

Shine like stars in the world
Philippians 2:15

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FOR THE RECORD



Kentucky
Kentucky Baptist Convention puts ministry spin on 'spring training.'
Page 2.



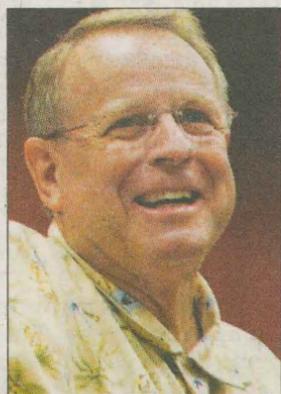
World
Even amid Africa's political turmoil, Christians continue to glorify God.
Page 8.



Nation
Annual publication shows church membership trends remained largely unchanged last year.
Page 9.

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Elliff is IMB search team's choice

Former SBC president will be presented to mission board trustees next month

By Erich Bridges
International Mission Board

Richmond, Va.—Tom Elliff, a longtime Oklahoma pastor, Southern Baptist Convention leader and former missionary, is the unanimous recommendation of a 15-member trustee search committee to be the next president of the International Mission Board.

The nomination of Elliff—who served as a missionary to Zimbabwe with his wife, Jeannie, in the early 1980s—will be presented to the full board of trustees for consideration and a possible vote when they meet March 15-16 in Dallas.

If elected, Elliff would succeed Jerry Rankin as leader of the mission board, which coordinates the work of more than 5,000 Southern Baptist missionaries worldwide. Rankin retired as IMB president last July after 17 years at the helm. Veteran missionary and Executive Vice President Clyde Meador currently serves as interim president.

IMB Trustee Chairman Jimmy Pritchard, who has led the presidential search committee throughout its selection process, announced the nomination Feb. 17. He said Elliff emerged as the committee's clear and unanimous choice last month.

"Throughout the process, we talked to some great and godly men, but we just could not get a sense of God's peace about any one of them," said Pritchard, pastor of First Baptist Church of Forney, Texas. "When Dr. Elliff's name came before us, we had a subtle sense of God's Spirit speaking to our hearts. That may sound mystical, but that's really what happened. ... Every one of us senses that God spoke and said, 'This is the moment you've been praying for. Here is your man.'"

□ See IMB search team taps Elliff ... Page 3

Kentucky Baptists care for dying souls in Africa

By Zoe Allen
Baptist Global Response

Nairobi, Kenya—In sub-Saharan Africa 1.5 million people die each year because of AIDS. More than 22 million people are living with HIV and AIDS. The extreme poverty in the region means most of these families are unable to ease the suffering of their loved ones.

Stan Williams, pastor of First Baptist Church of Cannonsburg, said he believes the love of Christ compels believers to personally reach out to people in desperate need.

The congregation is helping relieve the suffering in sub-Saharan Africa by partnering with the In-Home Care Kit program of Baptist Global Response, an international relief and development organization based in Nashville, Tenn.

The kits are five-gallon plastic buckets filled with medical and hygiene supplies to help caregivers and ease the suffering of individuals affected by terminal illness. Most of the items in the kit—from lip balm to clean sheets—would be completely unavailable to the patients.

"We realized what a great need there was for this type of ministry and how practical it was," Williams said. "Just giving money to a ministry seems impersonal, compared to filling a bucket with needed health and hygienic items that will be used by those who are suffering with the HIV/AIDS virus."

More than 4,700 kits have been sent the past

"Just giving money to a ministry seems impersonal, compared to filling a bucket with needed health and hygienic items that will be used by those who are suffering with the HIV/AIDS virus."

Stan Williams, pastor, First Baptist Church of Cannonsburg

two years to South Africa, Zambia, Kenya, Uganda, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Guinea and Niger. This year BGR has received requests for 6,000 buckets from partners in Africa.

Churches all across North America are being challenged to make a difference by helping people suffering from terminal illness experience the love of God for themselves—and learn that they can have hope even in the face of death, said Mark Hatfield, who with his wife, Susan, directs BGR work in sub-Saharan Africa.

"When we hear statistics about the HIV/AIDS crisis, we often just go numb. The numbers are bigger than we really can comprehend," Hatfield said. "But instead of saying we can't solve a prob-

□ See Kentucky Baptist church ... Page 8



LOVING OUTREACH Members of First Baptist Church of Cannonsburg pray over In-Home Care Kits that will help take the love of God through medical and hygiene supplies to people in Sub-Saharan Africa who are dying of terminal illnesses. The 175-member Ashland-area church recently shipped 50 of the care buckets through Baptist Global Response. (BGR photo)

Children's ministry workers challenged to 'Imagine'

Bardstown—"Don't ever let anyone tell you that what you do is not important."

"And don't ever let anyone tell you that what you do is just baby-sitting."

That was the challenge from a pair of Kentucky Baptist children's ministers to fellow kids' ministry workers and volunteers of all types at the recent Preschool and Children's Ministry Conference.

The Feb. 11-12 event, sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention, was the brainchild of John Bennett, who became the KBC's preschool

and children's ministry director a little more than a year ago. Parkway Baptist Church in Bardstown served as the host church.

Bennett developed the conference around the theme "Imagine," assembling children's ministry leaders from across the state to provide resources for local churches' children's ministries.

In addition to a pair of plenary session speakers, the Imagine conference featured nearly two dozen breakout sessions, as well as a children's ministry expo.

□ See 'Imagine' conference ... Page 2



IMAGINATIVE FUN Lee Ann Vincent (left) performs a skit at the recent "Imagine" Preschool and Children's Ministry Conference sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention. The Feb. 11-12 event was held at Parkway Baptist Church in Bardstown where Vincent is the minister to children and families. (Photo by Robin Bass)

Dated material. Please deliver by Wednesday, Feb. 23

KBC puts own spin on 'spring training'

By Dannah Prather
Kentucky Baptist Convention

Louisville—For the Kentucky Baptist Convention, the term "spring training" has nothing to do with baseball.

This spring, convention staff, with help from ministry specialists across the country, will provide training opportunities on topics ranging from Sunday school and vacation Bible school, to creative ministries and how to serve multi-housing communities.

Equipping Kentucky Baptists to share the gospel and make disciples "is what we do best," KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey said.

"During the first five months of 2011, the Kentucky Baptist Convention will provide training and inspirational events for more than 6,000 Kentucky Baptists," Mackey added.

Some of the events require a registration fee, others are free. Each event is made possible by gifts through the Cooperative Program.

Growing ministries & VBS

March kicks off with the Growing Ministries Tour and vacation Bible school clinics.

The Growing Ministries Tour brings seven members of the KBC's church development team to each region of Kentucky for an evening of training. Topics include preschool/children's ministry, youth ministry, Sunday school, stewardship and discipleship. Events begin at 6 p.m., local time. They will be held March 3 at Northside Baptist Church, Mount Vernon; March 8 at Crittenden Baptist Church; March 10 at First Baptist Church, Whitesburg; March 15 at Horse Cave Baptist Church; March 17 at Northside Baptist Church, Mayfield; and March 24 at Living Hope

Baptist church, Hopkinsville.

Registration is \$10 per person at www.KyBaptist.org/Growing.

For many churches, vacation Bible school is their primary community outreach effort. KBC provides free VBS training in how to organize, promote and execute a fun, educational and evangelistic Bible school that perhaps will introduce children and families to a Baptist church for the very first time.

Crafts, décor, music and other aspects of LifeWay Christian Resources' 2011 VBS curriculum, "Big Apple Adventure," will be previewed. Online registration is underway at www.KyBaptist.org/VBS. The Saturday events begin at 9 a.m., local time, and will be held March 5 at Edgewood Baptist Church, Hopkinsville; March 12 at Porter Memorial Baptist Church, Lexington; and April 2 at Beacon Hill Baptist Church, Somerset.

Creative thinking

The annual Creative Ministries Festival will be held March 4-5 at Southern Seminary in Louisville.

Through the years, thousands of Kentucky Baptists have attended this event to start or improve ministries such as drama, mime, interpretive movement, illusion, clowning, ballooning, puppets and many others to enhance church programs.

Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union sponsors special sessions on how to use creative ministries in missions such as block parties, backyard Bible clubs and other venues.

Student musicians attending the festival may audition March 5 for the Kentucky Baptist All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra.

Individual registration is \$25 and group rates are available. Regis-

ter at www.KyBaptist.org/CMF.

Multi-housing ministries

The term, "multi-housing ministry" may bring to mind images of high-rise apartment buildings in big cities, but there are multi-housing communities throughout Kentucky. The workshops, "Developing Multi-Housing Ministries That Last," will help Kentucky Baptists discover how to minister to—and plant churches as mobile-diverse communities such as mobile home parks, condominiums, patio homes and apartments.

The free events will be held March 10 at Crestwood Baptist Church, and March 11 at West Union Baptist Association in Paducah. Sessions begin at 9:30 a.m., local time. Registration is underway at www.KyBaptist.org/MultiHousing.

Believers interested in learning more about other religions so they can share the gospel more effectively are encouraged to attend the free "Understanding Other Beliefs" workshop March 15 at Oldham-Trimble Baptist Association in Crestwood. The event begins at 6:30 p.m. Advanced registration is not required.

Church leaders' gathering

Pastors and church staff are invited to the Pastor/Staff Forum March 22, 10 a.m., at Porter Memorial Baptist Church in Lexington.

Chuck Lawless, dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism at Southern Seminary, and Ken Hemphill, the Southern Baptist Convention's national strategist for Empowering Kingdom Growth, will be the guest speakers.

The event is \$5 per person and includes lunch. Online registration is underway at www.KyBaptist.org/Forum.

January CP gifts top budget, remain behind for fiscal year

Louisville—Kentucky Baptists gave more than \$1.9 million to missions through the Cooperative Program in January, exceeding the Kentucky Baptist Convention's monthly budget goal, but total giving for the year continues to lag.

Gifts totaling \$1,974,517 were received against the monthly budget goal of \$1,958,333.

Although November and January CP receipts were over budget, Cooperative Program contributions for the 2010-11 fiscal year still are nearly 7 percent (almost \$700,000) behind budget after the first five months, said Lowell Ashby, leader of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's business services team.

CP receipts are \$661,350 (6.8 percent) behind contributions made during the same period in the previous fiscal year.

The total budget goal for the year is \$23.5 million.

"Reaching our budget goal in the last half of the fiscal year is going to be a challenge," said Billy Compton, KBC's executive associate for Cooperative Program and resources. "But the investments Kentucky Baptists are making in light of our commitment to the Great Commission will continue right into eternity."

One of those investments is training. KBC Executive Director Bill Mackey recently reported that in the first five months of 2011, the Kentucky Baptist Mission Board will provide 6,000 Kentucky Baptists (see story at left).

"Those giving sacrificially through the Cooperative Program are investing in God's kingdom work around the world," Compton said. "Together, we are here, there and everywhere connecting people to Christ."



Kentucky Baptist CP giving at a glance

Giving for Jan. 1-31, 2011 & Year-to-Date

Monthly budget goal:	\$ 1,958,333
Actual giving:	\$ 1,974,517
Over budget:	\$ 16,184
Year-to-Date goal:	\$ 9,791,667
Year-to-Date actual giving:	\$ 9,095,130
Under budget:	\$ 696,537

'Imagine' conference challenges children's ministry workers to dream big

Continued from page 1

Building on the "Imagine" theme, the head of the children's ministry team at LifeWay Christian Resources reminded fellow workers that all great and useful things began with a vision.

And if people can dream big, "just imagine all the things God wants to do," he said. The long-time children's ministry servant pointed out three areas on which fellow workers should focus.

■ Just imagine if we decided to put first things first.

Emphasizing the commandment in Mark 12:30 to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, Emeott said all four are required to properly understand what God wants to teach kids through children's ministry workers.

"God wants to speak to us so that He can teach the boys and girls from the overflow of what He's taught us in our hearts," Emeott noted.

■ Just imagine if we started our work with the end in mind.

Churches often do not have a specific goal in mind when it comes to children's ministry, Emeott explained. Therefore, they covet the successes of other churches and try to emulate what they're doing.

"You can't just say, 'I want to be like that church,'" he warned. "That might not work in your setting. Your end is going to be different."

■ Just imagine if we connected with kids and their families.

Making connections with kids and their families likely is the most important aspect of the ministry, Emeott noted.

"You have the potential to be the world's greatest Sunday school teacher," he said. "Not because you can teach Bible stories, not because you can taught scripture, ... but because you can minister and connect with kids and their families."

So, what defines a healthy children's ministry? "I think a healthy children's ministry is one that disciples kids to conversion and then on to a lifelong growing relationship with Christ," Emeott said.

Connecting with kids

Preschool and children ministry leaders can count on encountering three types of kids walking through the church doors, said Shane Garrison, an assistant professor of children's ministries at Campbellsville University. He based each classification on the level of spiritual support a child is receiving at home.

■ Spiritual orphans,

■ 50-50.

■ Children of believing parents.

Spiritual orphans are the name implies, Garrison said. "This is a boy or girl that just shows up somehow. They don't know how to behave. They don't know the songs or the stories. All they know is there will be food, games and maybe a craft. They are blank slates."

Spiritual orphans are children who come from families that do not know



STORYTELLER
Mary Margaret Douglas shares a Bible story with "Imagine" conference participants. The 6 year old has become an Internet sensation as video of her retelling of the story of Jonah at an Alabama church has circulated the web. (Photo by Robin Bass)

Christ. Garrison said that because these children are not receiving spiritual training at home, the responsibility for their eternal souls falls to the church.

Garrison said he was 9 years old when he first heard the name of Jesus. He did not hear about Christ from his father, or his mother—instead, Garrison said he learned about what Jesus did for him at vacation Bible school. He accepted Christ as his Savior and was given the promise found in Galatians 4:7. "I got a new lineage that day at VBS," Garrison said. "I got a new family."

"Jesus will grab hold" of the hearts of children and not let go," Garrison said. "But first, they have to hear His voice and that is where children's ministry leaders step in."

Preschool and children's ministry lead-

ers should also step in to help nurture the parent of a 50-50 child, he added. A kid who comes from a family consisting of one parent who is a believer and one who is a non-believer falls into this category.

Garrison told ministry leaders and volunteers it is their responsibility to stand alongside the believing parent and provide strength and encouragement.

For children of believing parents, Garrison said the responsibility of a child's soul shifts back home, but there still is a role for churches to play.

Garrison noted that modern parents are accustomed to "outsourcing." The everyday education of children has been outsourced to professional educators. Similarly, if a child excels in a particular sport, Dad signs the child up for athletic camps.

"So, when it comes to the matter of the soul of a child, they outsource to the professionals—you," Garrison said. "Parents think, 'As long as I just get them to church, you will take care of their spiritual needs.' They are completely blind that the child's soul is their responsibility."

Children's ministry leaders should consider a language change when it comes to children of believing parents, Garrison said. Be a resource rather than the source. Educate parents how to lead their children to Christ—and fuel the way for parents to experience the blessing of being an integral part in their child's walk with God.

Compiled from reporting by News Director Drew Nichter and Partnerships Editions Director Robin Bass

Black SBC pioneer donates personal documents to SBHLA

By David Roach

Nashville, Tenn.—An extensive collection of personal records from one of the Southern Baptist Convention's most influential black leaders now is open to researchers at the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives in Nashville, Tenn.

Emmanuel McCall, a member of the Home (now-North American) Mission Board staff from 1968 to 1991 and developer of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's black studies program, has donated his personal papers to SBHLA, including more than 30 boxes of correspondence, audio-visual resources, sermons and other items.

The collection documents the SBC's transition from harboring notorious racial prejudice to becoming one of the most ethnically diverse denominations in America.

McCall, author of five books, said he hopes his papers will provide researchers with "materials that will help them to understand how the Lord worked" in the SBC.

Though three institutions asked for McCall's papers, he said he decided on the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives because his files hold more value for Southern Baptists than any other group.

SBHLA director Bill Summers noted, "Dr. McCall and others of his generation, both

black and white, encouraged and pushed Southern Baptists to do the right thing as it related to inclusiveness for all races into the Southern Baptist family. In today's setting we take this for granted, but in 1968 or 1970 that wasn't the case. His papers document much of that struggle."

Within the existing files are records of McCall's encounters with some of the SBC's key leaders in the advance of racial justice—men like Mississippi layman and former SBC president Owen Cooper.

"The first SBC meeting that I attended was the Houston meeting in '68," McCall said. "There were about 30 editors and various denominational persons who were trying to push the Statement Concerning the Crisis in our Nation (a document denouncing racial prejudice), and Cooper led a four-hour fight against passing that statement. And I had a rather negative attitude towards him without realizing that his attitude would change that next December."

The change came when Cooper's daughter brought home a black friend from college and challenged her father's prejudice, McCall said. Cooper later called to request a meeting with McCall and a colleague.

"He just opened up," McCall said. "He had sort of a revelation and change. And lat-

er that next year he initiated an interracial laymen's retreat and then became a leader among the laypeople in the Southern Baptist movement toward reconciliation."

McCall battled prejudice firsthand at the University of Louisville and later at Southern Seminary. At U of L in the mid-1950s, the local Baptist association sent a committee to investigate when he began attending the predominantly white Baptist Student Union. He was allowed to keep attending only when other students said they would leave if he were not allowed to stay.

"During the four years that I was a student at U of L, we broke a lot of racial barriers," McCall said.

By the time he began attending Southern Seminary, black students had long been allowed to enroll. But he discovered that blacks from foreign countries received very different treatment from African Americans. "If you were from another country, you were given preferred status. So they had privileges that I didn't," McCall said.

As more African Americans enrolled, however, the prejudice began to change, he noted.

Among the other personalities referenced in McCall's files are Jimmy Carter, Billy Graham and Martin Luther King Jr. (BP)



HISTORICAL DONATION Emmanuel McCall, one of the Southern Baptist Convention's most influential black leaders, has donated his personal papers to the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives.

Baylor University votes to allow non-Baptists on governing board

Dallas—The governing body of Baylor University, the world's largest Baptist academic institution, now may include Christians who are not Baptists.

Baylor's board of regents voted Feb. 11 to amend the university's bylaws, allowing members who are active in Christian—but not Baptist—churches to comprise up to 25 percent of the board.

The bylaws require 75 percent of the board to be Baptists, and the Baptist General Convention of Texas will continue to elect 25 percent of the overall board.

In steps Baylor leaders described as maintaining the university's ties to the Baptist denomination, the regents also voted to create the Baptist Studies Center for Research and to increase the amount of financial aid available to children of Baptist ministers and missionaries.

Despite the change, Baylor will maintain its strong Baptist identity, regent Chairman Dary Stone pledged.

"We have been for 166 years ... and always will be a Baptist university," Stone said. But expanding regent qualifications to include non-Baptist Christians reflects Baylor's large non-Baptist constituency, he added. For example, the composition of the freshman class is slightly less than one-third Baptist, and the majority of the overall student body is non-Baptist.

BGCT executive staff leaders learned Feb. 9 the regents planned to consider changing the requirement that the university's entire governing board be Baptists. Steve Vernon, associate executive director of the BGCT's Executive Board, said he sent an e-mail to Baylor's regents opposing the move.

Last November, BGCT messengers turned aside a recommendation that the state convention revise its agreement with Houston Baptist University, allowing HBU to elect a minority of non-Baptist Christian trustees. (ABP)

Okla. pastor dies in motorcycle crash

Edmond, Okla.—A prominent Southern Baptist pastor in Oklahoma died last week from injuries he sustained in a motorcycle accident.

Alan Day, 62, pastor of First Baptist Church of Edmond, Okla., for more than 25 years, reportedly lost control when his motorcycle hit some sand on a city street. The motorcycle tipped on its side and skidded more than 100 feet. Day died at a hospital from head injuries. Police said he was wearing a helmet.

According to media reports, Day had left to pick up his wife for the church's weekly Wednesday night supper. Church members learned of the accident as they gathered for prayer meeting.

Associate Pastor Keith Haygood told the Oklahoman newspaper that Day took up motorcycle riding about five years ago, and that he was a safe driver who always wore a helmet.

Day, a pastor for 42 years, received degrees from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He held numerous leadership positions in the Baptist General Con-

vention of Oklahoma, including multiple terms on the Oklahoma Baptist University board of trustees. He currently was serving as the board's vice chairman.

"Alan Day was a consummate Baptist statesman," said university President David Whitlock. "He had a pastor's heart and a servant's spirit, which was demonstrated in his love for his church family and his leadership role in the Edmond community. His warmth and caring were so strong that they sometimes overshadowed his keen theological mind. He was a student of God's word and an innovative communicator of biblical truth."

Day was a former trustee for the International Mission Board and served as vice chairman from 1998 until 2000. He preached at the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference in 2008.

As pastor of First Baptist, Edmond, Day emphasized support for missions. He led the church to increase financial support for missions and took several trips overseas.

Day is survived by his widow, Alice, four children and six grandchildren. (ABP)



Alan Day

IMB search team taps Elliff as nominee, trustees could vote in March

Continued from page 1

Elliff, 66, a Texas native, was twice elected president of the SBC, in 1996 and '97, and also served as president of the SBC Pastors' Conference in 1990. He has led several key churches in the denomination, including First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla., where he was pastor for 20 years.

He most recently served as IMB senior vice president for spiritual nurture and church relations from 2005-09. In that role, he taught and counseled missionaries and helped mobilize churches throughout the convention for missions involvement. Currently he leads Living in the Word Publications, a writing and speaking ministry he founded in 2005. He frequently speaks about spiritual awakening and family life in churches and conferences throughout the United States and abroad.

Elliff brings a wealth of gifts and experience to the challenging task of leading

Southern Baptists' international mission work in the coming years, Pritchard said.

Elliff, Pritchard said, has lived in "many different worlds" in Southern Baptist life:

"He has heard God's call to missions as a field missionary. He has pastored some of our best churches. He was president of our convention for two years. He worked at the vice presidential level with IMB. So he is uniquely prepared, his integrity is unquestioned, and I believe that he will be able to help connect all of our entities together."

"We just see so many indicators that he is God's choice. Through the process, God has spoken to him also, and we are enthusiastic. We are standing with complete and total unanimity. We are very confident that God's hand is on Dr. Elliff at this time to lead IMB."



Tom Elliff

Reached for comment, Elliff asked Southern Baptists to pray for him, his wife and family—and for IMB trustees as they consider his nomination.

"Both Jeannie and I were incredibly humbled when the search committee approached us," he said. "Obviously, we would not have moved forward to this moment had we not spent a great deal of time in prayer seeking the face of the Lord."

Elliff said his discussions with the IMB presidential search committee initially came as a surprise.

"We love missions and we've given our hearts to it, but this was not on our radar screen," he said. "It has just driven us to our knees in prayer. We certainly couldn't do this if we didn't sense the Lord's leadership to do it."

Born in Paris, Texas, Elliff is a third-gen-

eration Southern Baptist pastor. The Elliffs, who married in 1966, have four grown children and 25 grandchildren.

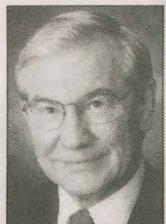
He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

He led several churches while in college and seminary and was pastor of Eastwood Baptist Church in Tulsa, Okla., for nearly a decade before being appointed with his wife as missionaries to Zimbabwe in 1981. They served in the east African nation for about two years, but resigned in 1983 after their teenage daughter, Beth, was seriously injured in a car accident there. After they returned to the United States, Elliff led Applewood Baptist Church in Lakewood, Colo., before being called to First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, where he was pastor from 1985 to 2005. (BP)

Grandchildren and the Bible

I recently had telephone conversations with two of our older grandchildren. These were great experiences as we explored the Bible together.

Partners in the Mission



By Bill Mackey

The older grandson, Will, is a second grader at a Christian school where he is expected to be able to recite the 66 books of the Bible by May. During Christmas, we worked on the New Testament.

Will came in from school one day recently, got his Bible and committed the New Testament books to memory. Will left word for me to call him. He recited the New Testament books and then recited Genesis through 2 Chronicles as well.

A couple of nights later, Lilly, our granddaughter, who is a fourth grader, called to talk after having completed her homework. When I told her about Will reciting the New Testament books, she wanted to do the same.

Lilly recited the New Testament and the Old Testament books, with just a few bumps. I was impressed that she could recite the Old Testament books without review.

We talked about some of the books. Lilly knew the Book of Psalms has the most chapters and the longest chapter, Psalm 119. When she read Psalm 23, I asked her if she knew what "eternal" meant. She reflected and then she said John 3:16. We discussed that eternal means forever, with no beginning and no end. God is eternal.

She read Psalm 100, and we discussed this Psalm of Praise and that many psalms were sung by the people of Israel as they went up to the temple for worship.

Discussion turned to the Major Prophets and we talked about Ezekiel 37 and the valley of dry bones. Lilly referred to the story in II Samuel of David sparing the life of Saul. Then I took the opportunity to direct her to the call of Samuel, which she read.

Lilly referred to the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8. She read that passage with great interest as her own baptism is scheduled for Palm Sunday, April 17.

Lilly exclaimed that "the Bible seems like a long book, but when you get into the stories, the Bible is really interesting. It is like a long fairy tale, but it is real!"

It will be a privilege, God willing, to have many more conversations like this one with my other four grandchildren as well.

Due to Bible illiteracy, Bible storying has become a major focus in small groups. Parents and grandparents have a wonderful opportunity to complement Sunday school and to teach children and grandchildren who are not in church.

Many readers are teaching the Bible, but most of us can do much more when we are with our children and grandchildren.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Mission boards appear to be getting back on track

At the beginning of last week as state executive directors and editors gathered in Williamsburg, Va., for their respective meetings, attention was focused on the unveiling of a new strategy for doing North American missions work. By mid-week, a surprise announcement from the 15-member search committee for a new leader of international missions brought a renewed sense for some that Southern Baptists' Great Commission efforts may be getting back on track.

The primary objective of NAMB's "Send North America" emphasis is to help reengage the thousands of Southern Baptist churches that are not currently participating in missions, President Kevin Ezell told state editors. The three-fold strategy envisions mobilizing and equipping churches to partner directly with NAMB church planters working in 25 major cities in the United States and Canada. That number, however, is expected to expand quickly as interest expressed by churches grows.

"We feel like one of the best missions education tools is for Southern Baptists to do missions and to know our missionaries," Ezell explained. NAMB is way behind in connecting people and helping churches to feel a sense of identity with church plants, he assessed. In talking with church planters, he said they had learned that while funding and resources are helpful, the thing that is most desired is "connectivity"—sustained, supportive relationships with established churches and their leaders. A potential danger with this approach, though, is that these churches may elect to support specific church planters or preferred missions efforts, siphoning off general missions giving through the Annie Armstrong offering and the Cooperative Program.

One appearance that NAMB leaders have sought to avoid is that they were distancing themselves from the state conventions—seeking to do ministry independently, rather than as partners. "Actually, we want to use the structure that is already there. It is our hope that the states would be the primary portal of what we do," Ezell assured. By organizing its work into five regions, NAMB leaders feel they would be able to better strategize with state convention leaders while maintaining greater accountability among missionaries. In the new approach, state convention leaders and NAMB regional vice presidents will coordinate bringing together church planters and partnering churches in determining the best approaches and locations for starting churches.

In deciding which population centers to focus on first, the obvious challenge is determining who gets included and who gets left out. "It felt like an NCAA selection committee—and that's not what was intended," Ezell quipped. While the NAMB decided upon 25 cities initially, "we just didn't put as much weight into it, because we are going to move at the rate the churches are mobilized," he said. As more churches express in-

terest in sending and assisting church planters, more cities will be quickly added. Yet, the intent is not to just continue working in metro areas. "If you win the major cities, then it permeates outward. You start there; you don't finish there," Ezell said. "We want to 'power seed' certain areas," he envisioned. But unlike the recent Strategic Focus Cities emphases that changed regularly, "We are going there for the long term," he said. "We want to go there to stay and help plant as many churches as we possibly can."

Though exciting to see a Great Commission strategy for reaching North America taking shape, the week's breaking news story came on Thursday morning when Tom Elliff was announced as the nominee for the next president of the International Mission Board.

Elliff, a third-generation pastor whose father and grandfather both served as pastors and association director of missions, was a longtime pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, Okla., before becoming the IMB's senior vice president for spiritual nurture and church relations in late 2005. In that role, he encouraged the spiritual growth of missionary families, taught Baptist doctrine to missionary candidates, promoted missions involvement among pastors and churches, advised IMB leaders in mobilization efforts, and equipped overseas Baptist leaders.

A recent doctor of ministry recipient from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Elliff also is founder of Living in the Word Publications, a writing and speaking ministry that focuses on spiritual awakening. The two-term president of the SBC in the mid-1990s has brief experience as an IMB missionary, having served in Zimbabwe from 1981 until his daughter was in a serious accident in 1983. Elliff delivered the annual sermon at the SBC meeting in Orlando, Fla. in 1994, and he preached on forgiveness and reconciliation during the SBC Pastors' Conference when it met at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville in 2009.

But what most longtime convention-goers probably will recall about Elliff is his work as chairman of the Southern Baptist Council on Family Life. In a "Kingdom Family" rally prior to the 2003 SBC annual meeting in Phoenix, Ariz.—where the convention returns this summer—Elliff joined James Dobson of Focus on the Family, Dennis Rainey of FamilyLife Today, and Bible study author Beth Moore in introducing seven pillars as guiding principles for strengthening families. The pillars included honoring God's authority, respecting human life, exercising moral purity, serving one's church, using time wisely, practicing biblical stewardship and sharing the gospel. Described as an attempt to reverse the decline of the American family, the council championed the development of a comprehensive strategy to "call families back to God."



After Thought

By Todd Deaton

Doing more ... while we have the opportunity

Human nature is intrinsically selfish. We grow up wanting our own way, doing things our own way, and expecting everything to be about us. The world we live in is dominated by this mindset: Wars are fought, marriages fall apart, and even churches split. Cooperation ends where selfishness begins.

Christ calls us to live a different type of life: a life of selflessness. The selfless life is one where we think of others' needs before our own wants. Jesus came not to accomplish His own agenda, but the Father's—to seek and to save lost humanity. He died on the cross to give us eternal life. He became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. What Christ did for us was the epitome of selflessness.

As Christians, our lives should model and reflect that of our Lord Jesus. We need to seek to serve others, to help others, and to share with others the life-changing gospel. Perhaps John the Baptist said it best when he remarked that "He (Christ) must increase, but I must decrease."

President's Pen



By Floyd Paris

So how can our lives reflect this character? How does Christ increase in us and selfishness decrease? I believe the answer is simple, but not easy. We must commit ourselves afresh to becoming more like Him.

I must confess I like using the phrase "More for Christ" to encapsulate this commitment. I believe it directly applies to our everyday lives. Each day I ask God what more can I do for Christ? Can I serve more? Can I

give more? Can I go more? Can I witness more? Can I teach more, reach more, pray more?

As KBC president, I have asked all Kentucky Baptists to commit to giving \$3 more each week to their churches, but doing such is just the beginning.

Giving \$3 more per week is a small amount that will make a huge impact across the Commonwealth, but an even greater impact will come if we, together, commit to doing "More for Christ" in every aspect of our lives.

One day we will all stand before our Heavenly Father to give an account, and in that moment it will be too late to do "More for Christ." Beloved, let us start now and begin each new day with the goal of "More for Christ" while we have the opportunity. Let's do it!

Floyd Paris is president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and pastor of Unity Baptist Church in Ashland.

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

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'God's message to the world' inspires concern for students

We have a copy of the letter in the Bolin family archives. I cannot remember when I first saw the letter, but now a framed copy of it hangs on my History Department office wall. I always glance at the letter before going out the door to class for the purpose of inspiration, to inspire me to value the worth of each one of my students, to inspire me to care for them.

The letter was written on April 10, 1893 to my grandfather, Wesley Lafayette Bolin, a student at Clinton College in Hickman County in far western Kentucky. Founded in 1873 by Willis "Father" White—the pastor of Clinton's First Baptist Church, the county judge, and the moderator of the West Union Baptist Association—as an academy for young women, Clinton College graduates often found their way to Wellesley.

Later, the institution became coeducational, but with declining enrollments it closed in 1915. In 1893, however, the newly-formed West Kentucky Baptist Association had taken charge of the school. For a time, Clinton College flourished, and Amanda Melvina Hicks, a cousin of Abraham Lincoln, both taught there and served as the college president, a remarkable achievement for a woman at a denominational college in far western Kentucky in the 1890s. Hicks served as president of Clinton College from 1880 to 1894.

In the Spring of 1893, President Hicks wrote this letter to my grandfather. Although she sent the letter to my grandfather, the missive really concerned my Great-Uncle Eugene, also a student at Clinton College and the "character" of the Bolin family. I grew up listening to stories my Baptist-minister-father would tell about his "Uncle Gene," and despite his uncle's shenanigans my father, another Wesley, had a twin brother named Eugene

after his Uncle Gene. So, my Great-Uncle Gene must have had some qualities worthy of emulation. Anyway, Amanda M. Hicks seemed to be especially concerned about the prospects of one Eugene Bolin. Read the letter, and see for yourself:

A Letter from the Laity



Duane Bolin

"Clinton College, Apr. 10. [18]93
"Mr. Wesley Bolin—My dear pupil.
"I am very anxious that Eugene should hear the lecture tonight. The subject is 'God's Message to the World.' It may do Eugene a great deal of good to hear it. He told me he would stay at home and that you were coming. If you can so arrange that he can come I shall be much pleased even if you have to stay at home. I say this because I am so much concerned about his soul.
"Your friend and teacher,
"Amanda M. Hicks"

A great deal of mystery surrounds this letter. I never found out if my Great-Uncle Gene made it to the lecture that evening. And I never knew what the speaker said in his lecture, "God's Message to the World." There is a great deal that I do not know.

I do know, however, that here was a teacher who cared so much for one of her students that she took the time to write to the student's brother—my grandfather—asking him to make a sacrifice for the sake of his brother. In short, the teacher wanted young Eugene to come to the lecture because she was "so much concerned about his soul."

I don't know if Amanda Hicks inspired Eugene to come to the lecture, or to attend to his schooling or his soul, but I do know that she inspires me today. She inspires me to care for my students more, to recognize in them seeds of worth and even greatness.

For more information on Clinton College, see R. Charles Blair's entry in The Kentucky Encyclopedia (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992), p. 208. Duane Bolin teaches in the Department of History at Murray State University and leads a Sunday School class at Murray's First Baptist Church. He may be reached at duane.bolin@murraystate.edu.

How do kids spell love?

By David Garrard

Somehow, I managed to be selected as an outstanding senior for the 1971 class of North Springs High School in North Atlanta. The yearbook featured a photo and a couple of descriptive phrases, one of which was, "There's your dad over there." I still find that amazing. My dad was so present in my life that when my friends had to come up with a couple of sentences to describe me, that is part of what came to mind.

My dad was a busy man. He was a pastor, and for most of my growing up days, he was the only staff member at our small church. There were lots of night meetings and people's needs to see about. But somehow, Dad always had time for me. He played ball with me. He built me a tree house. He helped me with homework (especially math). He took me to magic club meetings. He came to my practices and my games. (I can still see him leaning up against the wall of the gym.) Dad knew my friends, my coaches and my teachers. He loved math, and was so interested in one of the classes I took as a senior that my teacher sent a grade home for him on my report card.

The time we spent together afforded lots of opportunities to talk. Our conversations had a stream of consciousness quality about them as we drifted from the silly to the serious. Through it all, Dad was investing himself in me—teaching me about family, faith and life.

Dad worked hard and was as busy as anyone I know—now or then. But Dad took time to be with me. He was always around. He showed his love for me by giving himself to me, and my life was changed forever through his influence.

It may sound trite, but it's true: kids spell love: t-i-m-e. Give some love today?

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



Policies not worth the money

By Don Spencer

There are some types of insurance where we generally don't have enough coverage. Life, disability, long-term care and renters insurance are examples.

There are other types of insurance we often buy too frequently and are, for the most part, a waste of money. Here are some examples:

Credit Life Insurance—Life insurance tied to a major purchase is generally not a good buy. It doesn't pay out that often and only pays off the balance due of the amount financed.

Because it doesn't often pay off much, it's cheap and, therefore, attractive to people. Instead, use the money to pay off the loan faster and save on interest.

Collision & Comprehensive on auto insurance—One pays for damage to your car no matter who is at fault; the other pays for damage from fire, theft and vandalism. When your car is new or a valuable car, you need this. As the car ages, there is generally less need since the pay off on a damaged car may be relatively low. If your car is more than five years old, start monitoring what it is worth to figure out if this insurance coverage is worth the premium.

Rental car insurance—If you own a car, you're likely already covered. If so, purchasing this coverage from the rental car company is doubling up on insurance. Sometimes a credit card you use also carries rental car coverage. The only reason to buy rental car insurance is to avoid having to file a claim on your own insurance. Before renting, check with your car insurance and your credit card to learn about the coverage you already have.

Private mortgage insurance—PMI is added to your monthly mortgage to protect the lender—not you. If you finance more than 80 percent of the home's value, it is generally required. As your loan principle reduces and as the appraised value of your property goes up, make sure PMI is cancelled.

Roadside assistance from your insurer—This and towing is an option on your insurance. This extra is cheap, but if you take advantage of the coverage it goes on your claim record and could increase your premiums. You're probably better off paying for your own towing or roadside assistance.

Don Spencer is a certified financial planner and directs the Kentucky Baptist Convention's church financial benefits department



Will we rise and do something about biblical literacy?

By George Guthrie

In his work entitled "Eat this Book," Eugene Peterson rightly notes concerning the Bible, "We open this Book and find that page after page it takes us off guard, surprises us, and draws us into its reality, pulls us into participation with God on his terms."

I am confident that you agree—the Bible is both foundation and fuel of spiritual vitality for the church as we seek to live out God's agenda in the world. As the great minister and philanthropist George Müller put it, "The vigor of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our life and thoughts." It is not surprising, therefore, that in a recent survey by LifeWay Research, the No. 1 predictor of spiritual maturity among churchgoers was whether or not they read the Bible on a daily basis.

Yet, only 16 out of 100 of those who regularly attend our churches read the Bible every day; another 32 percent read the Bible at least once per week. This means that more than 50 percent of people who come through our doors on a regular basis only read their Bibles occasionally, perhaps one or two times per month, if at all. Even more sobering, only 37 percent of those who attend church regularly say that reading and studying the Bible has made a significant difference in the way they live their lives. Only 37 percent.

What studies show clearly is that over the past 50 years the church has joined the broader culture in a frightening, accelerating, pervasive, downward slide into biblical illiteracy. This plunge affects both clergy and laity, making a profound impact on the way

we think, the way we live and what we know or don't know about the Bible itself.

As a professor at one of the top Christian universities in the country, I have seen the effects of this trend on my students. They are exceptionally smart and deeply committed to Christ and the church. Yet, many fail very basic biblical literacy tests, neither knowing the Bible's stories, nor grasping how the grand story of the Bible fits together. Fewer than one in 10 of them have received any training from

"... over the past 50 years the church has joined the broader culture in a frightening, accelerating, pervasive, downward slide into biblical illiteracy. This plunge affects both clergy and laity, making a profound impact on the way we think, the way we live and what we know or don't know about the Bible itself."

their churches in how to read and/or study the Bible effectively. And if these cream-of-the-crop kids are in that situation, where are the folks who sit in our pews?

This great need is why LifeWay Christian Resources and the R.C. Ryan Center for Biblical Studies at Union University have partnered together in what we believe is an exciting, timely initiative called "Read the Bible for Life." The initiative seeks to change

the processes for how we as Christ's followers interface with the Bible.

We want to accomplish two things foundationally: 1. We want to help people learn to read the parts of Scripture well, so they know how to engage a psalm, or an Old Testament story, or a parable, applying the Word in specific, life-changing ways. 2. We want to help people understand how the grand story of the Bible fits together, so they can understand their place in that grand story that God has written on the world.

Psalm 78:5-7 reads, "He established a testimony in Jacob and set up a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers to teach to their children, so that a future generation—children yet to be born—might know. They were to rise and tell their children, so that they might put their confidence in God and not forget God's works, but keep His commands" (HCSB). There is no confidence in God, nor a life lived in light of His works and commands, apart from the Bible.

It is time for us to "rise and tell" the children in our generation, so that they might be powerfully established in, and oriented to, God's Word. To fail to do so will be to hand them over to the formidable winds shaping our time in history. Those winds have already blown much of our grasp of the Bible down a dark, ever-widening hole of illiteracy. The question is, will we "rise" and do something about it? (BP)

George Guthrie is the Benjamin W. Perry Professor of Bible at Union University in Jackson, Tenn., and author of the book "Read the Bible for Life." This article is adapted from the December 2010 issue of "Biblical Solutions for Transformation" published by LifeWay.

ERLC head urges pro-life protections in budget

Washington—Southern Baptist ethicist Richard Land called on the U.S. House of Representatives Feb. 16 to pass a government funding bill for the remainder of the fiscal year that includes protections for the sanctity of human life.

Because the last Congress did not pass a budget for 2011, the House is working on a continuing resolution to fund federal agencies through September. Republicans are seeking to cut \$100 billion from the budget in the resolution.

Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, wrote to Speaker of the House John Boehner and Majority Leader Eric Cantor a day after the chamber's Energy and Commerce Committee approved legislation prohibiting federal funding of abortion and abortion coverage in last year's health care reform law.

The House's new Republican leadership has included several pro-life provisions in the continuing resolution, and some amendments favored by pro-life advocates will be considered before final action.

In his letter, Land said the ERLC urges

House members "to not only adhere to proposed deep fiscal cuts, but also to support amendments protecting the sanctity of human life and the right to conscience and to reject any and all amendments that would undercut such protections."

Land's letter urged House support for the following amendments to the continuing resolution:

- A ban on all funds for Planned Parenthood Federation of America and its affiliates.
- A ban on eliminating or weakening conscience protections for health care providers.
- Elimination of \$440 million in funds for international population control.

Regarding the amendment on Planned Parenthood, Land said, "We do not believe the government should be in the business of supporting the nation's leading abortion provider with taxpayer dollars, no matter how Planned Parenthood allocates the money."

Planned Parenthood received \$363.2 million in government grants and contracts in 2008-09 and performed more than 324,000 abortions in 2008. Those are the most re-

cent years for which figures are available.

Pro-life measures already in the continuing resolution and possible targets for amendments for their removal include:

- Reinstatement of the Mexico City Policy, which would bar federal money for organizations that perform or promote abortions overseas.
- Restoration of the prohibition on funds for the United Nations Population Fund, which has been found to support China's coercive population control program.
- Re-establishment of the ban on the use of federal and congressionally approved local funds for elective abortions in the District of Columbia.

Last week, the House Energy and Commerce Committee voted 33-19 for the Protect Life Act. Two Democrats—Reps. Mike Ross of Arkansas and Jim Matheson of Utah—joined all the GOP members on the panel in support of the bill. The measure would amend the health care law, which was enacted in March, not only to prohibit federal funds from being used for any portion of the costs of a health insurance plan that covers abortion, but also to protect the pro-life conscience rights of health care workers and institutions. (BP)



Richard Land

Most Americans support congressional probe on Muslims

By Nicole Neroulias

Washington—Americans haven't heard much about upcoming congressional hearings on the radicalization of U.S. Muslims, yet more than half think it's a good idea, and nearly as many believe Muslims here haven't done enough to fight extremists in their midst, according to a new poll.

At the same time, 62 percent say American Muslims are an important part of the religious community, and a clear majority—72 percent—say Congress should investigate religious extremism anywhere it exists, not just among Muslims, according to a PRRI/RNS Religion News Poll released last week.

Peter Gottschalk, co-author of "Islamophobia: Making Muslims the Enemy," said the findings reflect the impact of recent waves of anti-Muslim rhetoric surrounding burning the Quran and opposing the construction of mosques.

"The Muslim community has been fairly successful at demonstrating themselves as neighbors, but the question becomes are they good neighbors?" said Gottschalk, chairman of the religion department at

Wesleyan University in Connecticut.

"There's a double standard that Muslims are responsible for extremism by people who happen to be Muslim, but all Christians aren't responsible for abortion clinic bombers or the KKK."

The poll, conducted by Public Religion Research Institute in partnership with Religion News Service, was released as House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Peter King, R-N.Y., prepares to hold hearings on the threat of homegrown Islamic extremism during the week of March 7.

The poll examined attitudes toward both the hearings and American Muslims, analyzing the responses by gender, age, most trusted news source, and religious and political affiliation.

Overall, men, viewers who trust Fox News, white evangelicals and Republicans are more likely to think the hearings are a good idea and to believe Muslims want to establish Shariah law in the United States.

Those groups also are among the most likely to say they feel "well informed" about Islam and the "religious beliefs and practices of Muslims."

These groups aren't necessarily more knowledgeable, however—just more confident in their beliefs, researchers explained. They said a person's preferred news source is significantly correlated to how much they worry about U.S. Muslim extremism.

"What we're seeing here is a significant Fox News effect," explained Daniel Cox, PRRI research director. "We even see differences among Republicans who trust Fox News most and those who trust other media."

Other findings include:

■ Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of Americans haven't heard anything about the upcoming hearings to investigate U.S. Muslim extremism.

■ A majority (56 percent) believes that a hearing on American Muslim extremism is a good idea, including most Republicans (71 percent), people who trust Fox News (76 percent) and white evangelicals (70 percent). The hearings find less support among Democrats (45 percent), people who trust CNN (45 percent) or public television (28 percent) and white mainline Protestants (50 percent). (RNS)

Poll: Americans generally back companies run by Christians

Ventura, Calif.—A new poll shows that Christian-based companies have more to gain when it comes to operating according to their faith—and even promoting it.

The survey, conducted by the Barna Group, found that 43 percent of Americans said they would be more likely to buy products from a company that "manages its business according to Christian principles," while only 3 percent were less likely to do so. More than one-quarter of those surveyed—27 percent—said they would be "a lot" more likely to support such a business. More than half of Americans said they were indifferent.

But what if a company "embraces and promotes the Christian faith?" In that case, 37 said they are more likely to purchase products from the business, 3 percent less likely and 58 percent have no opinion. More than 20 percent of respondents were "a lot" more likely to buy products from that company.

"There appears to be a significant opportunity for enterprises that understand and value faith to express their faith consciousness through their business practices—not simply as a marketing gimmick, but as an authentic part of their content, their mix of products and services, their branding, and their corporate culture," said David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group.

"The research shows that the consumer audience is divided between those who favor Christian companies and those who are simply indifferent," he added. "Very few Americans appear to be opposed to such faith-related businesses."

In January Chick-fil-A became the target of homosexual rights groups when one of its Pennsylvania restaurants agreed to donate food to a marriage enrichment seminar sponsored by the Pennsylvania Family Institute. (BP)

NATIONAL NOTES

GuideStone issues 2011 pastor tax guide—Ministers can find additional help in preparing their 2010 federal income tax returns with the annual Tax Return Preparation and Federal Reporting Guide from GuideStone Financial Resources. The 2011 guide details recent changes to tax laws and their effect on ministers. The guide includes important tax law changes signed into law by President Obama in December. The tax guide can be read in PDF format at the GuideStone website. GuideStone participants can order a free printed copy by calling (888) 984-8433.

Ind. house passes marriage amendment—Indiana's state house passed a constitutional marriage amendment on a 70-26 vote Feb. 15, sending it to the state senate. If passed there, it must pass again in each chamber in a separately elected legislature before going to voters in 2014 at the earliest. The amendment would define marriage as being between one man and one woman. A majority of states—29—

have such an amendment. "The basic unit of society is the family and the cornerstone of the family is marriage," the bill's author, Republican state Rep. Eric Turner, said during floor debate, according to the Indianapolis Star. "Marriage is and should be between one man and one woman." At least seven states are expected to consider marriage amendments this year.

Hawaii to legalize civil unions—Hawaii soon will become the seventh state to legalize same-sex civil unions or their equivalent after its state senate last week passed a bill by a vote of 18-5, sending it to Gov. Neil Abercrombie, who has pledged to sign it. The bill will grant homosexual couples all the state legal benefits of marriage, minus the name. Critics said it simply is a stepping stone to same-sex marriage. They pointed to other states—Connecticut, New Hampshire and Vermont—that recognized civil unions before legalizing gay marriage. Opponents also warned the bill would lead to homosexu-

al relationships being taught in elementary schools. Six other states recognize civil unions or domestic partnerships. Five states and the District of Columbia recognize same-sex marriage.

Pa. cracks down on abortion clinics—Abortion clinics in Pennsylvania will receive greater scrutiny under regulatory controls announced Feb. 15 by Gov. Tom Corbett in the wake of the state government's failure to supervise a horror-filled Philadelphia clinic. Seven employees of the state's Departments of Health and State have been fired or have resigned since a grand jury issued a devastating report last month regarding those agencies' shortcomings in overseeing the Women's Medical Society in west Philadelphia, Corbett told reporters. Kermit Gosnell, the owner of the clinic, was charged with eight counts of murder—one in the death of a 41-year-old woman and seven in the deaths of viable, fully delivered children who were killed outside the womb. The grand jury report-

ed that a February 2010 raid of the clinic found deplorable conditions, which resulted in its closing and Gosnell's medical license being suspended.

Report: Churches, charities not competing—Houses of worship and other charities often aren't in competition for dollars, but tend to reap donations from similar donors, a new study shows. Slightly more than 50 percent of people who financially supported congregations also gave to at least one charitable organization in the last year, according to a study conducted by Grey Matter Research Consulting. Researchers also found that the more Americans give to a house of worship, the more they donate to other groups. And the trend continues with the generosity of the donor. For example, donors who gave less than \$100 to a house of worship also gave an average of \$208 to other charities. Those who gave between \$100 and \$499 to a congregation gave an average of \$376 to others.

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AFRICA

A Continent in Turmoil

By Riley Reynolds
International Mission Board

As uprisings in parts of Africa and the Middle East continue to escalate, many Christians are seeing God make Himself known in the midst of chaos.

Pro-democracy protests have swept through several Arab nations, with the presidents of Tunisia and Egypt forced to resign amid growing unrest. Most recently, activists in Libya, Iran and Bahrain are clashing with the police and military as they seek political reform.

Former International Mission Board missionary Mike Edens, associate dean of graduate studies and professor at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, said he believes Christians all over the world can make a difference in this time of unrest. "We who are outside of the situation pray for and are partners with people inside the situation, and God is working through both of us to make Himself known," Edens said.

Desperate for prayer

An Egyptian Christian monitoring the situation said it is difficult to know what's really going on in his country.

"The protest started as (the) real people's revolution—it was the farmers, the poor workers, the true Egyptians asking for change, because they cannot take it any longer," he said.

Now it is as if "evil was unleashed on Egypt," he continued, with freed prisoners and thugs—believed by some to be from the secret police—taking to the streets to kill, steal and destroy.

"The church is confused in Egypt—not sure how to pray," he said. "We don't know if change is going to be good or worse. (Christians) need wisdom and revelation to move at this opportune time in strategic prayers led by the Holy Spirit."

Southern Sudan seeks secession

Believers in Sudan, a country divided between the northern and southern regions, also are relying on God during a crucial time for their nation.

A January referendum in southern Sudan yielded a nearly unanimous vote that the south secede from the north.

One southern Sudanese woman who voted in the referendum said the secession will be a historic breakthrough and believes it all is part of God's will.

"From the very beginning of this struggle the people of southern Sudan have been equal, and I think God had a plan for us," the woman said. "I think God was working all this time and I think this is God's work in these days."

President Omar Hassan al-Bashir has reigned in Sudan for more than 20 years and threatened if the south secedes, he will implement Islam as the national religion in the north, Arabic as the national language and a stricter form of Shariah, the sacred law of Islam.

Salva Kiir Mayardit, president of the Government of Southern Sudan, is encouraging southerners to not be complacent in this time, but "to harness the full potential of the natural resources God has given them to satisfy all their needs," according

to the official Government of Southern Sudan website.

Despite some uncertainties, Calvin Lutsk*, an IMB missionary for sub-Saharan Africa, said he believes the situation in Sudan is improving.

"For a long time, civil war in Sudan seemed inevitable, but (things) have turned for the better," Lutsk said.

Bloodshed in Nigeria

Conflict between the north and south also has plagued Nigeria for more than a century. Centered between a Muslim north and a Christian south, the city of Jos is caught in the middle of the battle.

Homes, churches and mosques in Jos have been burned and thousands of Christians and Muslims have been killed.

Matilda Bryson*, an IMB missionary in Nigeria, said there only are limited opportunities for reaching out to Muslims because of safety factors.

"It is very dangerous for a Christian to even travel into a Muslim neighborhood right now," she said.

One leader too many

Ivory Coast, where presidential confusion has caused educational and economic challenges, is another nation in turmoil.

President Laurent Gbagbo came to power in 2000, and after postponing elections for nearly a decade, Ivory Coast finally voted for a new president, Alassane Ouattara, in November 2010. However, Gbagbo deemed himself president by having the Constitutional Council overturn the election of Ouattara.



TAKING REFUGE IN PRAYER Nigerian pastors gather to pray for their nation, which has been plagued with religious, ethnic and economic violence for more than a century. In the past decade, numerous churches have been burned and hundreds of Christians killed.

Both men continue to claim the presidency, but Ouattara has the international backing of the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States.

Though he remains in the presidential palace, Gbagbo has been told by ECOWAS to leave quietly or military force will be used to remove him.

Unlike the situation in Sudan, Lutsk said the Ivory Coast conflict is getting worse. As leaders remain locked in a power struggle, Ivoirians are faced with rising prices and food and fuel shortages.

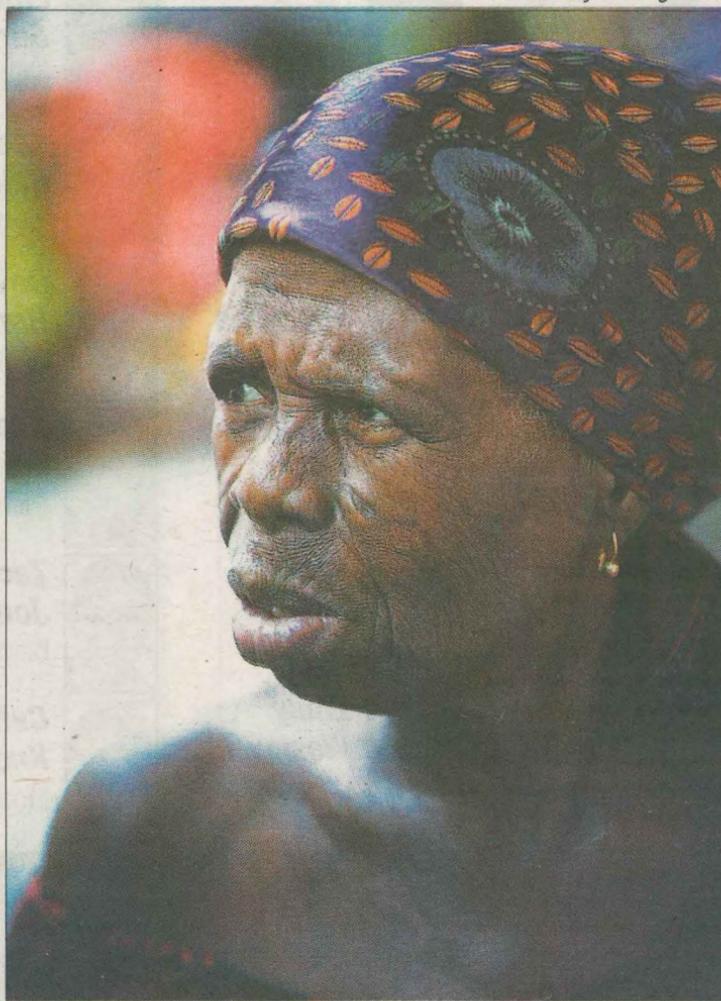
IVORY COAST TURMOIL

While leaders remain locked in a power struggle with no end in sight, tensions are rising as Ivoirians are faced with rising prices and food and fuel shortages. "The possibility of more violence is great and reminds us that many more people could die without ever knowing the Gospel of Christ," said a missionary serving there.

In the midst of such tension, Brad Danielson*, an IMB missionary serving in Ivory Coast, said he sees the Lord's purpose that extends beyond the chaos.

"We are ambassadors sent from God Himself to introduce a peace that goes beyond politics and (that is) found only in Christ," Danielson said. "The possibility of more violence is great and reminds us that many more people could die without ever knowing the gospel of Christ that we came to share with them." (BP)

*Names changed for security reasons



COMPASSION IN ACTION A man dying of AIDS in Zambia receives the contents of an In-Home Care Kit provided through Baptist Global Response. (BGR photo)

Kentucky Baptist church cares for dying in Africa

Continued from page 1

lem that big, we are reminded that each one of those numbers is a real person, someone who is suffering and needs to personally experience the love of Christ.

"We can't solve the whole HIV/AIDS crisis, but we can make a real difference, one person at a time, that has eternal implications," Hatfield said. "When a church packs an In-Home Care Kit, they know how overwhelming a gift it will be for the person who receives it. The pleasure of lying on clean sheets and putting balm on cracked lips—and knowing it came from caring Christians in the United States—makes a life-changing difference, for now and often for eternity, too."

The Cannonsburg congregation loved the idea of providing a physical and spiritual touch to people dying from AIDS and other illnesses, Williams said.

"We made filling the buckets a church-wide ministry and devoted a Wednesday evening service to filling and praying over the buckets," the pastor noted. The church, which runs about 175 in worship, filled 50 buckets.

"I feel this is the greatest ministry opportunity to come along in a long time, and would encourage every church to get involved in this ministry," Williams said. "Each family and each Sunday school class could easily fill at least one bucket." (BP)



Church membership trends largely unchanged in 2010

By Bob Allen

New York—Pentecostals, Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses gained ground, mainline churches continued to decline, and growth in the largest two denominations—Roman Catholics and Southern Baptists—remained stagnant, according to new statistics compiled by the National Council of Churches.

The 2011 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches contains few surprises, with growing churches continuing to grow and churches that have been declining continuing to lose members, said Eileen Linder, editor of the annual report card ranking growth in the largest 25 religious bodies.

"The direction of membership remains very stable," Linder wrote. "That is, churches which have been increasing in membership in recent years continue to grow and likewise, those churches which have been declining in recent years continue to decline."

The 79th annual edition of the yearbook noted that rates of both growth and decline have slowed in recent years.

The Catholic Church, the nation's largest denomination with 68 million members, grew by about one half of 1 percent, while the Southern Baptist Convention, the second-largest, declined by 0.4 percent, to 16.1 million members.

This is the third straight year the yearbook has noted a loss in membership for Southern Baptists, which until recently reported decades of uninterrupted growth.

Membership figures reported in the 2011 yearbook were collected by churches in 2009 and reported to the NCC in 2010. The SBC's membership totals are compiled by LifeWay Christian Resources. Churches report vital statistics through Baptist state conventions that are compiled by the denomination's publishing house. Reports for 2010 are being compiled. Typically those numbers come out in April.

Not all faith groups are as intentional about numbers. Historically African-American groups like the 5 million-member National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.; 3.5 million-member National Baptist Convention of America, Inc.; and 2.5 million-member National Missionary Baptist Convention of America, estimate membership instead of doing actual head counts. Each of those groups reported no change last year.

The Progressive National Baptist Convention, by contrast, declined from 2.5 million to just more than 1 million members, due to a new methodology in counting membership. Last year the PNBC was tied for the 11th largest denomination. In the new ranking, it is No. 25.

American Baptist Churches USA, one of a number of mainline churches that has been losing members for a number of years, declined 1.5 percent to 1.3 million members.

Southern Baptists count only professed and baptized believers as members, compared to groups like Catholics who number communicants from infancy. About one-third of Southern Baptists included in the count of total membership are "non-resident" members, who joined a local Baptist church but moved away and never transferred their membership. Southern Baptists don't count inactive members, people who belong to a church but never attend, but only about a third of the total membership is in church on a given Sunday.

Not all charismatic/Pentecostal groups are equally faithful in reporting new data, but from those that do it appears such groups continue to advance. The Assemblies of God, for example, increased a half-percent to more than 2.9 million members.

The yearbook does not count non-denominational churches, which reportedly are the second-largest group of Protestant churches in America and are the fastest growing. (ABP)

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Community is key to churches' ministry to vets, chaplain says

By G. Jeffrey MacDonald

Washington—Some 2 million Americans have served overseas in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001. Now, thousands are coming home each month and trying, sometimes with difficulty, to settle back into civilian life.

Churches are uniquely positioned to help returning veterans adjust and find meaning in their lives away from the battlefield, according to David Thompson, a retired Navy chaplain and co-author of the 2009 book, "Beyond the Yellow Ribbon: Ministering to Returning Combat Veterans."

For two years, he worked as a military family life consultant, helping 8,000 soldiers and their families handle the transition back to civilian life. He said churches need to recognize what they have to offer and rise to the occasion. (Some answers have been edited for length and clarity.)

Where do congregations have something distinctive to offer to veterans who are just now returning home?

It really comes down to meaning-making and wrapping people into a community and a brotherhood. Those are the two pieces that veterans long for.

Why?

Soldiers have been in an experience of being intensely bonded together. They come back to the civilian life and they feel like they've lost their place in life, their community, their brothers and sisters in arms. All of a sudden they're back in a very individualistic society. There's not the same level of care and commitment to one another. That's a real big missing piece.

What else do they crave?

They want to be doing something meaningful with their lives. I had one soldier come back and he said to me, "I'm back in a job at Best Buy. I'm selling big screen TVs to people who really don't need them. Less than a year ago, 20 people depended on me for their lives. I was involved in doing things to help stop violence, I feel like I'm just wasting my life."

Where is our society not doing enough?

We're asking them to come back sometimes to stuff that's pretty boring and pretty deadening. We're not challenging them. We're not saying to them, "Have you thought of the Peace Corps? Have you thought of doing something for the cause

of justice?" There are a lot of things we could hook them in to.

How can churches help veterans who face these kinds of struggles?

We could elevate people to capture a vision of doing something that's meaningful. Then we could assist them in the transition by connecting them with training or with people engaged in certain kinds of work. In that, you become part of a band of brothers working for a great cause.

Why are these circumstances largely unaddressed by organizations that exist to serve veterans?

Sometimes we, in our medical model, are zeroing in on all the people who need a hospital or who need serious mental health interventions, which probably is about 20 percent of the veterans who are coming home. But 80 percent are this other kind of veteran, who really needs to end up getting a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives.

What do returning veterans have to offer congregations?

They've had a lot of responsibility in the armed forces. They show up on time, they're terribly loyal, they don't quit easily. Many of our churches grew as World War II veterans became part of those churches. Many of the churches we have today are standing because of that group that came back and is now in their 80s and 90s. Why not do that with this group?

How can churches reach out to veterans?

The welcome mat has to be out in a way that's saying more than, "Come and receive some help for basic needs." It really needs to be a reciprocal relationship where veterans are giving something to the church, and the church is giving something to them. Then it's a community.

How do churches learn to create environments where people make significant sacrifices together for great causes?

I'd probably start with a small group of people—not just military people, but people in general who are struggling with the deadness of life that doesn't have a lot of meaning and who are frustrated. I'd build a mini-community within the church community of people who want to explore options under this idea of meaning-making and community-building. That might lead to mentoring relationships. And we'd see where that goes. (RNS)



10 Minutes With ... David Thompson

Pentagon: No change for chaplains with 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' repeal

Washington—The pending repeal of the U.S. military's ban on openly gay members will not change policies related to chaplains, the Pentagon stated recently.

"There will be no changes regarding service member exercise of religious beliefs, nor are there any changes to policies concerning the chaplain corps of the military departments and their duties," according to a six-page memo that address implementing the repeal of the "Don't Ask/Don't Tell" policy.

It notes that chaplains will continue to be required to "care for all," and their First Amendment freedoms will remain unchanged.

"When chaplains are engaged in the performance of religious services, they may not be required to engage in practices con-

trary to their religious beliefs," the statement reads.

Last November, the military issued a comprehensive review of the planned repeal and concluded "special attention" should be given to the chaplains corps because of sharp differences on the issue. But that report also concluded existing rules protecting chaplains' First Amendment rights were "adequate" for the ban's repeal.

Officials of some chaplains' organizations have opposed the repeal and questioned whether chaplains who oppose homosexuality will be protected.

The exact effective date of the repeal remains unclear, but President Obama said in his recent State of the Union address it would occur this year. (RNS)

Liberty University seminary leads ranks of prospective chaplains

By Tim Townsend
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Arlington, Va.—According to Air Force data, no training program is more popular among prospective chaplains than Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, part of the late Jerry Falwell's Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va.

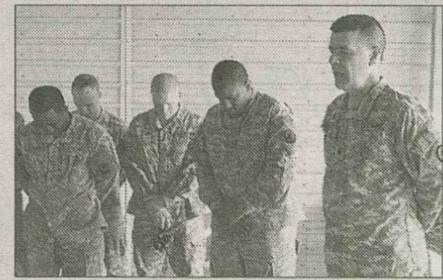
One out of every five Air Force chaplain candidates studying at an evangelical seminary is enrolled at Liberty.

Critics say that high rate of enrollment could add to an imbalance of evangelical Christians among the military's corps of chaplains. And some even within the military have raised questions about the quality of Liberty's program.

Liberty's pairing of evangelical Christianity and patriotism is exemplified during the university's annual Military Emphasis Week. According to the school's website, the highlight of that week is "the patriotic convocation, occurring the Wednesday closest to Veterans Day, featuring patriotic music, veteran testimonies and an inspirational message from a Christian combat veteran."

Liberty is not accredited by the Association of Theological Schools, the national accreditation agency for graduate-level seminaries. Instead, it is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The Department of Defense requires only that seminaries that train chaplain candidates be listed with the American Council on Education, which is not an accrediting body.

Retired Air Force chaplain Charles Davidson is a professor at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary and director of the school's chaplaincy degree program. Davidson launched the program in 2007, taking advantage of a 2004 change in Armed Forces Chaplain Board policy that set training requirements



for the Master's of Divinity at 72 credit hours. Most seminaries require 90 credit hours. Liberty eliminated Greek and Hebrew from the required coursework, meeting the Pentagon's 72-hour level.

Davidson also made the coursework available online, and the combination has resulted in an explosion of interest in the program, growing from two students in 2007 to more than 1,000 today.

"The majority" of those students are Army chaplain candidates, Davidson said. Only about 30 of Liberty's chaplain-track students reside on campus.

Such online degrees are a "concern" for Air Force chaplain leaders, said Col. Steven Keith, commandant of the Air Force Chaplain Corps College in Fort Jackson, S.C.

"We are taking note of that," he said. "Resident seminarians, we feel, are better prepared."

All military chaplains first must have the endorsement of a denomination or other institutional religious body before entering a chaplain-candidate track. Liberty has its own military endorsement arm, Liberty Baptist Fellowship. Davidson is the endorsing agent, and he estimated that the school has endorsed 180 chaplains or chaplain candidates.

"Praise the Lord, 10 or 15 years from now we could have 600, 700, 800 evangelical chaplains sprinkled throughout the military who are Liberty graduates," Davidson said. (RNS)

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A new reality for Egyptian families

People's revolution in Egypt leaves family structures shaken and in flux

By Reed Flannigan
International Mission Board

Cairo, Egypt—The long-running social and political upheaval in Egypt, which toppled the presidency of Hosni Mubarak, also has shaken family structures, one Christian worker said, noting that the resulting uncertainty presents a key evangelism opportunity for the global Christian community.

"I think we are going to see more people becoming more open (to exploring ideas) and a lot of people who are going to be seeking spiritual answers," said Brad Carmichael, a Christian worker who has spent time in Egypt. "I also believe there are going to be a lot of people who will become a lot more dedicated (in their religions), including Islam."

Carmichael said the socioeconomic structure in Egypt—and primarily in the capital city of Cairo—has dramatically shifted Egypt in recent years from being family-centric, often with extended families occupying multiple floors of the same high-rise apartment, to separation and isolation from family members. The result is an uncertainty about how to exist in a shifting culture.

It raises a lot of questions in their minds, Carmichael said.

"Whereas (families being scattered across the U.S.) is common to us," Carmichael said, "that's not common to them. So, in all these new dynamics people are going to look to something to be an anchor. Where they are going to look is unfortunately very limited, so the posture of the church both from within Egypt and without is going to be very important. This is a key time for us. Some are going to (believe they've found) their answer in Islam. But others are going to look elsewhere."

To the Western world the chaos in Egypt and Tunisia may appear to have been a spontaneous event, Carmichael said, but it has been "brewing for some time." The

protests in Egypt particularly, according to The Economist magazine, were not initiated by an uneducated mob but by socially connected, urban professionals and university students with few—if any—future job prospects.

A variety of news sources have reported the causes for widespread protests as being attributed to a housing shortage, shortages of food and high food prices, low wages and limited employment opportunities for a population whose majority (45 million-plus) is 25 years of age or younger (the median age of the United States is 38.6, according to the CIA Factbook).

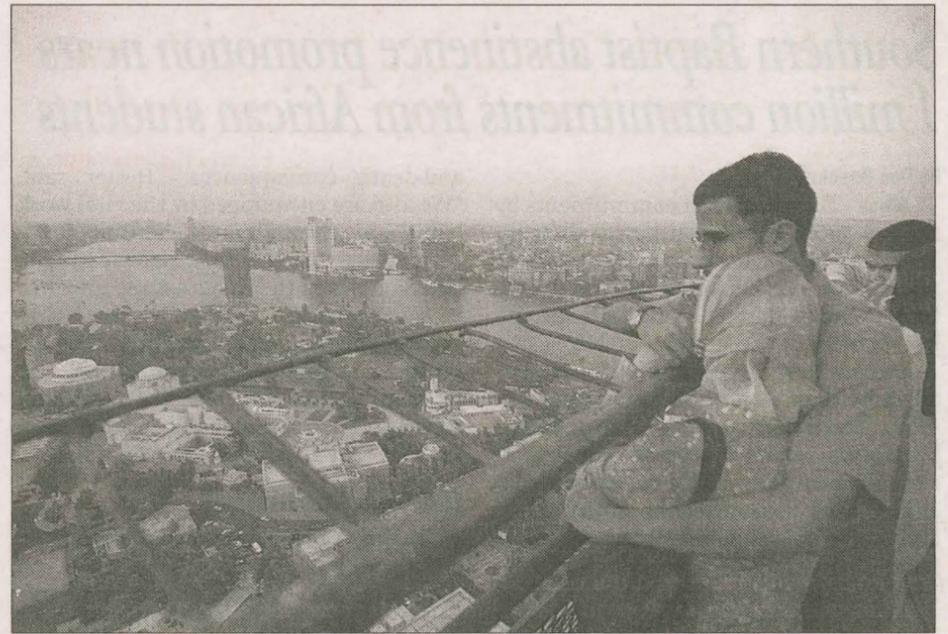
"The perception of people from the outside may be that Egyptians want to get out of their situation," Carmichael said. "That's not true. The majority of Egyptians I know want to stay there. That's where their life is, where their families are. They love Egypt, but they don't know anymore how to make all the pieces fit together."

Problems reshaping the culture

Men in Egyptian culture have the responsibility to provide for their families, beginning with purchasing a home before marriage, but with the shortage of housing and wages hovering around \$100 (U.S.) per month, prospects are dim. The need to generate more income for families has driven more women to the workforce, further reshaping traditional Egyptian culture, especially when children are involved.

Many of the factors that led to demonstrations in Egypt and Tunisia are present in neighboring countries around the region. Long-tenured political leaders are being challenged to change their policies to improve living conditions for people—or get out of office. Although certain of their cause, people have given less thought to what comes next. It leaves many searching, Carmichael noted.

"You see many more women in Cairo



FAMILY CULTURE An Egyptian couple, perhaps reflective of the populace, likely want to remain in Egypt, a Christian worker says, noting, "The majority of Egyptians I know want to stay there. That's where their life is, where their families are. They love Egypt, but they don't know anymore how to make all the pieces fit together."

with their heads covered now than you did before the 1970s," Carmichael said. "Egypt has for a long time been a bit more secular than some of the countries around it and that isn't the case so much anymore. However, the religion they've gravitated toward hasn't been able to completely answer their questions. There is an angst that they feel with all the changes going on."

"At the same time it is a patriarchal culture and forsaking the religion of your father and grandfather brings great shame to yourself and to your family," Carmichael added.

"But you also have this dynamic with the median age being so young. The young are a lot more (willing to listen) because they are globally connected through mobile devices and are exposed to a lot more. We need to look at the family as a unit and hope the patriarchs can be influenced, but it's sad to think that if Egyptians are going to be reached with the gospel it may hap-

pen through the younger generations and it may skip the older ones."

Western church's role

Carmichael said in light of everything that is happening in Egypt and across the region, the Western church must recognize that an opportunity is blossoming that can't be missed.

"Egyptian culture is very segmented in so many ways," he said. "But what we've seen is many of those barriers that were there beginning to crumble as neighbors stood side by side in the streets defending their homes and families. Where once they recognized their neighbors, now they know their neighbors."

"I'm hopeful that the common ground that has been established will create new networks through which the gospel will spread and we as Christians need to be praying for that to happen." (BP)

**Name changed for security reasons*

Egypt's Christians, Muslims alike keep wary eye on Muslim Brotherhood

By Alice Fordham
USA Today

Cairo, Egypt—In Magdi Shnouda's café in Cairo, pictures of Jesus and the saints hang on the shabby walls, and the men playing backgammon and dominoes are a mixture of Christians and Muslims.

Sucking down glasses of sweet tea and strong coffee, they drape arms around one another and talk of how well they get along. They live in a neighborhood dotted with mosques and churches, and grew up like brothers, they say.

Another thing they agree on is the toppling of the regime of Hosni Mubarak, who left office after 17 days of anti-government protests. The country now is being run by the military, which has dissolved a parliament full of Mubarak cronies.

"It's excellent what's happening," said Nasraddin Mustafa, 55, a decorator and friend of Shnouda's. "Christians and Muslims are the same, ... there will now be more safety and more friendship between Christians and Muslims."

The revolutionary solidarity in Shnouda's café was shaken, however, when the subject of the Muslim Brotherhood came up.

"If the brotherhood take control, I will

be the first to leave the country," said Baha al-Rashid, 40, a driver playing backgammon.

The brotherhood, a strictly Islamic political party, is the country's most organized opposition group. Some Christians fear that if it gains more influence, it would impose Shariah, or Islamic law, and forbid them from practicing their faith.

"Neither Christians nor Muslims like them, because they are a group with their own ideas, but the rest of the Muslims are good with Christians," said Eid Ibrahim, 41, also a driver and a Christian.

Egypt has about 8 million Christians, the largest Christian population in the Middle East. Most belong to the Coptic Orthodox church ("Coptic" means "Egyptian"). The faith has been in Egypt for 2,000 years, they say.

The Bible says Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt with the infant Jesus to escape King Herod's decree that baby boys in Bethlehem be killed. Tradition holds that St. Mark brought Christianity to Egypt in the first century. Islam did not arrive until six centuries later.

Christians here have long complained that they are shut out of some government jobs and treated as second-class citizens.

Christians have been targeted by terrorists in attacks that Mubarak's Interior Ministry blamed on "foreign elements." In the largest of many attacks against Christians last year, a car bomb in the northern city of Alexandria killed 21 people in December at a Christmas ceremony.

But during the recent demonstrations in Cairo's Tahrir Square, many Christians joined in, protecting Muslims from police and Mubarak supporters while they prayed. Christian doctors manned some of the first-aid stands, and posters with a crescent moon and a cross proclaimed unity.

At St. Mark's Coptic Orthodox Cathedral Feb. 13, there were christening parties and worshippers caressed babies and chatted. They agreed that a new Egypt is a good thing but that there could be problems ahead.

"In the last year, there (have) been a lot of demonstrations," said David Samuels, 31, a master's student and a Christian, speaking in a bar near the upscale Heliopolis area of Cairo. "They were protesting because of anger and discrimination against them."

Many Christians say they suspect the government was involved in the attacks to keep Egyptians divided.

"When the demonstrations started, I

doubted that what would happen in Tunisia would happen here," Samuels said. "But then I understood that there was real anger and people were talking about being Egyptian, not about being Christians or Muslims, and my Muslim friends were angry that the government was making conflict between Christians and Muslims worse."

Despite the euphoria, he, too, is nervous about the brotherhood.

"I read a lot about the history of the party," he said. "They know there are a lot of bad vibes against them, so they will first try to get to the top of all the syndicates and then come to power, which would be the worst for Christians."

"Christians have been raised on fear, and they are always afraid," he said.

In Shnouda's café, the owner was quiet as his friends chattered about the revolution, about how the political elite who stole all the money had gone, how Egypt was entering a time of more freedom, and how the new government would not try to divide Christians and Muslims as the old one did.

Asked whether he agreed that the government would bring people closer, Shnouda paused. "Come and ask me this question in a year," he said. "We hope it will be better." (RNS)

True Love Waits

Southern Baptist abstinence promotion nears 1 million commitments from African students

By Don Beehler

Africa—The number of commitments by African youth to biblical purity through True Love Waits International stands at more than 959,000 since LifeWay Christian Resources launched its strategic initiative there in the summer of 2007.

During that three-and-a-half-year period, more than 1.6 million young people in Africa heard the True Love Waits message promoting sexual abstinence until marriage. In addition, nearly 46,000 married adults have committed to faithfulness, and more than 41,600 decisions to follow Jesus Christ have been recorded by True Love Waits team members.

From April to October 2010, the total grew by more than 70,000 African youth, according to TLW leaders.

Filipinos make commitments

In the Philippines, which joined True Love Waits International in 2009, nearly 22,000 students signed commitment cards last year after going through training, with plans in place for expanding outreach to Filipino youth between ages 15 to 24 beginning this year.

"We are very close to having 1 million young people in Africa make documented commitments to biblical purity through this initiative, which will be an incredible milestone," said Jimmy Hester, co-founder of True Love Waits.

"In a continent ravaged by AIDS, these African commitments literally have life-

and-death consequences," Hester said. "We also are encouraged by the vital work being done throughout the Philippines."

In Africa, the greatest response to True Love Waits is in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. In November, True Love Waits International South Africa was approved as a registered organization, and ministry partnerships there are growing, reported Sharon Pumpelly, lead consultant for True Love Waits International.

TLW 'bringing salvation'

During a presentation in Zambia, one girl stood and said, "True Love Waits is a good program. We have benefited and our lives have changed for the better. This program is different from our peer-educating programs because it is bringing salvation (in addition to) promoting sexual purity."

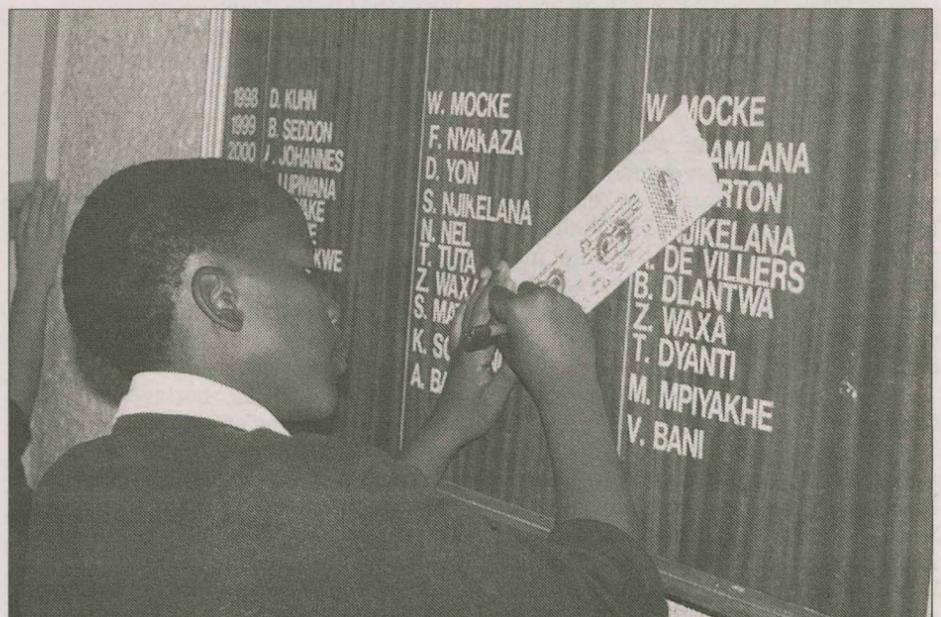
The Zambian girl concluded by making an appeal to True Love Waits team members "to come and train us as presenters."

"There are many more requests and hopefully we will be able to meet those," Pumpelly said. "I believe God is using True Love Waits to reach the next generation for Christ and that He is raising up people who are hungry and passionate for the message of purity."

True Love Waits International currently works in 10 countries throughout eastern and southern Africa and also provides assistance in Namibia, Madagascar and Lesotho. (BP)



COMMITTED TO WAITING ■ Above: Students in East London, South Africa, pose after signing True Love Waits pledge cards. ■ Below: A South African student signs a True Love Waits pledge card. (Photos courtesy of Roxie Shore)



'All my life I've wanted to sing gospel music'

Former student lives out his dream of singing after finding his voice at Oneida

Over the past 28 years, I have seen a lot of students come and go. Many were barely noticed because they went about their daily business and responsibilities with little fanfare. Sadly, many of those students received very little of our attention. The students who seemingly are always in the wrong place at the wrong time consume most of our time, energy and patience.

Some years ago a young man wanted to enroll at our school. "John" (not his real name) was a little older student. He had dropped out of school but quickly discovered that without his diploma, he couldn't find a job. In public school his grades were disappointing and he became easily frustrated. John came from a broken family with limited income and needed a full scholarship.

We were told John loved music, and he especially loved to sing. It didn't take long for John to find his special place at Oneida singing in our choir. He did have a good voice and enjoyed traveling with the school choir on Sundays to the various churches that invited our choir.

In spite of his love for music and being in our choir, not long after he enrolled he got into some trouble and was asked to leave. Two months later, with a repentant heart and eager to get his diploma, he asked to return. I remember John as a well-mannered young man who wanted to please, but did find some of our rules a little challenging as an older student.

John still struggled academically, even with the help of our tutoring lab. Being an older student made it a little difficult for John to feel

comfortable in the lab, but he knew the people there desperately wanted to help him.

Recently I received a letter from John telling me how he was doing and thanking me for the "paddlings" I gave him when I was his houseparent. He still loves his music, and here is part of what he wrote in his letter: "All my life I've wanted to sing gospel music and I have. Learning to sing in the Oneida choir was a very 'big help' as well.

This is Oneida



W.F. Underwood

"Since leaving OBI I've been in two singing groups. ... God has been so good to me ever since I found Him as my Lord and Savior at Oneida. ... I now play the piano and lead in worship. ... I've been wanting to come back to OBI to visit, but every time I make plans, something comes up.

"What an honor from God it was to go to school at OBI. Not only going to school but working, singing and everything else. I thank God every day for Oneida. ... I don't know where my life would be if it weren't for Oneida. Oneida pointed me in the right direction."

Many of the teens we work with come from broken homes and often have had little or no male role modeling. They frequently struggle academically, so a diploma may seem to be out of reach. We don't claim to be successful with all of our students, and we are painfully aware of our failings. But I must confess that it is rewarding to hear of those like John who have been able to find some success and satisfaction in life, in large part as a result of their Oneida experiences.

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

Clear Creek Days

Series of events offer CCBBC students practical training

One of the greatest experiences of a Clear Creek education is our focus on practical ministry training. One of the ways we provide these opportunities is through events called Clear Creek Days that take place in local associations across the state and even in some neighboring states.

Sometimes I get to travel with our students to these events. Recently I was involved in the Clear Creek Days hosted by Greenup Baptist Association where Harold Cathey is the director of missions. Dicky Tiller, pastor of Liberty Missionary Baptist Church, coordinated the event. There were 15 churches in Greenup Association that participated in the event. The churches and the pastors opened their pulpits to our students and allowed them to have a Sunday morning service where they shared a little about Clear Creek and then preached.

Greenup Association recently constructed a beautiful multi-purpose facility which they used to host our team. They provided sleeping quarters for Saturday night and the WMU provided a wonderful meal in the facility after everyone had completed their preaching as-

signments on Sunday.

These events always are exciting. I enjoy watching and listening to our students as they talk with each other about the messages they are going to preach the next day and the opportunities God will give them to minister to people.

Some of the pastors in the association met with us on Saturday night for a time of devotion and prayer. We were privileged to have Floyd Paris, president of our Kentucky Baptist Convention, speak to the students. He shared about the importance of their Bible college training and how God was laying a foundation of ministry preparation in their lives.

Paris challenged them not to get complacent about what God had called them to do. I also enjoyed watching some of the other pastors spend time with our students and sharing words of wisdom with them.

We already are looking forward to our next Clear Creek Days which will be held in Union Baptist Association where Norman Workman is the director of missions.

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

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

By Piet Levy

With a smooth voice, a signature mop of hair and a string of hits, Justin Bieber has accumulated millions of fans and sold 3.7 million albums in the United States last year.

Now Bieber's handlers are showcasing another side of the 16-year-old pop sensation: Christian icon for the tween set.

Bieber's faith is on display in the new 3-D concert film/documentary "Justin Bieber: Never Say Never," which is in theaters now. Paramount Pictures screened

the movie for faith leaders across the country and distributed spiritual discussion guides—the same tools used to promote "The Passion of the Christ" and "The Blind Side" as family-friendly fare.

"People will walk away (from the movie) knowing faith is very important to him," said Scooter Braun, Bieber's manager and one of the film's producers. "As a Christian, he's someone to look up to."

Bieber never has shied away from faith. He was singing Christian songs on YouTube before he became famous. His born-again Christian mother Pattie Mallette has shared her spiritual conversion on a Chris-

tian TV show and openly shares her beliefs and Bible verses with Twitter followers.

Bieber's come-from-nowhere climb to become the fourth top-selling artist of 2010 has given a higher profile to his Christian beliefs and background, which he also addressed in last fall's autobiography, "First Step 2 Forever: My Story."

"I believe that Jesus died on a cross for my sins," Bieber told Billboard last November. "He's the reason that I'm here."

On his recent single "Pray," a departure from his typical pop oeuvre, Bieber sings, "I close my eyes and pray, I close my eyes and I can see a better day." The music video, seen more than 21 million times on YouTube, ends with the written message, "God speaks in the silence of the heart. Listening is the beginning of prayer."

In the new film, fans will see Bieber expressing his faith—several scenes show Bieber praying before concerts, and Mallette discusses how God brought stability to her life as a single teenage mother.

Paramount's spiritual resource guide suggests the movie "provides an opportunity to teach our children about the power of hope, prayer, faith and family." It lists discussion points and Bible verses related to the movie, such as "the power of prayer" and "the importance of godly friendships."

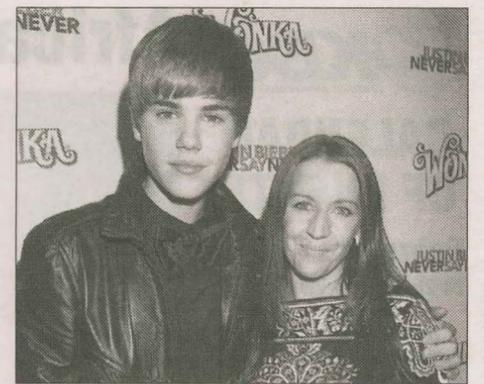
David Tai, one of the pastors at the Christian Assembly of Suburban Chicago in Carol Stream, Ill., said after a recent screening that while the film's faith message is subtle, he might use the movie as an illustration to discuss "how authority and responsibility go hand in hand."

Diane Winston, a scholar in media and religion at the University of Southern California, said its "perfectly natural" for Paramount to market "Never Say Never" to spiritual leaders.

"Many (Christians) might not have known Justin Bieber was one of them," she said. This campaign "reminds them (the movie) is a wholesome product they can take a child to see."

It's also not unusual for teen pop stars to use "the language of faith to widen their audience and project a clean pop image," Winston said, citing Miley Cyrus and the Jonas Brothers as examples.

"For young stars, particularly in those



MOTHER & SON Paramount Pictures is promoting teen pop star Justin Bieber's new film, "Justin Bieber: Never Say Never," to pastors and faith-based groups. Bieber was raised by his mother, Pattie Mallette (seen here), a born-again Christian. (Photo courtesy of Dave Allocca/Paramount Pictures)

murky young teenage years, it's a quick, reliable way to show parents you are not going to be offering a sexually explicit message," Winston said.

While Braun said the movie may earn Bieber more Christian fans, he dismissed the idea that Bieber's faith is being used as a marketing tool.

"There are some stars who speak their faith because they're trying to do outreach to that audience, and there are others who share that side of their lives because that's who they are," Braun said, "and I think that's just who Justin is."

"When there are 20,000 people chanting your name night after night after night, if there's no sense of faith, if there's not a sense of something bigger than yourself, you can get lost."

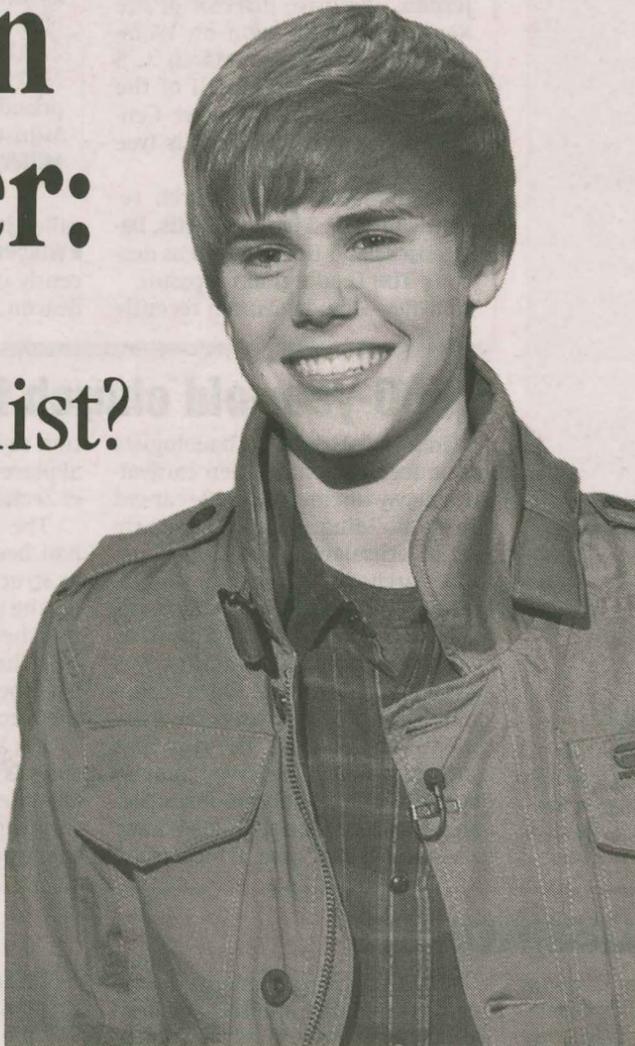
Winston said one potential setback to Bieber promoting his Christianity is that he may be held to a higher moral standard; Cyrus' wholesome image, for example, took a beating after a pole dancing episode at a 2009 awards show.

Braun, for one, isn't worried.

"There's going to be mistakes I'm sure (he will) make as a young man, like we all make," Braun said. "But overall he has a really good heart and he's a very intelligent kid. ... For him it's about living his life to be the best example he can be." (RNS)

Justin Bieber: Tween evangelist?

New film paints teen pop star as Christian role model



Haiti in desperate need of help

Earthquake-ravaged nation needs long-term investments of time

I always have been told that when you visit Africa, "you always leave a part of your heart there." Having been several times, I must say I agree, but the saying is not just limited to the continent of Africa.

Through missions partnerships and adoptions, God has blessed me by allowing me to visit many countries over the past 15 years. I honestly would say that as a believer, I think a part of our heart stays in all places we visit.

Just today, I returned from Haiti where we as Crossings are considering a missions partnership. During my visit, each day was packed from sun up to sun down.

Some days were much longer with visits to various church groups, villages, orphanages and other ministries that all share a common bond: Haiti is in desperate need of help. Help not just because of the earthquake last year, but because of a long history of political corruption, poverty, Voodoo activity and the overall effects of a country living with the consequences of sin.

During trips such as this one, I try to guard myself against seeing needs and

then thinking of what we can do to meet them. I know that may sound wrong, but Haiti needs long-term commitments alongside short-term action.

Most importantly, Haiti is in desperate need of the gospel at all levels, and such change simply will not happen overnight, nor will it happen due to the investment of funds—not even funding that comes from the "church."

We simply cannot just send money to solve the immediate physical crisis. We must make efforts to provide for immediate physical needs and, at the same time, make the commitment of a long-term investment of time to help solve the generational problems that are so ingrained in the culture.

I am not sure at this point about how the Lord will lead Crossings to be involved with Haiti, but I am certain that a part of my heart has been left there—and I know the Melbers will return.

Ky. Baptist Assemblies



David Melber

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

Child abuse prevention awareness

Abused kids all across Kentucky need churches' help to ease pain

Police found 3-year-old Hannah living in horrible conditions when they arrived at her home to arrest her father. The little girl weighed 19 pounds, was wrapped in a dirty blanket and had not been bathed in some time. An investigation also determined the toddler had been sexually abused.

Hannah was removed from the home and placed in a loving Sunrise foster home and later was adopted by her foster parents. She's now a healthy young girl with a bright future.

Hannah's was a life saved, but there are countless other children in Kentucky who still suffer from abuse and neglect. A report last year cited Kentucky as leading the nation in the number of deaths attributed to child abuse. That's not a statistic Kentucky Baptists can be proud of, but one that should stir them to action. We no longer can sit idly by as the children in our state live in fear, pain, hunger and distress because of abuse and neglect.

Sunrise Children's Services exists to help children like Hannah, by providing a safe, loving and supportive environment

for them. We also work to raise awareness about child abuse and neglect. We'd like to invite Kentucky churches to join us as we prepare for Child Abuse Prevention Month in April.

There are many ways your church can get involved, including:

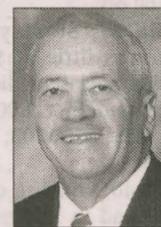
- Praying for the thousands of children who are abused and neglected every year in Kentucky.
- Decorating the pews of your church with blue bows or hand out blue ribbons one Sunday in April to raise awareness and invite a Sunrise representative to provide a sermon.
- Organizing a group volunteer activity at one of Sunrise's residential programs.
- Taking part in a Thanksgiving Children's Offering for Sunrise.
- Using child abuse prevention bulletin inserts from Sunrise.

Hurting children need to know they haven't been forgotten, and who better to speak out for them than the church?

For more info on how your church can join with Sunrise during Child Abuse Prevention Month, call (502) 538-1046 or visit our website at www.Sunrise.org.

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



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

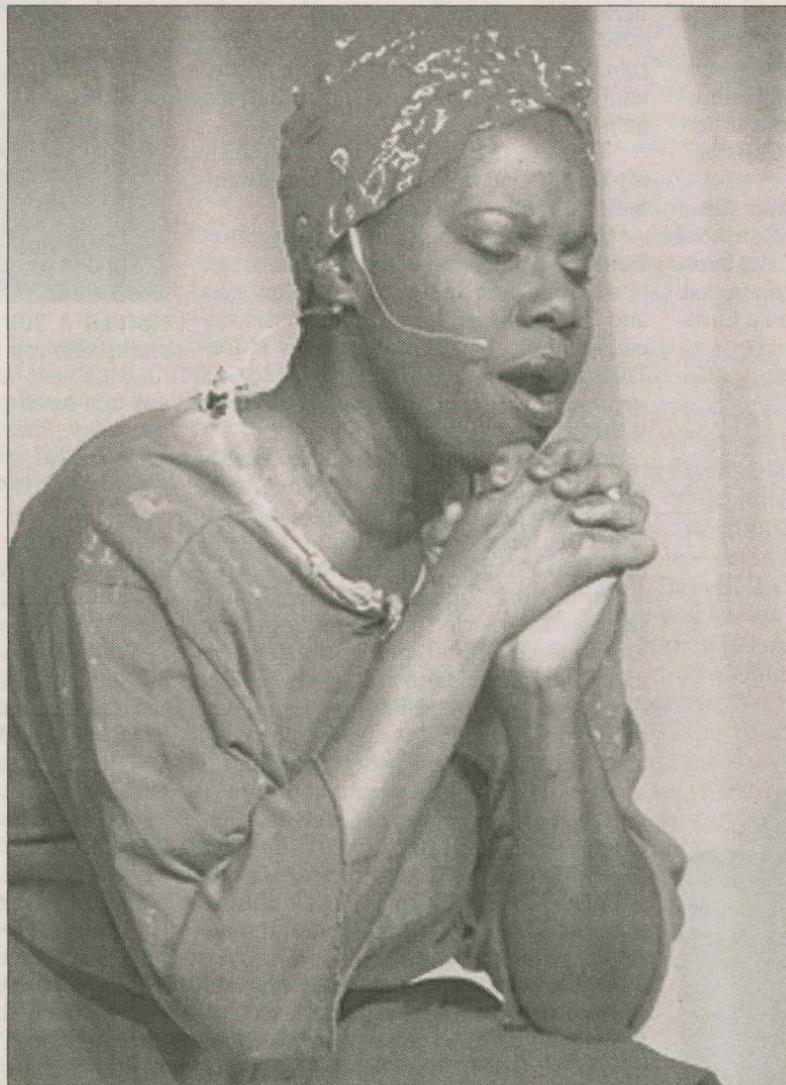
February

- 24-26 Basic Training Journey for Church Planters, Kentucky Baptist Building, Louisville.
- 28-3/1 Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference, Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.

March

- 1 Kentucky Baptist Evangelism Conference Women's Emphasis, Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.
- 3 Growing Ministries Tour, Northside Baptist Church, Mount Vernon.
- 4-5 Creative Ministries Festival, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.
- 5 All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra Auditions, Central Baptist Church, Corbin; First Baptist Church, Walton; Lewis Lane Baptist Church, Owensboro; Mount Zion Baptist Church, Paducah; Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.
- 5 Vacation Bible School Clinic—West, Edgewood Baptist Church, Hopkinsville.
- 8 Growing Ministries Tour, Crittenden Baptist Church.
- 10 Developing Multi-Housing Ministries That Last, Crestwood Baptist Church.
- 10 Growing Ministries Tour, First Baptist Church, Whitesburg.
- 11 Developing Multi-Housing Ministries That Last, West Union Baptist Association, Paducah.
- 12 All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra Auditions, First Baptist Church, Mount Sterling; First Baptist Church, Scottsville; First Baptist Church, Walton; Lewis Lane Baptist Church, Owensboro; Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah; Parkland Baptist Church, Louisville; Rose Hill Baptist Church, Ashland.
- 12 Disaster Relief Regional Training, May's Lick Baptist Church.
- 12 Region 8 RA Congress and Rally, First Baptist Church, Russell.
- 12 Vacation Bible School Clinic—East, Porter Memorial Baptist Church, Lexington.
- 15 Growing Ministries Tour, Horse Cave Baptist Church.
- 15 Understanding Other Beliefs, Oldham-Trimble Baptist Association, Crestwood.

African-American history



Sherre Miller Bishop, a Christian dramatist, speaker and writer from Nashville, Tenn., prays during one of her monologues at Campbellsville University Feb. 15. Bishop gave a history of African-Americans, sang various spirituals, spoke of African-American traditions and discussed how God helps everyone. (Photo by Munkh-Amgalan Galsanjamts/Campbellsville University)

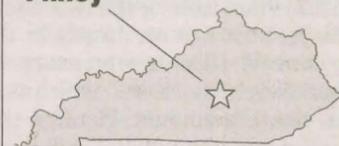
MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

- **BUCKNER**—Buckner Church recently called **Jacob Guinn** as youth minister. **Lynn Traylor** is pastor.
- **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Saloma Church will host Illinois missionary **David Akers** as guest speaker Feb. 27, 11 a.m. **John Chowning** is pastor. Campbellsville University's Kentucky Heartland Institute on Public Policy will host **Eleanor Jordan**, executive director of the Kentucky Commission on Women, as guest speaker March 1, 5 p.m., in the banquet hall of the Badgett Academic Support Center on campus. The event is free and open to the public.
- **MORGANFIELD**—First Church recently ordained **Jeremy Curtis, David Hicks** and **Heath Lovell** as deacons. **Tim Leadingham** is pastor.
- **ONEIDA**—Oneida Church recently

Spotlight on ...

Finley



Mount Gilboa Church will hold revival services March 27, 11 a.m. & 4 p.m.; March 28-29, 7 p.m., with **Ray Pritchard**, president of Keep Believing Ministries, as evangelist. **Fred Miller** is pastor.

called **John Routh** as pastor. ■ **WINCHESTER**—Ephesus Church recently ordained **Josh Lowery** as a deacon. **Todd Rader** is pastor.

1,500-year-old church found in Israel

Jerusalem—Israeli archaeologists announced they have been excavating a newly uncovered 1,500-year-old church building in the hills southwest of Jerusalem.

Researchers at the site initially thought the building, which sits on an uninhabited hill not far from an Israeli farming community, was a synagogue, until the dig revealed stones carved with crosses, the Associated Press reported. The ruin also contained a well-preserved mosaic floor with images of lions, foxes, fish and peacocks. Stone steps lead down to a small burial cave, which tradi-

tion says might have been the burial place of the Old Testament prophet Zechariah.

The Byzantine church building had been erected on top of another structure, dating 500 years earlier, the AP reported. Underneath researchers found a network of tunnels they believe were used by Jewish rebels fighting Roman armies in the second century A.D.

Because officials discovered thieves were plundering the ruins, the site will be buried again until funding is obtained to open it as a tourist site, the AP said. (BP)

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FOR SALE: Seventeen 15-foot solid oak pews. Contact Rodney Vincent at First Baptist Church, Bowling Green, (270) 842-0331; or by e-mail: rvincent@firstbaptistbg.org.

OPPORTUNITY: Start your own newspaper for as little as \$3,500. Includes website, social media, hosting for first year, and first 1,000 10-page newspapers. (859) 559-3703; www.Save4Missions.com.

SEEKING: Paid summer camp staff coordinators and a camp director, starting on or about June 1 and ending July 29, 2011. Must be 18 or older with a Baptist background. If you are interested, call Boone's Creek Baptist Association, Winchester, Ky., at (859) 744-0037 for an application.

SEEKING: Part-time accounting/circulation assistant for the Western Recorder. Must have a background in bookkeeping/accounting; knowledge of Peachtree Accounting and office experience are pluses. Contact Tom Townsend at 502-489-3428 or send resumé to Tom.Townsend@WesternRecorder.org.

SEEKING: Senior pastor for Glasgow Baptist Church. Prefer 10 years experience and seminary degree. Lead both contemporary and traditional services. Send resumé to Jesse R. Brown, 107 Karakal Drive, Glasgow, KY 42141.

SEEKING: Full-time director of administrative services for large, growing church (First Baptist Church, Richmond, Ky.) Successful candidate will have experience in supervision, human resources and finances, with a strong calling to work in this area of ministry. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, First Baptist Church, 425 Eastern Bypass, Richmond, KY 40475; or e-mail: fbcresumes@firstbaptistnet.com.

SEEKING: Hosparus chaplain. Part-time opening to cover Bowling Green and surrounding area. Responsible for meeting the spiritual needs of patients and families. Chaplain participates in on-call services in regards to assisting at the time of death of a patient and giving support to family members. Requirements: masters degree in divinity and a minimum of two clinical pastoral education units. Submit resumé to hrdept@hospices.org; or fax: (502) 719-4213.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music and worship to serve the church by developing, coordinating and administering an effective and well-rounded music ministry program, and providing leadership to and supervision of staff members and volunteers involved in this ministry. Contact Central Baptist Church, 829 High St., Paris, KY 40361; or e-mail to slrcbc@bellsouth.net; or call (859) 987-3951.

SEEKING: Exciting, passionate leader to direct children's ministry and oversee daily activities of family life center. Must have vision and desire to share the love of Christ with children and families through God-given spiritual gifts. Experience preferred, college degree a plus. Please send cover letter and resumé to: Search Committee, Marion Baptist Church, PO Box 384, Marion, KY 40264; or e-mail to: searchcommittee@marionbaptistchurch.com.

SEEKING: Full-time associate pastor of education and discipleship at First Baptist, Owensboro (www.fbcowb.org), a downtown, multi-generational church. FBC is strongly mission-minded and a leading support of the Cooperative Program in Kentucky. The associate pastor for education and discipleship will be responsible for all aspects of adult education, discipleship, outreach, leadership development, assimilation of new members, and will assist the pastor with pastoral care. Send resumé to: resume@fbcowb.org; or PO Box 904, Owensboro, KY 42302.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor of students for Zion Baptist Church in Henderson. Candidate must have 5 years leadership experience, be visionary in student ministries, a team player, highly relational with students and families, and passionate about reaching youth and families for Christ. Responsible for development and leadership of all student ministries, middle school through collegiate. Resumé should be sent to Zion Baptist Church, 8158 Hwy. 351, Henderson, KY 42420; or e-mail to general@zionbaptist.org. For more information, visit www.zionbaptist.org.

SEEKING: Full-time youth pastor for Crowfield Baptist Church, Goose Creek, S.C. Minimum 5 years paid youth ministry experience. Mail resumé to: CBC Youth Pastor Search Team, 100 Hunters Lane, Goose Creek, SC 29445; or e-mail to: dcoleman@crowfieldbaptist.org.

SEEKING: Highly motivated and called student minister to lead outstanding youth group at Lewisport Baptist Church. For more information, contact Bob White at (270) 295-3322; or lewisportbaptist@tds.net. Please submit resumé by Feb. 28, 2011.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music who will be responsible for planning weekly worship services, working with the adult choir and all instrumentalists, and overseeing the entire music ministry of the church. Contact Pastor Rodney Bice at Bardwell Baptist Church, (270) 628-3645; or bbcpastor1@windstream.net.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth, children and families. Woodburn Baptist Church is a growing, medium-sized, multi-generational and multi-site SBC church. Proven strengths in leadership and administrative management skills are essential. Previous successful experience in local children and student ministries, and an applicable bachelor's degree are required. Pursuit of a seminary degree is preferred. A detailed job description may be found on our website: www.woodburnbaptist.org. Submit a cover letter and resumé via e-mail to: personnel@woodburnbaptist.org; or by mail to Woodburn Baptist Church, PO Box 38, Woodburn, KY 42170, Attn: Personnel Committee.

Have you lost your love for Jesus?

By David Jeremiah

While the loss of love is a disheartening experience in any area of life, there is one area in which the consequences are most serious: when we lose our spiritual love for the things of God. Without diligence, the fire of love that burned brightly when we first met Jesus Christ can begin to fade and provide lesser and lesser amounts of light in this world.

There is no greater love than the love we have for Christ. But, regardless of the object, love is love. The way we leave our love—whether love for Christ, the scriptures, prayer, our family, or our ministry—is the same in every case.

■ **We leave by lusting.** If we do not guard against the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life (1 John 2:16), we can leave the things of Christ in pursuit of the things of this world. Money, position, power, influence, possessions—these are powerful enticements for one who has not maintained a close walk with Jesus.

■ **We leave by lack of attention.** It stands to reason that what we ignore, we will eventually care little about. If we ignore the Bible, our spouse, our responsibilities as a parent, our life in the church, it will only be a matter of time before we find little or no love for those parts of our life. It takes years for a woodwind or brass instrument player to develop the embouchure in his mouth and lips that allows him to produce beautiful music. But it only takes a few weeks of inattention to the instrument for it to be lost.

■ **We leave by lack of perseverance.** The greatest myth about sacrificial, heart-based love is that it is easy. The truth is, nothing could be harder because true love is the op-

posite of human nature. Love takes work, diligence and perseverance. It's easy to sleep in instead of rising to pray and read the Bible, and easier to take a spouse for granted than to practice acts of kindness. And it's easy not to take up our cross and follow Jesus as His disciples when the way gets hard.

■ **We leave by laziness.** Sometimes it's not temptation or trials or time or the world—it's just us! We can easily go through life as a couch potato, surfing the channels on TV or surfing the web on our computer. We can while away an hour, a half day, a weekend ... we can while away a lifetime by living an unfocused, self-centered, lazy life. It's human nature to do so, and the quicker we recognize that pattern and correct it, the sooner we'll find love returning.

■ **We leave by lapsing.** Finally, we can leave our love by lapsing into sin—and staying there. We're going to sin in this life. But if we don't confess and repent of our sin when it happens, we are opening up the door for that sin to become a lifestyle. Jesus told the church at Ephesus that unless they repented, He would remove the lampstand—the light of His presence—from their midst (Revelation 2:5).

How to keep your love

The way we rekindle and keep our love for Jesus and others is by reversing what we did to lose it. In short, stay close to and focused on serving those you should love. Rekindling the flame of love for Jesus will cause that flame to spread and burn brightly for everyone and everything in your life. (BP)

David Jeremiah is the founder and host of Turning Point for God and senior pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church in El Cajon, Calif.

The real bottom line of money decisions

By Chuck Bentley

I once met a man who told me he could increase the "velocity" of my money. I told him I didn't get it. He said he thought it was over my head. Turns out, he didn't get it either—his investment company crashed and burned less than two years after our dialogue.

In man's economy, financial advisors and experts can lead you through any financial need you face; but regardless of their expertise, their wisdom is no substitute for the wisdom of God. When we transfer our hopes to God and His economy, we are to turn first to the Lord and seek His wisdom for all issues, including financial decisions.

Paul warned that in the body of Christ we are not to have any "gurus," even if they are very capable Christ followers. When he learned that some in Corinth were followers of Apollos, some were followers of Peter, and others were claiming to be his followers, it was time to step in.

He broke through this tendency of man to become reliant upon man with this reminder of Isaiah's prophecy: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate" (1 Corin-

thians 1:19). In other words, no matter how wise or intelligent your "gurus" are, they do not compare to the wisdom of God.

For emphasis, Paul gave us a measure of just how ridiculous it is to fall prey to this form of misplaced dependency by saying that God's foolishness (imagining there is such a thing) is wiser than man's wisdom. (See 1 Corinthians 1:25.) In other words, it is a bad mistake to place your dependency for wisdom on any source other than God Himself.

The system we live in tells us to place confidence in money or those who give us assistance with our financial problems. That is why it is so important that we avoid seeing the solution to our financial problems as money or people. Money does not solve financial problems, nor do people. God is the solution to all financial problems, and thus He wants us to place our total confidence and dependency in Him.

The real bottom line to the issue of money is not how successful you are at making it or managing it, it is this: Who provided it? And Who do you turn to for wisdom about it?

Chuck Bentley is CEO of Crown Financial Ministries.

For Heaven's Sake



Mike Morgan

Preacher's Kids



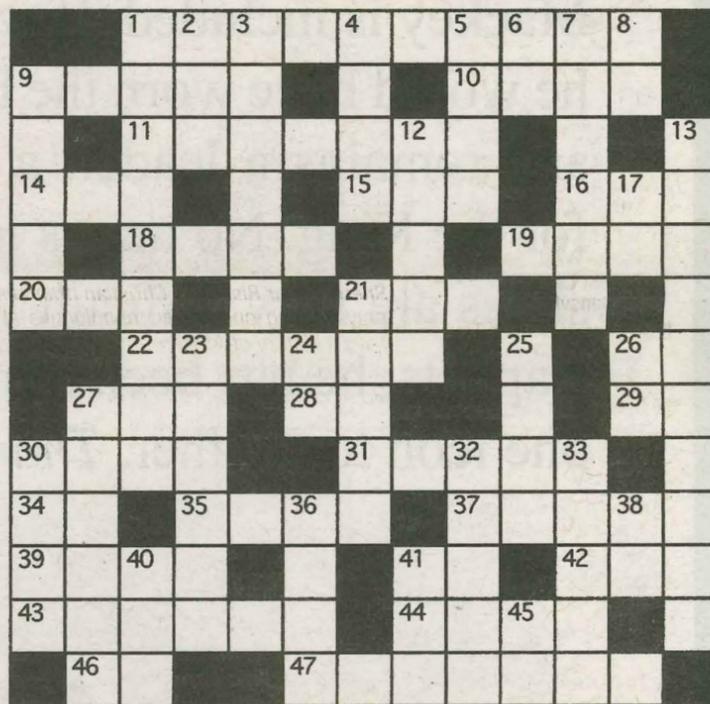
David Ayers

Bible Crosswords

By Kenda Turner

Across

- 1 "Being justified freely by his grace through the ____ that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24)
- 9 "I will sift the house of Israel ... like as corn is sifted in a ____" (Amos 9:9)
- 10 Annoy
- 11 "Jesus said ... 'If thou canst ____, all things are possible to him that believeth'" (Mark 9:23)
- 14 "I ____ no pleasant bread" (Daniel 10:3)
- 15 "____ the knot" (get married) 16 7, Romans num.
- 18 "Man shall not ____ by bread alone" (Matthew 4:4)
- 19 Fervor
- 20 Delegate, abbr.
- 21 A swine
- 22 Jacob
- 26 Fifth letter of Hebrew alphabet
- 27 Fruit of the Spirit
- 28 Undergraduate degree
- 29 Southern state, abbr.
- 30 James and John, to Zebedee
- 31 One of two faithful spies sent to search Canaan
- 34 A preposition, meaning to the same degree
- 35 Biblical weed
- 37 Weird
- 39 What Boaz plucked off to signify redeeming Ruth
- 41 Southern continent, abbr.
- 42 Possessive pronoun



- 43 One of four seasons
- 44 Roman poet
- 46 Support group for alcoholics, abbr.
- 47 Sect of Jews during time of Christ

Down

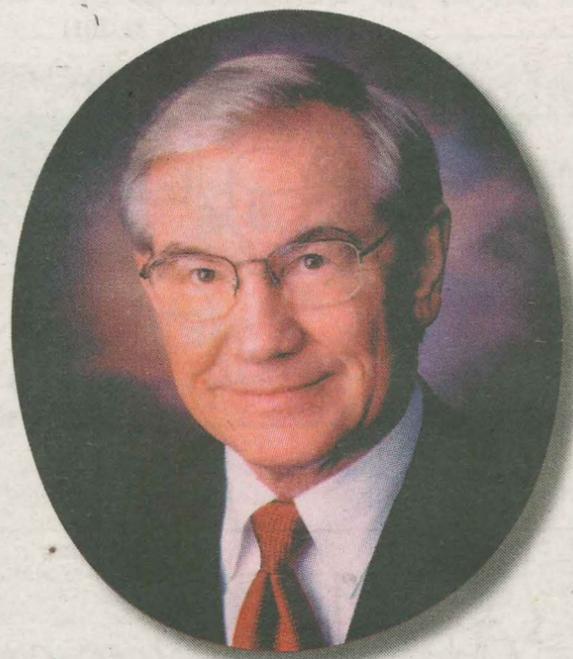
- 1 "For ____ is as the sin of witchcraft" (1 Samuel 15:23)
- 2 The first woman
- 3 "Lead us not into temptation; but ____ us from evil" (Luke 11:4)
- 4 Come together
- 5 "____ of knowledge of good and evil" (Genesis 2:9)
- 6 2, Romans num.
- 7 Mount of ____
- 8 Compass point
- 9 "____ in awe, and sin not" (Psalm 4:4)
- 12 Active of watching
- 13 "He said, 'I am the voice of one crying in the ____'" (John 1:23)
- 17 Its capital is Des Moines, abbr.

- 21 "And the ____ of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7)
- 23 An orderly way of getting things done
- 24 Stomach muscle, for short
- 25 "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you ____" (John 8:32)
- 26 Exclamation of amusement
- 27 One of two faithful spies sent to search Canaan
- 30 What disrespectful children do
- 32 "Therefore shall a man ____ his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife" (Genesis 2:24)
- 33 "And the Spirit and the ____ say, 'Come'" (Revelation 22:17)
- 36 Unusual
- 38 Pronoun
- 40 Suffix for a growth
- 41 International signal of distress
- 45 Opposite of out

Last week's solution

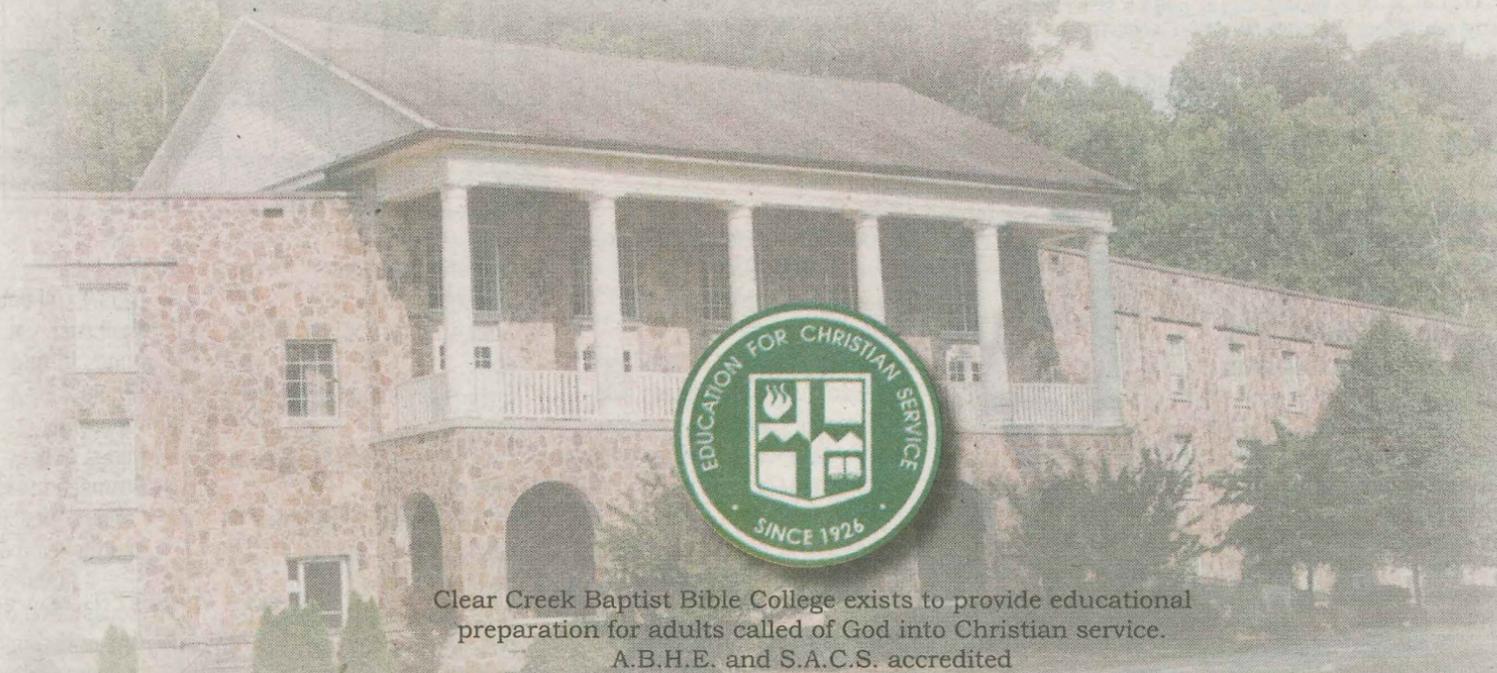


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Thank You Dr. Bill Mackey

In the purest sense of the word, an icon is not a bad thing; it is simply a representation, an image, or a piece that reminds us of the whole. The name of the Kentucky Baptist Convention brings icons to mind, snapshots on a picture board that do not just represent our convention – they are our convention. The Bible is one of those images. The Disaster Relief van is another. We like to think the stone buildings at Clear Creek would be included. We are sure Dr. Bill Mackey is included. If we awarded the title of “Mr. Kentucky Baptist,” he would have worn the banner for thirteen years. Bill Mackey has been and remains a leader, a spokesman, a statesman, and an ambassador for the King. No one is irreplaceable in God’s work on earth, but some shoes are very difficult to fill. As he has been a friend to all Kentucky Baptists, he has been a friend to Clear Creek. We just want to say, from one icon to another, *Thank You*.



Clear Creek Baptist Bible College exists to provide educational preparation for adults called of God into Christian service.
A.B.H.E. and S.A.C.S. accredited

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.cbbbc.edu

E-Mail: cebhc@cebhc.edu

Clear Creek is an institution of the Kentucky Baptist Convention