

WESTERN Recorder

March 27, 2012

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 186, Issue 12

Unique church events attract new faces

By Ken Walker

Hartford—After seeing a larger crowd at its first “Beast Feast” than at Sunday morning church services, Pastor Kenny Rager of Living Faith Baptist Church had to find a larger venue for its next wild game dinner on March 17.

Held at the Family Wellness Center in Hartford, the event included a special speaker who offered a gospel presentation.

“We had three people accept Christ last year,” Rager said. “We drew people from all over the county and helped people get connected with a church. We’re excited.”

For “Find It Here 2012,” Baptists around the country are emphasizing “attractional”

events, such as concerts, block parties and other events designed to reach a certain affinity group—hunters, motorcycle enthusiasts, cowboys, classic car collectors and others.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention is encouraging individual churches to host special community events leading up to Easter Sunday, April 8.

The spring events will be backed by an advertising campaign similar to one in 2010 that reached 85 percent of all Kentucky households.

“Our goal is always to reach out with the gospel,” said Ross Bauscher,

leader of the KBC’s evangelism growth team. “At these events, we want church members to seek to meet some of these visitors, hopefully so they can share Christ with them.

“It creates a lot of interest. If churches prepare and do them well, they will get a lot of people there.”

Also reaching the outdoorsmen and women of Kentucky are the churches of Bates Creek Baptist Association in Berea and Calvary Missionary Baptist Church in Corbin.

Tates Creek Baptist Association hosted a Wild Game Dinner in January at Kirksville Baptist Church in Richmond. It

□ See *Attractional events ...* Page 2



Lee Eames Missionary of the Year



Lee Eames, chaplain of Interfaith Chapel at the Greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Airport, was presented the Kentucky Baptist Convention’s 2011 Missionary of the Year award for his commitment in the Lord’s service, effectiveness in evangelism, and his positive representation of the KBC and the North American Mission Board. Teresa Parrett, state coordinator for Kentucky Mission Service Corps, presented the award to Eames at the Kentucky Woman’s Missionary Union annual meeting March 23 at Beacon Hill Baptist Church in Somerset. (Photo by Robin Bass)

NAMB missionary models healthy church planting

By Joe Conway

Clovis, N.M.—Derek Osburn never set out to be a poster child for missionary church staff members. He was minding his own business as a youth minister at Central Baptist Church in Clovis, N.M., when God broadened his horizons.

The pivotal decision point for Osburn came at a New Mexico state evangelism conference where Ed Stetzer challenged the audience. Stetzer, the president of LifeWay Research, is a longtime church planter and church planting advocate.

“He said you will not change your circumstances until the discomfort of staying outweighs the discomfort of leaving,” Osburn shared. “That was the turning point for me. I knew it was time to go.”

And by go Osburn thought he and

his family would have to leave their home in Clovis, N.M., and start a church elsewhere. Turns out Central Baptist had another idea.

In 2005 Osburn began wrestling with the idea of planting a church that would reach the unchurched. But from the beginning, his concern was for the health and welfare of Central Baptist. He went so far as to resign from the church and explored the possibility of planting a church in Oklahoma. Osburn weighed the options, but a call from Central Baptist Pastor Alan McAlister changed his plans.

McAlister suggested Osburn try exactly what he was planning, but do it at Central as associate pastor. That opened the door for a new Sunday night service and new small groups to build community. In three years, a

□ See *NAMB missionary ...* Page 3



Poll: Bible readers like their translations, but open to others

Nashville, Tenn.—Among regular Bible readers, more than a third indicate they read it nearly every day and typically use one primary version of the Bible.

But three-quarters say they are open to using other translations.

LifeWay Research polled 2,000 Americans for a study on how American adults read the Bible. All qualifying participants indicated they read their Bibles at least monthly—either for personal study or as part of a family activity.

When asked, “About how often do you read the Bible either by yourself or together with family members as part of a private activity?”:

■ 37 percent said nearly every day.

■ 22 percent read it three to five times

□ See *Bible translations ...* Page 6



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Louisville pastor part of SBC African-American council

Nashville, Tenn.—A Kentucky Baptist pastor is part of an African-American advisory council that has been created to communicate the perspectives of black churches and their leaders to Southern Baptist Convention entity leaders, according to Executive Committee President Frank Page.

"Part of the work of the Executive Committee is ... to provide quality connections and relationships," Page said in a statement to SBC Life, a publication of the Executive Committee. "I am very excited about working with the members of this council, which includes Dr. Ken Weathersby who is helping with all of our ethnic groups in raising awareness and involvement of our ethnic brothers and sisters in Cooperative Program promotion and development," Page noted.

Weathersby is the North American Mission Board's presidential ambassador for ethnic church relations.

Joining Weathersby on the committee are 17 African-American church leaders, including Kevin Smith, pastor of Watson Memorial Baptist Church in Louisville. He is a former Kentucky Baptist Convention first vice president and is an assistant professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's School of Theology.

The African-American Advisory Council is a three-year initiative established by Page and NAMB President Kevin Ezell in an ongoing effort, as SBC Life described it, "to engage the many faces of the SBC in meaningful dialogue about working together as full and equal partners in the harvest."

Page first noted the council's formation in addressing the Executive Committee's Cooperative Program Subcommittee on Feb. 20. Last September, Page announced the creation of a Hispanic Advisory Council,

which held its inaugural meeting in early February in Fort Worth, Texas.

Understanding perspectives

Among the African-American Advisory Council's chief aims is to help the Executive Committee, NAMB and other SBC entities understand the perspectives that African-American Southern Baptists bring to the



Kevin Smith

common task of reaching the United States and the nations with the gospel.

"The council is representative of the regions of the country and reflects the cultural diversity of the African-American population," SBC Life reported. "Its purpose is consultation, communication and cooperation. It will neither launch nor execute ministries. It will provide information, insight and counsel through NAMB and EC staff to the broader Southern Baptist community relative to the special needs and concerns of African-American churches and church leaders in the Southern Baptist family of churches."

Among those with whom the council will communicate are key African-American pastors and laymen; the National African-American Fellowship, SBC; the Black Southern Baptist Denominational Servants Network; the Black Church Leadership Network; and African-American leaders serving in elected roles in state Baptist conventions and on state Baptist convention staffs.

The council "will enable the presidents

and staff of the EC and NAMB to maintain vital contact with the African-American Baptist family through participation in strategic meetings and personal conferences," according to SBC Life. "One of the council's goals is more fully to incorporate African-American Baptist churches and church leaders into the total fabric of Southern Baptist life and ministry."

The council will be chaired by **K. Marshall Williams**, pastor of Nazarene Baptist Church in Philadelphia.

Also serving on the council, in addition to **Smith** and **Weathersby**, are:

Roscoe Belton, Middlebelt Baptist Church in Inkster, Mich.

Chandra Bennett, Greater Grace Temple Community Church in Nashville, Tenn.

Mark Croston, East End Baptist Church in Suffolk, Va.

James Dixon, El Bethel Baptist Church in Fort Washington, Md.

Leroy Fountain, Philadelphia Baptist Church in Lithonia, Ga.

Mark Hammond, Village Baptist Church in Norwalk, Calif.

Kim Hardy, Connections Community Church in Ypsilanti, Mich.

Keith Jefferson, Parkway Baptist Church, Moseley, Va.

Dennis Mitchell, Greenforest Community Baptist Church in Decatur, Ga.

Marvin Parker, Broadview Baptist Church in Broadview, Ill.

Bucas Sterling III, Kettering Baptist Church in Upper Marlboro, Md.

Terry Turner, Mesquite Friendship Baptist Church in Mesquite, Texas.

Alton Vines, New Seasons Church in Spring Valley, Calif.

Frank Williams, Bronx Baptist Church in New York. (BP)

Attractional events

Continued from page 1

attracted more than 300 men and boys and resulted in 26 first-time professions of faith in Christ. The event featured an address by Paige Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"Patterson refuses to come unless we encourage lost people to come," said Tate Creek's Director of Missions Hamp Valentine. "There were so many people there it was hard to count them all. It was a wonderful event."

The Corbin congregation has gone in a slightly different direction. Its third annual Tri-County Sportsmen's Expo at Lynn Camp High School will be held in late August.

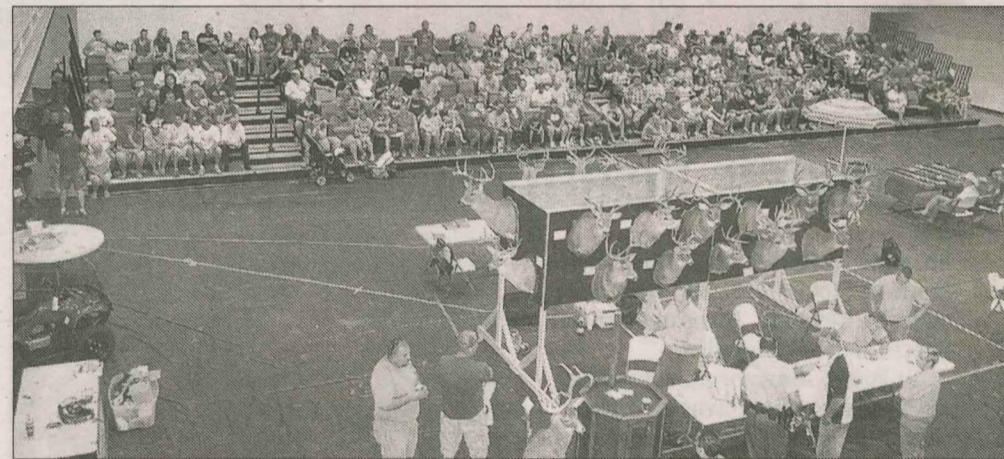
Pastor Kevin Roach said the expo emerged from the church's missions committee following the first Find It Here emphasis in 2010. After first considering a wild game dinner, they decided to sponsor an outdoor expo.

Calvary Baptist invited dozens of vendors to display products, give demonstrations and award door prizes. It also invited Gary Miller, founder of Outdoor Truths, to speak.

Prior to the grand prize drawing, Miller presented the gospel. At each of the first two events, 10 to 15 people responded to his invitations to accept Christ as Savior.

The expo and other attractional events not only have grown in size, they have sparked growth within Calvary, Roach said.

After seeing eight or 10 baptisms annually in recent years, that number reached nearly 20 in 2011.



REACHING 'OUT' Outdoor enthusiasts await a special speaker at Calvary Missionary Baptist Church's Tri-County Sportsmen's Expo. The Corbin congregation began hosting the event as a way to introduce themselves to people in their community who perhaps do not attend church regularly or have never heard the gospel. Kentucky and Southern Baptists are encouraged to host similar events prior to Easter as part of the ongoing "Find It Here" gospel-sharing initiative. (Photo courtesy of Calvary Missionary Baptist Church in Corbin)

"There's a sense among our folks of satisfaction, of having done something that pleases the Lord," the pastor said.

"I've had people come to church in the last two years who have come and stayed because they see we're trying to do something to share the gospel. I believe God is honored by this."

Averaging 130 on a Sunday means the Corbin church needs considerable participation to stage its expo. Roach said it takes up to 75 members to contact sponsors, distribute brochures, handle mailings and set up and tear down equipment at the event.

The effort is worth it: Of the 350 people who usually come to an expo, only a fourth of them attend church, Roach said.

"Over the last two years our church has had the chance to share the gospel with a lot of people," Roach said. "How long would I have to preach the gospel to reach 275 lost people? That would be a lot of sermons."

Rager said Living Faith's Beast Feast hasn't dramatically increased church attendance, but the congregation has established better relationships within the community.

"Our church has become a beacon, known in our community for helping people," Rager said. "People are seeing we care."

The church will follow up its dinner with a community-wide Easter egg hunt. Rager said he hopes it will increase attendance at its Easter services, which will be held at Ohio County High School. (KBC)

Ky. Baptists' CP gifts top \$2 million mark in Feb.

Louisville—For the second consecutive month, Kentucky Baptists have given more than \$2 million to missions through the Cooperative Program.

The total of \$2,023,295 was more than \$165,000 higher than CP giving in February 2011.

February's CP receipts also outpaced the Kentucky Baptist Convention's monthly spendable budget goal of \$1,820,594.

Despite the good news, year-to-date totals for CP giving remain 4.31 percent below the budget goal of \$23.5 million that Kentucky Baptists approved at last fall's annual meeting.

"We are encouraged that CP giving through the first six months of this fiscal year has exceeded our adjusted spendable budget by more than \$320,000," said Lowell Ashby, the KBC's business services team leader.

"If this continues for the second half of the year, all of our planned ministry and mission program activities adjusted for this fiscal year can continue," he added.

Kentucky Baptists' decision in 2010 to adopt a 50/50 split of undesignated CP dollars between state and national Southern Baptist causes now can be translated into individual missionaries on the field, Ashby noted.

Currently, nine International Mission Board missionaries are being supported through the additional funding provided by Kentucky Baptists, he pointed out.

The North American Mission Board has received an additional \$167,183 for missionaries serving elsewhere in the United States and Canada.

Billy Compton, the KBC's executive associate for Cooperative Program and resources, said he hopes the good start in CP giving for the calendar year translates into renewed interest in and support of the missions and ministries supported through the program.

"Cooperative Program Sunday is April 22 and I hope our churches will consider learning something about CP that they did not know before," Compton said. "We have free resources available on the (KBC) website, as well as information about how CP dollars are allocated, and the history of CP." (KBC)

NAMB missionary finds recipe for planting healthy church in N.M.

Continued from page 1

core group was ready to plant The Vine Community Church.

"Why would we want to start another church?" McAlister asked. "Well, over 80 percent of the population of this county is lost. If you sense that God is leading you to start a new work, the best thing you can do is do that, in spite of what logic might tell you. We're a testimony that He truly blesses."

The Vine now averages 210 in worship and pulls approximately 65 percent of its members from Cannon Air Force Base.

"Because of Central doing this, they've gained 100 new members in a year and the Vine has gained 200," Osburn said. "It proved to be the most biblical, godly thing they could do for the kingdom."

That multiplication, coming from a position of health and maturity, makes Osburn and Central Baptist a model for how church staff and churches can approach church planting.

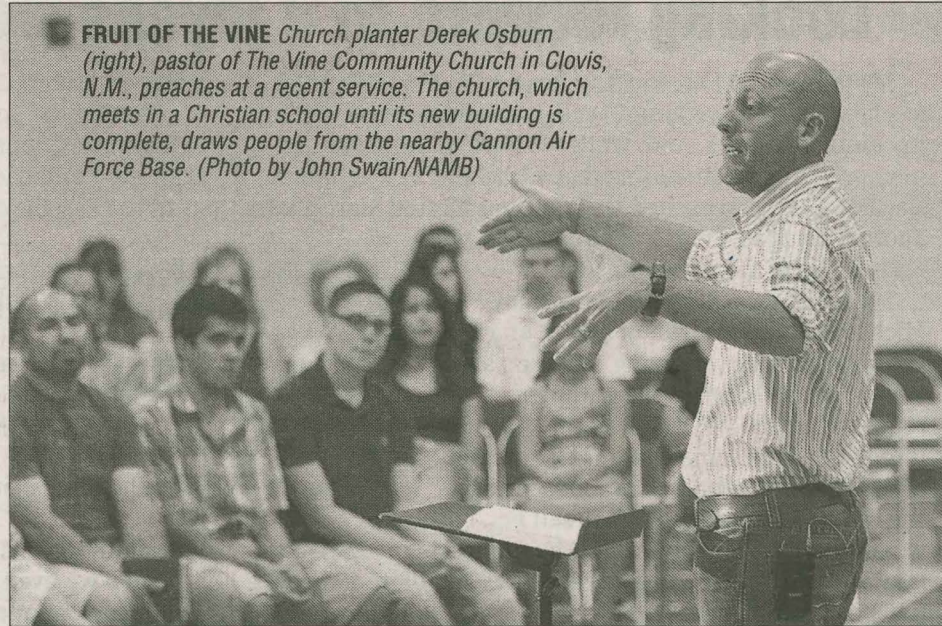
"Church planting is done best when healthy churches do what healthy living things do—reproduce," Stetzer noted. "When the process includes healthy reproducing churches and prepared and healthy planters, it is a powerful and effective combination."

COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Missionary Derek Osburn (center) leads a community group Bible study in his home. With him (from left to right) are members Amy and Bill Baca and Kristi Willis. Meeting in community groups is central to The Vine Community Church's strategy to reach people in the Clovis, N.M., area. (Photo by John Swain/NAMB)



FRUIT OF THE VINE Church planter Derek Osburn (right), pastor of The Vine Community Church in Clovis, N.M., preaches at a recent service. The church, which meets in a Christian school until its new building is complete, draws people from the nearby Cannon Air Force Base. (Photo by John Swain/NAMB)



The North American Mission Board is committed to helping churches prepare for partnership in church planting—wherever those churches find themselves—through Send North America. Clearing the hurdles for the healthy is important, but healing the hurting, and even dysfunctional, will help the overall effectiveness of church planting efforts.

"I was working at Central Baptist Church and spiritually searching for the next step that God wanted me to take," Osburn recalled. "I had this sense that we're not going to reach everybody in our world at our church. Of course that's the whole point of our Christian life—to be fruitful."

"God has blessed us enormously," said Osburn's wife, Sharla. "I was skeptical in the beginning, but this has been better

than I ever imagined.

"When we stepped out, it was a whole different experience from anything I had encountered in church before. It is a blessing to see so many people from different groups come together. We have people who have never been churched, we have military, we have people who have not been in a community of people who follow Christ."

Having the flexibility to attend her daughters' events, Bible studies with new members, different small groups, all allow Sharla to be involved at a depth that supports the vision of Vine Community Church.

"It has been neat to see our girls be a part of this," said Sharla, of the couple's three daughters: Aspyn, 11, Makaidyn, 8, and Pacyn, 4. "They have a heart for missions and missions is fun."

The Vine Community Church launched in September 2009 and constituted in September 2011.

"Until recently we did not even have a sign," said Osburn. "We do not advertise. We don't print bulletins, do mailings or use any paper. We do all our outreach by personal invitation. People bring people they know to church. People are much more likely to trust someone they know. Anyone will visit your church, but will they come back? When people bring their friends to church those friends are much more likely to return." (NAMB)

BRIEFLY

GBC to explore property sale

The Georgia Baptist Convention's Executive Committee has voted to entertain any valid offers for a potential sale of its 6-year-old Baptist Missions and Ministry Center and 43 acres of property. GBC Executive Director J. Robert White, citing interest from realtors and private entities in recent years, made the recommendation to the Executive Committee during its mid-March meeting. The committee's consensus vote permits White to schedule exploratory site visits with potential buyers. White later stressed that the building is not being listed for sale. The 43 acres of prime real estate sits across from the massive Gwinnett Arena sports and entertainment complex, which draws upwards of 1 million visitors a year. Georgia Baptists constructed the building for \$43.5 million and owe \$26 million on the property. Staffing levels at the convention have been cut back in recent years from 133 employees to 103. The most recent cutback came in late January.

Churches lost \$1.2 billion in 2010

Even as membership remains relatively stable in U.S. churches, the effects of the recession have caused contributions to drop by \$1.2 billion. According to the 2012 Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches, the almost \$29 billion contributed by church members represented a 2.2 percent decrease in terms of per capita giving. The \$1.2 billion decline in 2010 was nearly three times as large as the \$431 million in losses reported in 2009, and "provides clear evidence of the impact of the deepening crises in the reporting period," the Yearbook's editor, Eileen Lindner, wrote. The Yearbook is produced annually by the National Council of Churches and is considered one of the most authoritative sources of church membership. The Roman Catholic Church (No. 1) and the Southern Baptist Convention (No. 2) continued as the nation's largest denominations in 2010, and both posted a decrease of less than 1 percent, the fourth year in a row of declining membership for Southern Baptists.

Weeks, former SBF exec, dies

Mike Weeks, president of the Southern Baptist Foundation from 2002-07, died March 17, in Brentwood, Tenn., after an extended battle with cancer. At the time of his death, Weeks, 63, had been chairman of the Union University Foundation since 2010. He was chairman of Union's board of trustees from 2002-05. Prior to leading the Southern Baptist Foundation, Weeks had been vice chairman of BancorpSouth Bank and executive vice president of BancorpSouth Inc., the bank's holding company. He also served as executive vice president of BancorpSouth Trust and Asset Management Group. Funeral were held March 22 at Brentwood (Tenn.) Baptist Church.

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The challenges of strategic change

In little more than a decade, the average percentage of undesignated offerings Kentucky Baptist Convention churches are giving through the Cooperative Program has been reduced by roughly one-third. At the same time, churches have expressed a growing burden to get the gospel to the unreached and unengaged people groups of the world, resulting in an ongoing increase of the percentage of CP funds being sent outside of Kentucky. These realities, along with the reduction of investment income and the overall state of Kentucky's economy, have created significant challenges for our KBC Mission Board staffing and ministries.

An illustration of these challenges is that KBC staff members are working under the constraints of a ministry budget twice reduced from the convention-approved budget, the last reduction coming four months into the budget year.

Coupled with these funding challenges is my firm conviction that the time is right for the KBC Mission Board to explore new and different ways of serving our churches. I am convinced that a strategic realignment will help maximize our resources, effectiveness, and relevance to the changing needs of our churches. In light of these realities, the administrative committee of the Mission Board has approved both an early retirement plan and a voluntary resignation support package to any staff members willing to consider them.

While these decisions have been incredibly difficult, allow me to share a few observations. First, out of their love and appreciation for our staff members and concern for their wellbeing, I believe the administrative committee has approved offers that are both generous and compassionate.

Second, let me stress that these current offers are an opportunity for voluntary retirement or resignation. At this point, no jobs are being eliminated and no one is being terminated.

Third, future position eliminations will depend upon two factors: the number of staff members who accept the current offers and the outcome of our strategic realignment, both of which should be clear by the time the Mission Board meets in May. Any possible position eliminations will be addressed at that time.

Fourth, I am hopeful the decisions we are making to get in line with our funding and become more strategic in our work will help Kentucky Baptists have a renewed confidence in our future. I know of very few churches or businesses in the commonwealth that haven't been forced to make some difficult adjustments over the past few years. The discipline to make necessary changes is a part of the culture of a healthy organization.

I have a growing excitement about our future ministry, but these days of transition are admittedly painful for everyone. Thank you for your prayers for our staff and our Mission Board leadership.

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

Looking forward to a joyous wedding banquet

My family and I are looking forward to a wedding this weekend. Whose wedding? Well, it might surprise you. It's my mother-in-law's. And, while we have many cherished memories of her late husband and Michelle's father, John Dever, we are also excited that God has blessed Marcia with another companion to walk hand-in-hand with through life, Wes Johnson.

My daughter will be maid-of-honor, Michelle will be matron-of-honor, and I have the privilege of giving the bride away. When Marcia honored me with her request, I teased, "With pleasure." (I think it took her back somewhat!) I later jokingly told our pastor, who will be performing the ceremony, that we tried to sell her, but we couldn't get any takers. Truth is, Marcia is a jewel of a lady and worth more to us than rubies and diamonds. Wes, indeed, is a fortunate man!

In preparing a prayer to honor their former partners and to ask God's blessing upon the happy couple's new union, I have been reflecting on several New Testament passages about weddings. Jesus' first miracle, of course, was at a wedding celebration, in response to His mother's request. John tells us that in performing this first sign, "He displayed His glory and His disciples believed in Him."

Jesus later used wedding imagery when He explained to the followers of John the Baptist why His disciples did not need to fast. Matthew records His reply: "Can the wedding guests be sad while the groom is with them? The time will come when the groom will be taken away from them and they will fast" (9:14-15). Jesus not only was proclaiming that He indeed was the long-awaited Messiah, but He also was preparing them for the day He would die for them.

Jesus even compared the kingdom of heaven to a wedding banquet in a parable He told. "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son," Jesus said. "He sent out his slaves to summon those invited to the banquet, but they didn't want to come. Again, he sent out other slaves, and said, 'Tell those who are invited: Look I've prepared my dinner, my oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet'" (see Matthew 22). The parable, however, was a dire warning to the pious

religious leaders of the time about the tragic consequences of rejecting the gospel's invitation, and it foretold how salvation subsequently would be extended to ordinary Jews, both good and bad, and even to the Gentiles.

In the Parable of the 10 Virgins, the groom symbolizes the Messiah and cautions believers to stand watch for the Master's return. "Since the groom was delayed, they all become drowsy and fell asleep," Jesus said. "In the middle of the night there was a shout: 'Here's the groom! Come out to meet him'" (Matthew 25). Five were foolish and ran out of oil for their lamps, but five were wise and were invited to the wedding banquet. "Therefore be alert, because you don't know either the day of the hour," Jesus instructed us.

When we lived in Raleigh, N.C., Michelle and I attended a wedding banquet the likes of which I have never experienced again. Unlike most reception fare, which typically includes cake, punch, finger-sandwiches, nuts and mints, this one featured a full-blown dinner with entrees that included salmon, prime rib, barbecue and crabbed-stuffed shrimp that were out-of-this-world. I'm sure glad we went!

As good as that wedding banquet was, it will not even compare to the heavenly banquet coming that John describes in Revelation 21. In his vision of a new heaven and earth, John pens, "I also saw the Holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband." Then he envisions the beautiful reception of God dwelling with His people: "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will no longer exist; grief, crying, and pain will exist no longer, because the previous things have passed away." Now, that's one wedding banquet we sure don't want to miss!

Yes, my family and I are excited to be celebrating this joyous occasion with Marcia and her new spouse. The preparations have been made: A gorgeous gown has been selected; bridesmaids' dresses have been chosen; tuxes for the groomsmen have been ordered; the sanctuary will be adorned with flowers and candles; and a beautiful cake will be decorated. Yet, we will have an even more fabulous wedding banquet to attend one day when our Lord is united with His bride, the church. Are you ready?

After Thought

By Todd Deaton



Is your church ready for Easter's guests?

By Diana Davis

If a crowd of children was coming to your home for an Easter egg hunt, would you just give each child a carton of raw eggs as they arrived? Of course not. You'd boil and color eggs, decorate, and prepare prizes and snacks.

For churches, Easter Sunday is like that. Extra preparation is essential for such a special day. It's one of the highest attendances of the year, and many who come may not know Jesus as their personal Savior. Will your church be well prepared? Need ideas?

■ **Offsite parking.** If a guest can't find a parking space, he may just drive away. Rent or borrow offsite parking lots, then shuttle leaders and members to the

church by van or golf cart.

■ **Contingency plans.** Appoint an umbrella crew, in case of rain. Double the number of decision counselors, parking lot greeters and childcare volunteers. Consider adding worship services or overflow seating.

■ **Move over.** Before Easter, challenge members to invite friends and neighbors by using Facebook, email, and printed invitations. Remind members to fill center seats first and to warmly welcome every guest.

■ **Upgrade greeting.** Recruit extra greeters and ushers. Train them with instructions for welcoming newcomers and seating latecomers graciously.

■ **Introduce them to God.** Joyful, sincere worship is contagious. Boldly

share the meaning of Easter's celebration through music, drama and sermon.

■ **Provide a "next step."** Don't view Easter guests as one-timers; give them reasons to return next week. Announce an exciting new sermon series. Provide easy registration for small groups, an upcoming event, church sports team, singles mission trip or new Bible class.

■ **Re-invite guests immediately.** Pre-plan for excellent follow-up. A well-organized plan might include a "glad-you-came" phone call, an e-mail invitation to a Bible study or event, a note from the pastor and Sunday School teacher, a Saturday text invitation, and a personal visit from a member.

A crowd of God-seekers will soon arrive for Easter Sunday's celebration. Will your church be prepared?

Diana Davis is an author, speaker and wife of the North American Mission Board's vice president for the Midwest region, Steve Davis.

FRESH IDEAS

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Churches, not infrastructure, best way to reach new areas

By Kevin Ezell

As president of the North American Mission Board in a time of transition and change, I am often asked about the direction and vision of this mission agency. On some things, we are learning our way into the future. As we work with state convention partners, associations, local churches and church planters, we are seeking to figure out the best way of reaching North America with the gospel.

When Southern Baptists overwhelmingly adopted the Great Commission Resurgence, they expressed a desire for NAMB to be more focused on church planting and to think in more missiological ways. That has meant some shifts and changes.

For example, we are putting greater focus and energy on involving established churches in the planting of new churches in major urban regions outside of traditional Southern Baptist strongholds.

That leads to questions about how systems will be structured and how they will function. To the surprise of some, we continue to do a whole series of things for which we have been traditionally known.

For example, we actually fund our evangelism area at a higher level now than in 2010. We are also assisting our conventions with prioritizing evangelism resources from NAMB to help existing churches and church plants in developing evangelism strategies that will impact their fields of ministry. We are involved in chaplaincy, disaster relief and volunteer missions. But yes, we have an increased focus on church planting.

Why? Because that's what Southern Baptists told us to do and that is what our trustees and I believe will be the best way of penetrating lostness in North America.

Being a missions agency also requires us to think in missiological ways. And part of that also helps us ask questions about how we work with our partners outside of what have been traditional Southern Baptist regions. We are committed to, and are already now,

putting substantially more money into evangelistic church planting in what Southern Baptists call "new work" regions.

In addition, we are placing more money in general into those regions (not just to fund church planting). But missiological thinking also requires us to shift the way we fund our work in what are often called the "new work" states.

Historically, when Southern Baptists began work in North America outside the South, we sought to replicate state convention structures just like we have in the South. Thus, the same staffing model would be present in both places.

However, we have learned that is typically not the best approach. Missionaries discovered that when outside finances support administrative structures in missionary areas, the end results tend to be negative. But when outside mission agencies supported church planting, that created more churches. Then, those churches together could decide how best to structure their region for more effective ministry.

We recognize that this is a difficult shift, but we also recognize that it is a missiologically sound shift. The North American Mission Board will fund less infrastructure of new work state conventions, but fund substantially more the church planting efforts in those states. We think the end result will be stronger state conventions, as those state conventions determine how best to structure and organize.

In many places, this shift has been well received, but we also recognize that in some places it leads to great challenge. But at the end of the day, we think that centuries of mission history and the current stagnation of church planting in some new work areas tells us there is a better way. We think this is that way.

We will work diligently to help Southern Baptists plant more and better churches that will build stronger state convention partnerships. What we have been doing has not led to the rapid advance and increase we had hoped for, which is part of why Southern Baptists so overwhelmingly directed us to change. But, we are committed to work with our state convention partners to help plant healthy evangelistic churches and to penetrate lostness together.

Kevin Ezell is president of the North American Mission Board.

FIRST PERSON

What is income anyway?

By Jeremy White

You may think this is a simple question. But answering this more-complex-than-it-appears-question is important for income taxes and giving.

Many have proposed simplifying our tax code by having a flat tax rate or reducing the number of tax rates. But the brackets are not what make the current tax code so complex. The math of our current six rates is easy. The hard part is defining taxable income.

Our current tax code has specifically defined certain items as taxable or not. For example, your wages from your employer are taxable as income, but the value of the health insurance your employer pays on your behalf is not taxed. Selling your residence at a gain or receiving life insurance proceeds due to death of the insured is not taxable income. Winning a prize in a contest, jury duty pay, and unemployment compensation are all considered taxable income.

While this discussion of our tax code may interest a handful of financial nerds like myself, I'd like to focus on how to define income for charitable giving. The biblical principal is to give from the increase. Proverbs 3:9 says, "Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops."

In our modern economy, we don't give from the increase of our crops or herds. Instead, we should give proportionally from the increase in our resources. How do you measure your increase? Do you only use gross or net pay from your employer? Do you only use the monthly Social Security amount?

If you receive an inheritance (usually not taxable, by the way), then your resources have increased. Honor the Lord with giving from that. If you sell an investment at a gain or take a distribution from your IRA, then give cheerfully and generously from these sources. Figure out ways to give more instead of less.

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



The mechanics of forgiveness

By James Stillwell

Q: I know Jesus said to forgive. I know forgiveness is good for me. But what I don't get is how do I get to forgiveness?



A: Everette Worthington began his search for the meaning of forgiveness when his elderly mother was murdered by an intruder. His Christian faith told him that his task was to forgive. That experience began the journey that produced

the landmark book "5 Steps to Forgiveness."

The five steps to forgiveness are an acrostic, REACH for forgiveness:

"R" is for "recall" the hurt. Scott Peck, author of "The Road Less Traveled," said that you have to put the other person on trial in your head, file briefs for the defense and for the prosecution, act as judge, jury and witness, convict the person of wrong, and then pardon them. Getting in touch with that moment when you were most hurt is the first step to letting it go.

"E" is for "empathize." This means to feel what the other person felt at some point when they themselves were hurt. It may be most effective to use your imagination to think of that person as a child. Chances are their parents or someone else hurt them.

"A" is for offering the "altruistic gift" of forgiveness. Altruistic means you do it for the other person's benefit, because you feel compassion for them. Forgiveness is for giving.

"C" is for "commit" publicly. Billy Graham talked about this in reference to personal salvation. It's also true when it comes to forgiving. Whenever you tell someone, you are holding yourself accountable and it makes the decision more real.

"H" is for "hold on" to forgiveness. Keep something tangible to remind you of your decision to forgive, a "memorial marker" of how God's Spirit enabled you to let go of the past and move into a better future. It will give you courage and encouragement in times to come, and it will remind you that God gives the power to do what God commands us all to do.

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

Crossing the street first step to reaching the nations

By Erich Bridges

A missionary with years of experience in the Muslim world was visiting back home in the United States when he struck up a conversation with an immigrant shop owner.

"I said, 'Thanks for coming to America,'" the missionary recalls. The shop owner was moved almost to tears. "He put his arms around me and said, 'You're the first person who has ever welcomed me to this country.'"

The same missionary spoke at a church in a Southern town. Before he arrived, a church member surveyed the community's 20 or so Muslim families. Some had lived in the area as long as 10 years. The member asked if anyone in town had ever visited to tell them about Christ. No, they answered.

What was their chief emotion about living in America? "We're so lonely," they said. "No one ever talks to us. No one wants to have a meal with us."

Immigrants arriving in America include people who are hard to reach with the gospel in their home countries. Here, they can be reached by crossing the street.

But you have to cross the street.

"God is giving us a second chance. He is bringing the nations to us," the missionary said. "But we're running from the nations in our midst. Having Muslims in our homes is not brain surgery. But the thing that is driving the church is fear.

Until we get over our fear, we will not welcome the lost in our midst. We're afraid of Muslims and ... foreigners. These people are so lonely and isolated.

"We're in a free country, and yet we're not exercising our freedom to witness to the nations in our midst."

What are we afraid of? Lots of things. Fear or suspicion of the stranger, the foreigner, the "other" is part of human nature. Recently, the flood of illegal immigration, the competition for jobs in a recession-ravaged economy and the ongoing reverberations of 9/11 have played into the mix. And racism still poisons minds and hearts.

Within the church, there's another dynamic worse than fear: indifference. If we're not sharing the good news with neighbors we've known for years, we're not going to share it with newcomers who don't act and talk like we do.

Throughout history, observed the late missiologist Ralph Winter,

God has been "kicking people out of one culture into a new one"—from Abraham's move to Canaan, to Christian slaves carried off by pagan conquerors, to the present.

God often uses such migrations, forced or otherwise, to place believers in cultures that haven't yet heard He is Lord. Alternately, He moves nonbelievers into cultures where they can hear the good news, then sends them back to their own people groups to spread the Word.

According to mission research, nearly 600 unengaged, unreached people groups can be found in North America—many in urban areas. They haven't heard the gospel in ways they can understand it and respond to it. Up to eight of every 10 refugees come from unreached areas.

The five cities with the largest foreign-born populations are New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Chicago and Houston. But the fastest growth is happening in smaller and midsize cities, such as Charlotte, Raleigh, Nashville and Indianapolis. Similarly, the states with the fastest-growing foreign-born populations are North Carolina, Georgia, Arkansas, Nevada and Tennessee.

That's essentially the Bible Belt, folks. How will we respond? (BP) Erich Bridges is IMB global correspondent.

FIRST PERSON



MET WITH LOVE Thousands of Syrian refugees have poured across the country's borders into Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, most of them families with small children, carrying few possessions. Many of them are being met by Southern Baptists' ministry partners with much-needed help and the love of Jesus. (BGR photo)

Syrians fleeing into neighboring countries met with God's love

By Mark Kelly

Syria—Ongoing violence in Syria is driving refugees across borders into neighboring countries, where many of them are being met by Southern Baptists' ministry partners with much-needed help and the love of Jesus.

Thousands of Syrians have poured across the country's borders into Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, most of them families with small children, carrying few possessions, according to news reports. The United Nations recently put the death toll for a year of violence in Syria at more than 8,000.

Abraham Shepherd, who with his wife, Grace, directs work in the Middle East for Baptist Global Response, is planning an assessment trip to determine how best to help refugees.

Thus far, more than \$165,000 has been disbursed from Southern Baptists' World Hunger Fund to

assist partners in Lebanon and Syria in meeting refugee needs, Shepherd said. Already, hunger and relief funds have helped more than 12,000 people in at least 49 communities, providing food and hygiene supplies as well as temporary shelter, bedding, heaters and some medicine.

The steady stream of displaced Syrians has spurred BGR and its partners to action throughout the Middle East, working on all Syrian border fronts to care for the fleeing refugees, Shepherd said.

"The crisis throughout the Middle East has been labeled by mainstream media as 'the Arab Spring,' but to the average Arab in the Middle East, it's anything but spring," Shepherd said. "What they are experiencing is more devastation, disillusionment, fear and scarce basic necessities of life.

"That is even more true of the minorities among them, like the Christian minority of the Middle East," he added. (BGR/BP)

Bible translations

Continued from page 1

a week, while another 22 percent read it once or twice a week.

■ 11 percent read it two or three times a month, and 8 percent read the Bible about once a month.

On average, Bible readers in the United States own 3.6 copies of Scripture. Eighty-four percent of readers have more than one Bible.

Three-quarters of Bible readers (74 percent) have one primary Bible that they use most of the time while the other 26 percent tend to use different Bibles for different situations. Among those who use a variety of Bibles, 75 percent consult varying translations.

Yet preferring one translation does not mean readers have an exclusive commitment to it. While 26 percent of Bible readers only are willing to use one specific translation, 74 percent identify themselves as "open to using different translations of the Bible."

"When people say 'my Bible,' that has a meaning that includes translation," LifeWay Research President Ed Stetzer said. "Bible readers usually have multiple Bibles but three out of four have one physical Bible that they use most of the time."

When it comes to how a preferred translation is selected, 75 percent of regular Bible readers personally chose the version they use most while 19 percent had it selected for them by someone else. Six percent do not remember how they arrived at their preferred version.

Nine out of 10 Bible readers are satisfied with the version they use most for personal reading. Only 6 percent say they are dissatisfied with the translation they use.

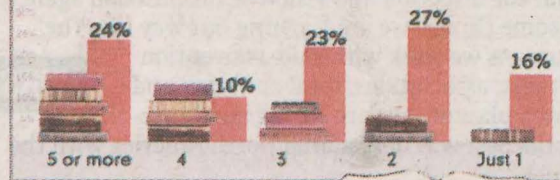
The study also revealed that in a typical month, 85 percent of regular Bible readers attend worship; 72 percent read religious books; 53 percent attend Sunday School or other classes; 51 percent attend a small group; 50 percent read religious magazines; and 47 percent volunteer.

Stetzer concluded, "We learn from this study among American Bible readers that owning multiple Bibles is much more prevalent than regularly investing time in reading it." (LW/BP)

BIBLE READERSHIP SURVEY

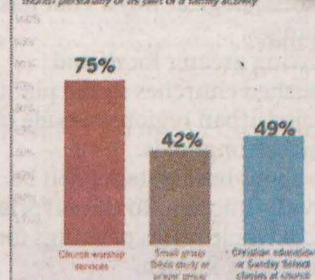
Number of Bibles owned

Among Americans who read the Bible in a typical month personally or as part of a family activity



Group situations where Bible readers read the Bible

Among Americans who read the Bible in a typical month personally or as part of a family activity



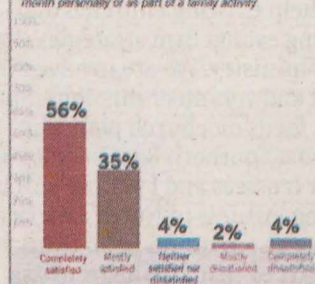
Using different versions

Among Americans who use different Bibles for different situations/versions



Satisfaction with primary Bible translation

Among Americans who read the Bible in a typical month personally or as part of a family activity



Using different Bibles

Among Americans who read the Bible in a typical month personally or as part of a family activity



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Q&A

Researcher Kara Powell

Why teens leave the faith & what can be done about it

By Michael Foust

A 2007 LifeWay Research study found that 70 percent of young adults who attended church in high school stopped attending church for at least a year during college.

Perhaps just as alarming, only 20 percent of those who left the church had planned on doing so while in high school. For most, the decision was not considered far in advance.

LifeWay's data is not unique. Surveys by Barna and Gallup have found similar dropout rates, leaving youth experts wondering: What can be done?

A new study of 500 youth group graduates may provide some answers. Conducted by the Fuller Youth Institute at Fuller Theological Seminary, the study followed the graduates through their years in college or vocational school. The results are compiled in a book, "Sticky Faith: Everyday Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in Your Kids."

Some of the suggestions aren't surprising. For instance, the level of church involvement by parents plays a key role in a teen maintaining his or her faith walk. Other suggestions, though, may surprise some Christian leaders.

Baptist Press talked to Sticky Faith co-author Kara Powell, executive director of the Fuller Youth Institute, about the research. (Some answers have been edited for space purposes.)

BAPTIST PRESS: What do you mean by "sticky faith"?

KARA POWELL: Sticky faith, in our

context, is faith that lasts beyond high school—a vibrant relationship with God, as well as with the faith community.

BP: Your book includes multiple reasons why teens leave the church when they move out or go off to college. What would you say are the top two or three?

POWELL: Our research didn't rank reasons, so it's challenging for me to choose the top two or three from a research perspective. Having said that, as

we've shared our research with students and gotten their feedback, the top two or three are, No. 1, their view of the gospel is a very truncated view of the gospel. It's very similar to what Dallas Willard calls the gospel of sin management, where the gospel has been distilled to a list of dos and don'ts. Part of what we need to do is reframe the gospel as God transforming us from the inside out.

No. 2, as youth ministries become more professionalized, ... it has become separated from the rest of the church. And so the typical youth group graduate leaves high school and they know their youth leader, but they don't know the overall church, they don't know adults in that church. We've done ourselves a disservice by having youth ministries so silo-ed from the rest of the congregation. We need to create more inter-generational worship and relationships.

And No. 3, their families are not vibrant hubs of faith. A lot of parents these days are what we call dry-cleaner parents—parents who think they can

bring their kids all dirty to church Sunday morning and then pick them up 75 minutes later all clean. A lot of parents are thinking they can outsource the spiritual formation of their kids to the church. And the reality is, the best combination is a family and church working in partnership for the long-term benefit of the child's faith.

BP: You say teens who feel the freedom to express doubts about their faith tend to keep their faith. How can parents and churches help facilitate that?

POWELL: Some of the parents and leaders who are most effective at engaging students in discussion about doubts share their own doubts. As parents and leaders share their own big questions about God, that tends to create a climate where that's more OK.

I think the other thing that comes to mind is for parents and leaders to be OK not having a definitive answer (to every question), because we can't understand everything about God. God is beyond our intellect and our ways. It's good for a parent or leader to say, "That's a good question and I don't know. Here's what I do know about God."

BP: Would you say, though, that there are questions that do have legitimate answers and teens just don't feel comfortable asking them?

POWELL: Absolutely. There are some questions that we can, using Scripture and reason and the help of good apologists, ... have well-reasoned answers for.

BP: In one chapter of the book you say



that it benefits a teen's faith to have adult mentors other than their parents. How does that help?

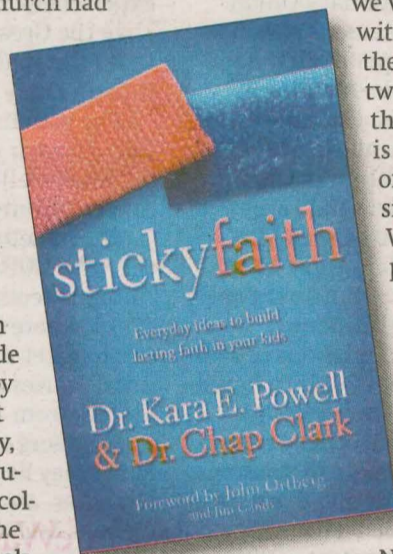
POWELL: As powerful as a parent is, there are just some life truths that a young person is going to absorb or hear better from somebody else other than their parent. The ideal is to form a constellation of caring adults around a kid, with other small-group members, neighbors, church members, coaches, teachers, etc., who are all caring for kids and praying for them and showing an interest in their life. ... God has designed us to live in community. ... So ideally, we have multiple voices reinforcing the messages to our students.

BP: How do parents have a role in choosing these mentors?

POWELL: I think it depends on the age of your child. For younger children, you can be pretty strategic in whom you invite over to dinner or whom you invite to your kid's soccer game, etc. As kids get older, I think they need to be more involved in this process. Parents of teenagers can ask their kids, "What adults do you look up to? Whom would you want to spend time with? What adults do you like?" The kids answer those questions, and the parents have a mental list of adults to try to connect with. This is not something we need to keep secret from our kids.

BP: How can churches that are located near colleges help facilitate the transition from high school to college and help teens stay in their faith?

POWELL: I think it's really simple things. If you see a college student who shows up at your church, introduce yourself to them. Find out if there's anything they need help with in their community. An adult could offer to be a vocational mentor. If a college student walks into your church and you find out that she's studying to be an engineer, how wonderful would it be if you could pair her or introduce her to another adult in the church who is an engineer and talk about how faith informs the engineering work they do? Vocation is a real avenue for connecting college students with specific adults. (BP)

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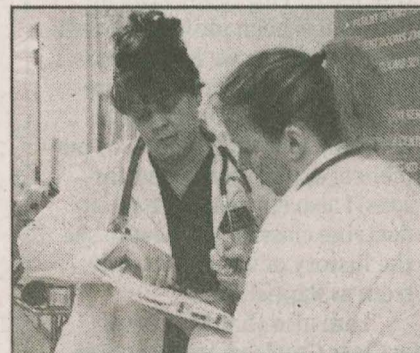
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Saying 'Thank You' is not enough

Two words not enough to express gratitude for time spent at Oneida

Kay and I understandably have been filled with a lot of emotion the past few weeks as our retirement date gets closer and closer. I don't know how many times I've been asked in the past few months, "Are you counting the days?" or "Are you ready for this?" My reply usually has been, "I know my body is ready for retirement, but I am not sure my heart is."

The past 28 years have been wonderful years for Kay and me, and it's no secret that the needs of this school have basically been the center of our lives. Though the demands on our time have been especially critical the past 18 years while I have been president, anyone who serves at Oneida will most likely devote a disproportionate amount of personal time to meeting the needs of our students.

This school and her ministry have been a part of our lives for more than 50 years. Kay and I first met at Oneida in 1961 as juniors in high school. So, our depth of appreciation goes back farther than just being on the staff. We also were blessed to attend OBI.

My predecessor, Barkley Moore, did not have the opportunity to say "Thank You" before he was called home in 1994. I can only imagine what he would have said to our wonderful friends if he had known he was going home.

So, as I write this final article, I find myself searching for the words to express my deepest appreciation to the many faithful friends Kay and I have made during our years at Oneida. The number of volunteers certainly is in the hundreds. They have contributed immeasurably to the ministry of this

school. So much has been done that otherwise would have gone undone if it had not been for the gift of their time and talents.

Those we have met—and many we have not met—who have supported this ministry with their financial gifts have been such a blessing that I cannot find the words to express my gratitude. This ministry simply would not exist were it not for the financial support that has undergirded our work the past 112 years.

I often think of the two quarters that one lady in Pennsylvania sent every Christmas—most likely the widow's mite. I clearly remember the day a longtime friend presented me with a stack of old envelopes which contained a large portion of her and her deceased husband's money that had been put away for a "rainy day." Then in her 80s, she told me she had never had a "rainy day" and she didn't expect to have one before she was called home, so she wanted Oneida to have the money. Those old envelopes contained more than \$30,000.

Finally, there are the wonderful prayer warriors we have met over the years who have told Kay and me that they prayed for us every day. Knowing the spiritual dedication of those faithful friends, it was a great comfort to know they were lifting us up in prayer every day. What a blessing!

I want to say something so much more meaningful than "Thank You," but I cannot find any substitute for those words. So, please accept this "Thank You" from the bottom of our hearts!

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

Changing directions

Soon-to-be graduate leaving Clear Creek with refined call from God

Senior Adam Lake and his wife, Amy, thought they knew the direction God was taking them when they came to Clear Creek four years ago. Sometimes God refines those plans once a student gets here.

"We came here with the idea we were going to be church planters," Adam recalled. "But God has taken us in a different direction than we first thought. I still feel as though God wants to use me to plant a church at some point in my ministry, but maybe in a more unconventional way than some would see."

"I feel God leading me to a teaching ministry at some point, ... but probably more in a secular setting on a college campus," Adam continued. "I know most secular college campuses have religion departments. I would like to teach some Bible and theology courses in this setting. Amy and I feel like this would be a mission field for us to share the truths of God's word to students on these campuses. We can still see ourselves eventually planting a church in this type of setting; it's just that God has

refined our calling to some extent.

"I am so thankful for the classes I have been so fortunate to have while here at Clear Creek," Adam said. "They have really prepared me for ministry in the type of setting I feel God calling me to. One of my favorite classes has been philosophy with the discussions we had in class. I enjoyed how the professor presented the secular side of the textbook and then helped us put biblical application to our lessons. I also enjoyed my Baptist doctrine class. It was neat to see the history of where we came from as Baptists."

"I am also thankful for a place like Clear Creek where I was able to lay some important foundations for my son," Adam said. "He started in the public school system the same time I started at Clear Creek. I quickly saw the value of making sure we disciple him to be able to face things he would face in that setting. Clear Creek has been a good place to raise him and disciple him at home and give him a good foundation."

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



Jessica Francis



Sarah Gaby



Alyssa Hargrove



Mary Virginia Harper



Sarah Harris



Lacey Wheeler

National Acteens panelists named

By Courtney Simpson

Birmingham, Ala.—Commitment to missions coupled with participation and leadership in their Acteens groups, churches, schools and communities landed six teenagers spots on this year's National Acteens Panel sponsored by national Woman's Missionary Union.

The 2012 National Acteens panelists are Mary Virginia Harper of First Baptist Church of Prattville, Ala.; Sarah Gaby of Heritage Baptist Church in Grand Blanc, Mich.; Sarah Harris of University Hills Baptist Church in Charlotte, N.C.; Jessica Francis and Lacey Wheeler, both of Abbotts Creek Missionary Baptist Church in High Point, N.C.; and Alyssa Hargrove of First Baptist Church of Spring Hill, Tenn.

Acteens is the WMU missions organization for girls in grades 7-12. Through Acteens, girls grow in their relationships with God and each other as they learn about and participate in missions, develop leadership skills and live a mission lifestyle.

"Acteens has broadened my perspective of the world and increased my awareness of missions across the globe," Harper said. Acteens "empowers girls to make a difference in their world for Christ, deepens their knowledge and relationship with God, and it gives them a safe haven where they can rely on the guidance and support of other strong Christians."

In their Acteens involvement, the six panelists have evidenced a commitment to serving others and sharing Christ.

"Acteens has had a huge impact on how I view my responsibility of sharing the gospel, and I do see it as a responsibility," Gaby said. "It is our

responsibility as Christians to share the good news of Jesus Christ. It is my job to be a missionary wherever I am—in my family, my neighborhood, my school."

"Missions involvement has opened my eyes and helped me take the focus off of myself and to view the world through God's eyes," Harris said. "These experiences have helped me to personalize the Great Commission and feel that I can make a difference even though I may be just one person."

The panelists, who serve through Dec. 31, each receive \$1,000 from the Jessica Powell Loftis Scholarship for Acteens from the WMU Foundation.

The panelists will be featured during the WMU Missions Celebration and Annual Meeting in New Orleans June 17-18, where they will have opportunities to meet national and international missionaries and interact with missions leaders from across the country.

Members of the National Acteens Panel may be requested to speak at churches, associational and state Acteens and WMU meetings and events. They will write articles for *The Mag*, the Acteens missions magazine, and for the Acteens website, www.WMU.com/Students.

WMU also recognized three Acteens as National Top Teens for their involvement in missions: Kendra Bollinger of First Baptist Church Jackson of Burfordville, Mo.; Alysia Funderburg of St. Stephen's Missionary Baptist Church in La Puente, Calif.; and Makayla Swygert of Bethel Baptist Church in Sumter, S.C.

Applications for the 2013 National Acteens Panel are available on the Acteens website and in the fall issue of *Acteens Leader*. All applications must be submitted to WMU headquarters by Dec. 1, 2012. (WMU/BP)

IMB to mobilize business leaders

By Kate Gregory

Lake Charles, La.—Within every Southern Baptist church there are people who can take the gospel around the world—business professionals, IMB President Tom Elliff said.

Elliff announced a new component to the International Mission Board's partnership with Southern Baptist churches during the March 20-21 trustee meeting at Trinity Baptist Church in Lake Charles, La.: "a global, strategic mobilization of businessmen and women, corporate leaders" across the Southern Baptist Convention.

Through global strategic mobilization, the IMB will offer business leaders and their organizations training and equipping to be "active, effective sowers of the seed of the gospel across the world."

The goal is to multiply Great Com-

mission impact by mobilizing business leaders, as well as other leaders in their professions across the SBC to "carry the light" of the gospel into their arenas, Elliff said, noting that the GSM concept is an acknowledgement of the first-century practice of believers carrying the gospel along Roman roads of commerce.

"Through the addition of this component, missionaries and business leaders will work together toward the vision of a multitude from every language, people, tribe and nation knowing and worshipping our Lord Jesus Christ," Elliff said.

In May 2011, the IMB initiated a marketplace initiatives task force that has been studying scriptural practices and contemporary possibilities throughout the business world. This May, a team of business leaders will meet in Dallas to provide an additional "think tank" as the GSM initiative is developed. (IMB/BP)

Churches conflicted when it comes to social media engagement

By Robert Dillard

Mobile, Ala.—It's not about hunting; it's about farming.

That's how bestselling author Ivan Misner, founder of one of the world's largest business networking organizations, describes social networks, which he says attempt to do one thing—cultivate relationships.

For church leaders—keen to deepen the authentic community at the heart of Christianity—the metaphor is apt. And ever since Facebook leapt off America's campuses and onto the computers of 850 million people worldwide, churches have regarded social media as essential to missional strategies.

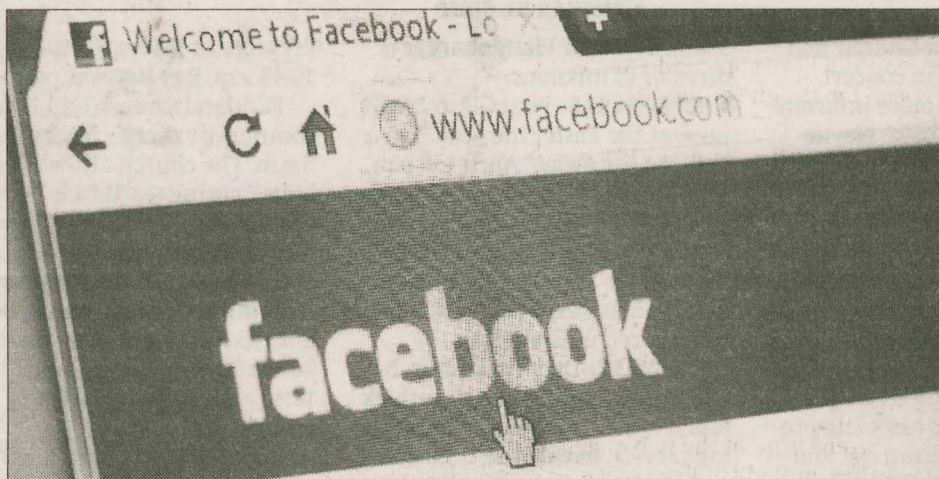
Yet eight years after Mark Zuckerberg famously launched "Thefacebook" in his Harvard dorm room, congregations largely remain uncertain about their engagement with social media.

"The fact is, if churches don't know why they have a Facebook page, it doesn't matter what they do with it," said Natalie Aho, a Mobile, Ala.-based social media consultant.

Part of the dilemma, say specialists, is failure to distinguish between web sites—which are primarily about communicating information—and social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Foursquare—which aim to create, well, social networks.

The distinction is important if churches hope to maximize the power of social media, which primarily lies in its interactive, community-developing potential rather than its information-distribution ability, Aho said. If an organization uses social media like a web site, "they won't get out of it what it's intended to do."

Less than half of Protestant churches—about 47 percent—actively use



Facebook, according to a survey conducted last year by LifeWay Research. Far fewer (3 percent) use MySpace or church-specific social networks like The City.

Fully 40 percent of churches use no social networking tools at all, the research found.

And while LifeWay found more than three-quarters of churches have web sites, most aren't attempting to use their sites' admittedly less effective community enhancing tools as substitutes for social media. More than 90 percent use them to provide information to potential visitors and almost 80 percent to provide information to the congregation.

"If churches desire to connect with their congregation and community in meaningful ways, then they need to establish a strategy for actively engaging in the social media conversation," said Curtis Simmons, vice president for marketing and community at Fellowship Technologies, a LifeWay partner. "Thousands of individuals are sharing support and encouragement through these tools. The church needs to be an active participant in these conversations and

connections."

For some churches, reluctance to fully embrace social media may be simply bewilderment at navigating a world of newly invented technical incarnations with newly coined names—Ning, Pinterest, Tumblr, Xanga.

But for others, there may be a more deep-seated theological suspicion that social media is a superficial substitute for authentic, embodied community. For Christians serving a God who "became flesh and dwelt among us," anything that undermines incarnation is problematic.

But Claire Diaz Ortiz, who leads social innovation at Twitter, said social media is a natural tool for religious organizations.

"Religion' is about relationships, and social media is about relationships," she told Christianity Today at last fall's Catalyst conference. "A lot of companies don't understand that. They think it's a new way to market themselves. In contrast, religious organizations have been relying on word-of-mouth marketing and relational marketing for forever." (Virginia Religious Herald/ABP)

Churches & Facebook

While about half of Protestant churches have Facebook pages, many essentially use it as a bulletin board, missing out on the potential to nurture relationships with congregants and its community.

Social media specialists suggest several ways a congregation can get the most out of Facebook:

- Examine other pages. See what other churches are doing and experiment. Don't reinvent the wheel.
- Keep it current. Post updates regularly so fans have a reason to return often. A stagnant site quickly loses its appeal.
- Open it up. Set the page's parameters to allow as many people as possible to post. Moderate comments frequently, if you have concerns about unrestricted content.
- Be a first responder. Acknowledge comments, answer questions, clarify confusion and express thanks for compliments.
- Focus on the congregation.
- Share the wealth. Encourage members to post photos and comments that reflect God's impact on their lives.
- Delegate responsibility. Staff ministers may not be the best administrators of a Facebook page. Find a church member who's proficient at posting and understands the community-building aspect.
- Start a discussion. It might be last week's sermon or a story in today's newspaper. Facebook conversations aren't limited by time or geography, and everyone can participate. (Virginia Religious Herald/ABP)

God has a plan

Story of Jonah is reminder that God is greater than any problem

Perhaps you see the news on a regular basis and feel like me: It seldom inspires much confidence in the world these days.

With the turmoil in the Middle East to the woes of our country and our financial systems, you certainly can get to the point where you have little confidence in the future.

I am 44 years old, and I remember my days in school with a certain assumption that my future was full of opportunity. Today, school-age youth do not seem to share the same optimism about the future as I did 25 years ago. Perhaps you don't even have to be their age to have more than just a little concern about the future these days?

All the uncertainty of our world and specific U.S. issues can be an asset today from a Christian perspective. After all, this place is not our home.

It is true that when times are more difficult people are more open to consider a "higher power."

As we continue to prepare for camp this summer, our theme is based on the life of Jonah, a story that reinforces the

fact that God has a plan, and His plan will come about according to His purposes. This fact absolutely gives me great hope and assurance knowing even when we face the current problems, God still has a plan and He will accomplish His purposes.

As you feel yourself become discouraged during our uncertain times, remember He will use these circumstances for His glory. This world undoubtedly has many challenges.

However, these same challenges will be used to draw people to the Lord in ways that a prosperous and stable world typically do not. Why should we fear trouble? Psalm 49:5, I know that I am much more likely to

seek God when I am facing trouble.

This year we will have thousands come to Cedarmore, Jonathan Creek, and now a camp in Haiti. I believe maybe because of our circumstances people will be more open to the gospel than ever before.

That is our prayer this year and we ask for you to pray as well for open hearts to the gospel.

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

Ky. Baptist Assemblies



David Melber

Take a stand against child abuse

April is opportunity for Ky. Baptists to join Sunrise in protecting kids

Headlines in recent months suggest that the issue of child abuse is no longer a hidden problem. Whether it's the scandal at Penn State University, the call for Kentucky officials to be more open with child-abuse records and details, or a story of abuse occurring in your neighborhood, the national, state and local media currently are tuned into the harsh reality that too many children endure every day.

But these children need more than just awareness that there's a problem. They need to know that we all are working together to prevent abuse and neglect

from occurring in the first place. April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, and Sunrise again is taking an active role in highlighting the need to not only react to the needs of children who have been abused, but to be proactive in efforts to stop abuse.

Last year in Kentucky, there were more than 9,500 substantiated cases of child abuse, involving more than 15,500 children. Whether the abuse was emotional, sexual or physical, the hurt was real and the damage could last a lifetime.

For more than 142 years, Sunrise has been there to help children recover from neglect and abuse. We also make efforts to intervene before the abuse takes place. Our staff works with families who have been identified as at risk

for trouble in the home, helping them ward off the escalation of those stresses. We also involve family members and parents of children in our care in counseling sessions so that if and when the children are returned home, it will be to a safe, violence-free home.

As Sunrise "Takes a Stand Against Child Abuse" in April, we invite you to do the same. As eyes and ears in your own community, abused and neglected

children are dependent upon you to be their voice. If you suspect a child is a victim, you can contact your local police, your county attorney's office, or you can contact the child protection hotline toll free at (877) 597-2331.

Your church can help spread the word through Child Abuse Prevention Month bulletin inserts available through Sunrise. Contact Cindy Hills at (800) 456-1386 or chills@sunrise.org. Bill Smithwick is president of Sunrise Children's Services. Contact Sunrise at (502) 538-1000 or www.sunrise.org

Sunrise Children's Services



Bill Smithwick



March

- 28-4/1** Adult Kentucky Changers—East, Louisville.
- 30-4/1** Leadership Training Conference, Cedarmore Camp & Conference Center, Bagdad.
- 31** Region 5 RA Congress and Rally, Knoxville Baptist Church, Williamstown.

April

- 13-14** 4:GO 2012, Campbellsville Baptist Church.
- 13-14** Exalt 2012, Campbellsville University.
- 13-14** Women on Mission Regional Retreat, Laurel Lake Baptist Camp, Corbin.
- 14** Disaster Relief Training Phase I & II, First Baptist Church, London.
- 19-21** Ministers in Transition, Louisville.
- 20-22** All-State Children's Choir—East and West, Cedarmore Camp and Conference Center, Bagdad.
- 21** Region 4 RA Congress and Rally, First Baptist Church, Mount Washington.
- 21** Youth and High School Bible Drill and Speakers' Tournament, Parkway Baptist Church, Bardstown.
- 23** Senior Living Celebration, Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah.
- 24** Developing and Managing People, Kentucky Baptist Building, Louisville.
- 24** Iron Sharpening Iron, Bowling Green Ballpark.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **BEREA**—White Lick Church will host **Lynn DeShazo** in concert April 3, 11 a.m. For more information, call (859) 925-4641. **Wayne Dunn** is pastor.

■ **CADIZ**—Cadiz Church will hold a "Brown Bag" Bible study series April 2-6, noon.

■ **CAMPBELLVILLE**—Campbellsville University will hold a Holy Week lecture April 2, 5 p.m., in the Badgett Academic Support Center banquet hall on campus with **Scott Wigginton**, an associate professor of pastoral ministries and counseling at CU, as guest speaker.

■ **CECILIA**—Cecilia Church will hold a luncheon to benefit the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering April 1 following the morning service.

■ **CRESTWOOD**—Crestwood Church will hold its Easter musical March 30-31, 7 p.m.; April 1, 4 p.m. **Donnie Patrick** is pastor.

■ **FRANKFORT**—Crestwood Church will hold the "On a Hill Too Far Away" outreach event April 1, 6 p.m.; April 2, 7 p.m. **Michael Hail** is pastor.

■ **GRAHAM**—Unity Church will hold revival services March 30-April 1 with **James Wedding**, pastor of Yellow Creek Church in Owensboro, as evangelist. **Richard Browning** is pastor.

■ **GRAY**—Knox Association will hold an "Amazing Wonders Aviation" VBS preview clinic March 31,

9 a.m. **Seymour Wattenbarger** is director of missions.

■ **HOPKINSVILLE**—First Church will present the Easter musical, "On a Hill Too Far Away," April 1, 6 p.m. **Rick Stevens** is pastor.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Highlands Church recently honored **James Pierce** for his 10 years as pastor. He also is pastor emeritus at Porter Memorial Church in Lexington.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Deer Park Church will hold a "Spring Fling" potluck lunch April 1 following the morning service. **David Platt** is pastor.

Fern Creek Church will hold a Lenten concert April 1. **Linda Barnes Popham** is pastor.

Green Acres Church's sanctuary choir will present its Easter musical April 1. **Phil Ellis** is pastor.

Highview Church recently called **Les Hughes** as pastor. He previously was pastor of Westwood Church in Alabaster, Ala.

Hurstbourne Church's women's ministry will hold a "Fountains of Friendship" event March 29, 7 p.m., with **Shelly Johns**, women's and senior adult ministry associate with the KBC, as guest speaker. Also, the church's choir and orchestra will present "Remember: Where the Past Ends and Forever Begins" April 1, 2:30 p.m. **Mike O'Neal** is pastor.

Maple Grove Church will present its Easter musical, "In the

Presence of Jehovah," April 1, 10:45 a.m. **Ray Hayes** is pastor.

Parkland Church will hold a community dinner March 29, 5 p.m. The church also will hold a ladies' spring tea March 31, noon, with **Brenda Smith**, electronic media specialist for the KBC, as guest speaker. **Tom Curry** is pastor.

South Jefferson Church will hold its Easter musical, "Hallelujah, Praise the Lamb," April 1, 10:40 a.m. **Richard Carver** is pastor.

Walnut Street Church will hold a "Let's Get Tech Savvy" Lunch and Learn event April 2, 1 p.m. The topic will be apps and computer programs. **Rusty Ellison** is pastor.

■ **MAYFIELD**—High Point Church will host For Heaven's Sake in concert April 1, 6 p.m. For more information, call (270) 247-3106. **Rick Hatley** is pastor.

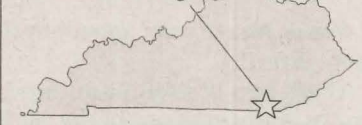
■ **PADUCAH**—Lone Oak First Church's worship choir and orchestra will present its Easter musical, "The Power of the Cross," April 1, 7 p.m. **Dan Summerlin** is pastor.

■ **PRINCETON**—Calvary Church will host Caldwell-Lyon Association's children's Bible drill April 1, 2:30 p.m. **Darrick Holloman** is pastor.

Cedar Bluff Church will host Caldwell-Lyon Association's "Amazing Wonders Aviation" Vacation Bible School clinic March 29.

Spotlight on ...

Williamsburg



First Church will hold a Cutting Edge Outdoors event March 29, 7 p.m., with **Randy Baker**, a competitive turkey caller, and **Nick Metcalf**, an award-winning animal call maker.

Mark Faughn is pastor.

■ **RICHMOND**—Red House Church will host **Lynn DeShazo** in concert April 2, 7 p.m. For more information, call (859) 623-8471. **Butch Tanner** is pastor.

■ **RUSSELLVILLE**—Southern Heights Church will host a showing of the "Love and Respect" marriage and relationship video conference March 30-31, sponsored by The Family Foundation of Kentucky and the Kentucky Marriage Movement. **Carl Freudenthal** is pastor.

■ **SOMERSET**—High Street Church recently ordained **Matthew Black** to the gospel ministry. Black is recently was called as pastor of Immanuel Church in Wilmington, Ohio, and will graduate from Clear Creek Bible College this spring. **Ed Amundson** is pastor.

■ **WACO**—Bethlehem Church will hold a community supper March 28, 5 p.m. **Mark McGuire** is pastor.

Budget woes bring end to Wyoming Baptist newspaper

Casper, Wyo.—Wyoming Baptists soon will no longer receive their convention news via newsprint. Lynn Nikkel, executive director of the Wyoming Southern Baptist Convention, announced April 3 that Horizons, the Baptist newspaper of the convention, will cease publication.

"Budgetary restraints because of decreases in giving through the Cooperative Program in fiscal year 2011 have caused us to make several reductions in expenses in operations of the convention," Nikkel said in a column to readers. "And one of those reductions has to be in the print publication of

this Horizons newspaper." Nikkel said the convention is looking into different avenues to communicate with Wyoming Baptists, including a redesigned convention website and possibly producing an online version of the paper. "Without the cost of paper, ink

and print publication, we are hoping to be able to continue this news service, just in a new form," Nikkel said. The final print edition of Horizons will be in June. Horizons has contracted editorial and design services from the Western Recorder since August 2009. (WR)

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OPPORTUNITY: Christian values technology company seeks mature business professionals for high-income opportunity. Home-based office; hands-on support and apprenticeship-style training. For complete information, call Keith at (888) 395-6557.

SEEKING: Full-time associate pastor (music and education) at Pleasant View Baptist Church, Waynesburg, Ky. Please forward resumés to pybcsearchteam@gmail.com; or mail to 13571 Ky. Hwy. 1247, Waynesburg, KY 40489, Attn: Search Team.

SEEKING: Full-time associate minister of youth and outreach for a growing Northern Kentucky church. Candidate should have love for Christ, calling to youth ministry and passion for building bridges to the lost and not-yet committed church members/attenders. Send resumé by April 21 to Union Baptist Church, PO Box 194, Union, KY 41091. www.unionbaptistchurch.org.

SEEKING: Part-time worship leader for blended services and leading an adult choir at Gamaliel Baptist Church, Gamaliel, Ky. Send resumés to carder@scrtc.com.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music and youth. Responsible for the music worship and the growth and development of youth. A BS or BA in music or related field; master's degree preferred. Full job description is available upon request. First Baptist Church, Fulton, Ky. Email: office@fbcfulton.org.

SEEKING: A worship pastor for large church in Knoxville area. Blended worship style (choir, praise team, band). Must have conservative theology and experience with productions. Experience with sound, lighting and video a plus. Great compensation package. Email a resumé and family photo to grow4life@aol.com.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth and children for First Baptist Church of Corbin, Ky. FBC is a CBF/SBC congregation. Please send resumés to search@firstbaptistcorbin.org; or Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 401 N. Laurel Ave., Corbin, KY 40701.

SEEKING: Director of missions for Pike Association of Southern Baptists in Pike County. Email resumés to bill@eliteky.net; or mail to Bill Staggs, moderator, PO Box 2973, Pikeville, KY 41502. Resumés will be received by May 4. Pike Association consists of 25 churches and one mission. For more information, call (606) 434-8289.

SEEKING: Part-time worship leader (12-16 hours/week), Hunsinger Lane Baptist. Music a blend of contemporary and hymns. Experience preferred. Email resumé to msnell@hlbc.net. (502) 491-4356.

SEEKING: Director of missions for Booneville Baptist Association in Clay County. Send resumé by April 15 to John N. Routh, PO Box 279, Oneida, KY 40972; or email to johnnrouth@yahoo.com.

SEEKING: Part-time worship leader who is familiar with hymns, modern music and leading a choir for Georgetown, Ky., church. Send resumés to safeharborpastor@gmail.com.

To place an advertisement:

Rates are available upon request. Call (502) 489-3428; or visit WesternRecorder.org. Claims made by advertisers are not necessarily those of the Western Recorder's staff or directors.



SEEKING: Associate pastor for Greensburg Baptist Church, Greensburg, Ky. See website, greensburgbaptist.com, for job description and to forward resumé. Mail: Greensburg Baptist Church, Box 248, Greensburg, KY 42743.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music/youth. For more info, contact Rev. Tom Stokes, (270) 487-6538; or email tfbc302@scrtc.com. Email resumés or mail to First Baptist Church, 302 N. Magnolia, Tompkinsville, KY 42167.

SEEKING: Full-time senior pastor for Westside Baptist Church in Murray, Ky. Average worship attendance: 450. Seminary degree required; previous experience preferred. Send resumé to Westside Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 750 Murray, KY 42071; or email to thph048@gmail.com by March 31, 2012.

Legacy Giving



Giving to Connect All People to Jesus Christ Through the Cooperative Program Endowment Fund

The Cooperative Program enables Kentucky Baptists to accomplish more for Christ together than we ever could on our own. Cooperative Program funds provide the foundational support for statewide, nationwide and worldwide missions and ministry efforts.

Your legacy gifts for the benefit of the Cooperative Program are an investment with eternal implications that will be working literally **24 hours a day, 365 days a year**, to connect people all over the world to Jesus Christ.

Earnings from Cooperative Program Endowments with Kentucky Baptist Foundation have been a major contributor through the Cooperative Program of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

During each of the past 5 years the combined earnings from Cooperative Program endowments have represented the 2nd largest single source of Cooperative Program gifts. Only one church has given more. The combined 5 year total was \$1,772,457.

Ways To Make A Legacy Gift f/b/o the Cooperative Program Endowment Fund

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For additional information about legacy giving contact:

Barry Allen, President and CEO
barry.allen@kybaptist.org

Laurie Valentine, Trust Counsel and COO
laurie.valentine@kybaptist.org

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