lot about how to live as a Christian.

Last summer, she married former high school teammate Mike Siergiej. He became a Christian shortly after graduation, and the two began dating about a year after that. Leading up to the tryouts for the Olympic team, the newlyweds spent many hours reading the Bible and praying about the process.

"I always had thought for the last two years that if I make the team it's because of God, because He has bigger plans for me than I do," Zaugg-Siergiej noted.

She forgot to change the name on her passport after her marriage, and the Olympic team is required to put a player's name on the jersey that is on her passport. So she asked if the team could at least use "Zaugg-Siergiej" as her official name in printed materials, "because I want people to know that I will be Siergiej for the rest of my life." After the Olympics, she said she'll drop the Zaugg and will be Jinelle Siergiej.

The first-time Olympian said she certainly wants to win a gold medal in Vancouver, but more than that, she wants to represent Jesus Christ well.

"You always get selfish, and want to play, or want to be on the top line, or want to get more media opportunities and stuff like that," Zaugg-Siergiej said. "But I think going into Vancouver, I just want to be grateful for where I've been and to be a role model for others. I want to represent more than the name on the front of my jersey or the back of my jersey." (BP)



ICE COLD Jinelle Zaugg-Siergiej goes for the puck in the U.S. women's hockey team's 12-1 victory over China Feb. 14 at the Winter Olympics in Vancouver. Zaugg-Siergiej came to know Christ at a young age and credits Him with her success on the ice. (Photo by David McIntyre/Genesis Photos)

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Study shows significant increase in hungry American families

Almost half of respondents forced to choose between eating or paying utility bills

By Ken Camp
Texas Baptist Standard

Princeton, N.J.—Food-assistance agencies nationwide serve 1 million more people each week than they did four years ago, according to a national study released earlier this month.

The nation's network of food banks and related agencies provide emergency food to 37 million people—one American in eight—including 14 million children and about 3 million senior adults, the study revealed. That's a 46 percent increase over the number reported four years ago.

The Hunger in America 2010 report, a comprehensive four-year study conducted by Mathematic Policy Research for the Feeding America network, provides the first empirical data demonstrating “an undeniable connection between the recent economic recession and hunger,” said Jan Pruitt, president of the North Texas Food Bank in Dallas.

“Hunger across our nation is growing by leaps and bounds,” she reported.

More than one household in three served by charitable agencies nationwide experiences “very low food security”—a 54 percent increase in the number of households classified that way compared to 2006.

About 5.7 million people receive emergency food aid each week from a food pantry, soup kitchen or other charitable agen-

cy served by one of the more than 200 food banks associated with the Feeding America network.

“Clearly, the economic recession, resulting in dramatically increasing unemployment nationwide, has driven unprecedented, sharp increases in the need for emergency food assistance and enrollment in federal nutrition programs,” Feeding America President Vicki Escarra said in a news release.

The report, she continued, “exposes the absolutely tragic reality of just how many people in our nation don't have enough to eat. Millions (of) our clients are families with children finding themselves in need of food assistance for the very first time.”

Hunger in America 2010 reports a 68 percent increase over 2006 in the number of adults seeking food assistance who have

been unemployed for less than one year. Nationally, the number of children served through the Feeding America network increased 50 percent over the same period.

The report revealed the hard choices Americans affected by recession and unemployment face. More than 46 percent of the households served by the Feeding America network reported having to choose between paying for utilities or heating fuel and paying for food. Nearly four out of 10 said they had to choose between paying rent or a mortgage and buying food, and more than one-third said they had to choose between transportation and food.

“It is morally reprehensible that we live in the wealthiest nation in the world where one in six people are struggling to make choices between food and other basic necessities,” Escarra said. (ABP)

‘Mount Vernon’ statement released, promotes ‘constitutional conservatism’

By Michael Foust

Alexandria, Va.—A coalition of leading conservatives has unveiled a document promoting a “constitutional conservatism” and affirming the three legs of the movement: social, economic and national security conservatives.

The Mount Vernon Statement, released at a news conference Feb. 17 at the Collingwood Library and Museum in Alexandria, Va., was modeled after the 1960 Sharon Statement, spearheaded by the late conservative leader William F. Buckley.

The Mount Vernon Statement was signed by, among others, Richard Land and Barrett Duke of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission; Kathryn Lopez of National Review; Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council; Grover Norquist of Americans for Tax Reform; Edwin Feulner of the Heritage Foundation; and Ed Meese, attorney general under President Reagan.

“A constitutional conservatism unites all conservatives through the natural fusion provided by American principles,” according to the document, which points continually to the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. “It reminds economic conservatives that morality is essential to limited government, social conservatives that unlimited government is a threat to moral self-government, and national security conservatives that energetic but responsible government is the key to America's safety and leadership role in the world.”

ERLC President Land lauded the document.

“The Mount Vernon Statement is a superb summary of the first principles that unite conservatives of various stripes in America,” he said. “It is important for conservatives to remind themselves, as well as the nation, where their first principles come from, namely our founding documents.”

While different elements of the conservative movement may have differing emphases, we share these first principles. There is more that unites us than divides us.”

The Mount Vernon Statement does not mention any political parties or politicians but it does criticize those who “insist that America must change” and “cast off the old and put on the new.”

“Isn't this idea of change an empty promise or even a dangerous deception?” the document asks. “The change we urgently need, a change consistent with the American ideal, is not movement away from but toward our founding principles. At this important time, we need a restatement of constitutional conservatism grounded in the priceless principle of ordered liberty articulated in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.”

The document does not mention any of the hot button social issues but does outline principles that could apply to those issues.

Focus on “first principles”

The document identifies five ways in which a constitutional conservatism “based on first principles” leads to a “consistent and meaningful policy agenda”:

- “It applies the principle of limited government based on the rule of law to every proposal.
- “It honors the central place of individual liberty in American politics and life.
- “It encourages free enterprise, the individual entrepreneur, and economic reforms grounded in market solutions.
- “It supports America's national interest in advancing freedom and opposing tyranny in the world and prudently considers what we can and should do to that end.
- “It informs conservatism's firm defense of family, neighborhood, community, and faith.” (BP)

Miss., Vt., are polar opposites on Sundays

Washington—The South continues to live up to its Bible Belt reputation, especially Mississippi, which reported the nation's highest church-going statistics in a new Gallup Poll.

At 68 percent, Mississippi had the highest percentage of weekly church-goers in 2009, Gallup said. Vermont remained the least church-going state, with only 23 percent regularly attending. The top and bottom rankings remained unchanged from last year.

Out of the top 10 states, nine are in the South. Utah's large Mormon population boosts it to the top as well, making it the odd state in the West. States in the West and all of New England were among the least church-going.

In addition to Mississippi and Utah, the most church-going states are South Carolina, Louisiana, Tennessee, Arkansas, North Carolina, Georgia and Texas. Kentucky checked in at No. 13 with 48 percent saying they attend church each week.

The lowest church-attending states were reported in New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Nevada, Hawaii, Oregon, Alaska and Washington.

Nationally, 41.6 percent of Americans reported attending church at least once a week in 2009. Following are the top five and bottom five states for percentages of people regularly in the pews:

Top Five:

- Mississippi (63 percent)
- Alabama (58 percent)
- South Carolina (56 percent)
- Louisiana (56 percent)
- Utah (56 percent)

Bottom Five:

- Vermont (23 percent)
- New Hampshire (26 percent)
- Maine (27 percent)
- Massachusetts (29 percent)
- Nevada (30 percent)

Faith-based panel recommends separate nonprofit church entities

Washington—A panel advising President Obama recently recommended that churches wishing to use federal funds to perform social services set up separate nonprofit corporations in order to avoid mixing funds for secular purposes with those for religious ones.

The recommendation is generally backed by supporters of strong church-state separation—and goes against one of the original rationales that President George W. Bush used in setting up the White House's faith-based office in the first place.

The President's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships voted 13-12 to endorse the recommendation that federal officials “should require houses of worship that wish to receive direct federal social service funds to establish separate corporations as a necessary means for achieving church-state separation and protecting religious autonomy, while also urging states to reduce any unnecessary administrative costs and burdens associated with attaining this status.”

The tally was announced on the White House faith-based office's blog Feb. 8. The minority voted instead to recommend that separate incorporation not be required “because it is not always the best means to achieve these goals, and because it may be prohibitively costly and onerous, particularly for smaller organizations, resulting in the disruption and deterrence of effective and constitutionally permissible relationships.”

Many religious groups have long received federal funding to perform social services by setting up separate nonprofit groups—usually organized under Section 501(c)(3) of the federal tax code—that operate independently of the denominations or houses of worship that created them. The separate incorporation provided an additional safeguard that government funds not be used for worship, proselytizing or other explicitly religious purposes.

But President Bush argued that the requirement was one of many unnecessary barriers preventing small religious charities providing effective social services from expanding their programs. One of the cornerstones of his so-called “faith-based initiative” effort was to change federal laws and regulations that required such separate incorporation so churches could participate in grant programs.

But groups that support a high wall of separation between church and state generally opposed Bush's effort. Many of the members of Obama's council who supported the recommendation for separate incorporation represent that point of view.

Those who voted for the opposite recommendation were generally conservatives who supported Bush's faith-based program, such as former Southern Baptist Convention president Frank Page. But the tally also included a few progressives, such as Peg Chamberlin of the National Council of Churches. (ABP)

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Barna study: Sour economy pushes offerings downward

Ventura, Calif.—One year after a majority of Americans said they hoped the sour economy wouldn't impact their church giving, three in 10 Americans now say they're putting less in the offering plate, a Barna Group study shows.

Compared to a similar study that Barna conducted at the end of 2008, the percentage of Americans who have reduced their donations has increased by a staggering 45 percent.

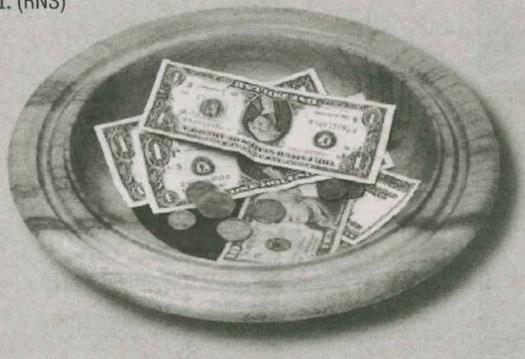
Many of those who traditionally give to their congregations have been able to maintain their usual level of giving, but those who have not often substantially reduced their giving. Almost one-quarter of church donors cut their contributions by at least 20 percent.

"The implication is that church and nonprofit leaders should prepare for another lean year," said David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group.

The Barna study was based on telephone interviews in January and early February with a nationwide sample of 1,008 adults. The new findings signal a departure from previous indications about optimism in giving despite the gloomy economy.

A year ago, a separate survey of U.S. donors by Cygnus Applied Research found that more than half of actively religious donors planned to give the same or more to charitable causes in 2009 as the year before.

In addition, that survey also found that 43 percent of actively religious respondents remained "seriously committed" to giving in the face of economic uncertainty, compared to 23 percent of those who were not religious at all. (RNS)



2010 Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches Stats show membership drop for SBC

New York—The Southern Baptist Convention—the nation's second-largest faith group—saw its membership decline for the second consecutive year, according to an annual report by the National Council of Churches. Catholic, Mormon and Assembly of God churches all posted membership gains in 2009, while mainline denominations including the American Baptist Churches USA, lost members.

The NCC's 2010 Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches reported membership of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States—the largest of 227 national church bodies included in the report—at 68 million. That represents growth of 1.49 percent, after a slight membership loss in 2009.

Membership in the SBC, the second-largest denomination behind Catholics, dropped 0.24 percent to 16,228,438 members. That follows a similar loss of 0.24 percent reported in the yearbook last year.

This year's edition of the yearbook reports information collected by churches in 2008 and reported to the National Council of Churches in 2009. Some faith groups, such as several historically African-American Baptist denominations, report their membership estimates based on population formulas instead of actual headcounts.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (No. 4) grew 1.71 percent to 5,873,408 members. The Assemblies of God grew 1.27 percent to 2,863,265 members, passing the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to become America's ninth-largest religious body.

Eleven denominations reported no change in membership. They include the predominantly black National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.; the National Baptist Convention of America, Inc.; the National Missionary Baptist Convention of America; and the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.

American Baptist Churches posted one of the largest losses, 2 percent, dropping its membership to 1,331,127.

Eileen Lindner, editor of the annual yearbook since 1998, said some observers attributed decline in church membership to increasing secularization of American society, but pointed out that some groups—especially of the Pentecostal variety—continue to report gains.

Another factor, she said, is that large percentages of immigrants into the United States in the last 40 years are Christians.

Lindner said statistics in the yearbook reflect "continued high overall church participation and account for the religious affiliation of over 163 million Americans."

The 10 largest church groups reported in the 2010 yearbook are:

1. The Catholic Church, 68,115,001 members, up 1.49 percent.
2. Southern Baptist Convention, 16,228,438 members, down 0.24 percent.
3. The United Methodist Church, 7,853,987 members, down 0.98 percent.
4. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 5,974,041 members, up 1.71 percent.
5. The Church of God in Christ, 5,499,875 members, no membership updates reported.
6. National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc., 5 million members, no membership updates reported.
7. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 4,633,887 members, down 1.62 percent.
8. National Baptist Convention of America, Inc., 3.5 million members, no membership updates reported.
9. Assemblies of God (ranked No. 10 last year), 2,899,702 members, up 1.27 percent.
10. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (ranked No. 9 last year), 2,844,952 members, down 3.28 percent.

With 2.5 million members each, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, National Missionary Baptist Convention of America and Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., all tied for 11th.

American Baptist Churches came in at No. 20, just ahead of the 1.2 million-member Baptist Bible Fellowship International (ranked No. 22 last year).

Jehovah's Witnesses moved up to No. 22 with a 2 percent increase to 1,114,009 members, passing the United Church of Christ, which lost nearly 3 percent of its members to drop to 1,111,691.

The Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.) moved up a notch from last year's No. 25 spot, increasing 1.76 percent to 1,072,169 members. (ABP)

'I'm sorry I have to write this note'

Prayer and contributions from faithful friends keep Oneida's ministry going

From my very first days in this office, I became aware of the tremendous impact our faithful friends have on all that we do.

Every day letters arrive in the mail, often with a financial gift that makes our work possible. I vividly remember Christmas in 1994 when I opened a letter that had two quarters inside. Those two quarters represented the annual gift a dear friend makes to our ministry nearly every year. I have never met her, and I know very little about her. She has no way of knowing how much those two quarters have impacted me and my appreciation for those who support our work.

Over the years I have received many letters with special donations inside. One person wrote that after receiving her Social Security check and paying all of her bills she had a few dollars left over and wanted us to have them. It is hard to imagine anyone having anything left over after paying the bills from a Social Security check.

Another letter came with some money in it and these words: "The enclosed currency was found in a parking lot." The person who found that money decided it was more important for Oneida to have it. You might remember reading in one of my articles about a widow lady in her late 80s who had been putting aside some money nearly all of her life for a "rainy day." Now, well advanced in life, she told me that she had never had a "rainy day" and she guessed she never would need the money, so she gave it to us.

Many vacation Bible school children through the years have given Oneida boys and girls their

offerings. Recently, two senior saints made one of their regular visits to our campus. The wife placed a jar on my desk that contained some change and currency. I was told that every time they went out to eat, were given gift certificates to eat out, or if their meal was being paid for by someone else, they placed money in the jar equal to the amount of the meal, including the tip. Now, one year later they were giving the jar and its contents to help our boys and girls. The business office told me later that the jar contained more than \$1,300.

This is Oneida



W.F. Underwood

On and on I could go about dedicated, faithful friends who find unique opportunities to support this ministry. It is humbling to know we have so many friends who love us and support our efforts to help deserving young people.

When I opened my mail today, I unfolded a letter that had a check inside. This friend wrote in part, "I'm sorry to have to write this note, but our medical bills and insurance have gone up so much that we will have to discontinue our gift ... but you will still be in our prayers." The check was for \$10. Not much in the eyes of the world, but like the widow's mite, when given with a heart of love and sacrifice, it can accomplish great things. We will miss the monthly gift of these faithful friends, who have been supporting our ministry for more than 20 years. However, knowing that they will keep us in their prayers will continue to be a source of encouragement to us.

I thank God for the many faithful and generous friends He has given to this ministry.

Reprinted from *Western Recorder*, Nov. 30, 2004

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

Timing is everything

Biblical lessons from Joshua and an archaeological dig

By Dan Haggerty
Third-year student

Recently Clear Creek professor Roy Lucas and I spent five weeks working on an archaeological dig at Tel Gezer, located in the Valley of Aijalon in West Central Israel.

One morning our director Eric Mitchell stopped us on the northeast corner of Tel Gezer. He pointed out the moon on the western horizon. Then he pointed out the sun hanging low on the eastern horizon. He then asked, "What does this remind you of?" Someone said it reminded him of Joshua 10, when Joshua asked if the Lord would stop the sun from setting over the Valley of Aijalon so the Israelites could defeat their enemy.

Dr. Mitchell quickly pointed out that the sun wasn't the only thing Joshua asked of the Lord. In the second half of Joshua 10:12, he urges, "O sun, stand still at Gibeon, and O moon in the valley of Aijalon." Dr. Mitchell then asked us, "What time did Joshua ask this?"

Almost every time I have heard a sermon preached on this verse, the focus has been on Joshua asking God at the end of the day. The problem with this involves the tim-

ing. The only time one can see the moon and the sun at the same time in the Valley of Aijalon is very early in the morning.

Think about that for a moment: Instead of Joshua trying in his own power to defeat his enemy all day and then turning to the Lord at the

last moment when the sun was about to set, he turned to the Lord first. Early in the morning, after marching all night (Joshua 10:9), mere moments after the sun rose, Joshua calls out to the Lord for the sun and the moon to stop over the Valley of Aijalon so they could defeat their enemy. Joshua knew he was powerless without the Lord. So, instead of trying to do

it his way first, he called on the Lord for help.

How many times do we try to do things on our own first, only to call out to the Lord in desperation after having exhausted our way of doing things? In Joshua's case, timing was everything. That could be a good lesson for us, too.

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

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

Record summer ahead for camps

True success gauged not by numbers, but lives changed

By Lindsay Swartz

Crossings guest services coordinator

Our lives are busy, and our plates are full. Our days seem to be more fast paced than ever, with things—even good things—vying for our attention from every direction. It is easy to lose sight of what really matters in the midst of all the necessary details.

Jesus helps us wade through those details by telling us in Scripture that our Father's kingdom should be our priority (Matthew 6:33). In other words, His glory should be our goal (Isaiah 26:8). In fact, the one necessary thing is that in all things we know Christ more (Luke 10:41).

We are experiencing busier days than ever at Crossings. We are on track to mark another milestone year, with more than 9,800 guests already registered. That's 20 percent more guests registered than this time last year—and we still have about four months until camp begins. The significance of this is astounding when you consider that many camp ministries are registering fewer guests than usual.

The fact that the numbers at Crossings are increasing is exciting, but it is not what drives us in ministry. The bigger kingdom picture is that each of these guests is created in the image of God and has a soul with a common need: to cross over from eternal death to everlasting life through faith in Jesus Christ (John 5:24). More guests coming to camp means more students have the opportunity to hear the gospel and find their lives in Christ. Our challenge is to keep this central truth at the forefront of our minds as we work to ensure a safe, smooth and successful camp season.

Ky. Baptist Assemblies



David Melber

God is showing Himself to be at work through Crossings Ministries. He has seen fit to bless us this summer with more opportunities than ever to impact our guests' lives with the truth. We have been entrusted with much, and our call is to be faithful to show these students what really matters. We invite you to join with us in praying that God would use us to point them to the One who is necessary. That is true success.

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

Thanksgiving in February?

Give thanks year-round by supporting Sunrise offering

Even though in America we are suffering through the worst recession since the Great Depression, relative to other countries we are exceedingly blessed. Our Thanksgiving Day celebration in November is an annual reminder to be grateful for what we have and to be mindful of others in need. I know you agree with me that giving thanks and remembering others in need should not be an annual, but a daily event.

Remembering others in need at Thanksgiving is an American value derived from our historic and foundational Judeo-Christian ethics. We give thanks and remember others as we acknowledge our loving God and all His mercies we receive. If we do not give thanks to God, then to whom are we thankful?

Giving thanks to God can be measured by what we give to those in need. People around us lacking the basics of life suffer daily. The question for each of us is, "Is our response to the suffering of others a metric of our thankfulness to God?" If it is, what is my score? There are many ways to serve others expressing one's thankfulness; ours is just one way to respond to a vital need.

Kentucky Baptists have an opportunity to make a difference each day in the lives of broken children by participating in the

Thanksgiving Offering for Sunrise Children's Services. This offering—which has the potential to provide more money for the kids by four-fold over the Cooperative Program monies—can be received throughout the year. We encourage churches and individuals to give at a time other than Thanksgiving when the other Kentucky Baptist and Southern Baptist offerings are before them.

People are hungry, need housing, medicines, and a helping hand daily, not just around Thanksgiving. Children across Kentucky go hungry, are neglected, abused and victimized daily; there is no "offseason" for child abuse. Kids of all ages find themselves removed from unsafe, non-caring homes to be moved in with strangers who will care for them and do more for them than their biological families.

You can genuinely demonstrate your thankfulness and experience a special Thanksgiving Day any day of the year by giving to Sunrise Children's Home's Thanksgiving Offering. Have your church set a goal like we do for Eliza and Lottie for the offering in your church. Bring the plight of Kentucky's at-risk kids to the attention of your pastor and how your congregation can help us be "the Christian response to the pain and suffering of Kentucky's most vulnerable citizens."

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

NAMB documentary gets two thumbs up at Angola

By Diana Chandler

Angola, La.—"Hate and indifference" are the only emotions Donald Biermann said he once knew.

The 54-year-old was "always coiled and ready to strike," "permeated" with evil—and was much like the possessed man whose encounter with Jesus delivered him from a legion of demons, as recorded in the Gospels.

"What I really wanted was to be left alone. I trusted no one and I tolerated no one," said Biermann, an inmate at Angola, the infamous Louisiana state penitentiary.

Now serving a life sentence for second-degree murder, his fourth incarceration, Biermann also has had a personal encounter with Jesus.

Biermann was among some 800 Angola inmates who attended a viewing of "A New Hope," a North American Mission Board documentary heralding God's work at Angola through an extension center of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Biermann is a 2005 graduate of the seminary's undergraduate program at Angola and a missionary to others imprisoned at correctional institutions across Louisiana.

Since the NOBTS extension center opened in 1996, 147 former and current inmates have embraced a calling to the ministry and earned bachelor of arts in Christian ministry degrees. Currently, 120 inmates are enrolled, according to extension center director John Robson.

The Bible college, as the Angola extension center also is called, has changed the prison's atmosphere. In 1995, Angola reported 1,016 violent incidents, including assaults, murders, suicides and escapes. In 2008, there were only 376 incidences of violence, mostly inmate-on-inmate assaults without weapons, according to prison records.

"It's bigger than any one of us," Robson said of the center. "It's not about us. It's about God being allowed to come in here and do what He does best."

Robson was one of several extension center professors, NOBTS officials, Southern Baptist Convention leaders and Angola staff members on hand for the Feb. 2 viewing.

Among them was NOBTS President Chuck Kelley, who described

the incarcerated believers as "saints" and referenced 1 John 4:4, confirming all saints have God's Spirit, which is greater than Satan's.

"I guess we could translate 1 John 4:4 like this: 'Who dat say they gonna beat those Saints?'" drawing roaring applause from inmates just days before the New Orleans Saints' Super Bowl victory. "Do you know who taught me that? Not those football Saints, but those Angola saints."

The documentary chronicles Angola warden Burl Cain's work to reform the prison and its prisoners through the introduction of seminary training and its resultant effects.

When Congress discontinued the use of Pell Grants for higher education in prisons in 1993, such opportunities ended at Angola. In an effort to restore higher education there, in 1995 Cain asked the seminary to open an on-site college. NOBTS administration embraced the idea.

"The potential of what could happen in humans' lives" was Kelley's motivation, he said, seeing the rare opportunity for a seminary to educate prisoners who then can minister to fellow inmates.

"God reached down in the most obscure place and raised up diamonds," Kelley said.

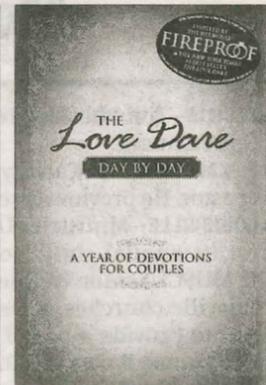
Currently, 28 incarcerated graduates are ministering in seven state correctional centers and the State Police Barracks, according to Angola communications officer Gary Young.

Many graduates have been released, including a former inmate featured in the documentary, Clifford Jones, who now serves as assistant pastor at St. John Baptist Church in New Orleans and owns a small home remodeling business.

"The college has been a beacon light to me," Jones said. "It has given me so much strength, and study habits (and) hermeneutics to understand and explain the gospel."

"The Bible college here is a miracle story," said Robert Toney, a NAMB-endorsed chaplain who has served at Angola the past 10 years. "It has brought tremendous hope to the prison population."

"But it wouldn't have happened without Southern Baptists and the vision that Baptists had." (BP)



'The Love Dare' book gets sequel

Nashville—The 2008 hit movie "Fireproof" may not have had a sequel, but that's not the case with its companion bestselling book "The Love Dare," whose authors have written a one-year devotional for married couples with even more "love dares" aimed at strengthening relationships.

"The Love Dare Day by Day" includes 365 devotionals and 52 love dares—one for each week. The original book included 40 entries and a love dare for each day and was central to the plot of "Fireproof."

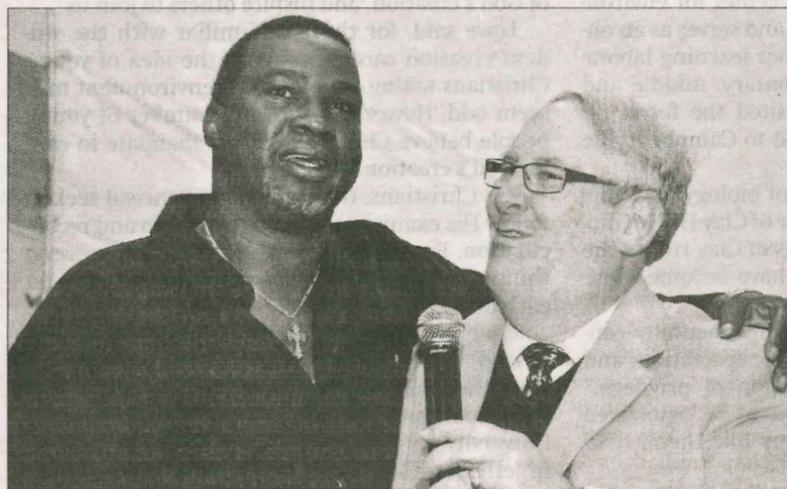
"The Love Dare" has spent more than 72 weeks on The New York Times bestseller list for paperback advice, several of those weeks at No. 1. Both books are published by B&H Publishing Group.

"When we were researching all the aspects that we could put in 'The Love Dare,' there were so many more that we couldn't fit in there," said Alex Kendrick, who co-authored the book with his brother, Stephen. "There were so many more we were like, 'What do we do with these?' Well, as we talked to our publisher, they said, 'Can you make a devotional out of this?'"

The goal, Kendrick said, is for couples to go through "an entire year and together, one day at a time, research and apply these principles."

"They're in doable sections," he said. "We don't do a dare every day. We do a dare a week because we know you may not be together every day."

B&H has launched a Web site, LoveDareStories.com, where couples who are reading "The Love Dare" or have completed it can post their thoughts, ask questions and encourage others. (BP)



PRIZED PUPIL Chuck Kelley (right), president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, interviews former Angola inmate Clifford Jones after a viewing of the documentary "A New Hope," featuring Jones and other students and graduates from the seminary's extension center at the Louisiana prison.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **CECILIA**—Tim Shockley recently resigned as worship pastor of Cecilia Church.

■ **ELIZABETHTOWN**—Calvary Church has called Donald Alexander as pastor. He previously served as pastor at the church in 2008.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Ministries United of South Central Louisville will host its annual chili cook-off and auction Feb. 28, 5 p.m. at the MUSCL Senior Wellness Center, 1016 East Burnett Ave. Any Louisville churches, Sunday school classes or individuals that want to provide a pot of chili or donate an item for auction, call Suzanne Baker at (502) 367-9993.

■ **NANCY**—Piney Grove Church #2 recently called Joseph Warren as pastor.

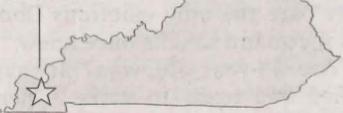
■ **PRINCETON**—Calvary Church will hold revival services Feb. 28, 6 p.m.; March 1-3, 6:30 p.m., with Barry Joslin, associate professor of Christian theology at Boyce College in Louisville; Ronnie Stinson, pastor of Trace Creek Church in Mayfield; Chris Turpin, pastor of Donaldson Church in Princeton; and John Michael LaRue as evangelists. Darrick Holloman is pastor.

■ **SCIENCE HILL**—Northside Church recently called Patrick Butcher as pastor.

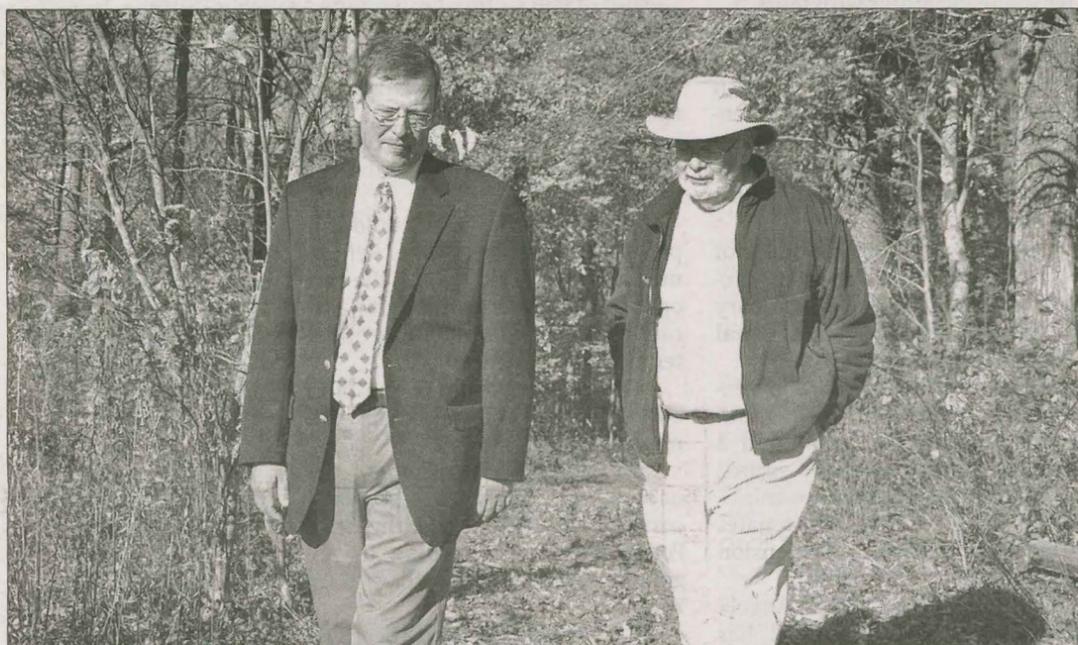
■ **SOMERSET**—Camp Ground Church recently called Brian Thomas as pastor. He previously was associate pastor at First Church of Fountain Run.

Spotlight on ...

Melber



Melber Church will hold Friends and Family Day Feb. 28 featuring No Other Name in concert. Lunch will be served after the morning worship serving, with the concert to follow. For more information, call (270) 856-3539. Jeff Cruse is pastor.



AMID GOD'S CREATION Campbellsville Professor Gordon Weddle, director of Campbellsville University's Clay Hill Memorial Forest (right), walks through the forest preserve with Christian environmentalist Matthew Sleeth last November. (Photo by Max Nergui/Campbellsville University)

Campbellsville Univ. woodland preserve recognized by student environment group

Campbellsville—Campbellsville University's 158-acre Clay Hill Memorial Forest is one of 52 Christian higher-education initiatives featured in a publication released last week by a national student-led, Christian environmental group.

The group Renewal: Students Caring for Creation released the "Green Awakenings Campus Report" Feb. 17 chronicling stewardship and environmental initiatives of 52 schools in the United States and Canada.

Clay Hill Memorial Forest is a woodland preserve that serves as a regional center for environmental education on all levels and serves as an on-site teaching center and outdoor learning laboratory. More than 25,000 elementary, middle and high school students have visited the forest on field trips since it was donated to Campbellsville University in 1995.

Gordon Weddle, professor of biology at Campbellsville who serves as director of Clay Hill Memorial Forest, credited the success of Clay Hill to the Campbellsville students who have become more aware of environmental issues.

"Our growing group of environmentally conscious students has exceeded expectation and have made teaching a profession of privilege," Weddle noted. "I am honored to be associated with students who, with others like them, hold our best hope."

Renewal is a growing movement of young Christians dedicated to caring for God's creation through mobilizing and equipping their campuses to be better stewards of the environment.

"The student generation in particular is stepping up to care for God's creation, but previously little was known about what this movement practically looked like on Christian campuses," said Ben Lowe, Renewal's co-coordinator.

"The Green Awakenings Campus Report demonstrates to the world what happens when Christian students and campuses come together to care for Creation," Lowe added. "Our two-fold goal is to demonstrate to colleges, churches and communities how we are working together for the renewal of God's creation, and inspire others to join us."

Lowe said, for those unfamiliar with the student creation care movement, the idea of young Christians taking action on the environment may seem odd. However, a growing number of young people believe Christians have a mandate to care for God's creation.

"As Christians, the students of Renewal seek to follow His example of love, stewardship and reconciliation. For us, this means taking care of everything that God so lovingly created—the earth and each other," Lowe said.

Campbellsville University is one of 11 colleges and universities featured in the publication from the Southeast region of the U.S. Other Baptist schools profiled in the report include Belmont University in Nashville; Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn.; and Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va.

For more information on Renewal, the creation care movement and the Green Awakenings Campus Report, visit www.RenewingCreation.org.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February

27 Region 3 and 7 RA Congress, South Fork Baptist Church, Hodgenville.

March

1 Here's Hope Discipleship Workshop for Pastors, Baptist Building, Louisville.

2 Here's Hope Discipleship Workshop for Pastors, Beacon Hill Baptist Church, Somerset.

5 Region 1 RA Congress, Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah.

5-6 Creative Ministries Festival, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

5-6 Region 6 Disaster Relief Recertification and Training, Red House Baptist Church, Richmond.

5-12 GPS Find It Here Spring Break, various locations.

6 All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra Auditions, Central Baptist Church, Corbin; First Baptist Church, Hazard; First Baptist Church, Walton; Lewis Lane Baptist Church, Owensboro; Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah; Rich Pond Baptist Church, Bowling Green; Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

6 Handbell Festival, St. Matthews Baptist Church, Louisville.

6 State Vacation Bible School Clinic—East, Porter Memorial Baptist Church, Lexington.

12-13 Creative Ministries Festival, First Baptist Church, Bowling Green.

12-13 Women on Mission Regional Retreat, Camp Schafer, Hawesville.

12-19 GPS Find It Here Spring Break, various locations.

13 All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra Auditions, First Baptist Church, Bowling Green; First Baptist Church, Walton; First Baptist Church, Mount Sterling; Lewis Lane Baptist Church, Owensboro; Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah; Parkland Baptist Church, Louisville.

13 State Vacation Bible School Clinic—West, Edgewood Baptist Church, Hopkinsville.

13 Region 2 RA Congress, Nortonville Baptist Church.

13 Region 3 RA Congress, Bethany Baptist Church, Alvaton.

15-16 Welcome to Kentucky, Hilton Garden Inn & Baptist Building, Louisville.

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

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FOR SALE: \$25 Overstock new church chairs. Call (877) 221-0266; or check us out at www.chairconcepts.com.

SEEKING: Full-time Southern Baptist pastor for The Potter's House Baptist Worship Center in Smithland, Ky., a member of Ohio River Baptist Association of Southern Baptists. Submit resumé to PO Box 3520, Paducah, KY 42003-3520. Resumés will be accepted through 5-15-2010. www.PottersHouseBWC.org.

SEEKING: Minister of worship and education for First Baptist Church of Blountville, Tenn., which is the county seat for Kingsport and Bristol. First Baptist Church currently has both blended and contemporary services with a variety of ensembles. Education will involve working with teams to coordinate Bible study, VBS, camps and adult education opportunities. Candidate should be a team player who is ready to serve as needed. Please submit resumé and available DVD or CD to: Minister Search Team, First Baptist Church, PO Box 587, Blountville, TN 37617; or online: fbcbtn@embarqmail.com. Resumés will be received through April 15.

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 minister of music. Prefer degree in music and experience in leading music for all ages. Will have additional ministry duties. Send resumés by mail to: Search Committee, Calvary Baptist Church, 121 Kentucky Ave., Princeton, KY 42445.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Turner Ridge Baptist Church. Strong, mission-minded church in Northern Kentucky affiliated with Crittenden Baptist Association. Send resumé to Terry Sowder, 421 Straightshoot Road, Falmouth, KY 41040.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music for growing church. Primary duties include leading choir and congregational singing; preparing seasonal cantatas; and coordinating music programs. Please send resumé to Minister of Music Search Committee, New Bethel Baptist Church, 2022 Verona Mudlick Road, Verona, KY 41092; or e-mail to nbbc2003@aol.com with "Minister of Music" for the subject.

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: 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.

SERVICES: Claycomb's Tree Service. Removal, trimming, bucket and crane trucks. Free estimates, member BBB. Louisville area only. (502) 449-1891.

WANTED: Up to 16 people to accompany me on trip through the West this summer. Contact Ms. Smith at (606) 280-0756.



The lost clam
By Todd and Michelle Deaton

On a clear day, Clarice Clam could see the fisherman's boat from her yard. She liked to watch as he floated all over the cove, casting his fishing line and reeling it in slowly.

Clarice didn't know his real name, but the Cove Kids called the fisherman John. She supposed it was because Seamore Seahorse once had overheard the fisherman call his tiny rowboat a johnboat.

John came almost every week, but he seldom caught any fish. When he did, John always threw the fish back.

Clarice and Sunny Starfish were playing dolls when they saw John's boat. "I wonder what it would be like to ride in a boat," Clarice said. "He seems to like it a lot."

Before Sunny could reply, her mom called her to supper.

Clarice sat silently, combing the hair of her favorite doll, Seabrina. "I'm going to go for a ride in his boat," she decided.

Clarice swam behind his boat for awhile. John pulled up to a pier where his wife brought his lunch. This was her chance. Clarice crawled into the boat.

John returned with a bucket of fresh bait. The warm sun beamed down on Clarice's shell. Tired from her long swim, she grew sleepy as the boat gently rocked on the waves. After several hours, John pulled his boat onto the shore near the pier.

When Clarice awoke, she did not know where she was. She felt afraid and began to cry. Back in Sand Dollar Cove, the Cove Kids became concerned when they learned Clarice was missing.

"We have to look for her!" Seamore exclaimed.

"Oh, come on," Craig Crab replied. "There must be 99 other clams in the cove. You expect us to find her."

"We're not talking about just any clam. We're talking about Clarice," Sunny urged. "What if you were lost?"

"Let's go!" Lenny Lobster urged.

"Where would she go?" asked Seamore.

"What about the playground?" Lenny suggested. "Clarice loves to swing."

But Clarice wasn't there.

"How about the library?" suggested Seamore. "She likes to read."

When they arrived, the library was closed. "She's not here," Craig whined, peering through the glass door into a dark room.

They were about to give up when Sunny remembered that while she was playing dolls, Clarice had said she wanted to ride in a boat.

"Let's find John's boat," urged Seamore.

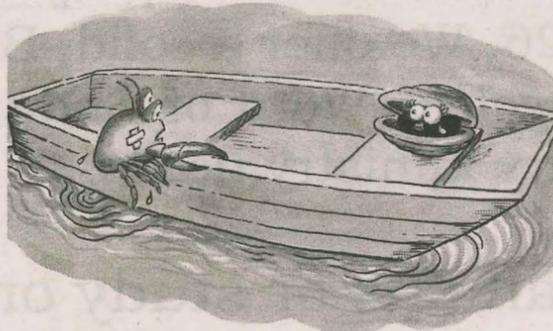
"Sometimes John goes to the pier and eats his lunch," Craig said. "When he sees me, John often tosses a chicken leg to me."

But John's boat wasn't at the pier.

"Where could she be?" Seamore panicked.

"Clarice! Clarice! Clarice!" they all shouted. From the dark shore, they heard a whimper.

"It's her!" Sunny exclaimed, pointing to John's boat on the shore.



Clarice climbed onto the boat seat and yelled, "Over here!"

Craig clawed his way up the side of the boat and led her to where the others were waiting.

"Boy, am I glad to see you," said Clarice. "I didn't think you'd come and find me."

"How could we not?" asked Seamore. "There may be 99 other clams in the cove, but you are the only Clarice."



Treasure Hunt

How did Clarice Clam get lost?
Where did the others find her?
Have you ever been lost?
How did you feel?
How is being lost like not knowing about God? Who can you tell?
Read Luke 19:10 together.

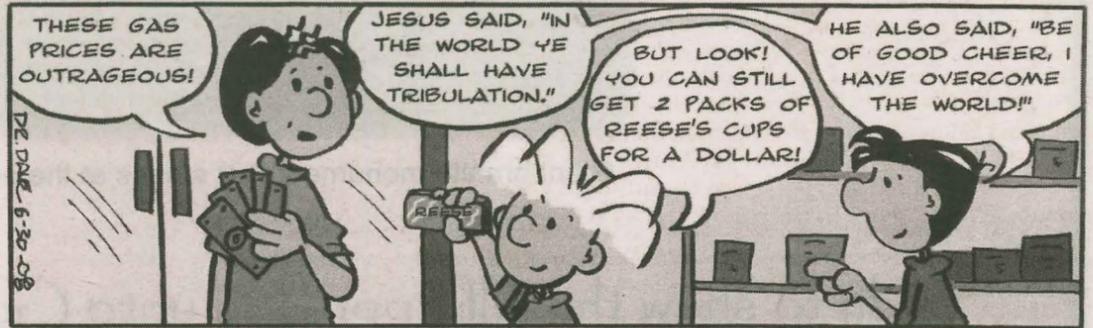
For Heaven's Sake

Mike Morgan



Preacher's Kids

David Ayers

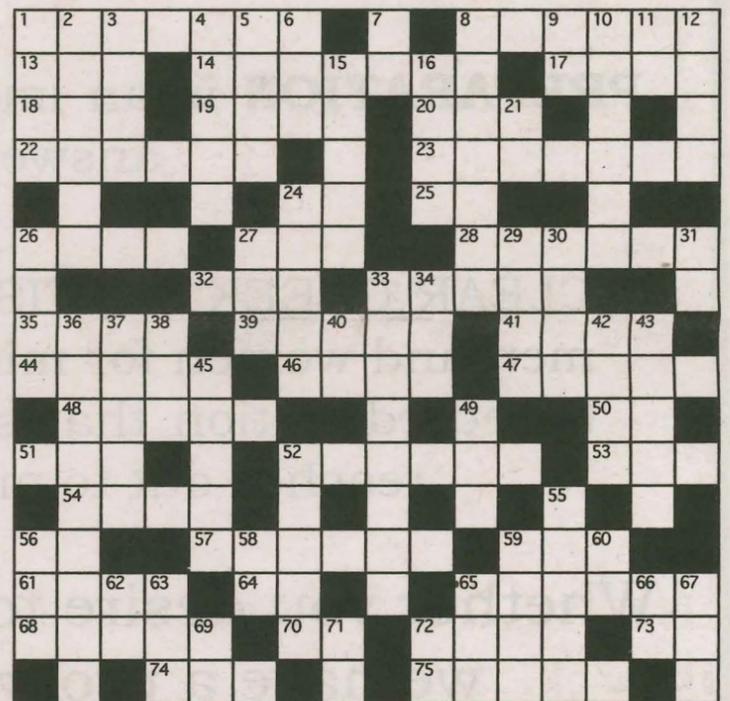


Bible Crosswords

By Michael J. Landi

Across

- 1 Father of the Chosen People (Genesis 12:1-3)
- 8 Prophet who tore his cloak into twelve pieces (1 Kings 11:30)
- 13 Sheep's noise
- 14 Old Testament prophet, between Amos and Jonah
- 17 Brief letter
- 18 Samuel's mentor
- 19 The rock city of Idumaea (Isaiah 16:1)
- 20 No-good fellow
- 22 Lions failed to harm him
- 23 Third longest book of prophecy in the Old Testament
- 24 Northern central state, abbr.
- 25 Drill instructor, abbr.
- 26 King of Israel (1 Kings 16:16)
- 27 Jacob's son (Genesis 30:10-11)
- 28 Belonging to a son of Aaron (1 Chronicles 24:1)
- 32 This animal alive is better than a dead lion (Ecclesiastes 9:4)
- 33 Belonging to the man who shot Jehoram (2 Kings 9:24)
- 35 Nehemiah's priest and scribe
- 39 Eliasaph was the son of this man (Numbers 7:42)
- 41 A servant in the house of Saul (2 Samuel 9:2)
- 44 "All they that hate me love ____" (Proverbs 8:36)
- 46 Asian woman's garment
- 47 Abraham's son
- 48 "Cursed is the ____ who ..." (Malachi 1:14 NIV)
- 50 This place in Moab was ruined in the night (Isaiah 15:1)
- 51 "____! The gate to the nations is broken" (Ezekiel 26:2 NIV)
- 52 The prophet who established the kingship in Israel (1 Samuel 8:21-22)
- 53 His wife became a pillar of salt
- 54 The Lord showed him a plumbline
- 56 Chemical symbol for argon
- 57 "Prophet of the Temple" and a colleague of Zechariah (Ezra 5:1)
- 59 "The name of the wicked shall ____" (Proverbs 10:7)
- 61 Needed for a photograph

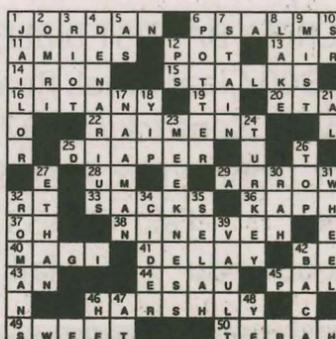


- 64 Unit of dry measurement, abbr.
- 65 Moses successor (Numbers 27:18-23)
- 68 The only spy left alive in the desert with Joshua (Numbers 26:65)
- 70 Exist
- 72 Cast a ballot
- 73 Sleuth, abbr.
- 74 "I will spread my ____ upon them" (Hosea 7:12)
- 75 David's father

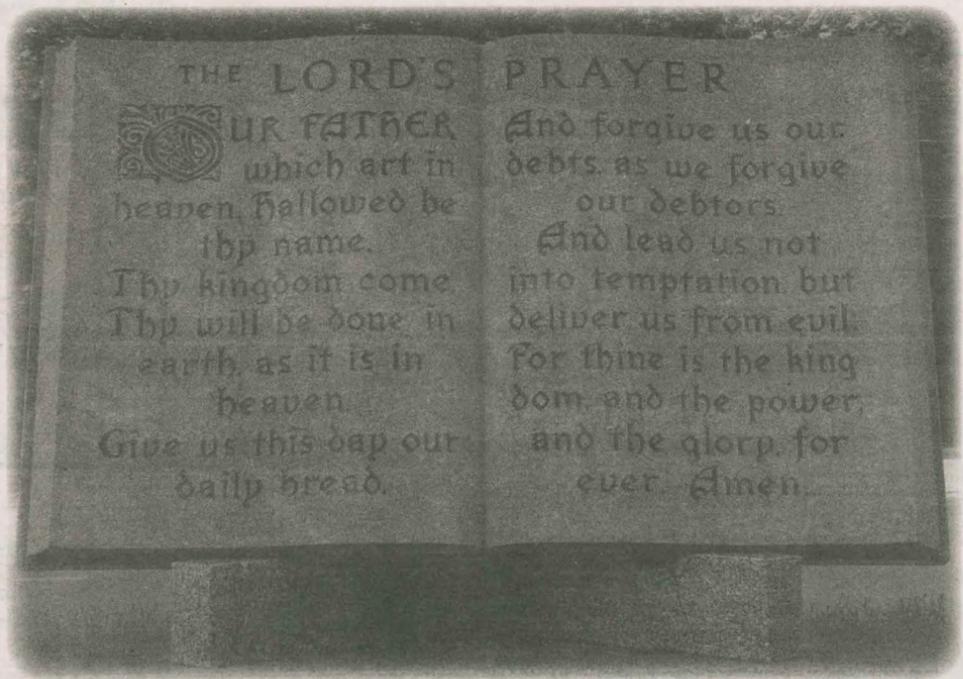
Down

- 1 In bed
- 2 The mercenary prophet (Numbers 22:5-7)
- 3 "I will ____ bread from heaven" (Exodus 16:4)
- 4 Prophet who married Gomer
- 5 Killed by his brother
- 6 Last book of the Old Testament, abbr.
- 7 Joshua sent men there from Jericho (Joshua 7:2)
- 8 King of Judah who reigned for only a year (2 Kings 8:26)
- 9 Opposite of out
- 10 He was 8 when he became king and reigned for 31 years (2 Kings 22:1)
- 11 Preposition
- 12 State of eternal separation from God
- 15 Israel's poet king
- 16 Did perfectly on a test
- 21 Eastern seaboard state
- 24 "The ____ of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)
- 26 Son of Boaz (Ruth 4:21)
- 27 Appeared to Abraham when he was 99 years old (Genesis 17:1)
- 29 Ezekiel's father (Ezekiel 1:3)
- 30 Egyptian goddess
- 31 Juan's yes
- 33 The weeping prophet
- 34 Word said by Christ on the cross (Matthew 27:46)
- 36 Second from the last book of the Old Testament
- 37 The son of Shema and the father of Jorkoam (1 Chronicles 2:43)
- 38 Consumed
- 40 United Airlines, abbr.
- 42 God Ahab served (1 Kings 16:31)
- 43 Supported Moses' hands in battle (Exodus 17:8-13)
- 45 "A ____ word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1 NIV)
- 49 King Darius threw Daniel here (Daniel 6:16)
- 52 The youngest son of Hiel of Bethel (1 Kings 16:34)
- 55 The man to whom God gave the Ten Commandments
- 56 American Football Conference, abbr.
- 58 Fifth month of the Jewish year
- 59 Decays
- 60 Chemical symbol for thorium
- 62 Lending library, abbr.
- 63 "I will make you fishers of ____" (Matthew 4:19)
- 65 Joseph for short
- 66 The opposite of down
- 67 To trouble, afflict
- 69 Chemical symbol for beryllium
- 71 Estimated position, abbr.
- 72 Video jockey, abbr.

Last week's solution



Call or email us
TODAY!



Registration for
Fall 2010 classes
begins March 15th

Giant granite monument that stands at the entrance to the college

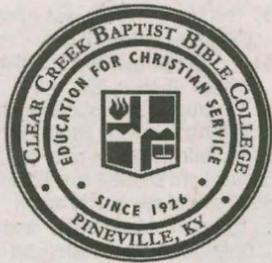
“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” || Timothy 2:15 kjv

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CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE
300 Clear Creek Road
Pineville, Kentucky 40977-9754
Dr. Donnie Fox, President

Phone: 606-337-3196 Fax: 606-337-2372
Internet: www.ccbbc.edu E-Mail: ccbhc@ccbhc.edu