

WESTERN Recorder

February 7, 2012

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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Poll: Churches meeting in public schools OK with most Americans

Nashville, Tenn.—Two-thirds of Americans believe public schools should rent space to churches and other community groups, according to a new study by LifeWay Research.

The study comes as a Feb. 12 deadline banning the use of New York City schools by churches approaches. Up to 160 congregations that have used school buildings for worship services in the last year will be directly affected by the ban. It will be the only major city in the U.S. with such a policy.

The study found that 65 percent of those surveyed agreed with the statement, "Public schools should rent to churches and other community groups," while 16 percent responded that schools "should rent to other community groups but not churches." Additionally, 12 percent believe "public schools should not rent to churches."
□ See LifeWay survey ... Page 2

'American Idol' contestant wants to live life with

No Regrets

By Robin Bass

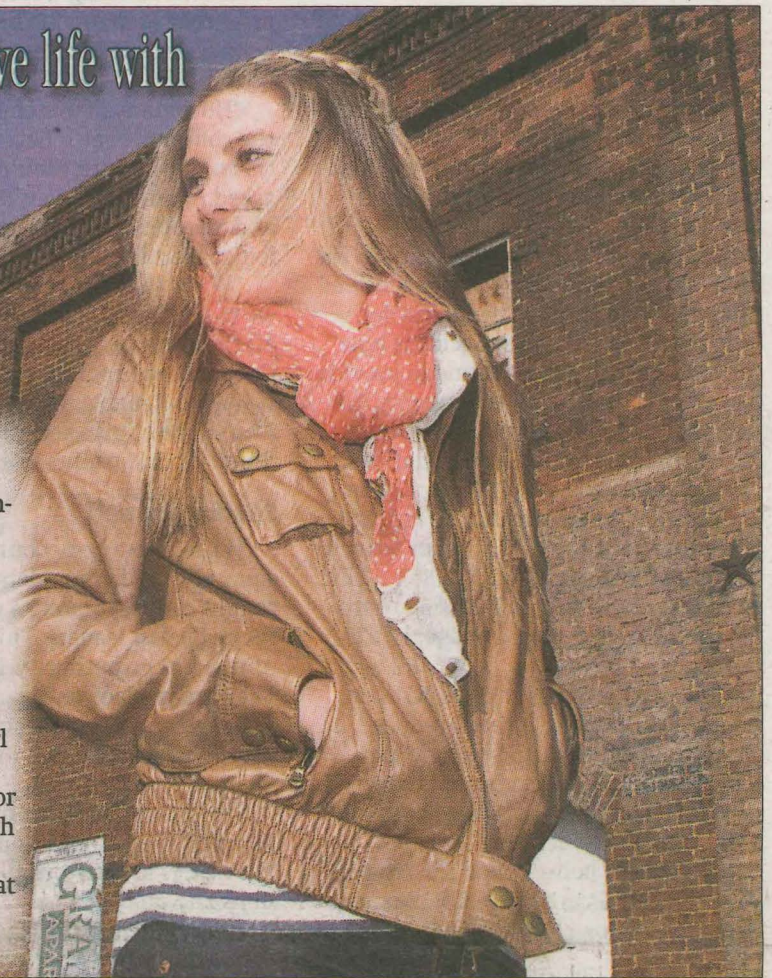
Winchester—Randy Jackson compared her to soulful country artist Jennifer Nettles of Sugarland. Jennifer Lopez broadly smiled and rubbed the goosebumps on her arms. Steven Tyler had to most to say to the "American Idol" contestant from Winchester.

"That was beautiful. You had so much passion, so much passion behind the notes. And the notes were so on," the Aerosmith frontman said. "Nice little audition there, girl."

That girl was 25-year-old Lauren Mink, a small-town girl with a big voice—and an even bigger smile. Mink, a former Georgetown College student, works as the program director for STRIDE, a therapeutic recreation program for adults with intellectual disabilities located in her hometown.

"I call what I do 'rockin' country,'" Mink said, adding that she tries to follow in the vocal footsteps of singers Carrie

□ See No Regrets ... Page 6



Kentucky Baptists involved in liquor-sale battles

By Ken Walker

Corbin—With residents deciding on Valentine's Day whether to expand liquor's presence in Corbin, Chad Fugitt said those who are speaking out against the measure are rooting their opposition in love.

"Our side is trying to do this in a loving way," said the pastor of Central Baptist Church, who is chairman of Concerned Citizens for Corbin. "We're not trying to do this in a bitter way."

"We don't want to win the battle and lose the war. We want people to know we love our community. We're saying this is not good for our community."

Corbin is one of four cities along or close to Interstate 75 in southern Kentucky facing alcohol-related referendums over the next six weeks.

Voters in Barbourville go to the polls on Feb. 7. They will be followed a week later by residents of Corbin, then on March 6 in London and March 20 in Williamsburg.

Votes could be looming in two other areas, too:

■ A Lexington TV station reported recently that business interests are

circulating petitions to call for a vote on packaged liquor stores in Pineville.

■ According to Randy McPheron, director of missions for Rockcastle Baptist Association, a petition to legalize all types of alcohol sales in Rockcastle County was filed Jan. 27.

If the county clerk certifies that the petition has enough valid signatures, a referendum would follow between March 30 and May 22, McPheron said.

Dozens of Kentucky Baptists are involved in efforts to combat these "wet" forces by participating in citizens' committees, helping with voter education drives, or working on publicity, including social-media campaigns.

Don Cole, executive director of the Kentucky League on Alcohol and Gambling Problems, said he sees the upcoming initiatives as part of a coordinated statewide effort.



FIGHTING BACK Williamsburg residents hear from Don Cole (right), executive director of the Kentucky League on Alcohol and Gambling Problems, at a recent meeting of the Citizens Against the Sale of Alcohol. (Photo by Mark White/Corbin News Journal)

On the inside...



The head of the Kentucky League on Alcohol & Gambling says allowing more liquor sales leads to more problems.

See story on page 2.

Cole said they typically start with efforts to permit liquor sales in restaurants seating at least 100 people, then move on to seeking package stores, liquor stores and bars.

"Apparently we're fighting a losing battle because there are more things out there than we can possibly defeat," Cole said. "They use the restaurant bill to come in but then they want more and more."

Fugitt agreed, saying the 2003 vote that permitted restaurant alcohol sales in Corbin marked the first step in a three-stage process.

However, Fugitt noted, alcohol has failed to produce the economic bonanza advocates cited, with only two new restaurants moving in over the past nine years. That has a lot of people talking

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Western Recorder 2-7-2012

KBC Exec Chitwood: Convention at 'critical point' in 2012

Evaluation of Mission Board structure to lead to reorganization, cuts

By Drew Nichter

Louisville—A mere seven months into his tenure as executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, Paul Chitwood already is facing some difficult decisions.

"I think we're at a critical point in the life of the Kentucky Baptist Convention," Chitwood told the Western Recorder.

What Chitwood must decide is how convention staff can continue to provide services to the 2,400-plus Kentucky Baptist churches using continually shrinking CP gifts from those congregations.

Halfway into the 2011-12 fiscal year, Cooperative Program gifts are nearly 6 percent behind the KBC Mission Board's "workable" budget of \$22,522,817, which already is close to \$1 million less than the messenger-approved budget of \$23.5 million.

Chitwood recently asked KBC team leaders to trim their already-reduced program budgets an additional 8 percent. That includes funds used to provide services to churches, not fixed costs such as salaries and benefits.

What's now being called the "spendable" budget, according to KBC Business Team Leader Lowell Ashby, is \$21,847,133.

Reorganization plan

While the current cutbacks do not affect jobs, Chitwood said an assessment of the Mission Board organization is underway "that will result in a reduction of staff, as well as be an evaluation of all of our financial commitments as a convention."

As he indicated at the December meeting of the KBC Mission Board, Chitwood wants to have a reorganization plan in place for members to vote on at their May meeting. The board's administrative committee discussed the restructuring possibilities in executive session at its Jan. 26 meeting, but, Chitwood stressed, "no decisions have been made."

At the heart of the issue is the reality that Kentucky Baptist churches have given considerably less to the Cooperative Program, percentage-wise, than they did a decade ago. From 2000 to 2010, CP gifts from churches' undesignated receipts have dropped from 9.2 percent to 6.9 percent, according to the KBC's business office.

Of course, the decline in CP giving affects not only the work of the Mission Board staff, but that of the KBC's agencies, institutions and auxiliary. That includes Campbellsville University, Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Oneida Baptist Institute, University of the Cumberland, Sunrise Children's Services, Western Recorder, Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union and the Crossings camp ministries.

In November 2010, KBC messengers adopted a report from the Kentucky Great Commission Task Force called "More for Christ" that, among other things, calls for a 50/50 allocation of CP funds between Kentucky and Southern

Baptist causes (minus shared expenses) by 2020.

Factor in a sluggish economy that has impacted individual Kentucky Baptists and forced local churches to address their own funding woes, it's hardly a surprise that such drastic measures have to be taken at the KBC level, its president noted.

"How many of our churches across the commonwealth have been going through this with their own budgets?" asked Adam Greenway, KBC president and a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"What they have the microcosm of, we're getting the macro view because of all the churches that ... have reduced Cooperative Program funding or who simply aren't able to give at the level they would like to give because of their own financial constraints," he added.

Seeking counsel

With such a heavy burden resting squarely on his shoulders, Chitwood has sought counsel among a group of Kentucky Baptist leaders. This advisory committee has no authority, he stressed. They are in place to "hear my ideas and to help me in personal counsel to think through decisions that I'll bring" to the Mission Board, he said.

The committee is comprised of 18 Kentucky Baptists, including Greenway. The others are pastors, directors of missions and one layman.

Chitwood said the leaders come from "very committed Cooperative Program-giving churches." The average percentage of undesignated receipts given through CP by 17 of the churches represented by the committee members is around 8.25 percent, according to the KBC's most recently available data. (One church did not report its undesignated receipts in that year.)

Corbin Pastor Chad Fugitt is part of the group counseling Chitwood. He commended the exec for making a "concerted effort to not just try to make these decisions all on his own."

Fugitt cited Proverbs 24:6, which, in part, says, "... in a multitude of counselors, (there is) safety."

"I think what's he's trying to do is ... get wisdom not just from his own heart, but from other men who are connected to the work of the convention, who love the KBC and who want to see the KBC succeed," Fugitt said of Chitwood's committee.

Fugitt also is a member of the Great Commission Task Force that brought

Kentucky Baptist CP gifts at a glance

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



Monthly budget goal*	\$1,876,900
Actual giving:	\$1,973,017
Over budget:	\$ 96,117
Year-to-Date budget goal*	\$7,507,600
Year-to-Date actual giving:	\$7,065,499
Under budget:	\$ 442,101

*Based on annual workable budget \$22,522,814
Actual budget \$23.5 million

forth the "More for Christ" emphasis which took effect November 2010.

Of the report's proposals, one of them challenges Kentucky Baptist churches to increase their Cooperative Program giving by at least 0.25 percent of their undesignated receipts each year. Another proposal—noted as the most important by the GCTF—is the three-year "More for Christ" campaign described as an "intentional time of repentance, renewal and redirection for the future" of the KBC.

In an effort to accomplish the latter's goal, Fugitt's church, Central Baptist in Corbin, has embarked on its own emphasis playing off the "More for Christ" theme called "Abandon Yourself."

"We're really challenging our people to give more of themselves to the Lord and to His work by abandoning themselves," Fugitt said.

"Abandon Yourself" challenges church members to read through the Bible; get connected to a Sunday School class; reach unchurched people in their lives; serve on the mission field; and give 10 percent—and beyond—of their incomes through the church.

It's the last of those that proves to be most challenging for average Kentucky Baptists in the pews, Fugitt acknowledged. "They have to see a value in dollars that are being given to missions."

Optimism amid adversity

Greenway said 14 months of "More for Christ" has not been enough time to gauge the campaign's overall impact on the KBC. Given church budget cycles, this year and next will provide better indicators of its effect.

"I'm encouraged, I'm optimistic," Greenway said, "but obviously, we all wish that the economy was better and that we were doing more."

Chitwood shares Greenway's enthusiasm. He said that although 2012 will be a

LifeWay survey

Continued from page 1

rent to any churches or community groups." There also is 1 percent who believe public schools should rent to churches but not other groups.

New York state residents are less likely to embrace a law allowing churches to meet in schools, although a plurality (49 percent) there still believe public schools should rent to churches and other community groups. Twenty-seven percent believe "public schools

should rent to other community groups but not to churches." Nineteen percent indicate "public schools should not rent to any churches or community groups" while 1 percent said they should rent only to churches.

LifeWay Research President Ed Stetzer said the ban has considerable implications for churches in urban contexts and start-up congregations.

"Historically schools have been welcoming locations to churches, especially in larger urban centers where schools are in the heart of the communities," he said. "A trend of banning

Advisory committee

Charles Barnes, member, Hurstbourne Baptist Church, Louisville
Jeff Crabtree, director of missions, Warren Association of Baptists
Alan Dodson, pastor, Cornerstone Baptist Church, Lexington
Andrew Dyer, pastor, Corinth Baptist Church, London
Greg Faulls, pastor, Bellevue Baptist Church, Owensboro
Chad Fugitt, pastor, Central Baptist Church, Corbin
Richard Gaines, pastor, Consolidated Baptist Church, Lexington
Adam Greenway, professor, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
Bill Henard, pastor, Porter Memorial Baptist Church, Lexington
Tom James, pastor, Eastwood Baptist Church, Bowling Green
Bill Langley, pastor, Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown
Stan Lowery, director of missions, Nelson Baptist Association
Jason Pettus, pastor, Living Hope Baptist Church, Bowling Green
Steve Rice, pastor, First Baptist Church, Shelbyville
Matthew Spandler-Davison, pastor, Bardstown Christian Fellowship
Paul Strahan, pastor, First Baptist Church, Owensboro
Dan Summerlin, pastor, Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah
Hershael York, pastor, Buck Run Baptist Church, Frankfort

"very difficult year" with "significant transition" ahead, he envisions a leaner, more effective convention a year from now.

In 2013, the KBC will be "more strategic and focused on a ministry assignment that is not as broad," he projected. "It'll be more streamlined, and hopefully, we'll be more field oriented in terms of how we service and interact with the local church."

With difficult decisions still to be made, Chitwood said he is "extremely grateful" for the continued prayers of Kentucky Baptists.

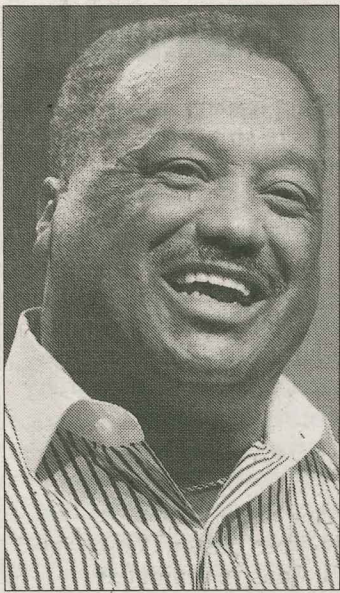
"It does us no good in the end to have ... Paul Chitwood's vision for the Kentucky Baptist Convention," he said. "What we desperately need is God's vision for us and the plans He has for us to be set in front of us." (WR)

Dannah Prather of the KBC's communications department contributed to this report

church use of public schools could have significant implications."

According to the study, there are several statistically significant differences between subgroups of Americans. Americans who live in large cities are less supportive of church and community group use of public schools, with 21 percent saying "public schools should rent to other community groups, but not churches."

Americans who never attend worship services are the least likely (32 percent) to agree that public schools should meet in churches. (LW/BP)



Luter could become SBC's first black president

New Orleans pastor tells congregation he will be candidate for convention's top post

By Michael Foust

New Orleans—Louisiana pastor Fred Luter has told his congregation he's willing to be nominated for president of the Southern Baptist Convention, a step that could lead to a historic election.

Luter, currently the first vice president of the SBC, made the announcement Jan. 29, as first reported by the SBC Today. Baptist Press confirmed that Luter is willing to be nominated in a call to the church he leads, Franklin Avenue Baptist in New Orleans.

"He and his wife (Elizabeth) have been

praying for months," Johnell Thomas, pastor of membership at Franklin Avenue, told BP. Thomas said Luter "did announce that he would allow his name" to be placed in nomination when addressing the congregation.

Luter, senior pastor of Franklin Avenue, is the only announced candidate so far. If elected, he would become the convention's first African American president. The election also would coincide with the 150th anniversary of the Civil War. Luter already is the first black pastor to hold the first vice president post.

Last August, Luter said he was leaning "80

percent" toward the idea of allowing his name to be placed in nomination for the SBC presidency.

"It is an awesome responsibility" to serve as SBC president, he told the Louisiana Baptist & Reflector newspaper at the time. "I don't want to take it lightly or for granted."

In that same interview, Luter said his goal, if elected, would be to "bring us together as a convention" so that "we can truly be the body of Christ. ... We need to major on the things that have made this convention great through the years—evangelism and discipleship." (BP)

Alcohol opponents: Increased liquor sales equals more problems

By Ken Walker

Princeton—Don Cole has a high-powered ally in his efforts to limit alcohol's reach: New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

In mid-January, news media in the Big Apple reported on the mayor's proposal to crack down on alcohol sales to curb excessive drinking. The proposal to reduce the density of retail outlets came from the health department's Partnership for a Healthier New York City.

Health officials told the New York Post that alcohol is a factor in nearly 50 percent of homicides and 10 percent of hospitalizations in the nation's largest city.

Cole, director of the Kentucky League on Alcohol and Gambling Problems, said he sees similar problems around the commonwealth.

On a recent visit to Madisonville, he noticed in newspaper court records that more than half of 30 arrests in the

western Kentucky city were linked to drunk driving or other problems stemming from alcohol or drug abuse.

During a recent organizational meeting in Williamsburg, Cole told Citizens Against the Sale of Alcohol that 15 to 18 percent of drivers on Kentucky's public roads are intoxicated.

With more than 50,000 vehicles passing through their area on Interstate 75 in a 24-hour period, that means considerable potential for destruction, Pat Marple said.

"Almost two of every 10 cars you pass have intoxicated drivers," said Marple, chairman of the citizens group opposing legalization of restaurant sales. "That's alarming."

More liquor, more problems

The more liquor sold in a city or county the more problems it will see, said Cole, citing two scholarly surveys:

■ A 2004 study of two cities in Texas by researchers at Texas A&M University showed a clear association between the density of alcohol outlets and violence.

■ A 2008 report in a medical journal that reviewed data from seven countries said the percentage of violence-related injuries attributable to alcohol ranged from 28 to 43 percent.

"There is a stronger link between alcohol impairment and being a victim of violence than between alcohol impairment and suffering from accidental injuries," the report said.

Once noted as a bastion of dry counties, in recent decades the scene in Kentucky has shifted after the legislature passed regulations permitting liquor sales in cities, counties or a voter precinct if voters approve.

As of late January, the Kentucky Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control said only 39 counties were still dry.

Another 32 are wet and 27 are "moist," meaning they permit alcohol sales in a municipality within a dry county.

There also are 34 cities or counties that permit liquor sales in restaurants seating at least 50 or 100 patrons, 24 that permit sales at golf courses, 27 with small farm wineries, and two with qualified historical sites that are wet.

Although alcohol advocates like to promote economic development, Pastor Shane Nickell said that argument didn't hold water in this week's election in Barbourville.

Noting that a manufacturing factory there already had announced plans to move to Ohio, Nickell said opening the city up to alcohol wouldn't keep the plant there.

In addition, the pastor of Barbourville's First Baptist said the moral deterioration that can follow alcohol is justification for keeping it out.

"A man in my church is 81 and remembers when he was about 12 and Barbourville was wet," Nickell said. "It was like a Wild West town. We had bars and shootings and stabbings and drunks laying in the street. It was crazy."

Alcohol sales not 'quick fix'

Given New York's attempts to reduce its number of liquor outlets, Cole said he is mystified by Kentuckians who buy the alcohol industry's arguments.

"These products are marketed as though they are not harmful," Cole said. "You see people drinking and having a good time but not the after-effects."

Even the idea that liquor taxes can generate additional funds to pave roads, build parks or other local improvements is a myth, Cole said.

He said that under state law, governments only can impose a small tax and those funds only can be used for extra policing, regulation and administration of the laws.

"I explain this from the law books and people still think they will be able to pave streets and other things," Cole said. "People are looking for a quick fix."

To Nickell, there is a more sinister reason behind the spreading influence of intoxicating substances in Kentucky.

"If Satan can keep people's minds flooded with alcohol and drugs, it's difficult to talk with them about the gospel and have them consider the claims of Christ," Nickell said. "It's one of the devil's tools to keep people lost." (WR)

Alcohol sales

Continued from page 1

about the deception involved in the last campaign and the current one, the pastor said.

"For every \$1 we get from alcohol, it's going to cost \$3 to \$4 for social problems," Fugitt said. "The message is not only from a spiritual and moral basis, but from an economic standpoint."

After co-chairing an unsuccessful 2004 effort to stop restaurant sales in London, Laurel River Baptist Association's Roy Faulkner is an advisor to Citizens United Against Alcohol. The chairman is Randy Bingham, pastor of Hazel Patch Baptist Church in East Bernstadt.

The Laurel River DOM said the Citizens United group held its first rally Feb. 2.

After losing the last referendum by 77 votes, Faulkner said he is hopeful opponents of package stores will prevail because it is the sole issue on the ballot.

"If it were a county-wide vote, I think it would be voted down 2-1," Faulkner said. "Because it's a city vote, I'm not sure how it will go. I don't have a gut feeling about it."

In Williamsburg, Pat Marple is again serving as chairman of Citizens

Against the Sale of Alcohol, which is fighting a proposal to allow restaurant sales.

The group successfully defeated a 2006 pro-alcohol petition, although the 57-43 percent margin was far less than a 1976 vote. Thirty-six years ago, dry forces led the way to an 88-12 percent landslide.

Marple said his group is better organized this time, mentioning the valuable experience of David Akers.

The director of missions for South Union-Mount Zion Baptist Association, Akers has been involved in three successful pro-dry efforts in other areas.

"I expect a harder fight, but we believe we can defeat this again," said Marple, a deacon at Williamsburg's Main Street Baptist Church. "We hope we can do it by 413 votes instead of 213," referring to the city's 2006 tally of 790-577.

Marple said he hopes residents will benefit from the senior citizens who are old enough to remember the bars and dance halls around the city when it permitted liquor sales.

"Our children are my No. 1 concern—the future generation," Marple said. "We know what alcohol does to families and individuals. My concern is what comes next? We can see what happened in London and Corbin.

"If the (proposal) in Corbin passes,

they can have three package stores and an unlimited number of licenses to sell beer. That's full-blown alcohol sales."

Although many communities start with a proposal to allow liquor sales in restaurants, this week's referendum in Barbourville also concerned permitting package stores.

Shane Nickell, pastor of the city's First Baptist Church, said the measure would allow the mayor to issue special liquor licenses as well.

Nickell said alcohol sales at the city's Daniel Boone Festival in the fall could ruin that event's peaceful atmosphere.

An adult bookstore has opened six miles from Barbourville and wide-open alcohol sales only will add to problems with methamphetamine and prescription pill abuse, Nickell said.

"It can't be good," the pastor said of liquor broadening its reach across the region. "The family-friendly climate of the area will take a severe downturn. It's going to complicate things."

Marple said the spiritual nature of the battle is one reason his Williamsburg group sees its principal organizing tool as prayer.

"We can't defeat this without prayer," Marple said. "I can't do this without prayer. This is a real battle; it's spiritual in nature. But we have Jesus Christ and when you've got Him you don't need anything else." (WR)

God wants pastors 'after His own heart'

My wife, Michelle, and I recently enjoyed an evening with the church family of Hunsinger Lane Baptist Church in

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

Louisville as it celebrated the 20th anniversary of Pastor Charlie Davis' ministry among them. We were delighted to see a church express such deep appreciation for the ministry of her pastor. The following day, I stopped by Simpsonville Baptist Church to witness a similar event as Pastor Steve Boyd

marks 20 years of ministry to his congregation (see photo, page 11). The relationship shared between a church who loves her pastor and a pastor who loves his church can be one of the greatest spiritual blessings in life.

Unfortunately, such relationships aren't as common as we would like. Mike and Kari MacKenzie, who specialize in counseling Christian leaders, observe that pastors often feel more isolated than loved. They note that, specifically, a lack of support, close friends and accountability often contribute to a painful end for churches and their pastors. For the good of your church and the kingdom, find ways to express your love and appreciation for your pastor.

In his book, "Shepherds after My Own Heart," Timothy Laniak traces the biblical metaphor of the pastor as shepherd. Early in the book, Laniak appeals to God's pledge in Jeremiah 3:15 to replace the corrupt leaders of His people: "I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding."

Laniak explains that God, the Shepherd of His people, is promising to provide under-shepherds who have the "capacity to care for God's flock with self-sacrificing diligence and compassion. It is not just 'heart', however, but 'after my own heart' that matters. A good shepherd is one who sees what the Owner sees and does what the Owner does. He is a follower before he is a leader. He is a leader because he is a follower" (page 22).

Eighteen years as a pastor taught me the necessity of understanding my calling in light of biblical revelation. Scripture reveals God as the Shepherd of His people. Scripture also reveals God's care as flowing through the under-shepherds He has called. Moreover, Scripture unequivocally mandates that the under-shepherds exhibit, to the best of their grace-given ability, godly qualities and character as they minister to God's people. Love, grace, patience, integrity, selflessness, clarity, conviction, truthfulness, servanthood, and humility are a few of the many descriptive words that come to mind when I think about an authentic pastor.

My prayer is that our pastors, as they seek to model their lives and their shepherding ministry after the character and ministry of the Good Shepherd, will find the love and support they need from their congregation. And I pray God will continue to bless the churches of the Kentucky Baptist Convention with shepherds after his own heart.

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Toward understanding and affirming the introverts among us

Do our churches reflect a cultural bias that favors extroverts in our worship styles and in the selection of pastors and other church leaders? And, are there specific advantages that introverts have to offer that might be beneficial to our churches?

I hadn't given it much thought—at least not until I read Bryan Walsh's article, "The Upside of Being an Introvert (and why extroverts are over-rated)," last week in Time magazine. The next day, I caught an interview on National Public Radio with Susan Cain, author of "Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking," from which Walsh drew much of his information. Cain's book suggests that our culture has "a subtle bias against introverts, and it's generating a waste of talent and energy and happiness."

Among the benefits of an introverted temperament—for workplaces, personal relations and society—are deep and rewarding friendships, more cautious and deliberate decision-making processes, less tendency toward risk-taking behaviors which may lead to injury or financial loss, better listening skills that allow for fuller understanding of complex issues, and the ability to spend long periods in solitary work or practice to master difficult skills, Cain notes. As business leaders, she adds, they often empower employees to act of their own initiatives, encouraging more creativity.

While many workplaces are designed to foster collaboration and teamwork, Cain maintains, "You need to give people time to think if you want them to actually get work done." Consequently, contrary to societal bias, Walsh arrives at the conclusion that in some situations "the right kind of leader may be an introverted one." He sharply quips, "It may be time for America to learn the forgotten rewards of sitting down and shutting up." For the church, Walsh's words are a curt echo of the psalmist's counsel, "Be still, and know that I am God." Indeed, we may have a core desire, even a need, for ample time for deep reflection, meditation, contemplation of life application, and intercessory prayer in our worship expressions.

Their insights resonated with me—perhaps because I am something of an introvert myself—and my hunch is I'm not alone. I suspect there are many others out there in our congregations, and even in our pulpits. In my own research and reflection, I discovered a book by Presbyterian pastor Adam McHugh, "Introverts in the Church," and judging from the dozens upon dozens of reviews on the Internet, he has struck a nerve among evangelical Christians.

McHugh attempts to debunk many of the church's longstanding assumptions about spiritual maturity, evange-

listic methods and the qualities that leaders should possess. "Put bluntly, I think most qualities of an introvert are prone to be overlooked!" he told Alex Crain, editor of Christianity.com. "In our extroverted society, we value aggressive, action-oriented, gregarious people, and I think this extroverted bias has bled over into some of our churches,

where often the 'ideals' of faithfulness are strikingly extroverted," he said. "We praise people who are social and expressive, eager to participate in a wide variety of activities; have an overt enthusiasm, share the faith with strangers easily, assume leadership positions quickly."

Introverts do not usually fit this mold, but nonetheless have tremendous gifts to bring that can make them effective in

ministry, McHugh said. Among these attributes are great listening abilities, a non-judgmental presence, creativity, deep compassion, self-awareness, contagious peacefulness and a servant mindset. He hopes his book will enable introverts "to find peace in their God-given personality preferences and to discover their places in their Christian communities that so badly need their gifts and strengths."

Cain and McHugh have helped our society, and the church, to see that people who have introverted personalities are OK, even normal—for it is not the same as being self-centered or self-absorbed. Introverts can still be outwardly-focused, possessing a strong servant mentality that compels them to reach out to others in a non-threatening and inviting manner that displays sincere concern and compassion. Though I don't know whether or not he would be considered an introvert, I believe the article below about an Arkansas pastor who started a prayer ministry using Facebook provides a good illustration of this very thing.

Through awareness, affirmation and acceptance, the church should seek to be more sensitive to the worship needs of introverts and recognize their unique leadership gifts. While their preferred witnessing methods may differ from those of extroverts, introverts are specially geared for a quieter, more relational style of persuasion and Christian service that allows them to reach those who are less likely to respond to more aggressive evangelistic approaches. As Mike Bechtle, author of "Evangelism for the Rest of Us," observes: "When introverts spend time trying to function like extroverts, they're doing more than just wasting time. They're actually robbing themselves of the very tools God gave them to do His work." And, the church, in turn, may be denying a significant segment of its congregation the opportunity of service, and depriving the community whom they may serve the blessings of their ministry.

After Thought

By Todd Deaton



Pastor turns into 'cyber prayer warrior'

Fair Oaks, Ark.—About a year and a half ago, rural pastor Al Brodbent became frustrated with all the gossip and solicitation on Facebook.

He was ready to quit when he saw two people had requested prayer after seeing his "Pastor Al" page. Instead, he started using the site to pray for people in the ministry.

"I decided to pray every day for their request and let them know I was praying," said Brodbent, pastor of Fair Oaks Baptist Church near Wynne, Ark. "It had a positive influence on me as

'maybe I am onto something' ... as well as influencing that person on the value of prayer."

Perhaps most significant was a word Brodbent received from a pastor for whom he had started praying.

"After two weeks of every day praying and sending a message, he sent me a message stating, 'In my 30-plus years of ministry, I have had many people commit to pray for me but never have had someone that did.'"

It confirmed for Brodbent that God was giving him a new ministry assign-

ment as a "cyber prayer warrior."

Since dedicating his Facebook page to people in ministry, Brodbent's prayer list has ballooned to more than 600 and includes a number of pastors and staff, state executive directors, denominational employees, college presidents and seminary professors.

"God has really used this ministry in my life to bring me to a realization that prayer is at the foundation of everything we do or attempt to do. Most plans fail because of a lack of foundation of prayer" Brodbent said. (BP)

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Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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Time to give up on the Great Commission Resurgence?

By Chuck Lawless

I've made up my mind: I'm giving up on the Great Commission Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention. It's not that I've been opposed to the concept of a GCR. In fact, I enthusiastically voted in favor of forming the GCR task force at the Southern Baptist Convention in 2009. I strongly supported the task force recommendations the following year. Now, though, I'm giving up.

I suppose the reasons not to give up are numerous. Local churches are taking the lead to send short-term mission teams around the world. Our SBC seminaries and Baptist universities are filled with young men and women committed to going where the gospel has not gone. Our new mission board presidents, Tom Elliff and Kevin Ezell, are passionate about evangelism and church planting. Still, I'm giving up.

Several state conventions have affirmed the reports of their own Great Commission task forces. Some have made intentional commitments to incrementally increase missions giving beyond their state. The employees of LifeWay Christian Resources completed their 100th mission trip in November 2011. Our SBC president, Bryant Wright, is a Great Commission pastor leading a globally minded church. None of this changes my mind, though—I'm still giving up.

Here's why: we're seeing every day that we cannot create a Great Commission Resurgence. We can cast a vote to form task forces, but whether God visits us with renewal is not determined by Baptist democracy. We can affirm recommendations for change, yet not consider that only God can transform apathetic hearts that led us to stagnation in the first place. We simply cannot generate the resurgence that we need, so it is time to give up.

My motivation is a fear that Southern Baptists who prayed for a Great Commission task force three years ago—and I am one—are now praying too little for God to send us a heart-wrenching, world-reaching, devil-defeating Great Commission revival. Unless I am misreading Southern Baptists, we who passionately joined

Ronnie Floyd in praying for the GCR task force settled into prayer mediocrity once the task force recommendations were adopted. That happens when a denomination is generally more focused on human effort than divine blessing, more on corrected structures than broken hearts, more on programs than prayer. That happens when your Christian life is more about trying hard than giving up.

FIRST PERSON

Too few are the church leaders who would cry with the great English preacher Charles Spurgeon:

"Oh! men and brethren, what would this heart feel if I could but believe that there were some among you who would go home and pray for a revival of religion—men whose faith is large enough, and their love fiery enough to lead them from this moment to exercise unceasing intercessions that God would appear among us and do wondrous things here."

Here, our SBC leaders who have called us to prayer are right on target (www.namb.net/sbccalltoprayer). It is a call to repent of our prayerlessness, which is, at its core, nothing less than idolatry of the self. It is an admission that the tasks assigned to us are daunting—impossible, in fact. Our leaders know there will be no Great Commitment Resurgence unless the God who gave us the Great Commission also grants us the resurgence.

A call to prayer is, in fact, an admission of powerlessness. We can only wave the white flag of surrender in this task called the Great Commission. Not one of our 16 million Southern Baptists can penetrate the darkness in his own power. No church can move heaven without first longing for the God of heaven. No denomination will ever be large enough to make hell shake simply because of its numbers.

The God of the Scriptures seeks a humble, desperate, repentant people to do the Great Commission. We get there not by growing strong, but by being weak. And, in a strange but biblical twist, we will have no Great Commission victory unless we give up first—that is, unless we surrender to God and seek his face in prayer. (BP)

Chuck Lawless is the International Mission Board's vice president of global theological advance.

Preparing teens for marriage

By Scott Wigginton

Q: What can parents do to help prepare teenagers for marriage?

A: Let me take the word "prepare" and use it to help outline seven things that parents can do to assist their teenagers in preparing for possible marriage one day.



P—Place before them a godly example. If you are married, you must do everything you can to make your marriage all that it can be. If you are divorced, your teenager needs to see you taking responsibility for your

part in the failure of the marriage.

R—Reject culture's lies about dating and courtship. Marriage is not supposed to be easy. It is not primarily for enjoyment, but to serve as a witness of Bridegroom's incredible love for His Bride, the church. The engine of marital love is not emotion but obedience to the Word of God. Feelings are the caboose.

E—Expose them to the truth about marriage. Marriage is a spiritual opportunity to become less selfish and a better lover of God, spouse and others.

P—Prepare them to be good "pickers." Teenagers must learn what to look for in persons they meet. Help them to differentiate between negotiables like a certain look or interest and non-negotiables such as a serious commitment to Christ and trustworthiness.

A—Agree to talk about the role of money, sex, communication, conflict, personality types, and roles in marriage with your teens. Norman Wright has written extensively on marriage preparation. Pastor Tommy Nelson has created an excellent DVD series on "The Song of Solomon."

R—Remind them that they are "in training" in the "school of relationships," which will help form them into the godly "king" or "queen" someone awaits.

E—Encourage them to use every relationship to learn and grow.

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

Christian estate planning basics

By Laurie Valentine

A Christian estate plan is one you develop by determining God's purposes for how your assets should pass at your death and for how your finances would be managed and decisions would be made for you if you became incapacitated. To accomplish God's purposes regarding how your assets will pass at death, you need a written plan—a will or will and revocable living trust—that directs how your probate estate will pass.

Fine-tuning your written distribution plan can be accomplished with specific bequests of designated amounts or assets to charitable or individual beneficiaries. You may also need to make special provision for the management of the shares of your estate passing to young beneficiaries or incapacitated beneficiaries by including testamentary trust provisions.

You also need to review the way in which your assets are titled. Assets titled as joint tenants with rights of survivorship do not pass under your will; they pass to the surviving joint owner. Likewise, beneficiary-designated assets pass to the named beneficiary, not per your will.

God's purposes for asset management in the event you become incapacitated may be accomplished by executing a durable power of attorney. This will empower someone of your choosing to make decisions for you and manage your finances. A revocable living trust can provide a mechanism for management of assets in the event of incapacity, as well as distribution at death without probate.

To assure the appropriate person(s) have authority to make healthcare decisions for you, a Healthcare Surrogate Designation should be considered.

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation.

Restoring vision to capture city for Christ

By Ronnie Floyd

Years ago, we used to hear spiritual leaders talk about reaching their cities for Jesus Christ. Rarely do we hear this anymore. If you ask 100 pastors and 1,000 laypeople what their church's strategy is to reach their city, you would hear more clutter than clarity. The forgotten vision is the vision to capture our city for Jesus Christ. I believe the following steps are necessary to see this become a reality:

1. Understand your city. Get to know the people around you. Are we observing the objects of worship around us? Sports teams, local hangouts, shopping centers, all are objects of worship in our communities. Figure out what motivates and excites the people where you live. We must be demographic specialists, knowing our city well enough to formulate a dynamic strategy to capture our city.

2. See your city the way Jesus sees your city. In learning about your community, remember to view it as Jesus does. There are three specific ways:

■ Theologically. Recognize that everyone in your community is made by the same Creator. We all share the common problem of sin. Left to ourselves, each of us is lost. Theologically, we must recognize

those around us as equally separated from God.

■ Providentially. Recognize that God is sovereign and has designated the "wheres" and "whens" of our lives. Acts 17:26 says that God not only determines your race and nationality, as well as when you will live in His timeline, but He determines where you will live. We fail to think missionally if we do not constantly ask ourselves why God has placed the people around us that He has.

■ Purposefully. Since He has us living at a particular time, in a particular place, we know that it is for a particular reason. He has brought every person to your community for the purpose of using you and your church to share the gospel with them. If you are going to capture your city for Jesus Christ, you have to see your city as lost theologically, placed here providentially and destined here purposefully.

3. Invade your city strategically. What is your specific strategy to reach your city? Do you have one? If we are going to obey the Great Commission, we must become strategic and effective in how we communicate the gospel. Here are three key ideas for any size city:

■ Identify. In the same way that a microscope can change lenses to look more deeply at an object, you

can work toward narrowing down those features that make your community unique. First, find out the various people groups represented in your city. Second, look for pockets of people who have come together because of the culture they share. Third, identify the community distinctives within the subcultures around you to find what makes them unique to your community.

■ Customize. Remember that what works in one region may not work in another. Develop your own ministry that is unique to your surroundings.

■ Intensify. Customizing your ministry to your unique community will create a lot of excitement. Build on that intensity. Always be intentional about fulfilling the Great Commission where you live. Push your people to develop new, creative ways to communicate the gospel.

The combination of these strategic principles can be a powerful tool in fulfilling the Great Commission. There are countless opportunities for local churches to make the gospel known right where they are. It comes down to each body of believers, wherever they may be, actively seeking to accomplish the primary purpose of the church. We must capture our community for Jesus Christ! (BP)

Ronnie Floyd is senior pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas.

No Regrets

Former Georgetown College student chases lifelong dream of 'American Idol'

Continued from page 1

Underwood and Miranda Lambert. "They put a lot of attitude into things."

Imitating her country role models at the Charleston, S.C., auditions, Mink belted out just enough of the song "Country Strong" to hear the coveted words, "You're going to Hollywood."

Back home in Winchester—away from the cameras and Idol madness—Lauren's mother, Leslie Mink, pondered how her daughter's adventure began.

"I always felt like she was a very talented singer," her mom said. "We live in a small town, so you don't really think about being a star. But I knew early on that she had a great voice."

As the oldest of three girls, Mink quickly was labeled the outgoing one of the family.

"She's always been that way. She's kind of outspoken in a lot of ways, and then it surprises you when you break the shell and how grounded she really is. She's always been able to stand her own," Leslie Mink said of her daughter.

Still, Lauren's mother said her daughter never has been the kind of child who pushes the boundaries.

"I haven't hit that rebellious streak yet. I guess everyone is still waiting for that one to kick in," Lauren said.

The singer said it was her parents and church family that were responsible for molding her into who she is now.

"I don't ever want to do anything that would make them ashamed or make them not proud of me," Mink continued. "I'm not saying that I don't do things that are silly-sometimes, but I try to follow the rules."

Her daughter was not born a strong, confident performer, Leslie said. The closest she came to singing in front of a group was during the morning carpool to her elementary school.

That quickly changed when a childhood babysitter encouraged Lauren to take the stage at First United Methodist Church of Winchester and give her first of many performances. Later, Mink found herself singing on stages at high school, in a Georgetown College production of "Grease" and at various venues in and around her hometown before taking the national stage on American Idol.

"I've had people listen from Croatia and Ireland," Mink said, referring to some new fans who called in during a radio show interview. Strangers now greet her on the street asking for pictures and autographs.

"It's overwhelming in a good way," Mink said. "It's been fun."

Since learning her rollercoaster ride with American Idol would not end in South Carolina, Mink has been a busy lady. So busy that she put graduation from Georgetown on hold with only one class shy of obtaining her degree in communications and media studies.



BELTING IT OUT Lauren Mink, of Winchester, entertains a late-night crowd in Lexington Friday with a cover of the song "Country Strong," the same song that got her through "American Idol" auditions last fall. Mink, a former Georgetown student, recently opened for rising country star Hunter Hayes at a concert in Lexington. (Photo by Robin Bass)

Mink has spruced up her Facebook page, started a Twitter feed and assembled her first band. "Lately, I just haven't been wanting to stop," Mink said of all the musical appearances. "The other night I sang for three straight hours."

Another reason Mink is pushing herself, she said, is so her voice can become stronger. Could it be so she can continue on as a finalist on American Idol? Mink pursed her lips in a tight smile. She is not allowed to provide any insight about her audition in Hollywood. Those who want to know will have to watch American Idol later this week to find out for themselves.

"She sings really strong and confident," said Dave Adams, Lauren's lead guitarist. "There's a lot of soul behind it. She doesn't hold anything back. I think she has something unique."

Adams, a member of the praise band at Southland Christian Church in Nicholasville, said he has been following Mink's budding career for 10 years and is thrilled they finally have the opportunity to work together.

"I think she has a real healthy perspective. If it works out, good. If not, it's OK. I'm proud of the way she is handling herself. It's a no-lose situation either way," Adams continued. "I think she'll have music as a part of her life (from here on out.)"

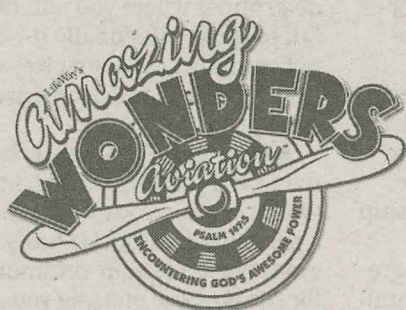
One part of her life that Mink wants to remain consistent no matter what happens in the future is her commitment to STRIDE (Supporting Therapeutic Recreation for Individuals with Disabilities Everyday).

"I still go to work every day," Mink said, even when her mornings are filled

with interviews and her nights are spent on the stage. "They always come first in my calendar. I want to be able to do everything I can for them. ... They are just like the most beautiful people in the world. It's not about me when I'm with them."

While the organization has received some much-needed press and donations—including a \$2,500 check from someone in California—Mink said that was not why she tried out for the show.

"I did this for me. It's been cool to take STRIDE along for the journey, but this is what I wanted," Mink said. "The days of driving down to Nashville and getting a record deal are over. This really is the best way to showcase your talent to millions of people. I really just didn't want to ever have a regret. I'm following my dream and that's really cool." (WR)



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Bill seeks to restore hope to victims of human trafficking

By Robin Bass

Frankfort—She was advertised online as an adult, but what men paid for was a 16-year-old girl, said Marissa Castellanos, an advocate for victims of human trafficking.

The missing Florida teen was shuttled up the interstate through Georgia, Tennessee and Kentucky—stopping only for a couple of days at a time in cities like Nashville, Bowling Green and Louisville.

"She was sold to men for sex multiple times a day at hotels along major highways. Local men paid to ravage and abuse her young body," said Castellanos, program manager for Kentucky Rescue and Restore, an organization that works with victims of human trafficking.

Castellanos told these and other heart-wrenching stories to a group gathered at the Capitol Rotunda Feb. 1 in support of HB 350, also known as the Human Trafficking Victims Rights Act.

Of the 67 victims identified by her organization in the past four years, Castellanos said more than half were forced into prostitution, pornography or stripping. The remaining cases involved labor trafficking victims who endured wage theft, debt bondage, involuntary servitude and virtual slavery in professions such as housekeeping, farm work, hotel work and construction.

Other human trafficking statistics provided by Kentucky Rescue and Restore showed:

- 80 percent of Kentucky victims were female.

- 43 percent appear to be initially trafficked as children.

- 61 percent were brought to Kentucky from other countries.

- 39 percent were victimized by a parent, guardian or boyfriend.

"One child as young as 6 years old was sold by her mother. Another young boy was sold at the age of 11 to men in the community that raped and sodomized him. Two sisters—13 and 14 years old—were sold by their parents in front of a local movie theater," Castellanos said.

"We should all be outraged that these kinds of things are being committed in our communities. We must restore hope to these victims."

In an effort to do just that, Rep. Sannie Overly (D-Paris) announced her sponsorship of HB 350 during the Feb. 1 press conference in Frankfort. Rep. John Tilley (D-Hopkinsville) and Rep. Susan Westrom (D-Lexington) are co-sponsors of the bill and attended the announcement.

The representatives say they hope to provide aid to injured parties by creating a human trafficking victims fund fueled with increased fines and asset forfeitures and seizures. The bill proposes an increase in penalties for the sexual exploitation of minors from \$500 to \$10,000 and would classify the crime as a Class C felony, instead of a Class A misdemeanor.

If passed, the legislation also would fund and establish a special prosecuting division within the Kentucky State Police to seek out and investigate cases of



VICTIMS' RIGHTS Marissa Castellanos provides a glimpse into the lives of sex and labor trafficking victims during a press conference at the Capitol Rotunda Feb. 1. Castellanos, program manager for Kentucky Rescue and Restore, joined Rep. Sannie Overly (D-Paris), seen in the background, in announcing HB 350, also known as the Human Trafficking Victims Rights Act. (Photo by Robin Bass)

human trafficking.

"The incidence of trafficking children has risen at an alarming pace in Kentucky, and we need to stem the tide before we lose this battle," Overly said.

Kentucky Baptists are actively working on this issue as well. Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union is entering its second year of Project HELP: Human Exploitation, Executive Director Joy Bolton said.

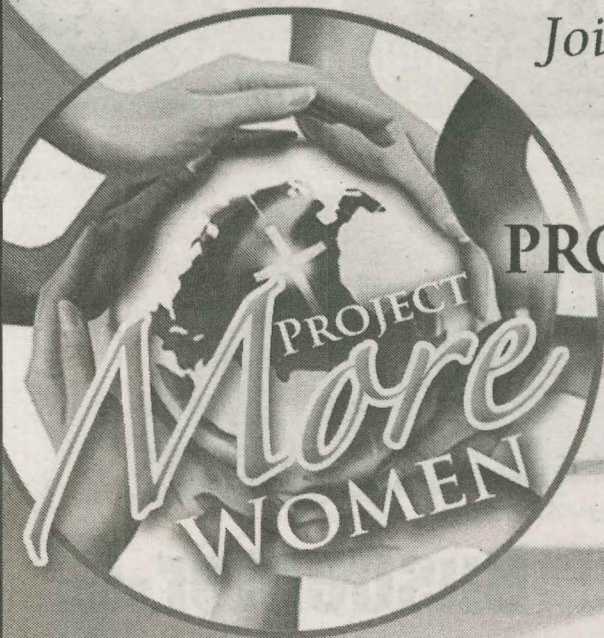
"I've noticed an increasing awareness of this issue in both religious and secular circles," said Bolton, who attended the bill's announcement in Frankfort. "You don't have to be faith-based to recognize this is wrong."

Bolton said WMU recently extended its human exploitation emphasis through 2014, with a focus on getting people involved in tangible ministries beginning next year. (WR)

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Our history, part 4

1936: For two weeks in July, the temperatures reached triple digits. Sherwin-Williams made a significant donation of paint that was used to renovate the school buildings.

1937: The community was hit hard with influenza and pneumonia, but the campus was spared any serious illness. A wet spring caused major flooding downstream leading to the Ohio River, but Goose Creek and Red Bird never got far out of their banks. A one-year scholarship at Oneida was \$135, or \$15 a month.

1938: Work was completed on Route 11. It had been graded and graveled to Oneida. The community received electricity.

1939: The school helped feed and house community members during and after the flood. The water reached three feet higher than any other flood recorded. Although damaged by water, Oneida's gymnasium hosted the district basketball tournament for the first time. Eighteen seniors graduated in the spring.

1940: The Jan. 1 receipts showed that the cash on hand was 82 cents. There were 28 students in the graduating class. A request was made in the September Oneida Mountaineer to send reading and reference books to replace the many worn-out and outdated editions in the library.

1941: Oneida grad Saul Houchell became the fifth president. For the next several years, the graduating classes had few boys due to World War II. A request was made for woodworking equipment and a loom.

1942: Word was received of the first OBI graduate to be killed in World War II. Shelby Treadway (Class of 1938) was stationed on the U.S.S. Oklahoma, which was bombed at Pearl Harbor.

The 18-year-old boiler in the school building broke down; it was replaced for \$750. A special radio address was made for OBI at West Side Baptist Church in Cincinnati on WCPO. Several former students who were members of the church spoke of their Oneida experiences. A request was made for sewing machines for the girls' workshop.

This is Oneida



W.F. Underwood

The One-Thousand Club was started with a goal of finding 1,000 friends who would pledge to donate \$5 a year. The Oneida hospital was dedicated after it became the property of the state and U.S. government. The print shop was moved to the basement of Marvin Hall. OBI had 20 staff members and 16 graduates.

1943: One of Oneida's finest volunteers, William Evans, died and an endowment fund was established in his name to pay for a scholarship. The school's highest honor is given each year in his name.

1944: There were 17 students in the graduating class—13 girls and four boys. On March 1, the balance on hand was 13 cents. There were a total of 40 scholarships, partial and full combined, available to Oneida students. The October Mountaineer featured a special-needs list, including 100 soup spoons, six wash tubs and paint. The One-Thousand Club reached the halfway mark.

1945: OBI founder James Anderson Burns died. He had spent most of the last decade of his life in Anderson Hall, and it was there that he passed away. Oneida had 275 high school and elementary students, 14 graduates and 18 faculty and staff.

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

A heart for serving

Clear Creek student Webb feels called to serve Lord as missionary

First-year student Jamie Webb, from Anderson, S.C., has had a heart to serve from a young age.

"My mother and father are active members of our home church," Jamie said. "My mother led me to accept Christ in my bedroom when I was 6 years old. I knew from that young age that God was calling me to a life of service, but I really surrendered my life to serve as a missionary when I was 18 on a summer mission trip with my church.

"I felt God calling me to the mission field, and I knew I needed to get some training. My youth minister at my home church is an alumnus of Clear Creek, and he spoke well of the college so I decided to visit. I loved the college from the very first time I stepped onto the campus. The students and staff were wonderful. I loved the Christian atmosphere on campus, and I felt God was leading me here to study.

"I have been able to go on some mission trips since I surrendered my life to God's calling," Jamie continued. "One

reason I enjoy mission trips so much is because it is really neat to see how much can be accomplished when you just want to serve the Lord for His glory. The trips that I served on were construction trips where we renovated the homes of some people. It was great to see God use different people to reach out to others and He was glorified in the process.

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

"Clear Creek is a great school. I am thankful for a place like this where I can be equipped for God's calling on my life," Jamie said. "I have learned so much in my short time here. The ways professors deliver their lessons in class help me to grow so much in my faith.

"The one thing that has always stood out to me about Clear Creek is the loving Christian atmosphere here," Jamie noted. "People here are totally devoted to serving God and fulfilling His will—and that's what I want to do with my life. Coming to Clear Creek is one of the best decisions I have ever made."

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.ccbcc.edu; e-mail: dfox@ccbcc.edu

After minor turbulence, Alaska Airlines suspends prayer cards

By Lauren Markoe

Seattle—After causing a bit of turbulence with some passengers, Alaska Airlines no longer will serve prayer cards with in-flight meals, the company announced Jan. 25.

The cards, which take a line or two from the Book of Psalms, have been an Alaska Airlines trademark for 30 years, uplifting some flyers but annoying others.

"This difficult decision was not made lightly," wrote Alaska Air Group Chairman and CEO Bill Ayer and Alaska Airlines President Brad Tilden, in a letter to frequent flyers.

While some passengers appreciated the prayers, "we've heard from many of you who believe religion is inappropriate on an airplane, and some are offended when we hand out the cards.

"Religious beliefs are deeply personal and sharing them with others is an individual choice," the letter continued.

Actually, relatively few customers of Seattle-based Alaska Airlines—the nation's seventh largest carrier in terms of passenger traffic—have received the cards since 2006, when the airline stopped serving meals in coach.

First-class passengers continued to find them on their meal trays, but only on flights longer than four hours that featured food service.

The airline, which carries more than 16.5 million passengers annually,

stopped handing out the cards on Feb. 1.

Harriet Baskas, a veteran travel writer based in Seattle, wrote about the change on her website and said she rarely has seen a story get as much attention.

In a non-scientific poll on her website, nearly 20,000 people responded to her online question: "Would you be offended by a prayer card?" About 80 percent said they would not; 20 percent said they would.

The results surprised Baskas. People she has talked to about the cards found the practice odd, whether they are religious or not, she said. "It seems to be mixing one world with another."

The prayers, printed over a dreamy depiction of a mountain range or sunset, all were taken from the Psalms, which is read by both Christians and Jews. One Alaska Airlines favorite came from Psalm 107:1: "Give thanks to the Lord for He is good; His love endures forever."

Some customers, according to the airline, have assumed that the prayer cards were the idea of former CEO Bruce Kennedy, a devout Presbyterian and elder in his church.

The letter to frequent fliers explains that it came from a marketing executive who thought the cards would be a good way to set Alaska Airlines apart.

With the Alaska Airlines decision, no major U.S. air carrier provides prayer cards. (RNS)

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EGYPT: A year of Arab Spring

Christians look past surface tension to real need

By Ava Thomas

Cairo—Lucy Hamilton* really can't explain it—even on a normal day, the air just feels strange in Tahrir Square.

People bustle about the giant traffic circle in downtown Cairo, going to the Egyptian Museum, to McDonald's, to kebab shops. Most days, Tahrir doesn't look anything like the place the world saw on the news a year ago—a square filled with thousands of angry protesters, government soldiers and tanks.

"But there's always a feeling when I go through there that something's about to happen," said Hamilton, a Christian worker who has spent time in Egypt.

The eerie feeling isn't eased by the fact that the burned-out government building of ousted president Hosni Mubarak sits on the circle, or that the walls of the large mosque nearby are covered with graffiti about the revolution.

"It just feels volatile even when nothing is really going on," Hamilton said.

That sentiment sums up most of Northern Africa and the Middle East ever since the Arab Spring began in Tunisia in December 2010, found its momentum in Egypt in January 2011, and spread across the region, experts say.

"In Egypt at least, there's a revolution attitude of, 'I can do what I want,' because people are disillusioned, desperate and the police force is unable to keep up with petty crime problems," Hamilton said.

Protests and violence still break out from time to time with little, if any, warning. And international news sources report that the Egyptian people don't feel like they have gotten the jobs, economic improvement, new opportunities or respect for which they passionately protested.

"Last year's revolution was not the revolution that activists ... had been dreaming of," reported BBC News' Robin Lustig in Egypt. "The winners, at least for now, were not the socialist and communist activists of Egypt's labor movement, but ... the Muslim Brotherhood and the ultra-conservative Salafi al-Nour party, who espouse an even stricter form of Islam."

The new Egyptian parliament met Jan. 23 for the first time since Mubarak was arrested, with Islamic political parties holding 73 percent of the parliament's seats, according to BBC News.

"Many people are still optimistic, but by far not all. One man I talked with said Egypt isn't ready for a democracy," said Beth Judson*, a local Christian worker.

"Another woman I spoke with is terrified of the new government. She became visibly upset talking about it and thinks things will be much worse."

The changes in Egypt haven't been as deep as many expected, but they still have made a region-wide impact, said Nik Ripken*, who has served 25 years with the International Mission Board and is an expert on the persecuted church in Muslim contexts.



"I believe that the Arab Spring and what has happened in Egypt has begun to redefine the Arab if not the entire Muslim world," Ripken said. "What has happened to Mubarak has so terrified the leaders of countries like Yemen and Syria ... that no dictator or leader is now willing to participate in a peaceful transition to a more democratic or less corrupt form of government."

It seems to those leaders that the only option is to die or go to jail, he said.

The people seem to want something as different as possible from the leadership they had—and that may mean a more Islamic form of government, Ripken added.

Citizens of these countries may have viewed their leaders as "something less than true, practicing Muslims" because of their dictator-like rule and ties with the West, Ripken pointed out. "So, what I would expect of these countries, if they do actually experience something nearing an Arab Spring, is that the population in general will turn to Islam more now than before."

But with this, much like Tahrir Square on its peaceful days, things may not be exactly as they appear, Ripken said.

"This is not necessarily a bad thing from a believer's point of view, because having conversations concerning faith and religion are more important for us than conversations about government and corruption," he said. "Often it is in the most conservative of Muslim hearts that we are finding God appearing to them in dreams and visions and sending them on a spiritual pilgrimage that can last for years, where they secretly read the Bible many times and have quiet discussions with followers of Jesus Christ."

Hamilton said a sense of hopelessness in the government also can bring them to Christ.

"We hear that many are turning to the one whose kingdom is just and merciful and has no end," she said. "The church in Egypt also seems to be waking up as never before. It is great to watch Him use His church in the work of revolutionizing hearts." (IMB/BP)

*Names changed for security reasons.

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3/19	Graefenburg Baptist, Waddy
3/20	Northside Baptist, E-town
3/26	Immanuel Baptist, Pikeville
3/27	Unity Baptist, Ashland



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Take charge

Failing to establish or update one's estate plan can have dire results

Why do so many adults procrastinate when it comes to putting in place an estate plan, especially given the risks and potential costs to one's family by not having a plan in place if he or she becomes incapacitated or dies?

From our experiences, we have discovered some common themes among those who have confessed to being procrastinators. Some simply dread pondering matters related to death and incapacity. Others find it awkward to discuss such matters with family members or professional advisers. In some instances, people conjecture such planning will be too costly and an unnecessary expense given their modest estates.

Taking charge and planning ahead is worth the effort and expense—and it's biblical. The Apostle Paul warned the Christians of his day, and now us Christians today, if we did not anticipate future possibilities and realities and put in place a plan to accommodate them, we have "denied the faith and are worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8). By planning ahead, you are in control of how and when that which God has

entrusted to you will pass to your heirs and your charitable interests when you are no longer around or no longer capable of managing it.

Failing to have a plan, or update one's outdated plan, is the biggest mistake one can make. Therefore, it behooves you to take charge and not procrastinate any longer. Get those important documents, like a will, power of attorney, health care surrogate designation and living will directive, prepared, updated and executed promptly.

We suggest you engage an attorney who practices in the estate planning field. We discourage the use of do-it-yourself online forms. An estate planning attorney will be able to produce the documents that are tailor made to your particular situation and which conform to the laws of your state.

To the extent we can help you get started with the process, please call us toll-free. There is no cost for an estate stewardship consultation. Also, invite us to conduct a free Christian estate planning seminar in your church.

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

Ky. Baptist Foundation



Barry Allen



February

- 9** Strength in Numbers Deacon Ministry Training, Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah.
- 9-11** Basic Training Journey for Church Planting, Kentucky Baptist Building, Louisville.
- 10-11** Imagine Preschool and Children's Ministry Conference, Parkway Baptist Church, Bardstown.
- 14** GuideStone Live Church Compensation Issues Conference, Griffin Gate Marriott Hotel, Lexington.
- 15** GuideStone Live Church Compensation Issues Conference, Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.
- 16** GuideStone Live Church Compensation Issues Conference, Kentucky Baptist Building, Louisville.
- 17** RA Region 1 Congress and Rally, Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah.
- 27-28** Evangelism Conference, Porter Memorial Baptist Church, Lexington.
- 28** Evangelism Conference Women's Emphasis, Porter Memorial Baptist Church, Lexington.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Campbellsville University will hold a Kentucky Heartland Institute on Public Policy event Feb. 9, 5 p.m., with **Doug Bandow**, senior fellow with the Cato Institute in Washington, as guest speaker, in the banquet hall of the Badgett Academic Support Center on campus. The event is free and open to the public.

■ **FARMINGTON**—Bell City Church recently called **Presley Lamm** as pastor.

■ **FRANKFORT**—Buck Run Church will hold a Valentine's cooking class for kids Feb. 11, 3 p.m. **Her-**

shael York is pastor.

Crestwood Church will show the movie "Fireproof" Feb. 12, 6 p.m. **Michael Hail** is pastor.

■ **HENDERSON**—Immanuel Temple recently called **Ken Gazaway** as pastor. He previously was pastor at First Church of Owasso, Okla.

■ **HOPKINSVILLE**—First Church will hold a nursery Valentine play date for kids Feb. 11, 9 a.m., with games and a crafts time making cards for shut-in members. **Rick Stevens** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—**Jason Allen** recently resigned as pastor of Carlisle

Avenue Church. **Brad Walker** recently was called as pastor. He previously was family equipping pastor at Trinity Church in Southaven, Miss.

Green Acres Church will host Long Run Association's personal evangelism training event Feb. 11, 10 a.m. **Phil Ellis** is pastor.

Parkland Church will hold a story time night for preschoolers Feb. 10, 6 p.m., featuring dinner, activities and bedtime stories. **Tom Curry** is pastor.

St. Matthews Church will hold an Upward Sports Day Feb. 10, 10 a.m., with former University of Louisville and NFL wide receiver Scott Long as guest speaker. There will be a free throw shooting contest and all families that attend will receive a DVD copy of "Facing the Giants." **Greg Barr** is pastor.

Spotlight on ...

Morganfield



First Church will celebrate its anniversary Feb. 12 with KBC Assistant Executive Director **Steve Thompson**, a former pastor at the church, as guest speaker. **Tim Leadingham** is pastor.

■ **RADCLIFF**—Mill Creek Church recently called **T.B. Smith** as pastor.

■ **WILLIAMSBURG**—First Church will hold a "Where's Your Heart?" event Feb. 12, 5 p.m., with food, fellowship and trivia.

■ **WINCHESTER**—Heritage Church recently called **Tim Christopher** as pastor.

Kentucky Baptist Chorales in concert in February, March

Louisville—Men and women from across Kentucky will share their vocal talents through praise and worship in three free upcoming concerts.

The Kentucky Baptist Chorales are comprised of music ministers, pastors and church members from congregations across the commonwealth. The groups perform around the state a few times each year. They also undertake mission projects in Kentucky, North America and elsewhere overseas.

The men's chorale will be at Friendship Baptist Church in Paducah on Feb. 16. The concert begins at 7 p.m. local time.

The women's chorale sings at Sand Spring Baptist Church in

Lawrenceburg on March 4 at 7 p.m., local time.

The chorales will perform a combined concert on March 22 at Little Flock Baptist Church in Shepherdsville. The event begins at 7 p.m., local time.

Directing the men's chorale this year is Tony Cunha, assistant professor of music at Campbellsville University. The accompanist is Chris Kihn, minister of music at Hurstbourne Baptist Church in Louisville.

Sue Ellen Ballard of Central Baptist Church in Paris directs the women's chorale. The accompanist is Nevalyn Moore, a freelance musician, who is retired from Campbellsville University. (KBC)

GuideStone Live coming to Kentucky

Dallas—GuideStone Financial Resources' is bringing its GuideStone Live tour to Kentucky. The free events include seminars, health check-ups, food, giveaways and GuideStone representatives available to answer financial questions.

The Kentucky events are scheduled for Feb. 14 at Griffin Gate Marriott Hotel in Lexington; Feb. 15 at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown; and Feb. 16 at the Kentucky Baptist Building in Louisville. All three events run from

8 a.m.-1 p.m.

"We are always looking for ways to better connect with and serve our participants," said O.S. Hawkins, president of GuideStone Financial Resources. "GuideStone Live allows us to meet with our participants face to face, answer their questions on the spot, and help them stay on a solid financial path."

Throughout the day, participants can choose from 12 seminars. Those who plan to attend can learn more www.KyBaptist.org/GuideStoneLive. (GS)

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RESOURCES: Do you need a church pianist? Try our piano CDs for churches to sing by. Hymns, Easter, choruses and more. Free demo. Special church pricing. Worship Service Resources, (877) 977-6800. www.wsrpianocds.com.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music and youth for West Corbin Baptist Church. We are seeking God's man to serve with us in leading our music and youth programs. Please send resumé to: Music/Youth Search Committee, West Corbin Baptist Church, 200 Walden Ave., Corbin, KY 40701.

SEEKING: Full-time director of children for Elkton Baptist Church. We are looking for someone who is a team player, energetic, self-motivated, well organized and can relate to children, parents and the rest of the church. A bachelor's degree and experience are a plus. Send or email resumé to Elkton Baptist Church, PO Box 547, Elkton, KY 42220; or ericharris@mchsi.com.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of church administration for Calvary Baptist Church located in Oak Ridge, Tenn. A degree in church administration with a minimum of five years experience in church administration is requested; Shelby computer software experience is a plus, as well as the ability to provide pulpit relief for the senior pastor. Please submit your resumé and salary requirements to personnel@calvarybapcbc.com; or mail to: Personnel Committee, Calvary Baptist Church, 163 N. Jefferson Cir., Oak Ridge, TN 37830.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music at First Baptist Church, 425 Eastern Bypass, Richmond, Ky. Qualified candidates should possess at least a bachelor's degree in music, a seminary degree from an accredited seminary, or be enrolled and actively pursuing a seminary degree. It is preferred that candidates have a minimum of three years experience in church music ministry. Our church profile and job description may be viewed at www.firstbaptistnet.com.

Applicants may send resumé to First Baptist Church, 425 Eastern Bypass, Richmond, KY 40475, Attn: Search Committee; or email to fbcrésumes@firstbaptistnet.com. Resumé must be received by March 2, 2012.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of students to lead youth and children's ministries. Must have a college degree with experience in youth and children's ministry. Please send resumé to First Baptist Church, PO Box 327, Paris, KY 40362, Attn: Gary Ellcessor.

SEEKING: Full-time senior pastor, First Baptist Church, Bethany, Mo. (www.fbc-bethany.org). Conservative Southern Baptist Church affiliated with SBC, MBC; adhering to 2000 Baptist Faith & Message. Send resumé to Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 302 N. 22nd St., Bethany, MO 64424; or email pastorsearch@fbcbethany.org.

SEEKING: Part-time worship leader for blended services and leading an adult choir at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, Nicholasville, Ky. Phone toll-free: (877) 770-1677 or (859) 224-0383. Email: stan.n.frazier@gmail.com. Web: www.mtpleasantbaptist.net.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music, students and family ministries. Responsible for the music worship and the growth and development of student and family ministries. A BS or BA in music or related field; master's degree preferred. Full job description is available on request. Submit resumé to First Baptist Church Fulton, PO Box 1140, Fulton, KY 42041; or email office@fbcfulton.org.

SEEKING: Pastor, First Baptist Church, Williamsburg, Ky. Located in a small town near a university, actively engaged in local missions, including a food pantry, home repair ministry, outdoorsmen ministry,

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Center Shot, Upward Basketball, a quilting ministry, and distribution of necessities to the needy, including coats, shoes, hygiene items and laundry detergent. FBC supports missions worldwide, including missions supported by Samaritan's Purse, Compassion International, SBC and CBF. Church is seeking new avenues of ministry and outreach. Candidates should have completed Master of Divinity; pastoral experience desired. Submit resumé to fbcoffice@gmail.com; or mail to First Baptist Church, 230 S. 5th St., Williamsburg, KY 40769.

SEEKING: Full-time Southern Baptist pastor for Grace Baptist Church, located 7 miles south of Pikeville at Shelbiana, Ky. (rural Pike County in Eastern Kentucky). Seminary preferred. Average Sunday worship attendance: 105-130. Church provides part-time secretary. Send resumé to Grace Baptist Church, c/o Larry F. Compton, 7129 Millard Hwy., Pikeville, KY 41501-8101.

TOUR: 11-day Holyland and Jordan tour, departing Oct. 29. All-inclusive \$3,798. Contact pastors Jack Studie, (270) 889-7604; or Foy Back, (270) 922-1084 for a color brochure. Email jstudie@aol.com, or back.judy@yahoo.com.

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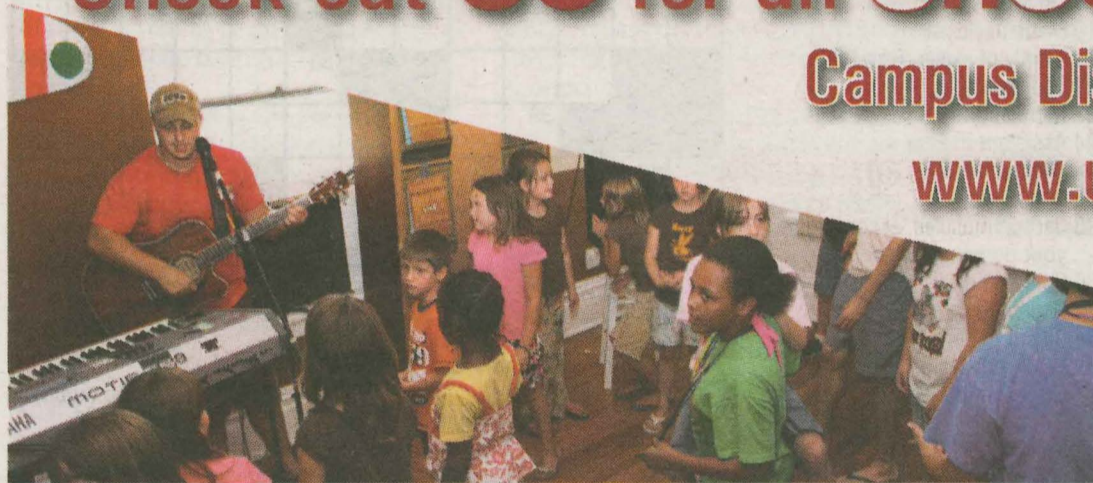
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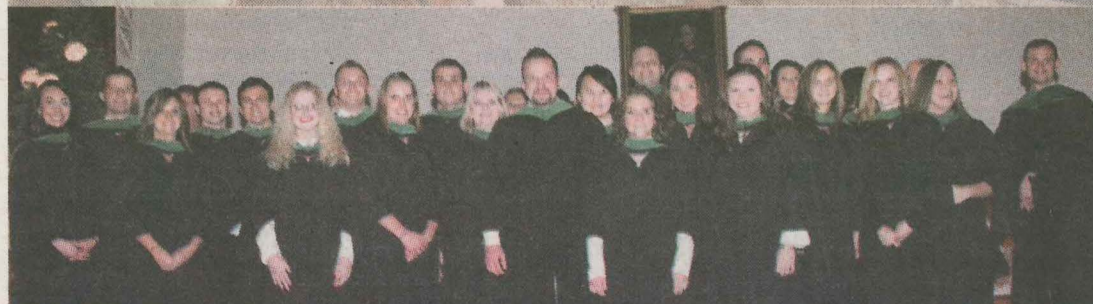
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