

# WESTERN Recorder

March 20, 2012

Shine Like Stars \* Philippians 2:15

Volume 186, Issue 11

## More than an empty box

Texas ministry offers tornado victims place to store belongings, words of encouragement

By Robin Bass

**West Liberty**—Southern Baptist disaster relief comes in many forms. Sometimes it sounds like the whine of chain-saws. Other times it fills hungry bellies with hot meals. Often the relief Baptists offer in times of disaster is a softly spoken prayer with a loving embrace.

Then, there are times when it simply looks like a box—a cardboard box to be exact. A container just large enough to collect and protect valuables or precious mementos not destroyed by flooding waters, hurricane winds or—in the case of West Liberty—deadly tornadoes like the one that ripped through the eastern Kentucky community March 2.

“At the very beginning of a disaster, people need boxes,” said Cindy Wesch, a vice president in charge of the box ministry of Ellis Baptist Association out of Waxahachie, Texas. “We provide them so folks don’t have to go to Walmart and pay \$4 a box.”

In less than two days, disaster relief volunteers from the Baptist General Convention of Texas distributed 2,200 cardboard boxes in Kentucky’s hardest-hit area. West Liberty residents also received plenty of tape and packing paper to secure what was left of their belongings.

Wesch, who made the 2,500-mile, two-day trip with three other Texas Baptists, said while the service they provide is meeting a need, it is what comes with the boxes that really nourishes the souls of disaster victims.

Each family or homeowner benefiting from the ministry also receives a handwritten note by a child expressing God’s love for them and the promise of His eternal faithfulness.

□ See Box ministry ... Page 3



Betty Golden chats with a West Liberty homeowner after providing him with free packing supplies last week. Golden and a team of Baptist General Convention of Texas Disaster Relief volunteers from Ellis Baptist Association in Waxahachie, Texas, brought thousands of cardboard boxes, tape and other supplies to Kentucky as part of their disaster relief box ministry. (Photo courtesy of Cindy Wesch/Ellis Baptist Association)

## Syria Believers ponder gospel movement in war-torn nation

By Ava Thomas

**Damascus, Syria**—For a long time, Syrians were complacent. At least that’s how one person familiar with Syria described the people of the war-torn country.

Syrians were “a people who felt they were more blessed than others because natural disasters and wars had not been a part of their modern history,” Dan David\* said.

But over the past year, war has broken out, bloodshed has escalated and people have run for the country’s borders with their children in arms. The peace they enjoyed has been shattered.

“The news coming out of Syria—and there is much of it—shows their situation is bleak,” said Natalie Shepherd\*, a Christ follower who lived and worked in the country.

But there’s a big question mark over how much good news is making it in to Syria, David said. The chances are slim that many Christ followers from the outside are left in the country to share the gospel.

So, then, who is on the inside?

Seven percent of the population is

“Christian,” a title that’s more indicative of a passed-down identity than personal relationship with Christ, David said. It’s a long heritage—Syria’s capital, Damascus, is the place where Paul met up with Christ followers for the first time as a fellow believer rather than as a persecutor, according to the Book of Acts.

“During the first century A.D., the news about Jesus went into all Syria (Matthew 4:24), but only centuries later this cradle of Christianity became the cradle of Islam,” David pointed out.

Over the past several decades, the gospel has been shared with small pockets of people, with rough starts and stops. But believers still are there, however few, according to evangelical leaders familiar with the area.

“Today, as far as we can tell, less than 1 percent of the population of Syria knows Jesus,” Shepherd said. “Pray that millions of Syrian families who live inside and outside the country will begin to follow Jesus during this monumental upheaval in their homeland.”

The unrest has shaken the country’s people to their core, Shepherd said.

□ See Believers in Syria ... Page 7



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# Ky. Baptists shifting to long-term DR response

By Dannah Prather

**Louisville**—To help survivors of the March 2 tornadoes, Baptists across Kentucky, including those serving through Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief, are shifting their focus from emergency response to long-term assistance.

Cindy Henderson, ministry assistant with the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Baptist Men on Mission department, said much work remains to be done in the hardest-hit areas of the commonwealth, but many immediate needs have been met.

"We're transitioning from removing trees from houses and cooking meals to basic debris removal," Henderson said.

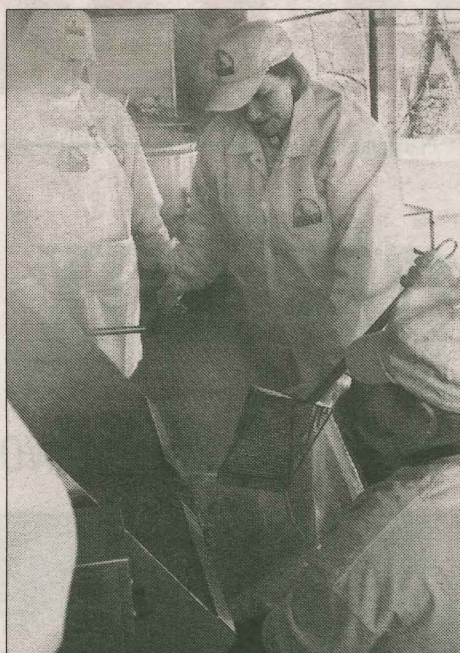
Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief staging areas in Debord and London have closed. The team from First Baptist Church of Louisa also has completed its work.

The staging area in Crittenden closed several days ago but Henderson said Northern Kentucky Baptist Association Disaster Relief continues to serve through cleanup and chaplaincy in the devastated Piner community in Kenton County.

North Carolina Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers left Haven of Rest in Debord, joining another North Carolina group already serving in Salyersville. Their mobile kitchen provided meals to displaced residents through the weekend.

The Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief mobile kitchen and shower unit left West Liberty late last week, in addition to the Ohio Baptist convention's child care unit that took over when the Kentucky unit stood down after several days of ministry.

It was the first deployment of the new



**THE KITCHEN IS CLOSED** The Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief mobile kitchen unit in West Liberty was one of several in the state that served more than 18,000 hot meals in the aftermath of the March 2 tornadoes. The unit recently closed down as disaster relief efforts in the state turn now to long-term assistance. (Photo by Robin Bass)

child care unit spearheaded by Christian County Baptist Association. Kentucky Baptists cared for 34 children, allowing parents time to secure temporary housing and take other steps on the road to recovery.

"Serving those children and families was the most wonderful thing," said Greta Wilson of London. She and her husband, Ron, were among the volunteers with the unit in West Liberty.

Wilson said God used compassionate care and gospel-centered activities to

speak to the heart of a 7-year-old girl who accepted Christ as her Savior.

Kentucky Baptist volunteers know of 18 other people who accepted Christ as Savior through the work of disaster relief since the March 2 storms that killed 23 in the commonwealth.

So far, Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief has prepared more than 18,000 hot meals and provided showers for nearly 300 people and laundry service for about 100 tornado victims.

Through various teams spread across London, Louisa, Salyersville, West Liberty and in Grant, Johnson, Laurel, Magoffin, Menifee, Morgan and Pendleton counties, teams completed 223 chainsaw jobs and 134 clean-up jobs.

And the work continues. The clean-up and recovery unit from Long Run Baptist Association has headed to Morehead to assist residents in that area.

Sixty students from Morehead State University Baptist Campus Ministry will devote their spring break this week to helping residents in West Liberty and elsewhere in the Morgan County area.

Through Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief, more than 7,000 individuals have been trained to respond to natural and man-made crises with an array of services. Kentucky Baptists are part of a larger network of Southern Baptist volunteers that comprise the third largest relief organization in the United States.

On March 10, more than 400 people attended training at Porter Memorial Baptist Church in Lexington. It was the second-largest single day of training ever for Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief.

The final training opportunity this spring is April 14 at First Baptist Church of London. Register at [www.KyBaptist.org/DRTraining](http://www.KyBaptist.org/DRTraining). (KBC)

## Douglas Carver to lead NAMB chaplaincy team

By Mickey Noah

**Alpharetta, Ga.**—Retired U.S. Army Chief of Chaplains (Major General) Douglas Carver has been appointed executive director of chaplain services for the North American Mission Board in Alpharetta, Ga., with the goal of taking Southern Baptist chaplaincy to a "new level."



Douglas Carver

In the newly created position, Carver, 60, will lead NAMB's chaplaincy team by casting its vision and future strategy.

The day-to-day operations and management of NAMB's chaplaincy group will continue under team leader Keith Travis, who will report directly to Carver. Although Carver's experience is with military chaplaincy, he will provide leadership and support to all NAMB chaplains.

Carver said he hopes to forge a tighter relationship between NAMB chaplaincy and Southern Baptists.

"Historically, chaplaincy has always been an extension of the ministry of the local church," he said. "I hope to help churches see more clearly how God works through chaplains in the military and in other institutions."

Chaplaincy dovetails easily with NAMB's current overarching priority of church planting, Carver said.

"Our chaplains frequently minister in places where the church hasn't been or cannot go, especially in dangerous or desperate situations where people need pastoral care," Carver said. "As a result of their providing what we refer to as 'ministry of presence,' chaplains often find themselves planting churches where they serve in their various institutional and community settings."

Before retiring in the summer of 2011, the two-star general spent 38 years in the U.S. Army, 27 of them as an Army chaplain. In 2007, he became the first Southern Baptist in 50 years to be promoted to chief of chaplains for the Army, based at the Pentagon. In that post, he was responsible for some 2,900 chaplains in the active Army, the Army Reserves and the National Guard.

A native of Rome, Ga., Carver graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of Tennessee. After serving on active duty for six years, he resigned his commission to enter the ministry. He was commissioned as an Army chaplain in 1984.

Carver also is a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and the Army War College in Carlisle, Pa. An ordained Southern Baptist minister, Carver has led churches in Kentucky, Colorado and Virginia. (NAMB/BP)

## Round-the-clock day care growing trend among parents

**Cleveland**—NBC Nightly News recently highlighted a growing demand for round-the-clock day cares, where children are tucked into bed at night by workers while their single parents work late shifts.

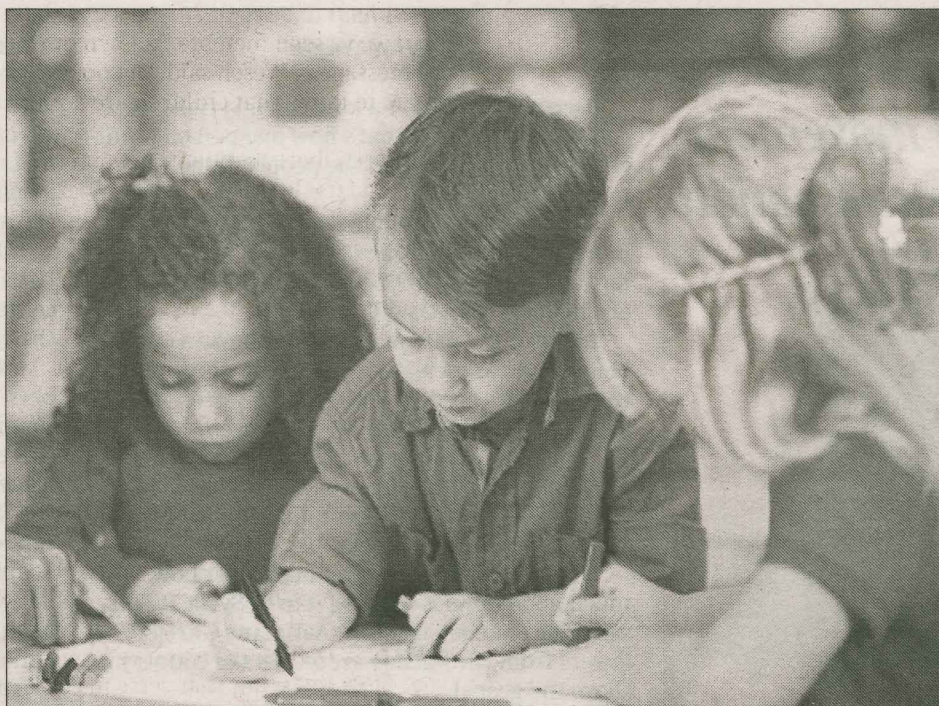
More than 40 percent of the American labor force works early in the morning, late at night or on weekends, NBC News said, and the depressed economy means parents cannot always choose their hours or are forced to take second jobs to make ends meet.

So, at ABC & Me Childcare in a Cleveland suburb, on some days, the first child is dropped off at 1:30 a.m. and the last child usually is picked up around midnight, according to the NBC News report. When the center opened in 2007, the non-traditional hours were the first slots to be filled.

"Nine-to-five jobs are a dream," one single mother who works as a waitress at a Bob Evans restaurant told the network.

Children at ABC & Me eat dinner at day care and then watch television while winding down on cots with blankets and pillows, waiting for a late-night ride home.

"They're cooks, they're caretakers, they're mothers, they're aunts, they're sisters, they're friends—they're everything," said Tiffany Bickley, whose



6-year-old daughter is at day care from the time she leaves kindergarten until around 9 at night. The center's staff, she said, is "exactly what I am, just in a different form."

NBC News said ABC & Me estimates that about 85 percent of their clients are single parents, and a similar portion of

those parents receive state assistance to pay for child care.

Experienced babysitters typically are paid \$10 or \$15 per hour, Bickley said, but she only makes \$10 an hour as a restaurant cook. Bickley said she pays only \$29 per week for the care her daughter receives at ABC & Me. (BP)

# Southern Indiana tornado victims declare: 'God is still good'

By John Evans

Henryville, Ind.—A family picks through a heap of ruins that was once their home, grabbing a piece of plywood spared by the tornado. They nail the wood to a tree and spray paint it with a simple message: "God is still good."

"What is that a picture of?" asked Toby Jenkins, pastor of First Baptist Church of Henryville, Ind. "That's a picture of people who don't find their hope in homes or cars. They find their hope in Christ. And it's beautiful to see that being lived out in our community."

Henryville, like other communities in Indiana, is struggling to piece itself back together after a March 2 tornado that obliterated entire neighborhoods. Amid the monumental task ahead, local believers and Southern Baptist volunteers are shining a light through their faith and service.

"I have just been overwhelmed by folks who see the body of Christ in a whole different way," said Cecil Seagle, executive director of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana. "They would not likely have come to a service at one of our churches. ... But I'm telling you, the pastor in Marysville and the pastor in Henryville have been out there, and townsfolk are gathering around them and have just said, 'What can we do to help?'"

Seagle said the recovery continues at a fairly rapid pace, with debris clearing by hand coming to an end. Heavy equipment-oriented cleanup comes next, along



**CLEANUP CONTINUES** Steve Olivas (left) of Lifeway Baptist Church in Ellettsville, Ind., Ron Henry (middle) of White River Baptist Church in Bloomfield, Ind., and Tony Martin of Paoli Baptist Church in Paoli, Ind., clear out downed trees and brush as part of a Southern Baptist Disaster Relief recovery effort in Henryville, Ind. (Photo by Richard Fow/NAMB)

with the enormous challenges facing homeowners who are seeking to rebuild. He said Southern Baptist disaster relief leaders recently met to determine how they can assist families—especially the uninsured and under-insured—in reconstruction.

"This bend in the road is pretty serious, because as the debris goes, a lot that was filled with debris is now vacant,

which is a hugely startling reality where once stood their home," Seagle said.

In Henryville, First Baptist Church serves as a ministry center, running a free store for needy residents and coordinating volunteers who do everything from nailing tarps on roofs to counseling people. The church also has held a free medical clinic.

"Anything people could possibly need

there, we're trying to take care of it," Jenkins said.

Jenkins has encouraged his congregation—which has shared in the struggles of the entire town—using the first chapter of 1 Peter, where the apostle writes to believers that trials prove the genuineness of their faith and bring honor to Christ.

"Basically what (Peter is) saying is that our faith is precious, because it's in these times of trials, in these times when we get hit by tornadoes and things, that we really get to see the genuineness of our faith, and I really just hammered home the fact that that's what I've seen," Jenkins said.

As his community moves forward, Jenkins said he and other volunteers want to rebuild homes, a task that cannot be accomplished by donating goods.

"I hate even saying this," he said, "but it's the truth: What we need more than anything is money so we can rebuild homes."

He asked for prayer that God will open the hearts of people in his community to the gospel, that they will believe it and that it will impact their lives. To that end, he labors day in and day out, grateful for the support Southern Baptist churches have poured into him, and insistent that he will not let up.

Though the challenges ahead remain daunting, Seagle said he believes God's power seen through the efforts of servants like Jenkins and other Southern Baptists will transform even this bleak reality into a picture of God's love. (BP)

## Box ministry

*Continued from page 1*  
Sometimes the message is a Bible passage or the words "Jesus loves you" scrawled in crayon. Younger children are given stickers with verses printed on them and encouraged to draw pictures for victims.

"Men tend to be stoic during a disaster, but we've seen men break down over these messages," Wesch said. "It chokes them up to know that children are doing this."

For West Liberty residents, it was children from First Baptist Church of Inez who supplied the encouraging messages. Brian Owens, pastor of the Martin County church, said about 30 children and young adults spent their Sunday school and worship times March 11 sprawled across tables in the church basement with sheets of paper and baskets of crayons.

"I think it gives them a sense that they are doing something to help and be a part of what was going on other than watching it on TV," Owens said. "It's great for our kids to be a part of that seed-sowing process. It may not be until they unpack that (disaster victims) see the message that says, 'Jesus loves you,' or that Bible verse. But that verse may be what brings someone to Christ."

Wesch said when the box unit first began in 2006, volunteers would tell disaster victims to use the paper with the messages to wrap up their belongings. "But they wouldn't do it," she noted. "They would hang them up on the refrigerator or garage wall.

"Even though we come out with just

boxes, what we really are doing is working with children. That's where our ministry begins," Wesch added.

Before the first box is handed out, volunteers visit Sunday school classes, GA and RA groups and summer camps sharing the gospel and asking children to participate by writing notes to disaster victims. Then, volunteers help the children pray over their messages.

"They are just at the beginning of learning how to pray and to serve, and we get the opportunity to share that," Wesch said. "That is fun."

Coy Webb, head of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Disaster Relief ministry, said he first heard about the Texas Baptist's box ministry on March 7 through contacts at the North American Mission Board. Ellis Baptist Association's unit is one of three in the Texas convention.

"That's one of the great things about being a part of Southern Baptist Disaster Relief," Webb said. "We're never limited to the resources we have. We don't have to have everything in our state."

Wesch said Ellis Association is blessed to receive regular donations of remnant cardboard boxes from RockTenn Co. in Waxahachie, Texas. In the past, the association has received donated plastic zipper bags that are especially useful in areas destroyed by flooding.

The Texas box unit maintains approximately 6,000-8,000 boxes throughout the year and utilizes one trailer and a mobile storage container. The highest volume of boxes they have given away, Wesch said, was more than 14,000 during 2008 when hurricanes Dolly and Ike pounded the Texas coast. (WR)

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## Call now to support Payday Lending cap

As the state legislative session in Kentucky continues to progress, we have been able to celebrate some significant

### Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

decisions for the families of the commonwealth. The Religious Freedom Amendment was passed overwhelmingly by the state Senate. The Senate also soundly defeated the casino bill, as well as the so-called "Bullying Bill" that sought to give special rights to students who practice homosexuality.

Another item we hope to see addressed is payday lending. In short, payday lending is an easy to get, "short-term" loan available at a ridiculous interest rate.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention, meeting in its annual session Nov. 15 at Florence Baptist Church at Mt. Zion, passed a resolution calling for the capping of the interest rate on payday-type loans at 36 percent. The current loans, which can end up having triple-digit interest rates, tend to target the poor and can entrap them in an endless cycle of growing debt. The resolution, submitted by Joseph Owens, pastor of Shiloh Baptist Church in Lexington, appears here in a slightly shortened form:

**Whereas**, the Bible has spoken clearly about loaning money at interest (Exodus 22:25-28; Leviticus 25:35-37; Deuteronomy 23:19; Psalm 15:5),

**Whereas**, the Christian faith has historically opposed and deemed usurious loans at exorbitant rates of interest, especially to those who are poor,

**Whereas**, these products are predatory in nature, designed to entrap households in debt through a combination of high fees and short repayment periods resulting in interest rates as high as 391 percent APR (annual percentage rate),

**Whereas**, these lenders primarily serve people who are poor or in financial distress and often perpetuate and increase their financial distress rather than offer an avenue out of financial distress or foundation for fiscal stewardship,

**Whereas**, we recognize the sinful and fallen nature of human beings and the just role of government to protect people from predatory activity (Romans 13:3),

**Whereas**, 17 states and the District of Columbia protect their borders from predatory lending by enforcing two-digit interest rate caps and federal law establishes a maximum rate of 36 percent APR for small loans to military personnel,

**Be it resolved** that the Kentucky Baptist Convention encourages state and local units of government to restrain exorbitant interest by establishing a cap of 36 percent for all small loans and any other protections necessary to protect individuals from lending abuse.

When citizens speak out on an issue in Kentucky, our elected representatives often respond. Add your voice on this issue by calling Frankfort and expressing your support of the payday lending bill. Tell your representatives to protect consumers and cap payday loans at 36 percent. Call toll-free (800) 372-7181.

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

## Exchanging March Madness for March Gladness

On her Facebook page, my daughter posted a picture of a four-leaf clover that she found on the day before St. Patrick's Day "without even looking." Laura gleefully commented, "I guess I just got lucky." Earlier, we had a delightful repartee about her "great day" because she knew all the muscles in the leg—pretty important, I guess, for a nursing student. When I praised her for using the "muscle in her head," she quipped, "Nice try, Dad. The brain is an organ." I stand corrected. "Then, I guess you played it well," I retorted. Finding a rare object, doing well on a quiz, or engaging in a humorous exchange can bring some momentary joy—gladness.

If you have watched any of the NCAA basketball tournament—and I suppose you have if you live in Kentucky—you've probably seen the commercial where the guy asks, "Is it March monotony?" Then, he counters, "No, it's March Madness." After watching several games—and my wife thinks I've watched way too many already—such as Norfolk State upsetting Missouri and Lehigh stunning Duke (which for some strange reason brings a smile to UK fans), it's easy to understand why it is called "madness." Even when it is a "bracket-buster," you have to love the insanity of it all. It is amazing how a win can bring some momentary joy—gladness.

But where can one find true and lasting "March Gladness"—real hope in the midst of adversity? Psalm 118:29 is a good place to start: "Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; His faithful love endures forever." I often sing to my kids to wake them up in the morning. (Cruel, isn't it?—especially since I can't sing well.) Verse 24 is a favorite chorus: "This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." But don't miss the psalmist prayer that follows it: "LORD, save us! LORD, please grant us success!" Therein is the source of our true hope and joy. The Lord is mighty to save, and our real successes come not from our own strength, but from His. That's March Gladness!

In Psalm 122 we are reminded where to look for true gladness: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD." Rejoice, for we have freedom to worship God and we can enter His courts with praise, not fear. The psalmist understood: "I will praise You, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works. I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High" (Psalm 9:1-2). And, he knew he could find gladness

in God's Word: "The instruction of the LORD is perfect, renewing one's life; the testimony of the LORD is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise. The precepts of the LORD are right, making the heart glad; the command of the LORD is radiant, making the eyes light up" (Psalm 19:7-9). That's March Gladness!

Gladness, though, is not to be hoarded, kept to ourselves. Gladness is meant to be shared, lavished on others. We are instructed in Psalm 100 to "serve the LORD with gladness" and "come before Him with joyful songs." Why? Because we want others to "acknowledge that Yahweh is God" and to know "He made us, and we are His—His people, the sheep of His pasture." He cares for us. In Psalm 40, he elaborates, "Let all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; let those who love Your salvation continually say, The LORD is great! I am afflicted and needy; the Lord thinks of me. You are my helper and my deliverer...." And, though many pains come to the wicked, our comfort is found in knowing "the one who trusts in the LORD will have faithful love surrounding him." For that reason, we can "be glad in the Lord and ... shout for joy" (Psalm 32:10-11). That's March Gladness!

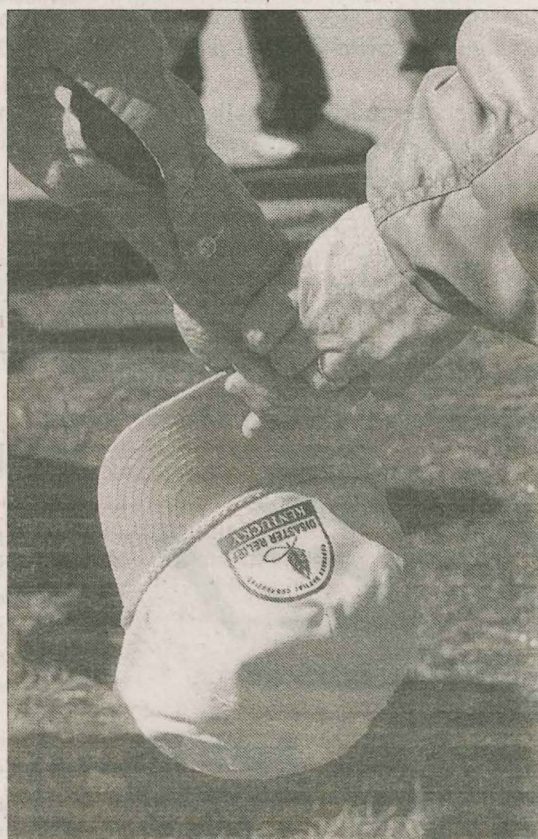
Greater still is the eternal gladness that John tells us of in Revelation 19: "Then I heard something like the voice of a vast multitude, like the sound of cascading waters, and like the rumbling of loud thunder, saying: Hallelujah, because our LORD God, the Almighty, has begun to reign! Let us be glad, rejoice, and give Him glory ...." Clovers soon wither and flowers of victory quickly fade, but our eternal security rests in the Lord Almighty.

That's the "grace in the whirlwind" that Cade Campbell, associate pastor of First Baptist Church of Henryville, discovered after the madness of a March tornado (see article on page 5). "The cross is the only secure shelter. The cross is the only endless hope," he declares. "When everything else is gone, the gospel is shown to be everything." And, that's the beauty Henryville pastor Toby Jenkins saw in a message that a devastated family painted on a sign and nailed to a tree: "God is still good" (see article on page 3). He affirmed, "That's a picture of people who don't find their hope in-homes or cars. They find their hope in Christ." With the psalmist we can rejoice: "The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped" (Psalm 28:7). That's March Gladness!



### After Thought

By Todd Deaton



*"May the LORD be praised, for He has heard the sound of my pleading. The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and I am helped. Therefore my heart rejoices, and I praise Him with my song."*  
Psalm 28:6-7

## WESTERN Recorder

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## Henryville: Finding grace from the whirlwind

By Cade Campbell

Henryville, Ind.—Tornado sirens have never bothered me. They have always been an annoyance. They test weekly. They seem to only go off at inconvenient times. I roll my eyes, sigh and patiently wait to return to dinner, obligations and plans I have made.

During my time as a pastor in Henryville, Ind., those high-pitched wails of the emergency sirens have become almost as monotonous as the regular trains that run through town not far from my apartment. The sirens are almost always false alarms.

That's what was before Friday, March 2. Before the day ended, I had experienced the terror of disaster as a powerful F4 tornado tore through Henryville while I and others sought shelter in our church basement.

It was a normal Friday afternoon. I had been in the church office. My wife Amy was getting off work at 2 o'clock. We were going to have a date night that evening—watch a movie and have dinner at home. By the time she arrived in town, however, the sirens were already blaring, calling us to seek shelter.

Since it was still early, we drove back to the church together to see if others were gathering there. Amy walked downstairs while I made my way outside to the front of the sanctuary where several families were coming into the basement and several others were watching the skies.

We heard the rumbling roar and felt the ground begin to shake long before we realized exactly what was

happening. As the winds began to pick up, I stood in the front parking lot and watched the tornado cross over the Interstate and crest the top of the hill in front of us.

Our little group, which included our senior pastor, Toby Jenkins, quickly ducked inside. I found Amy and held her as the building shook while the church windows exploded above us. As we crawled from the safety of the basement, we stumbled into a town radically different from the one we had left just moments before.

Henryville in many ways didn't exist. I stood with families who saw their homes in ruins for the first time, and watched the dazed wanderings of townspeople walking streets that were unrecognizable. It was shock. It couldn't be processed. So much was gone. Last year I had seen the images of Tuscaloosa and Joplin on the nightly news. Now I was walking around in that nightmare.

Storms grab your attention and refuse to let it go. The world is seen more clearly. Life becomes fragile again. The routine is mocked. Entitlement is erased. Who we are and what we have made ourselves believe we are is stripped bare by the relentless wind.

Throughout the Bible, storms have been used to snap individuals from their trance. We see this as Jonah is thrown into the raging waves. We hear it in the frantic cries of the disciples as they are tossed like leaves in the tempest of Galilee. We huddle with Job as he cowers before the tornado of God's presence.

Job's story in particular has repeatedly been on my mind during these last few days. Job demanded God's presence. He demanded to hear God's voice. And God gave a tornado—and not just an F4, but something worse—a raging, speaking whirlwind of glory (Job 38:1).

In the path of that storm Job is forced to confess, "I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you, therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6). When God appears in the whirlwind, Job is broken by the vision of God's grandeur and the truth of his own insignificance.

Walking amid the streets of Henryville, I had to confess that God is really big and my world is very tiny and frighteningly fragile. Yet in the midst of that overwhelming, sinking feeling, the brilliance of the gospel shone bright. When God appeared to Job, He was not destroying Job. He was giving to Job far more good than he could have ever dreamed or imagined. He was giving grace.

Job wanted to talk. Job wanted a theology lecture. Job wanted to feel important and right. Job wanted a revival service that fixed his friends and made him feel better.

What he got was a storm. What he got was God. Instead of giving to Job His answers and instead of giving to Job His judgment, God gave God. And that changed everything. The storm was a sweet vision of a sovereign God. It was, to use the phrase of C.S. Lewis, a severe mercy.

In the days since that terrible afternoon in Henryville, I have come to understand that our own whirlwind was mercy also. It was a gift.

It destroyed, but it also brought life. We have been overcome with examples of God's protection and preservation. The tornado humbled us, but it also forced us to look beyond the pathetic excuses of our own self-worth and self-strength to something that is far more powerful than our own efforts and far more powerful than a raging wind. In the helpless moments of disaster we are left with the only place we can go: the arms of a strong and mighty God who knows, who reigns and who loves.

The tornado in all its fury was nothing more than the merciful servant of God, used to prepare a way like a stormy John the Baptist. Ultimately, I believe that God gave the tornado to my town, and then

### FIRST PERSON

## Avoiding the 'summer slump'

By Doug Strader

Financial stewardship is a constant in the life of a church. Most churches have the special times of the year when they are having a financial emphasis

related to a special mission offering or a project that the church needs extra money to complete. But there are also those times of the year when there are no special projects, and many people for whatever reason do not get overly excited about bringing their tithes and offerings each Lord's day. That is why the church stewardship committee and the church staff need to find creative ways to talk with the church members about their financial stewardship commitments.

Financial stewardship testimonies are very good ways to add interest in the worship services and keep one's financial stewardship commitments in the forefront. When you use testimonies, make every effort to use people from a cross section of the church. Some of the best testimonies that I have heard have come from widows and widowers who were living on a meager fixed income. But the other side of the coin is that I have also been privileged to hear great testimonies from those who are more affluent.

Our incomes should not determine whether or not we will be faithful stewards of all that God has given to us. In the story of the poor widow's might in the Gospels, Jesus said that the widow who could only give a meager amount actually gave more than all the others put together because she gave all she had. While they gave a larger amount of money, they had money left after they gave.

People will soon be making plans for spring break and family vacations. Therefore, now is the time for churches to be proactive in keeping financial stewardship before the church family. Another alternative would be to contact the stewardship office at the Kentucky Baptist Convention to secure stewardship Bible study lessons to be used at the beginning of the summer season. The stewardship office may have other resources or suggestions for a mid-year emphasis.

Churches that do not plan for a "summer slump," but rather plan for a successful summer of faithful giving, usually come out ahead in almost every statistical category.

Doug Strader, retired director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's stewardship department, is pastor of Farmdale Baptist Church in Louisville.

## Does your marriage bear fruit?

By Valerie Vincent

On the way to the temple, Jesus pointed to a fig tree that was not bearing fruit. Although it was not the season for the tree to bear fruit, He wanted to teach the disciples that there are serious consequences when you do not produce what God has intended for you to produce.

Our culture teaches us that marriage and a love relationship is about us and for us. Is it?

Jesus praises the woman who pours out the perfume on Him, noting she will always be remembered for what she has done. We want God to pour out His love on us. We want God's great blessings. So what was marriage created for?

The fig tree causes us to pause and think about the fruit that our marriage produces. Is it bitter fruit that your children, neighbors and family must swallow to be around the two of you? What will that bitter fruit produce in the lives of those around you? Is the fruit your marriage produces attractive, but it has no taste, no substance? Is the fruit deceiving, only looking good? Does your marriage produce nothing?

The two of you are so unconnected that your marriage is barren, producing nothing that God intends. God intends for you, together, to produce good fruit—good to the eye and good to the taste.

Divorce in our culture produces a lot of bitter fruit. Unloving and unkind marriages also produce bitter fruit. Apathetic marriages produce no fruit.

If God stands looking at your marriage as Jesus stood and looked at the fig tree, what will be His verdict?

Valerie Vincent is a Christian counselor with Hardy Associates in Louisville.

let it be broadcast to the world for the beauty of the gospel being proclaimed to a town and a people who desperately need it. The gospel stands at the point where the terror of the tornado and the will of the wind-ruler meet. It is all about Him.

How foolish we would be to blind our eyes and make our own small storm the center of God's work. It is merely a pointer, stirring us to remember something far worse and far more beautiful. There was another spring day that grew dark. There was another Friday afternoon around three o'clock when the sky grew black and the ground shook with a mighty rumbling. There was another storm—and not a storm of dust and debris, but a storm of God's gracious judgment as He destroyed His own Son, Jesus Christ, in death.

In the wake of our own tragedies and in the path of ruins left from our own Friday afternoons, that is the only place to go. The cross is the only secure shelter. The cross is the only endless hope. When everything else is gone, the gospel is shown to be everything. I had heard of that with the hearing of the ear. Now my eye has seen it.

Cade Campbell is associate pastor of First Baptist Church of Henryville, Ind., and a student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.



# South African couple follows God's call to reach Connecticut

By Sara Shelton

**Norwich, Conn.**—Few understand doing whatever it takes to reach people for Christ better than Shaun Pillay.

Born and raised in South Africa, he and his wife, Deshni, arrived in the United States in 2007 as newlyweds. Having sold their possessions to finance their move, they brought only two pieces of luggage, a Bible, their wedding album and a resolve to follow God's call wherever it led them.

"It was a jump, a crazy leap," Pillay explained. "Everything was so different here, but Jesus remained the same and He saw us through. Every morning when we woke up we knew that this is where God wanted us to be."

Pillay was called to missions at a conference in Birmingham, England. "I remember one speaker

saying, "We need you to come to Europe and America. Our churches are dying."

He said he was surprised to hear of the need for missionaries in the U.S. Even more surprising was the fact that he knew God was calling him to be one.

"I never thought of it to be honest," Pillay said. "We hear of all that God is doing in Africa and other places like that, but it's sad to see what's going on in places like Europe and America with regards to church. When I heard about the need, I just felt God telling me, 'Shaun, you go.'"

God sent Pillay and his wife to Norwich, Conn., a far cry from the home they'd known in South Africa. With a population of 40,000, the city is full of history and diversity. Once marked by money and influence, it now is equally marked by economic struggle, homelessness and drug use.

"We looked at the homeless population, the drug problems in Norwich, and just knew there needed to be a light in the city," Pillay recalled. "We had compassion as Jesus did, looking on the multitudes and seeing them just waiting like sheep without a shepherd."

Since their arrival, the Pillays' goal has been to lead and love people just as

Christ does. They started Cornerstone International Church to offer those in Norwich a place to gather and grow in Christ. And it has been from the moment the doors opened.

David Holland arrived at Cornerstone as a carpet cleaner, hired to help spruce up the building before the church's launch in 2007. Known as a drug dealer and often in trouble with the law, Holland was worn out and searching.

Never one to pass up an opportunity to build a relationship, Pillay stayed with Holland as he worked and spent the afternoon talking and sharing with him, ultimately inviting him to the launch.

"David was in the congregation that Easter Sunday when we launched our church," Pillay recalled. "As we were wrapping up, he came forward and accepted

Jesus Christ."

Just last year Holland became the first deacon at Cornerstone and is working alongside Pillay to reach the city of Norwich for the name of Christ.

"God put Shaun right there in my life," Holland said, "and he's seen me through so much. He's a good man—a man of God. And everybody I introduce him to just falls in love with him and his passion for the people and the city."

Holland's transformation not only has been a testimony to the power of God but also the influence of Pillay.

Weeks after Holland's salvation, the two ran into a group of policemen who knew Holland as the drug dealer and troublemaker he once was. Holland explained his months-long absence from the legal system as the direct result of his newfound presence in Christ.

"The men were obviously moved," Pillay recalled. "They said, 'I wish all the drug dealers in the city would come to know your Jesus if this is the result.'"

For Pillay, this exchange was just a small step in changing not just one life, but the entire city of Norwich. Though the work is slow, he said he recognizes that every conversation and every seed planted is a victory for Christ. (NAMB)



**REACHING NORWICH** ■ Top: Shaun Pillay (left), a North American Mission Board missionary in Norwich Conn., baptizes Matt Mowery (center) in a swimming pool, with David Holland, a deacon at Cornerstone International Church, assisting. Holland, an former drug dealer, also was led to Christ by Pillay. ■ Above: Pillay talks with Derrick Shelby, a local barber who was led to Christ by the Connecticut church planter. Pillay now leads a weekly Bible study at Shelby's barbershop. Pillay is among the missionaries featured as part of the annual Week of Prayer for North American Missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering which helps fund Pillay and other missionaries like him. (Photos by Peter Field Peck/NAMB)



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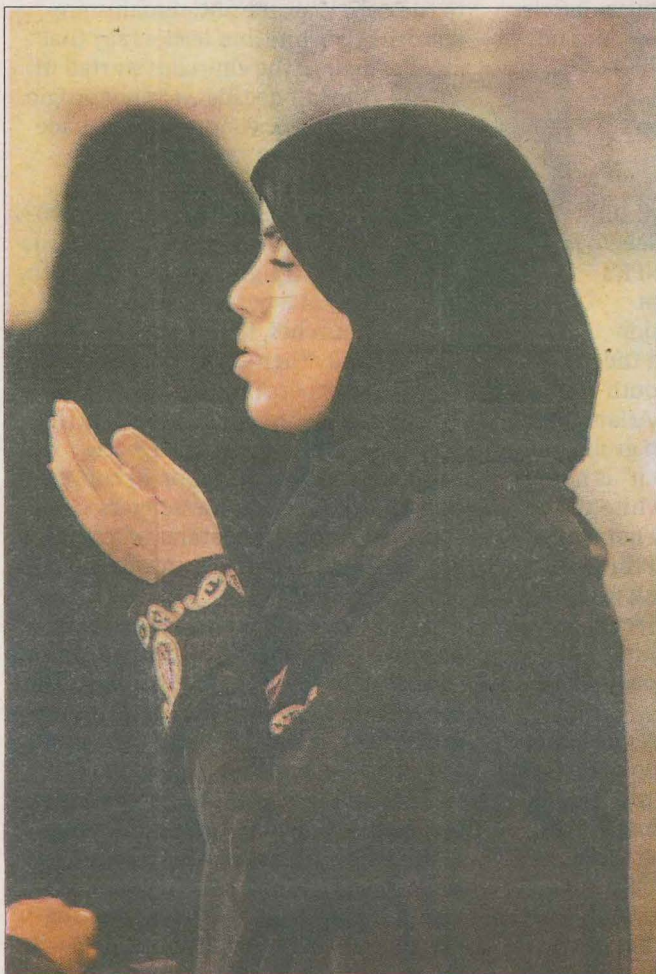
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## Believers in Syria pray for gospel movement

Continued from page 1

"Fear and apprehension about what will happen next is eroding most Syrian families' sense of wellbeing, leaving them with a huge deficit of hope," she



said. "Many Syrian families face desperate physical needs for warmth, food and shelter, permeated by emotional trauma—the death of loved ones, gunfire night and day and the bombing of their homes. Many families are filled with fear, wondering if and when the fighting will come to their neighborhood."

Recent news images show the city of Homs bombed out, people freezing in the snow and struggling to get the injured to medical care. On March 8, CNN footage showed some injured people chained to beds in hospitals, torture devices close at hand.

The Syrian death toll from the past year teeters around 8,500, according to The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

"Now most of the people in Damascus and all over the country are living their daily lives in fear and uncertainty as the country is being torn apart by fighting, arrests, torture and death," David said. "This is a time when good news is des-



perately needed. The people of Syria need the Prince of Peace right now in such an urgent way."

And many are finding him as they flee into other countries, Christian leaders say.

"People are running across the border into Lebanon, leaving everything behind, bringing only the clothes they are wearing," said Josef, a pastor in Lebanon.

And as they do, they've been met by believers happy to share with them the reason they have hope, Josef said.

"You can't share the gospel as freely in Syria, so these people have never heard it before," said Sam Lawson, a Christian worker in the Middle East. "In a short period of time, we've been able to share with the same number of Syrians that it would take us months and

months to share with in Syria."

Some have believed, and house groups grow stronger by the day among the refugees, he said.

"There are several key families where the believers are focusing and investing their time, and the gospel continues to go out wherever they go," Lawson said. "But the enemy attacks in various ways, so a key prayer request ... is that nothing distracts from the word going out among the refugees and that it will bear lasting fruit."

They also are praying that new Syrian believers will take the gospel back with them into their country as they return.

Believers in the region have asked for Christians in the West to pray for Syria every time they see that nation in the news. (IMB)

\*Names changed for security reasons



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## Our history, part 10

**1996:** An anonymous donor offered Oneida a half-million-dollar endowment fund if OBI could raise a matching amount. An overwhelming response more than met the goal in four months.

**1997:** Ten new apartments for faculty were dedicated. Pattie Sparks Midkiff Hall, a new day care for staff children, was dedicated. A third large walk-in freezer was added.

**1998:** John and Erma Smith Hall, the new home of the James A. Boswell Print Shop and the Bill Goins Friendship House, was dedicated. Central air conditioning was installed in the dormitories. A fourth walk-in freezer was added. A second computer lab opened. Oneida became one of only three private schools allowed to participate in the national FFA organization.

(This is where the narrative ended in our centennial booklet. We now will summarize our recent history.)

**1998:** OBI began offering field placement as a school-to-work program.

**1999:** Our spring play was "Moriah Morning," a drama about the founding of OBI. The annual June Homecoming doubled as our centennial celebration and brought in an estimated 1,200-1,500 visitors. Then-Kentucky Baptist Convention President Charles Barnes (Class of 1953) delivered the keynote address and a historical marker was dedicated.

**2000:** Commercial art was added to the high school curriculum.

**2001:** Dr. Underwood began taking students to the KBC annual meetings to speak on behalf of the school.

**2002:** A new bridge over Goose Creek was constructed. Our student yearbook staff won a national award for their cover design. A new agriculture center

was completed, as well as six new classrooms in Baker Hall.

**2003:** We canceled school for one day because flood waters left many teachers unable to get to campus. Major remodeling projects were completed in four campus buildings.

**2004:** Myrtle Cooke became the school's first alumni director, after retiring from her 20-year position as a guidance counselor. A new farm goat herd was started with 17 goats. Our dormitory beds were replaced for the first time in 50 years.

**2005:** OBI partnered with Christian Appalachian Project to transport volunteers to the Gulf Coast to help with disaster relief after Hurricane Katrina.

**2006:** Our school earned another five-year certification with the Kentucky Non-Public Schools Commission.

**2007:** Construction was completed on a 12,000-square-foot building for storing donations. A new OBI Mountaineer mascot was designed and approved.

**2008:** We celebrated our 100th graduation. And, for the first time, OBI purchased three brand new full-sized buses.

**2009:** The main campus entrance was moved to a different location and a new sign was erected to mark the spot. The boys' dorm lobby and office were renovated.

**2010:** At homecoming, we unveiled a portrait of our founder and first president, James Anderson Burns.

**2011:** OBI was recertified by the KNPC. The commercial art lab computers and software were upgraded, and two years' worth of repairs were completed on our swimming pool.

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

### This is Oneida



W.F. Underwood

## A helping hand

### Soon-to-be graduate intends to follow God's call in helping others

It was only a few years ago that senior Jim Young was at a low point in his life. He got some help from some people who cared about him. Now, as he is getting ready to graduate in May, he is ready to follow God's call to help others who are experiencing what he went through.

"I serve as the assistant director of the Bread of Life Rescue Mission in Crossville, Tenn.," Jim said. "I have been at the mission for over six years now. I first came in contact with the mission at a time in my life where I was at my lowest point. People there reached out to me, led me to the Lord and got me back on my feet again.

"God has called me to continue at the mission after I graduate and help others who are experiencing some of the same things that I went through in my life," Jim continued. "There is so much homelessness in the United States right now, so many who are less fortunate. I want to minister to them and help them get back on their feet with their lives.

"I will probably go on to seminary

and get my master's degree in counseling after I graduate," Jim noted. "I see 20 to 40 people a day at the mission who need help with counseling. I was once in the same place where they are, but God

brought me out of it. I want to share that hope with them and let them know they can get their lives back on the right track.

"I'm thankful for a place like Clear Creek that prepares those called of God for ministry," Jim said. "One thing I have learned here is that if you stand and teach or preach God's word, you are responsible for the people you are teaching or preaching to.

"God has used Clear Creek to instill that responsibility in me as I prepared for my calling at the mission," Jim said. "All my classes have been such a help to me. There are so many practical lessons from each class that you can use in your specific ministry. I thank God for allowing me to prepare for ministry here at Clear Creek."

*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.*

### Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

## Luter says his election would improve SBC's image on race

By Bob Allen

**New Orleans**—A New Orleans pastor seeking to become the Southern Baptist Convention's first black president said his election would add credibility to a 1995 resolution that apologized for the denomination's past support of slavery and segregation.

Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, said March 11 on NPR's "All Things Considered" that since adopting the "Resolution On Racial Reconciliation on the 150th Anniversary of the Southern Baptist Convention" in Atlanta, the nation's second-largest faith group has tried to let the public know it "is not just a convention that ... is lily white and that is not open to folks who are not white."

"And they've done that, I think, successfully," Luter said. "I think what this election would do, if I am elected, it will say, 'Hey, we're not only talking this thing; we're putting our money where our mouth is.'"

"If I'm elected, it's going to be because of the Anglo messengers who overwhelmingly have voted for me," he said. "It won't be because of the handful of black folks that's going to be there. So it will say something to the country and to the world that the Southern Baptist Convention is not just talking this thing; we're actually walking this thing. And I

think that will speak volumes."

More than 165 years after its split with northern Baptists over slavery prior to the Civil War, the SBC remains predominantly white, but leaders say that half of the churches started in the last decade were non-Anglo.

Ethnic congregations made up about 13 percent of SBC churches in 1998. That increased to 18 percent by 2008, with African-American and Hispanic congregations leading the way at 6 percent each of SBC churches, followed by Asians and other ethnic groups making up 3 percent each.

In recent decades Southern Baptists have passed 11 resolutions seeking greater ethnic participation in convention affairs. Last year messengers approved recommendations of a study group named to increase involvement by ethnic churches.

Luter currently serves as the SBC's first vice president. He is the first African American to be elected to that post. The convention elected its first African-American officer in 1994, naming Ohio pastor Gary Frost second vice president.

This isn't the first time Luter's name was mentioned as a possible SBC president. Dwight McKissic, an African-American pastor in Texas, said in 2010 it was time for a black SBC president and suggested that Luter would be the ideal candidate for the job. (ABP)



Fred Luter



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## Atheists likely to surpass Christians in England by 2032

By Al Webb

London—Christianity is waning in England and believers could be outnumbered by nonbelievers within 20 years, according to a new study.

The study conducted by the British Parliament showed there were 41 million Christians in Britain, down nearly 8 percent since 2004. Meanwhile, the number of nonbelievers stood at 13.4 million, up 49 percent over the same period.

Researchers at the House of Commons Library concluded that Christianity had declined to 69 percent of the population while those with no religion increased to 22 percent.

"If these populations continue to shrink and grow by the same number of people each year," the study said, "the number of people with no religion will overtake the number of Christians in Great Britain in 20 years."

The research was based on the government Office for National Statistics' annual labor force survey, considered authoritative because it examines a sample size of 50,000 people.

The "Religion in Great Britain" survey also found that from 2004-10, the number of Muslims in Britain grew by 37 percent, to 2.6 million.

England's Hindu population rose by 43 percent, to 790,000, and Buddhists by 74 percent, to 340,000. The numbers of Jews and Sikhs were reported down slightly, at 270,000 and 340,000, respectively. (RNS)

# Crossover: Katrina labors have opened hearts

By Adam Miller

New Orleans—In addition to jazz, beignets and the French Quarter, there's an added reason Southern Baptists may enjoy visiting New Orleans for Crossover 2012—the love they may sense from Crescent City residents.

Hundreds of volunteers—from Louisiana and across the nation—will join together for the June 15-16 outreach prior to the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting.

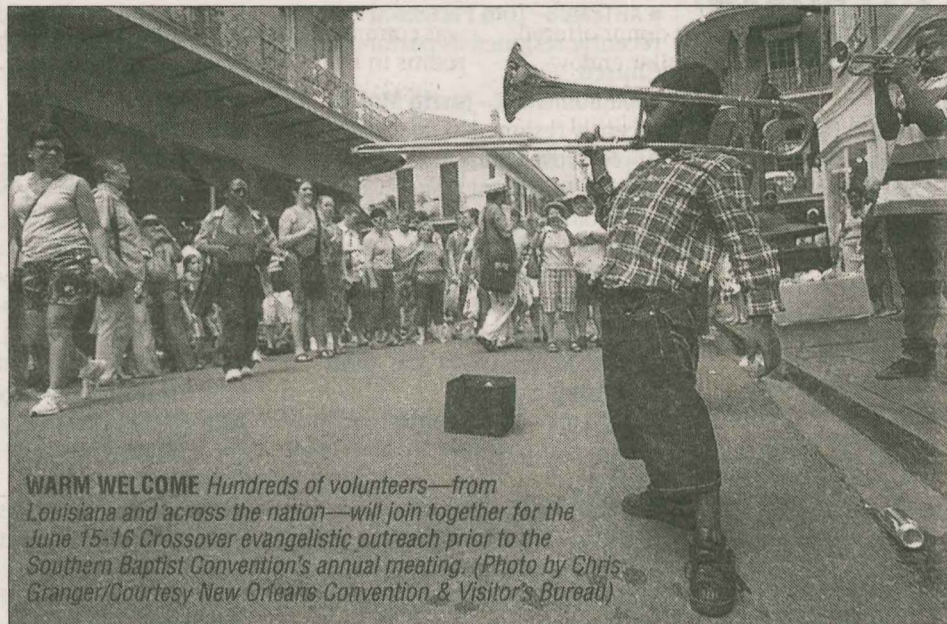
Southern Baptists have poured heart, soul and sweat into New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

"We all have our Katrina stories," said Jack Hunter, executive director for New Orleans Baptist Association and a lifetime resident of the city. "But for the most part we've gotten beyond Katrina and we're now in a rebuilding mode."

In city government, education and economic stability, New Orleans is evidencing a new heart. A recent study suggests the city also has a new attitude toward Christians—Southern Baptists especially.

According to the study, New Orleans residents are open to door-to-door visitation, street evangelism and coming to church if invited. The most surprising and encouraging of the findings was that residents favor Southern Baptists above any other faith group, according to a Turner Research study for the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

"Southern Baptists were here with us when we were recovering and mourning with us when we were getting back on our feet," said Hunter, who served as a lawyer in the city until more recently entering the ministry. "And Southern Baptist work is still going as New Orleans is reborn."



**WARM WELCOME** Hundreds of volunteers—from Louisiana and across the nation—will join together for the June 15-16 Crossover evangelistic outreach prior to the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting. (Photo by Chris Granger/Courtesy New Orleans Convention & Visitor's Bureau)

Southern Baptists have an opportunity to use such awareness to the fullest in a city where the need remains staggering.

"Our research also shows us that almost 50 percent of the people in New Orleans have never had anyone tell them how they can go to heaven," said John Hebert, director of missions and ministry for the Louisiana convention. "And about 75 percent of the total population can't tell you how to go to heaven. But a majority said they would love to attend a Bible study or prayer meeting if someone would just invite them."

"New Orleans pays more attention to the spiritual world than ever before," Hebert added. "They've been moved by the attention and care that Southern Baptists have given. It's made a difference and this research really shows that."

The North American Mission Board is

working with the local Crossover coordinating team to provide volunteers with opportunities to share the love of Christ through block parties, health screenings, prayerwalking, servant evangelism projects and church planting.

Southern Baptists in New Orleans plan to launch four new churches in 2012, with two of those launched amid the raised visibility Crossover and the SBC annual meeting will provide.

"Our churches are becoming well trained in evangelism and will lead the way in reaching our communities through Crossover events," Hunter said. "Our leaders want to create a culture of evangelism in the association, and Crossover, followed closely by other outreach events in succeeding weeks, will help do that."

To learn more about Crossover New Orleans and to volunteer, visit [JoinNOBA.com/Crossover](http://JoinNOBA.com/Crossover). (NAMB/BP)

## Givers and giving

### Survey reveals importance placed on giving to charitable entities

As challenging as it has been the last few years, charitable giving continues to be a key component of the American fabric.

According to Giving USA 2011, total charitable giving in 2010 (latest available) was estimated to have been \$291 billion, a slight increase from 2009 after having dropped from \$308 billion in 2008. Individuals contributed 75 percent of the total; foundations gave 13 percent; bequests represented 7 percent; and corporations gave 5 percent.

For the past 56 years, religious organizations have received the largest share (35 percent) of charitable gifts; education-related organizations were second (13 percent); foundations were third (11 percent); human-services organizations were fourth (9 percent); and health organizations were fifth (8 percent). As a percentage of the gross domestic product of the U.S., charitable giving was 2 percent, which is the level at which it has been, with a few exceptions, since 1956.

A recent issue of the Chronicle of Philanthropy reported the top 50 givers in the U.S. in 2011. Their combined gifts

were \$10.4 billion; the largest was a bequest of \$6 billion, the smallest was a current gift of \$26 million and the median was \$61.9 million. A total of 66 percent was given via 10 bequests; the remaining 34 percent was via current

gifts. By far the largest direct beneficiary category was foundations (75 percent).

While I was fascinated, delighted and inspired by the generosity of these top 50 givers and all of the benefits that will be derived from their gifts, I was struck by the lack of direct giving for the benefit of religious organizations. Only two (20 percent) of the 50 gave for the direct benefit of a religious organization; those two totaled \$100 million, less than 1 percent of the \$10.4 billion total given.

May the Lord raise up those who have the capacity to make transformational gifts for the benefit of their churches and the church-related organizations of our larger Kentucky Baptist family. To the extent we can be of assistance in facilitating such gifts, please give us that privilege.

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

### Ky. Baptist Foundation



Barry Allen

## Blankets, annual meeting & EBO

### Ky. WMU annual meeting to have updates on state missions efforts

The response to the appeal for blankets has been overwhelming. Thank you so much. Volunteers have been counting the blankets and sewing on labels that identify each blanket as a gift from Kentucky Baptists. Blankets were ready to go when the first teams went out to respond to the recent tornados.

The first blankets went with disaster relief chaplains who took them to give to children as they ministered to families who have lost so much. Then our new child care unit was called out to West Liberty. It has been exciting to see pictures of children holding or laying down on a blanket that was sent by loving Kentucky Baptists.

Join us this weekend, March 23-24, at Beacon Hill Baptist Church in Somerset for the Kentucky WMU missions celebration and annual meeting. The program includes international, North American and Kentucky missionaries, as well as 14 missions conferences and ministry projects that will be offered on Friday. The annual meeting is the gathering place for everyone who cares about missions.

Tom Westerfield, president of Kentucky Baptist Men on Mission and the

disaster relief communications leader, will lead a disaster relief conference during the Kentucky WMU annual meeting. He will provide information on the ways you can be involved in disaster relief and give an update on

the work of the new child care unit. For a schedule and other information, visit [www.KyWMU.org/AnnualMeeting](http://www.KyWMU.org/AnnualMeeting).

Because of your gifts to EBO and the Cooperative Program, our Kentucky disaster relief units are ready to go when disasters strike. While additional gifts always are welcome to meet overwhelming needs, EBO and CP provide foundational support that is vital. This year's Eliza Broadus allocations includes \$28,000 for disaster relief; \$7,000 of that amount was allocated for the new child care unit.

We have not yet reached the \$1.25 million goal for the 2011-12 Eliza Broadus Offering. Your gifts will help support missions across Kentucky. Start a chain reaction. Give to the Eliza Broadus Offering and come to our annual meeting for a missions celebration.

Joy Bolton is executive director-treasurer of Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union, PO Box 436569, Louisville, KY 40253; (502) 489-3534; [www.kywmu.org](http://www.kywmu.org)

### EBO at Work



Joy Bolton



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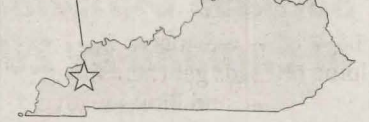
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By Butch Blume

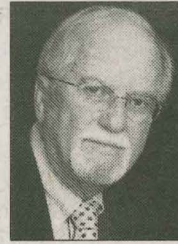
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 KENTUCKY BAPTIST CONVENTION  
**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**
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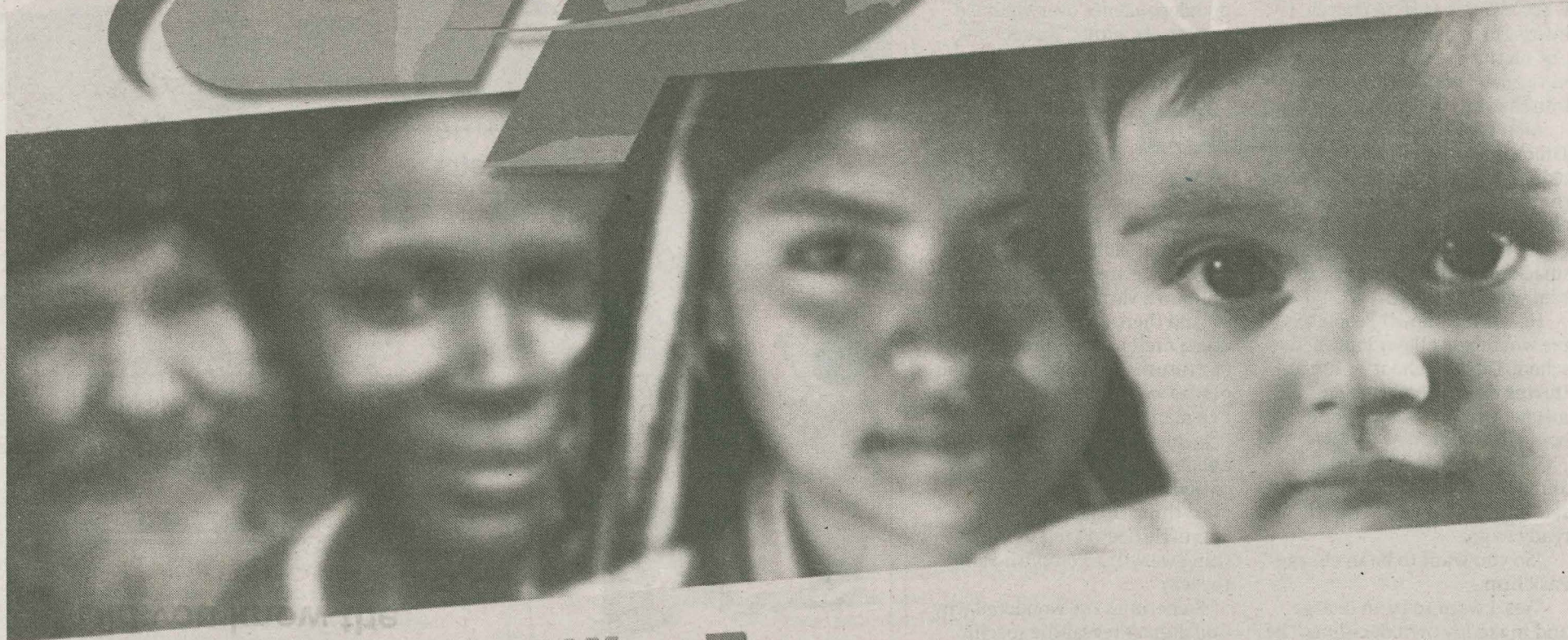
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# Being **MORE** for **CHRIST** through the



**COOPERATIVE PROGRAM**

## Celebrate! **CP** Sunday

Please join us as we celebrate how God is changing lives through the missions partnership of Kentucky Baptists...

...the **Cooperative Program**

**April 22, 2012**

### One Church's Story...

Even though Mexico Baptist Church was already giving 25 percent of its undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program, the rural Crittenden County congregation wanted to do more for Christ.

Led by Pastor **Tim Burdon**, the congregation set a goal of giving more dollars to CP than ever before by asking each member to increase his or her weekly gift to the church by \$3.

Because it gives to CP on a percentage basis, the congregation knew that increased offerings would mean more dollars for local ministry as well as for

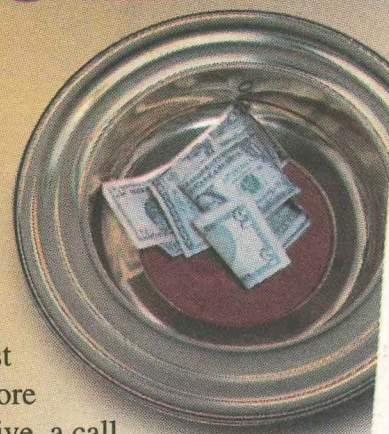
Southern Baptists' unified program of missions and ministry around the world.

So far Mexico Baptist is on pace to break its previous CP giving record of approximately \$102,000 in a year.

"It's real easy to look at our current situation and just say, 'We're already giving more than everybody else. What more can you expect?'" Burdon said. "But what I encouraged the church to do, and myself as well, is to look at it individually. We shouldn't compare ourselves to what other people are doing. We're just asking ourselves as individuals, 'What more can I do for Christ?'"

The church's renewed focus on CP came in response to the Kentucky Baptist Convention's More for Christ initiative, a call to repentance and spiritual renewal that messengers to the 2010 KBC Annual Meeting formalized as a three-year focus.

*"One church's story" continues on page 4*



# Being More for Christ through the



COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

Data Reflects 2010 Cooperative Program Giving

## Overall CP Giving (Top 20)

Congregation	City	Total CP \$
Living Hope	Bowling Green	\$404,998
Lone Oak First	Paducah	\$288,666
Severns Valley	Elizabethtown	\$236,000
Henderson First	Henderson	\$228,340
Eastwood	Bowling Green	\$225,599
Hillcrest	Hopkinsville	\$214,388
Owensboro First	Owensboro	\$187,859
Immanuel	Lexington	\$186,070
Paducah First	Paducah	\$181,333
Central	Corbin	\$174,437
Sand Spring	Lawrenceburg	\$157,902
Hardin	Hardin	\$157,328
Russell First	Russell	\$152,870
Porter Memorial	Lexington	\$147,046
Campbellsville	Campbellsville	\$146,337
Buck Run	Frankfort	\$143,540
Rich Pond	Bowling Green	\$137,199
Westport Road	Louisville	\$132,569
Richmond First	Richmond	\$125,247
Lawrenceburg First	Lawrenceburg	\$121,885

## Worship Attendance (Top 20) 99 or Less

Congregation	City	Total CP \$
Bethabara	Philpot	\$32,052
Good Hope	Campbellsville	\$30,313
Henderson Memorial	Hopkinsville	\$28,719
Woodland	Greenville	\$24,943
Salem	Shelbyville	\$23,883
Ralph Avenue	Louisville	\$21,516
Mount Zion	Elizabethtown	\$21,134
Cedar Bluff	Princeton	\$20,593
Hartford	Hartford	\$20,441
Morgantown First	Morgantown	\$20,181
North Livingston	Hampton	\$20,150
Kevil	Kevil	\$19,562
Westport	Westport	\$19,544
Shawnee Run	Harrodsburg	\$19,057
Pleasant Home	Glencoe	\$19,004
Hopewell	Gamaliel	\$18,824
Cerulean	Cerulean	\$18,609
Lamasco	Eddyville	\$18,361
Temple	Central City	\$18,004
Mount Zion	Kuttawa	\$17,727

## CP Giving Per Capita (Top 20)

Congregation	City	Total CP \$
Mexico	Marion	\$102,384
Emmanuel	Jenkins	\$13,625
Countryside	Morganfield	\$9,256
Paducah Korean	Paducah	\$2,155
Eastwood	Bowling Green	\$225,599
Good Hope	Campbellsville	\$30,313
Briensburg	Benton	\$102,390
Hanson First	Hanson	\$57,118
Henderson Memorial	Hopkinsville	\$28,719
Mount Zion	Kuttawa	\$17,727
Hillcrest	Hopkinsville	\$214,388
North Livingston	Hampton	\$20,150
Woodland	Greenville	\$24,943
North Oldham	Goshen	\$15,443
Riverview	Catlettsburg	\$1,327
Buck Run	Frankfort	\$143,540
Gracey West Union	Gracey	\$33,331
Crossing	Louisville	\$13,933
True Light Korean Mission	Louisville	\$3,031
Bethabara	Philpot	\$32,052

## 100 to 299

Congregation	City	Total CP \$
Central City First	Central City	\$117,016
Briensburg	Benton	\$102,390
Mexico	Marion	\$102,384
Owenton First	Owenton	\$74,192
Barbourville First	Barbourville	\$73,166
Grace	Somerset	\$72,514
Bruners Chapel	Harrodsburg	\$71,415
Lancaster	Lancaster	\$68,718
Northside	Elizabethtown	\$67,944
Eddyville First	Eddyville	\$64,537
Pleasant Grove	Owensboro	\$60,985
Highland	Shelbyville	\$58,635
Twelve Oaks	Paducah	\$57,551
Wildwood	Ashland	\$57,419
Hanson First	Hanson	\$57,118
Dripping Spring	Olmstead	\$56,841
Glasgow	Glasgow	\$54,636
Pleasant Hill	Somerset	\$54,168
East Bernstadt First	East Bernstadt	\$52,396
Unity	Ashland	\$51,350

# Celebrate! CP Sunday April 22, 2012

## Worship Attendance (Top 20)

300 to 499

Congregation	City	Total CP \$
Lawrenceburg First	Lawrenceburg	\$121,885
Southside	Princeton	\$111,675
Beaver Dam	Beaver Dam	\$99,019
Hopkinsville First	Hopkinsville	\$97,936
Yellow Creek	Owensboro	\$97,439
Shively	Louisville	\$92,487
Greenville Second	Greenville	\$87,037
Versailles	Versailles	\$85,747
Burlington	Burlington	\$81,200
Hopkinsville Second	Hopkinsville	\$78,940
Rose Hill	Ashland	\$78,765
Broadway	Lexington	\$75,455
LaGrange	La Grange	\$68,621
Corinth	London	\$68,296
Kings	Mount Washington	\$66,502
Princeton First	Princeton	\$65,064
Red House	Richmond	\$64,535
Hurstbourne	Louisville	\$64,006
Valley Creek	Elizabethtown	\$61,867
Russellville Second	Russellville	\$61,410



## Worship Attendance (Top 20)

1,000+

Congregation	City	Total CP \$
Living Hope	Bowling Green	\$404,998
Lone Oak First	Paducah	\$288,666
Severns Valley	Elizabethtown	\$236,000
Hillcrest	Hopkinsville	\$214,388
Immanuel	Lexington	\$186,070
Hardin	Hardin	\$157,328
Porter Memorial	Lexington	\$147,046
Richmond First	Richmond	\$125,247
Valley View	Louisville	\$52,524
Hillvue Heights	Bowling Green	\$50,000
Calvary	Lexington	\$15,455
Little Flock	Shepherdsville	\$11,250
Highview	Louisville	\$10,000
Florence	Florence	\$7,330
Binghamtown	Middlesboro	\$2,500
Consolidated	Lexington	\$2,500
Heartland	Paducah	\$2,200

500 to 999

Congregation	City	Total CP \$
Henderson First	Henderson	\$228,340
Eastwood	Bowling Green	\$225,599
Owensboro First	Owensboro	\$187,859
Paducah First	Paducah	\$181,333
Central	Corbin	\$174,437
Sand Spring	Lawrenceburg	\$157,902
Russell First	Russell	\$152,870
Campbellsville	Campbellsville	\$146,337
Buck Run	Frankfort	\$143,540
Rich Pond	Bowling Green	\$137,199
Westport Road	Louisville	\$132,569
Central	Winchester	\$112,579
Murray First	Murray	\$109,842
Mt. Washington First	Mount Washington	\$106,989
Shelbyville First	Shelbyville	\$101,179
Edgewood	Hopkinsville	\$95,742
Hickory Grove	Independence	\$95,695
Ninth and O	Louisville	\$92,368
Pikeville First	Pikeville	\$91,930
Crestwood	Crestwood	\$89,673



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## One Church's Story...

(continued from cover story)

When former KBC president **Floyd Paris** "challenged the convention to do more for Christ," Burdon said, "that's really where this started." It was Paris who came up with the "Three More for Christ" challenge to Kentucky Baptists to increase their weekly church offerings by \$3.

Along with increasing CP giving and individual giving, members of Mexico Baptist adopted five other More for Christ goals that they hope to accomplish over the next three to five years:

- Increase involvement in GROW, the church's outreach ministry, which involves contacting prospects by phone, writing them letters and visiting them.
- Offer additional evangelism training opportunities.
- Individually, spend more time with God in private devotionals.
- Achieve an average Sunday school attendance of 200, up from 174 in 2010.
- Increase hands-on involvement in mission work, particularly through the Kentucky-St. Louis Partnership launched this year.

(St. Louis is less than four hours from Crittenden County.)

After the adoption of these goals in December, Burdon preached a series of sermons related to them. Then in January, Mexico Baptist held an official goal kickoff with Billy Compton, KBC executive associate for Cooperative Program and resources, as the guest preacher. According to Compton, the church was packed that day with people eager to reach their community, their state, their nation and the world for Christ.

"Our overall goal as a Convention to do more for Christ wasn't just for big churches," Compton said. "Here's a (smaller) church that's having a tremendous impact. I pray that God will multiply the Mexico Baptist Churches of the world."

For longtime member Denny Mott, giving to CP sacrificially is an important way to work to fulfill the Great Commission – a concept that he said always seems to catch on with new members. "Even though we've got lots of new people in the last two years, it seems like as they come in, they sort of jump on the bandwagon too," he said of CP giving. "That's just something the Lord has laid on the people here, and I think we enjoy it."

Mott credits Burdon with casting the More for Christ vision, but "the people have really embraced it," he said, adding that the new goals can help the church bolster its spiritual health.

Already Mexico Baptist is making progress, according to Burdon. Giving has increased, new people have joined the outreach ministry and Sunday school attendance is up slightly, he said. To advance the missions goal, the church Woman's Missionary Union group has made more than 100 witnessing dolls that serve as visual aids for Gospel presentations.

Still, the pastor knows that enthusiasm could wane over time. So he has planned special events and emphases "through these three to five years that will...remind us and challenge us to continue to work toward that end means of our goals," he said.

KBC Executive Director Paul Chitwood praised Mexico Baptist's example and held it up as a model for churches around the state.

"Pastor Tim Burdon and the church family of Mexico Baptist are among our best examples of a Kentucky Baptist Convention church commit-

Members of Mexico Baptist Church Woman's Missionary Union sew "witnessing dolls" for use in gospel presentations. (Photo courtesy of Mexico Baptist Church)



ted to being a part of something bigger than themselves," he said. "While they faithfully share Christ in their community, they have not lost sight of our Lord's command in Acts 1:8.

"Through their sacrificial support of Cooperative Program missions, they provide a witness for Christ throughout Kentucky, North America and to the very ends of the earth," Chitwood continued. "I pray more KBC churches will follow the lead of Mexico Baptist and embrace the vision of cooperative mission work to advance the Gospel."

For details and free resources related to More for Christ, visit [www.moreforchrist.com](http://www.moreforchrist.com). The Kentucky Baptist Convention is a cooperative missions and ministry organization made up of nearly 2,400 autonomous Baptist churches in Kentucky. A variety of state and worldwide ministries are coordinated through its administrative offices in Louisville, including: missions work, ministry training and support, church development, evangelism and more.

For more information, visit the KBC website at [www.kybaptist.org](http://www.kybaptist.org), find "Kentucky Baptist Convention" on Facebook or follow "kentucky-baptist" on Twitter

Story by David Roach, KBC Communications

# COOPERATIVE PROGRAM together WE ARE

Did you know the Cooperative Program helps support...

More than 5,000 North American missionaries, including more than 3,400 operating in cooperation with state conventions and local associations, and more than 1,600 long-term Mission Service Corps missions?

Nearly 5,000 active international missionaries reaching more than 900 people groups?

Kentucky missions programs such as Disaster Relief, Kentucky Changers Partnership Missions, Appalachian Regional Ministries, and others?

Annual training and inspirational events that help over 27,000 Kentucky Baptists strengthen their churches?

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