

WESTERN Recorder

May 15, 2012

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 186, Issue 19



By Dannah Prather

Louisville—The Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board overwhelmingly embraced a plan last week that leaders say will enable more direct assistance to its 2,400 member churches to better prepare them to serve their communities and the world.

"The Kentucky Baptist Convention was created by churches, for churches to help churches reach Kentucky and the world for Christ," KBC Executive Director Paul Chitwood said.

"It must be the prerogative of the churches to decide if they need us," he added.

Approval of the plan is the first step in the most significant reorganization of the KBC Mission Board staff in memory, according to KBC President Adam Greenway.

When gaveling the meeting to order

May 7 at the Kentucky Baptist Building in Louisville, Greenway told members of the 120-member board to prepare for "the most historic meeting in half a century."

Following an executive session discussion on day one of the meeting, board members endorsed the plan during the meeting's final session the next day. There were five dissenting votes.

The strategy sharpens the focus of the KBC Mission Board staff into three areas of service: church consulting and revitalization; evangelism and church planting; and missions mobilization.

"We must have a focus that is oriented toward the field," Chitwood said. With the new structure, the executive director said he hopes to concentrate the expertise of KBC staff to offer small-to-medium-sized congregations assistance with their specific needs.

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Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Director Paul Chitwood (left) presents his plan for reorganizing the convention's staff to Mission Board members May 8, as KBC President Adam Greenway (center) and executive committee chairman Alan Dodson look on. The newly adopted restructuring also shifts the KBC's focus to getting more direct assistance to its 2,400-plus affiliated churches, most specifically in the areas of consulting, revitalization, evangelism, church planting and missions mobilization. (Photo by Robin Bass)

Meeting with black Southern Baptists prompts lengthy apology from Land

By Adelle Banks

Nashville, Tenn.—Southern Baptist leader Richard Land has issued a lengthy public apology for his racially charged comments about the Trayvon Martin case, and said he has sent a personal letter to President Obama seeking forgiveness.

Land, who leads the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, issued the two-page apology May 9, a week after a five-hour meeting with African-American leaders and other Southern Baptist officials.

Because of that meeting, "I have come to understand in sharper relief how damaging my words were," he wrote in the statement released through Baptist Press.

Land previously had apologized for his comments, which charged

Democrats and civil rights leaders with exploiting the killing of the unarmed Florida teen. He also has apologized for failing to attribute the material he used when discussing the case on his radio show.



Richard Land

The latest apology included references to his "insensitivity" towards Martin's family, and a clarification that "racial profiling is a heinous injustice" and that he does not believe U.S. racism is a myth.

Land also confessed that he "impugned the motives" of President Obama and civil rights leaders Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton.

"It was un-Christian and unwise for me to have done so," he wrote, adding that he sent them letters of apology asking for forgiveness. "God alone is the searcher of men's hearts. I cannot know what motivated them in

☐ See Land apologizes ... Page 3



QUESTION & ANSWER

Howard Atkinson, director of missions for West Union Baptist Association, poses a question to KBC Executive Director Paul Chitwood about the role of local associations within the convention's new organizational structure. In response, Chitwood pointed out the new missions mobilization team's emphasis on working closely with associations in facilitating missions opportunities for Kentucky Baptist churches. (Photo by Robin Bass)



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KBC Reorganization

Reduced staff, greater focus on equipping churches for missions, ministries highlights newly adopted plan

Continued from page 1

The evangelism strategy will include ministry to Kentucky's growing non-Anglo population, focusing efforts on planting churches among Hispanic communities.

Additionally, a full-time church planting strategist, funded by the North American Mission Board with assistance from the KBC, will help facilitate church planting in Kentucky.

Through the missions mobilization team, the convention will coordinate the statewide network of Mission Service Corps missionaries and the thousands of other Kentucky Baptists seeking to serve in Kentucky and beyond through short-term projects, including Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief.

The restructuring was required because of significant changes in Kentucky Baptist life that also are shared by Southern Baptists in other states.

Giving to the Cooperative Program, a unified fund that makes possible a variety of missions and ministries, has been in decline for the past 10 years, reducing the amount of resources available to Mission Board staff to provide services to churches. The global economic downturn further reduced giving.

Additionally, Kentucky Baptists decided at their 2010 annual meeting, to begin redistributing Cooperative Program dollars in order to send a greater percentage of receipts to national Southern Baptist causes, including NAMB and the International Mission Board.

The approved plan creates a smaller Mission Board staff, which will free up Cooperative Program dollars so Kentucky Baptists can more quickly achieve the 50/50 goal of creating an equal percentage of funding for Kentucky and SBC missions causes.

Financial realities demanded changes, including a reduction in the size of the staff, Chitwood said, but the time also was right to re-evaluate the Mission Board's service to Kentucky Baptist churches.

"The question was asked, 'Are we appropriately matching these resources of money and people to the needs of our churches?'" he said. "We saw within the existing structure some opportunities to do a better job."

Other highlights of the plan include sharing responsibility for youth ministry with Crossings Ministries, a KBC-affiliated summer camp and missions effort organized around Kentucky Baptists' Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek camp and conference centers.

In addition to youth ministry, Crossings also will become a partner in Kentucky Changers, the short-term missions effort modeled after NAMB's World Changers. More than 1,000 students and adults participate in dozens of projects annually through Kentucky Changers.

Joe Ball, who will resign June 30 as director of the KBC's youth ministry department, has accepted the newly created position of youth ministry strategist for Crossings. The appointment was finalized after the Mission Board meeting (see story on page 3).

Ball also is longtime Kentucky Changers leader.

"Joe's presence with Crossings will provide a seamless transition, and along with other Crossings staff, will help take youth ministry and missions in Kentucky to a new level," Chitwood said.

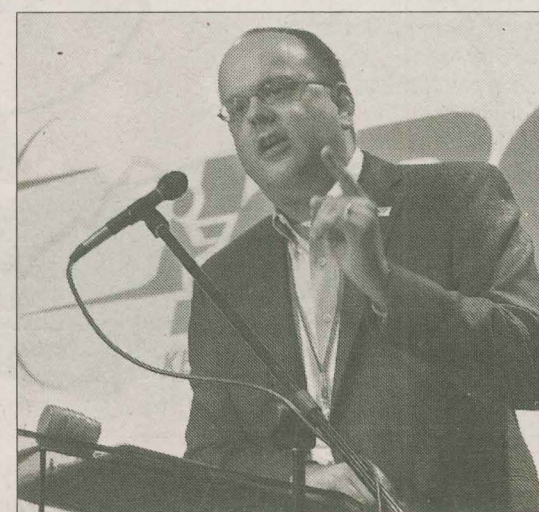
Coordination of Kentucky Changers has fallen almost entirely on one KBC staff member, Chitwood noted, and that with additional support from Crossings, Kentucky Changers could expand even more.

The reorganization plan did not include recommendations related to how Kentucky Baptists should continue to relate to its agencies and institutions, such as the Baptist universities. Additionally Baptist Collegiate Ministries also were not included in Chitwood's restructuring proposal.

"Collegiate ministries and the agencies and institutions have a long and significant heritage among Kentucky Bap-



■ Above: Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Director Paul Chitwood chats with Mission Board member, Ron Norrod, the pastor at First Baptist Church of Fountain Run, following the board's adoption of the plan that will reorganize the convention's staff and structure. The board will hold a special-called staff meeting in June to approve new hires for currently unfilled positions. ■ Right: KBC President Adam Greenway, a professor and dean at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, opens the May 7-8 Mission Board meeting with a call to endorse the reorganization plan, calling the board's gathering last week its most historic in the last 50 years. (Photos by Robin Bass)



tists and continue to present tremendous opportunity for Great Commission and Great Commandment faithfulness," Chitwood said.

Because of the "huge investment of Cooperative Program funds from the churches" represented in collegiate ministries and agencies and institutions, Chitwood informed board members that time for a thorough assessment is needed.

An in-depth evaluation of the two ministry areas will be conducted over the next year. Future Mission Board meetings may take up recommendations based on the findings.

The KBC's agencies and institutions include Campbellsville University, Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Crossings

Ministries, the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union, Oneida Baptist Institute, Sunrise Children's Services, University of the Cumberlands and the Western Recorder.

In other action, the Mission Board:

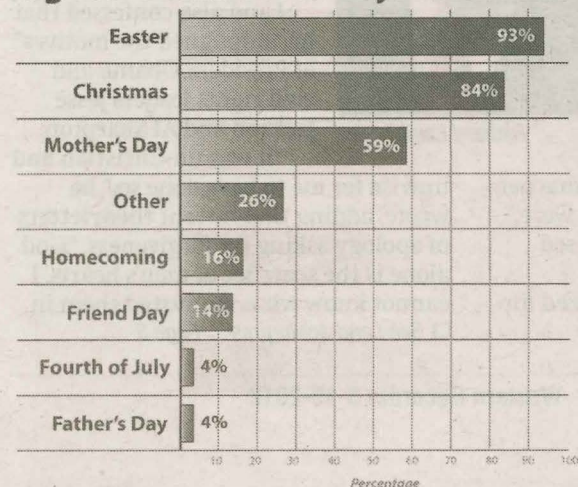
■ Approved a special session in June to consider candidates for vacant personnel positions.

■ Approved revised job descriptions reflecting increased responsibility for staff members Eric Allen, Larry Brannin, Jim Donnell and Shelly Johns.

■ Authorized the board's administrative and business and finance committees to develop and implement a revised budget to address the needs of the restructuring plan without full board approval. (KBC)

Reported among Protestant pastors

Days selected as one of the three highest attendance days at church



LifeWay
RESEARCH

LifeWayResearch.com

Mother's Day churches' third-best attended holiday

Nashville, Tenn.—Between Easter and Christmas, Mother's Day may be the most likely day people will attend church, according to a study by LifeWay Research.

LifeWay Research asked more than 1,000 Protestant pastors what the three highest attended Sundays were throughout the year. Mother's Day (59 percent) ranked third behind the standard religious powerhouse holidays of Easter (93 percent) and Christmas (84 percent).

"Clearly, mothers want to be present for the affirmation that is typically offered in most churches, but families also are present knowing their attendance will honor their mother," said Scott McConnell, director of LifeWay Research. "Many

families make church attendance on Mother's Day nearly obligatory."

Among the seven specific days tested, Father's Day was mentioned the least, falling behind even homecoming celebrations.

"The attendance difference between Mother's Day and Father's Day is telling," McConnell said. "Either churches are less effective in affirming fathers, or families believe Christian fathers don't value their participation in worship services."

The study asked the question: "At your church, which day typically has the highest attendance for worship services?" In addition to Easter, Christmas, Mother's Day and Father's Day, three other days were listed: church homecoming or anniversary

(16 percent), a special day to invite friends (14 percent) and Fourth of July (4 percent). Twenty-six percent of respondents indicated a different holiday.

Pastors of churches in the South were most likely to select homecoming (9 percent). No other region had more than 1 percent of pastors making this selection.

"Holidays and special days, regardless of which ones, offer an opportunity for churches to host guests who might not otherwise attend church," McConnell said. "Encouraging attendees to invite family and friends for services on these special days is a natural time to ask since many people will be considering attending." (LW/BP)

With youth ministry focus shifting, Crossings hires KBC leader

By Dannah Prather

Louisville—Just hours after an expanded partnership between the Kentucky Baptist Convention and Crossings Ministries was approved by the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board, Crossings filled a newly created position with a longtime Kentucky Baptist youth ministry leader.

Joe Ball will serve as a youth ministry strategist for Crossings, concentrating his efforts as program director for Kentucky Changers, KBC's youth missions endeavor that equips more than 1,000 students and adults every year to provide home repairs and renovations for Kentucky's needy.

Crossings, previously known as Kentucky Baptist Assemblies, provides camp and retreat services to thousands of students and adults annually at the Cedar-moore and Jonathan Creek conference centers.

In recent years, Crossings has expanded its ministry to mobilize youth to support international missions and to serve through short-term mission trips.

"We knew it was time to take a bold step in the area of youth missions and ministries," KBC Executive Director Paul Chitwood said. "Just hours after the board meeting, we are well on our way."

The Mission Board passed a comprehensive restructuring plan for KBC staff during its May meeting last week in Louisville.

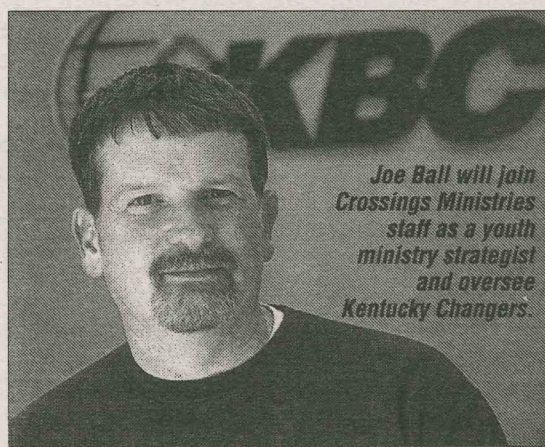
Ball currently serves as director of the KBC's youth ministry department. He was among 27 employees to accept resignation or retirement incentive packages in preparation for the restructuring. He will leave the KBC on or before June 30.

Although Kentucky Changers never was an official part of his work as a KBC staff member, Ball has been a fixture on the Changers scene since 1994 when Kentucky Baptists followed the lead of World Changers to mobilize students for hands-on ministry.

Ball has served in virtually every leadership role of Kentucky Changers, including several stints as project pastor.

"Kentucky Changers is in my blood," he said. "There is something about Changers and how God is able to get a student's attention during that week that I haven't seen in other settings."

Every year, Kentucky Changers leaders report students having come to faith in Christ during a project. Other young people accept God's call to Christian service, and students share the gospel with



Joe Ball will join Crossings Ministries staff as a youth ministry strategist and oversee Kentucky Changers.

the owners whose houses they are repairing.

"Honestly, it would have hurt my soul worse to have walked away from Kentucky Changers than to walk away" from the KBC, Ball said.

Chitwood said shifting

Changers and other aspects of youth ministry to Crossings will ensure continued growth in the vitally important area.

"Crossings knows youth and youth ministers and how to minister to both," he said. "I believe Kentucky Baptist youth ministers and student volunteers will benefit greatly from their expertise."

In the 1990s, Kentucky Baptists were on the verge of losing the Cedar-moore and Jonathan Creek properties, Chitwood noted. Crossings' approach to camps and retreats has placed the ministry on firm ground once again.

"Crossings also has displayed a sacrificial commitment to missions," he added. "I believe Kentucky Baptists who have been involved with Changers as students or adults will be thrilled with the results of this partnership."

Crossings will assume responsibility for Kentucky Changers in 2013.

Crossings President David Melber said asking Ball to join Crossings was an easy decision.

"We have had an ongoing working relationship with Joe since he joined the KBC," Melber said. "His commitment to reach students for Christ, coupled with his 18 years of service through Kentucky Changers, made Joe a logical and strategic choice."

Ball's years of service as a youth minister at Edgewood Baptist Church in Hopkinsville and then through the Mission Board staff have made him a valuable partner for many pastors, youth ministers and youth ministry leaders in Kentucky, Chitwood said.

Melber said he and his staff are eager to learn from Ball the inner workings of Kentucky Changers.

"Going into this partnership, I am most excited about how different Kentucky Changers is compared to Crossings, which might sound strange," he said. "But as we seek to serve the church, we need a wide variety of opportunities to offer them."

Ball said he is also optimistic about the future of Kentucky Changers.

"For years, Changers has been tagged as 'the best kept secret among Kentucky Baptists,'" he said. "My hope and prayer is that with this partnership with Crossings, more people will participate in and support Kentucky Changers. (KBC)

Land apologizes

Continued from page 1
their comments in this case."

An investigatory committee is looking into charges that some of Land's comments may have been plagiarized. In a May 9 statement, Steve Faith, chairman of the ERLC's trustees, said ERLC leaders expect to make a public statement about the probe by June 1.

"The trustees are aware of their responsibility to the convention and to the watching world," Faith said.

The meeting with Land included Fred Luter, the New Orleans pastor expected to be elected in June as the SBC's first African-American president; leaders of black Southern Baptist groups and two former SBC presidents, Frank Page and Paige Patterson.

Ed Stetzer, the head of LifeWay Research who criticized Land's comments, said he was grateful that black Southern Baptist leaders confronted Land, and wished more white leaders had spoken up.

"I am very glad that Dr. Land listened to them and apologized," Stetzer wrote on his blog last week. (RNS)

Influential black pastor 'fully' accepts Land's apology

By Art Toalston

Nashville, Tenn.—A prominent African-American pastor, Dwight McKissic, has publicly accepted Richard Land's apology for remarks the Southern Baptist ethicist made about the Trayvon Martin shooting.

"I fully accept his apology—without hesitation, or reservation—and appeal to all Christians, regardless of color, who were offended by his remarks to accept his apology and forgive him," McKissic wrote in a May 10 post at the SBC Voices blog.

McKissic said he previously had contended that Land should publicly apologize or be fired as president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty

Commission, which Land has led since 1988.

Land, on May 9, issued a five-part, two-page apology "for the harm my words of March 31, 2012, have caused to specific individuals, the cause of racial reconciliation, and the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Land and McKissic were among 12 people at a May 2 meeting when African-American leaders' concerns were voiced to Land—a session that Land said helped him "understand in sharper relief how damaging my words were."

Land, on his "Richard Land

Live!" radio show March 31, had criticized the intrusion of politics into the Trayvon Martin case and had referenced President

Obama, Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson by name.

McKissic, senior pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas, began his blog post by citing the oft-quoted words about repentance and healing from 2 Chronicles 7:14.

McKissic said he had "a joyful heart and renewed spirit" upon receiving Land's apology from James Dixon Jr., president of the SBC's National

African American Fellowship. The apology, McKissic said, "reveals that Dr. Land has indeed owned and then disowned his words regarding the Trayvon Martin/Zimmerman case."

Dixon, contacted by Baptist Press after Land's apology was issued last week, said he would have no comment until after ERLC trustees have completed the process initiated by their executive committee on April 18 regarding Land's comments. The ERLC executive committee also created an ad hoc committee to investigate allegations of plagiarism over material Land failed to attribute to a Washington Times columnist on the March 31 broadcast. (BP)



Dwight McKissic

Syrian refugee relief work hindered by dwindling World Hunger Fund

Syria—Southern Baptists are reaching out to the growing numbers of Syrians fleeing violence in their country, but financial reserves are inadequate to meet the needs.

"Many of us have seen the ongoing human suffering in Syria," said Jeff Palmer, executive director of Baptist Global Response, an international relief and development organization. "BGR and its partners have been responding to needs of refugees

flooding out of the country. Projects in neighboring countries are helping with food, temporary shelter, clothing and household necessities."

To date, Southern Baptists have provided about \$160,000 of relief supplies, but two recent requests for help have amounted to \$300,000, Palmer said.

"The World Hunger Fund reserve is low, and we will only be able to respond to about half of these needs," Palmer said.

A ceasefire was signed in Syria a month ago, and United Nations observers have been in the country for three weeks now—yet violence continues, according to news reports.

"Refugees are pouring out of the country," Palmer said. "Their numbers are just constantly growing."

If humanitarian workers are going to be able to share the love of Christ with the multitude of refugees seeking assistance,

donations are urgently needed, Palmer said.

"Jesus told His followers to 'work while it is day,' and right now we have the opportunity of daylight with these refugees," Palmer said. "As volatile as the region is, night may be coming and no one will be able to work. We need people who care about people in need to take advantage of the daylight, so the love of God can be demonstrated for these families in crisis." (BGR)

Remodeling the watchtower

In Luke 14, Jesus teaches us about the cost of discipleship, emphasizing our need to understand the cost even before we take the first step in His direction.

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

Jesus first illustrates His point using the example of a builder: "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it" (v28)? He then appeals to the example of a king: "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace" (vv31-32).

Jesus' appeal to the wise virtue of counting the cost can be applied to many areas of life and ministry. Over the course of the past several months, I have been applying it to the work of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. While we will never ask our already defeated enemy (Satan) for terms of peace, the time has come to remodel the watchtower we have constructed. It was a magnificent and effective structure for many years, but the needs of our churches and the financial realities of our day demand a new vision.

That vision can best be captured by asking three questions. First, we should ask "Why?" Why does the KBC exist? I believe that question can be answered like this—"The Kentucky Baptist Convention: Created by churches, for churches, to help churches reach Kentucky and the world for Christ."

Next, we should ask "How?" How will the KBC carry out the vision of helping churches reach Kentucky and the world for Christ? I believe that question can be answered like this—"By fostering missions cooperation among churches and providing vital resources and services to assist churches in fulfilling the Great Commission."

Then, we should ask "What?" What will the KBC be doing in order to fulfill the vision of helping churches reach Kentucky and the world for Christ? The KBC will:

- Provide comprehensive ministry consulting for KBC churches;
- Facilitate training and networking opportunities for leaders and churches;
- Facilitate missions partnerships and church planting opportunities in Kentucky, North America, and to the ends of the earth;
- Facilitate relationships between Kentucky Baptist churches and their agencies and institutions;
- Promote and process Cooperative Program giving in order to assist churches in their Great Commission obedience; and
- Mobilize Kentucky Baptist churches to influence society with the Christian principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love.

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Of towers, builders and the task before us

Attending last week's Mission Board meeting was somewhat akin to watching a jazz wake procession pass through the streets of New Orleans—a seemingly odd mix of sorrow and sense of loss for what was, punctuated by reserved excitement and anticipation for what could be.

Scattered about the room among the Mission Board members were many of the full and part-time employees of the Kentucky Baptist Convention who voluntarily accepted retirement or resignation incentive packages. We grieve with them for the loss of their ministries and the uncertainty of their futures. Among them are the likes of Richard Adams, leadership development department director; Larry Baker, missions growth team leader; Ross Bauscher, evangelism growth team leader; Billy Compton, executive associate for Cooperative Program and resources; Steve Thompson, assistant executive director; Robert Reeves, director of communications; and a host of consultants, campus ministers and ministry assistants. They have served Kentucky Baptists faithfully—some for many, many years—and something still seems amiss about having to ask them to depart before they were ready. They deserve better. They leave with our deep gratitude, for whatever ministry we forge tomorrow, we do so only because we stand on their shoulders today.

But at the same time, like a jazz band's snappy tempos and improvisation that celebrate both a life well-lived and accomplishments of the past as well as our hope of new life and the possibilities to come, KBC leaders sounded an enthusiastic note of future ministry directions. This day was about sharing a vision that God has given us for a new day and the construction plans for a new watchtower of ministry. In this, I believe, Kentucky Baptists can find cause to rejoice. Executive Director Paul Chitwood hit a strong chord, declaring that the Kentucky Baptist Convention was "created by churches, for churches, to help churches reach Kentucky and the world for Christ." That's a God-led vision that will resonate well among Kentucky Baptists. He further explained that the Mission Board's ministry will be "oriented toward the field" in assisting our churches, pastors and staff, and it will place a priority on evangelism and church planting—in step with the current focus of the Southern Baptist Convention—while mobilizing volunteers for missions work, particularly here in Kentucky.

And, Kentucky Baptists can rejoice in the church-centered focus of its stated ministry values, which was



After Thought

By Todd Deaton

hard to miss in the key questions that Chitwood called on the Mission Board and KBC staff to consider. Take, for example: How can a local church and/or pastor, who feels a burden for the lost and the obligation of the Great Commission, become a part of advancing God's kingdom all around the world? Where can a church and/or pastor who see and love the lost in their community and needs a plan to reach them turn to get help? How can a church be involved in planting churches when it lacks resources or expertise? Yet, other questions asked revealed concern for the needs of struggling congregations among us: Where can an older congregation, that sees the writing on the wall, learn ways to

once again become a church filled with the laughter of children? Where can churches that have hit a growth barrier, and may not know how to get over it, turn for help?

Mission Board members asked some very pointed yet graciously posed questions of their own. They were reassured about the expectation of North American Mission Board's financial support for a new church planting strategist position, about the vital ministry roles of associations and directors of missions, and about the future of the state's youth ministry and Kentucky Changers. In regards to the later, we were relieved and delighted to learn that Crossings Ministries, led by David Melber, will assume these responsibilities and has tapped Joe Ball of the KBC staff as a youth ministry strategist. He will help Crossings extend its ministry to teenagers beyond camps and conferences to assisting and equipping youth ministers in churches across our state. Crossings has seen tremendous success in youth ministry, with approximately 12,000 teenagers attending camps this season and more than 500 professions of faith recorded. This is a win-win outcome!

Chitwood fittingly drew upon a biblical metaphor of building a new tower to describe the task before us. As we move forward with plans that will bring the convention's structure in line with current Cooperative Program funding realities, may we be prayerfully mindful of the psalmist's wise counsel: "Unless the LORD builds a house, its builders labor over it in vain; unless the LORD watches over a city, the watchman stay alert in vain" (Psalm 127:1). As we labor together in building a new tower, may KBC President Adam Greenway's challenge echo in our hearts: "This is not simply about making a decision; this is not the end, this is the beginning," he urged. "Let us be a people of courage, a people of conviction, and a people of commitment"

Reaching teenagers

In a recent article, it was lamented that huge numbers of young people, once leaving home, are "falling away" from their religious upbringings and not returning as they mature. This is nothing new, but the numbers are increasing exponentially.

The current crop of teenagers are two generations removed from those of the hippy-dippy 1960s-70s, when drugs, free-love and the "anything goes" mantra came on line. This culture shock should have alerted religionists to the need for establishing a benchmark of the faith that would be necessarily different from the "counter-culture."



Instead, the religionists began wringing their hands and wondering what to do to "save" the youth. They decided to make church as similar to the world as they could in order not to lose young people, ergo, the inculcation of new settings for study, worship and service.

The result is seen in the children and grandchildren of the hippy-dippy crowd, virtual clones of their forbears, who, having accepted their ancestral "rebellion" as a way of life, have advanced it not just in church but in schools and other institutions now led by the rebellious. Well-meaning religionists have tried everything from rock-style worship to a come-as-you-are coffee-house approach

that is so shallow as to challenge young people to little more than a "ho-hum, just another activity" attitude.

There's no excuse for purposely not introducing young people to the best of Christian traditions, including service (the thing that attracts them most); worship, including the great music of the church; and studies that make sense.

Jim Clark
Lexington

Forum Disclaimer: Baptist Forum is provided as an opportunity for Kentucky Baptists to express their viewpoints. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Western Recorder's editorial staff, its Board of Directors, or the Kentucky Baptist Convention. Letters should be no more than 300 words in length and will be edited for style, clarity and space. Letters must reflect a spirit of Christian charity and civility.

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What Maurice Sendak can teach the church

By Russell Moore

Maurice Sendak, who just died, doesn't seem, at first glance, to have much to teach Christians. After all, he was an atheist with a cynical outlook and a foul mouth. But underneath all of that, I think, Sendak saw something of the fallen glory of the universe we followers of Jesus sometimes ignore.

Sendak's most famous work, of course, is his children's book, "Where the Wild Things Are." It's about a boy named Max, who is sent to his room for telling his mother he'll eat her up. My sons love this story. Whenever I read it, they start shifting around in their seats as they hear about his room becoming a forest, about his encountering scary, teeth-baring "wild things."

Sendak said that the "wild things" originated with his fear and loathing of his extended family, trying to hug and kiss him and "eat him up." I think there's more to it than that, more that causes this story to persist.

If, as both ancient and contemporary wisdom tells us, stories exist to help us categorize our fears and aspirations, then "wild" children's stories remind us of what we see everywhere in human art, from cave paintings to country music to the Cannes Film Festival. We're afraid of the wildness "out there" in the scary universe around us. Whether we fear saber-toothed tigers or Wall Street collapse or malaria or our parent's impending divorce, there are frightening, threatening forces out there that seem outside our control.

But Sendak also, at least in his artistic imagination, also recognized something the Christian revelation tells us clearly. Worse than what's "out there" is the uncontrollable "wildness" inside of us, those passions and desires and rages and longings and sorrows within our psyches that seem to be even scarier because they're so hidden, so close, and so much at the core of who we are. The wildness within us doesn't seem to end, either. It just morphs throughout the life-cycle from toddler tantrums to teenage hormones to midlife crises to,

well, sometimes, a lonely, elderly person facing death.

The kind of story Sendak intuited is part of a larger fabric, the knowledge that the wildness both out there and in here needs to be governed. The wildness needs to be reined in, and reigned in. We need a king, and we need to be part of a kingdom. After all, Max only gains power over his "wild things" when he gains self-control, control that comes with his being named "king of all of the wild things"

FIRST PERSON

I don't know what happened in Sendak's life in those moments before death. But I hope maybe he found that One who alone was able to do what Sendak imagined for that little boy in his story: to look wildness right in the eye, and to become king over it with a word. The Word came into the world, and the wildness did not overcome it.

At the end of the "Wild Things," the book puts the rambunctious here right back in his room after the journey is over. It's the same room his mother sent him off to, for his wildness, without supper. But after his time with the wild things, he finds his supper waiting for him. "And it was still hot," the book concludes.

Psychiatrist Bruno Bettelheim said the scary nature of the story wasn't found with the wild things at all. It was found in the "time out" in the room itself. Being sent to one's room alone, and without food, he argued, represents desertion, the worst threat a child can face. And maybe that's what Sendak feared the worst.

Those are the fears addressed by the gospel. Like children frightened by wild things, we retreat backward into the "spirit of slavery" and so "fall back into fear" (Rom. 8:15). The gospel, though, reminds us, all life long, that we have One who has gone ahead "as a forerunner" (Heb. 6:20). We hear a voice telling us to be "strong and courageous" for "I will not leave you or forsake you" (Josh. 1:5), no matter how wild you feel inside. He's the only one with the authority to tell the devils who accuse us to "be gone."

Russell Moore is dean of the School of Theology and senior vice president for Academic Administration at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Fully functioning partners

By Valerie Vincent

Q: I have been told that I am over-functioning in my marriage. What does that mean?

A: Over-functioning involves taking on what are your spouse's responsibilities in the marriage as if they belonged to you. Each spouse in a marriage has certain responsibilities as a husband or a wife. This is not in reference to roles or chores, although it certainly could apply to chores. These are marital responsibilities, such as:

- Treating your spouse with kindness.
 - Talking to your spouse respectfully.
 - Communicating to your spouse in his or her love language.
 - Being open with your spouse by sharing your thoughts, feelings, goals, and struggles.
 - Giving your spouse your focused attention and time.
 - Helping your spouse grow in her or his faith in order to become the man or woman God plans for them to be, rather than the woman or man you want.
 - Taking initiative with your spouse for dates, sex, conversation, problem-solving and conflict-resolution.
 - Offering regular support and encouragement.
 - Actively looking for ways to bless your spouse.
- This list of marital responsibilities is not exhaustive, but indicative of the nature of marital responsibilities. An over-functioning partner allows a spouse to under-function.
- Marriage needs two fully functioning partners. There is accountability to one's spouse, but there is greater accountability to God who has ordained marriage. Marriage is not a 50/50 arrangement. It is a 100/100 covenant.

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



The benefits of tithing

By Doug Strader

Most of us want to know what benefits we will get if we participate, and that includes giving to the Lord through our church. Listed below are some of the benefits that a member of a Kentucky Baptist Convention church will receive by giving their tithes and offerings through their church:

- You will be obedient to the Lord's command given by the Prophet Malachi when he said, "Bring the full tithe into the storehouse ..." (Malachi 3:10).
- You are showing you trust the Lord with a life of obedience as it relates to your material possessions.
- You are participating more fully in the act of worship because you are offering to Him not only your time and spiritual gifts, but also your tithes and offerings. The giving of one's tithes and offerings should always be an act of worship.
- By giving your tithes and offerings you are setting an example to other Christians.
- You are teaching your children the importance of being a faithful disciple.
- Your giving will help the church do all the ministry and missions in which they are involved.
- As your church gives to the work of the local association, you are assisting the association in all the ministry and missions in which it is involved.
- As your church gives through the Cooperative Program, you are joining with every church in the Southern Baptist Convention in supporting more than 10,000 national and international missionaries.

When you think about the benefits derived from being a faithful steward through your church, it is astounding. What a blessing it is to worship by giving your tithes and offerings to God through your church!

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

'Don't look back' is terrible advice

By Erich Bridges

"Don't look back."

That is one of the worst pieces of advice you'll ever hear. Naturally, you hear it all the time. "Positive thinkers" and pop psychologists love it. Forget the past, they say. You can't change it, so why dwell on it? Move on. Sunshine will follow the rain. Tomorrow will bring a new you. The next shot will fall.

"Waste not fresh tears over old griefs," recommended Euripides, the great Greek dramatist, more than 2,400 years ago. Now that's good advice. But regret is a response to memory, not memory itself. To forget our past is to forget who we are—individually and collectively.

Yes, the Apostle Paul urged believers to lay aside the past in their pursuit of knowing God: "(F)orgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13b-14). And he's right. We should not obsess about past sins and failures, but look to God, rejoice in His patient mercy and relentlessly follow Him toward glory.

But Paul never forgot where he came from, what he had thought as a Pharisee and what he had done as a one-time enemy of the gospel. He never forgot the long, dangerous, often discouraging road he had

walked as an early apostle. And he never forgot the many ways God's grace had pulled him from the pit to the mountaintop. Those experiences forged Paul into the man he eventually became. They stayed with him, informing his future attitudes, decisions and actions.

"The past is never dead," William Faulkner wrote. "It's not even past." Nor should it be. The Lord gave us memories for a reason. Even the painful ones. The Divine Physician has a way of healing us without removing our memories entirely. If we forget the pain, how can we minister to the hurting? If we forget the darkness, how can we lead others toward light?

Memories are precious things. As Saul Bellow observed, "They keep the wolf of insignificance from the door." Who are you without the memory of who you have been, what you have thought and done, the people you have known? That's why memory-killing afflictions such as Alzheimer's are so heart-breaking, both for people who experience them and their loved ones.

A recent movie, "The Iron Lady," is a meditation on memory. It is about former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and it won actress Meryl Streep her third Academy Award. The film itself, however, has been criticized for focusing not on Thatcher the world-changing political leader of the

1970s and '80s, but on Thatcher the lioness in winter, elderly and infirm, confused, engaging in imaginary conversations with her late husband, Denis.

I found it deeply moving. Streep as Thatcher reflects on past events large and small: a girlhood working for her grocer father, meeting her future husband, challenging a male-dominated political world as a young member of Parliament, motherhood, triumphs and defeats, war and terrorism, national turmoil and progress, doubts, questions, resolution.

Looking back is an inward journey we all must take as our earthly lives approach the farther shore. Memory helps us along the way.

Memory is a gift from God. More than that, it is a command and a sacrament. "Do this in remembrance of Me," Christ told His disciples as He introduced the Lord's Supper on the last night He spent with them (Luke 22:19-20).

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget none of His benefits," David sang (Psalm 103:2). Remembering who God is and the glorious things He has done is part and parcel of worshipping Him. Remembering God is as important as obeying Him; indeed, it is part of obedience.

Look back. Remember. Praise God for His marvelous grace and mercy. Then look ahead without fear or regret.

Erich Bridges is IMB global correspondent.

LifeWay Research survey

Americans split on homosexual behavior as sin

By David Roach

Nashville, Tenn.—Americans are split on whether homosexuality is a sin, and many do not appreciate if a church teaches it is sinful, according to a recent survey from LifeWay Research.

When asked if they believe homosexual behavior is a sin, 44 percent of those surveyed answered yes, while 43 percent said no; 13 percent were not sure.

Being a born-again, evangelical or fundamentalist Christian often corresponded with a negative view of homosexuality. Among those groups, 82 percent said homosexual behavior is a sin while 14 percent said it is not. In contrast, 29 percent of all other religious groups said it is sinful, while 51 percent said it is not.

Men and those Americans without college degrees were more likely to say homosexuality is sinful. Forty-seven percent of men said it is a sin, but only 40 percent of women.

And 49 percent of those without college degrees said homosexual behavior is a sin, compared with 35 percent who have college degrees.

"When asking questions like this to a general sampling of the population, it is important to note that people's definition of 'sin' may differ based upon their religious background and beliefs," said Scott McConnell, director of LifeWay Research. "We intentionally used the word but also know it means different things to different people."

McConnell noted that in 2011, Gallup's annual "Values and Beliefs" poll approached the question of homosexuality by asking if it was "morally acceptable."

"While we find 44 percent believe homosexuality is a 'sin,' Gallup reports 56 percent of Americans consider gay and lesbian relations morally acceptable," McConnell noted.

Church participation question

Respondents in the LifeWay poll also were asked: "If you were considering visiting or joining a church, would knowing that the church taught that homosexual behavior was sinful impact your decision positively or negatively or have no impact?"

Only 26 percent of respondents said it would have a positive impact, while 36 percent said it would have a negative impact. Nearly a third (32 percent) said it would have no impact at all.

Of those who said homosexual behavior is sinful, a slight majority (54 percent) said a church teaching it is sinful would positively impact their decision to visit or join. But among those who do not believe homosexual behavior is sinful, 74 percent said a congregation teaching it is sinful would negatively impact their decision to visit or join.

"Conversations about sin are inherently religious in nature," McConnell said. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary "tells us the use of the word 'sin' is religious or moral and often specifically refers to a 'transgression of the law of God.'"

"It is no surprise, then, that the sharpest negative reaction to a church

specifically teaching that homosexual behavior is a sin comes from the least religious, those who do not attend religious services."

Further results

Regarding the effect of a church's stand on homosexuality, the survey found:

- Americans who never attend a place of worship strongly leaned negative in their response to the impact of a church teaching that homosexual behavior is sinful. Those who never attend a place of worship were most likely to say this teaching would have a negative impact on them visiting or joining the church if they were considering it (72 percent) compared to only 21 percent of those who attend worship services more than once a week.

- Younger Americans took a more negative view of churches teaching against homosexuality. Those 18 to 29 (19 percent) were the least likely age group to say that a congregation teaching against homosexuality would have a positive impact upon their decision to visit or join. Those 65 and older were the most likely age group to say it would impact their decision positively (35 percent) and the least likely to say it would impact their decision negatively (29 percent).

- Men were more likely than women



to look favorably on a church teaching homosexuality as sin. Twenty-nine percent of men and 22 percent of women said it would impact their decision positively. Thirty-four percent of men and 38 percent of women said it would impact their decision negatively.

- People in large (44 percent) and small (43 percent) cities were more likely to say a church's teaching against homosexuality would impact their decision negatively than those in suburbs (32 percent) and rural areas (26 percent).

"Americans remain evenly split on the moral and religious questions of whether homosexual behavior is a sin," McConnell said. "It likely reflects different beliefs about Scripture and different beliefs about who defines sin." (LW/BP)

Black Baptist leader rebukes Obama

By Bob Allen

Arlington, Texas—A pastor who led the Southern Baptist Convention to adopt a resolution in 2009 applauding the election of Barack Obama as America's first African-American president termed the president's May 9 endorsement of same-sex marriage a betrayal of the black church and an attack on the Christian faith.

"America is now a candidate for the same judgment received by Sodom and Gomorrah," Dwight McKissic, pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas, wrote in a blog last week. McKissic compared the moral impact of Obama's statement to the Sept. 11 attacks and Hurricane Katrina.

"This means that parents are now going to have an extremely difficult time teaching their children that marriage biblically and traditionally is between a man and a woman, when the president that many love and admire is now on record endorsing sodomy," the pastor said.

McKissic said black church leaders should mobilize and address the matter with the same vigor, if not greater, that they used during the Civil Rights movement.

"If we don't, our children and grandchildren will pay a far greater price in suffering from a governmental sanction of same-sex marriage than we would have under segregation," he commented.

McKissic has been a leading voice in calling for greater representation by ethnic minorities in Southern Baptist denominational life. He recommended the 2009 resolution that, while in its final form criticized many of Obama's policies, hailed his election as a step forward for racial reconciliation.

McKissic said he plans to propose a resolution at the SBC annual meeting next month asking Southern Baptists "to go on record disavowing and repudiating the position of our beloved President Barack Obama as it relates to his position on affirming same-sex marriages." (ABP)

President Obama publicly endorses same-sex marriage

Washington—President Obama last week became the first sitting U.S. president to publicly announce his support same-sex marriage.

The announcement came one day after North Carolina voters overwhelmingly upheld the traditional definition of marriage—one man and one woman.

Obama made the announcement during an interview with ABC News' Robin Roberts.

"I've just concluded that for me personally it is important for me to go ahead and affirm that I think same-sex couples should be able to get married," Obama told Roberts.

Southern Baptist Convention President Bryant Wright reacted to the president's announcement.

"It is very depressing news when the president of the United States uses his power of influence to endorse same-sex marriage," the Georgia pastor said. "Scripture is very clear that from the beginning, God intended marriage to be between one man and one woman. It is important for us who are followers of Jesus to uphold the sacredness of marriage according to Scripture."

"Christians are called to pray for our government leaders, and it is now more important than ever to pray for President Obama in this very misguided decision," Wright added. (BP)

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Go Metro partnerships help in Ohio, Pennsylvania and home

By Ken Walker

Bardstown—Kentucky Baptist associational leaders who have enlisted in Go Metro USA say planting churches in other states can help strengthen congregations in Kentucky.

"We can see the gospel expanding not only in Pittsburgh," said Stan Lowery, director of missions for Nelson Baptist Association. "If the Lord blesses, this initiative could spread into the Northeast. One of the things I'm praying for is it will strengthen our churches and our convention."

Launched in the fall of 2010, Go Metro USA is a church-planting initiative of the Kentucky Baptist Convention that matches partnering associations from the commonwealth with church planters in metropolitan areas where there are few evangelical churches.

Currently Kentucky Baptists are helping plant churches in Cleveland and Pittsburgh. A partnership in West Virginia is in the works, and Elkhorn Baptist Association in Lexington has announced a partnership with Metro Columbus Baptist Association in Ohio.

Through Go Metro USA, the KBC helps associations identify potential partners and facilitates contacts among directors of missions. The convention also assists associations in developing a strategy that will best support church planters and existing evangelical congregations in the partnership areas.

The Pittsburgh partnership was formed by churches in Nelson, Lynn,



MAKING IT OFFICIAL Barry Whitworth (second from left), multiplying churches team leader for the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania/South Jersey, signs a ministry partnership agreement with four local Kentucky Baptist associations. Also signing the document are (from left) Randy Jones, director of missions for Oldham-Trimble Association; Larry Baker, leader of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's missions growth team; and Stan Lowery, director of missions for Nelson Baptist Association. Lynn and Severns Valley associations also are part of the effort to help strengthen existing churches and start new churches in the Pittsburgh area. (Photo by Robert Reeves/KBC)

Severns Valley and Oldham-Trimble associations. The goal is to help start 30 churches in the Steel City over the next three years.

"I think (church planting) is being faithful to our call to spread the gospel to other areas," Lowery said.

In western Kentucky, Bill Patterson expressed similar enthusiasm for a four-association partnership with Greater Cleveland Baptist Association.

"It may open people's eyes to possibilities we may have not seen before," said Patterson, DOM for Green Valley Baptist Association. "We now see how doing work for other churches opens doors."

The newest partnership involves four associations from eastern Kentucky—Pulaski, Lincoln, Freedom and Wayne.

Malcolm Cheek, director of missions for the Pulaski association, said the four DOMs will recommend to their associations later this year a partnership with West Virginia Baptists and church planters serving the area between Huntington and Charleston.

There are many missions possibilities in the region, Cheek said.

"Basically, we want to try to invite and encourage our people to reach beyond the walls of the church, where the lostness is great and the work is small," he said.

Ray Van Camp, director of church planting and development for Elkhorn Baptist Association, said the Metro Columbus partnership was approved by both associations in January. Some mission trips to Ohio are scheduled for June.

"This will be a partnership in which we seek not only for Elkhorn churches to minister in Columbus, but for Metro Columbus churches to minister to churches in the Lexington area," he noted.

Last December, Kevin Litchfield, director of missions for the Cleveland association, met with his Kentucky counterparts to assess the progress of the first Go Metro partnership.

"Our heartbeat is to see what it's going to take to change the lostness of our city," Litchfield said. "The Kentucky partnership is an extra help with that task."

Congregations in Green Valley, Little Bethel, Daviess-McLean and Ohio Valley associations sent more than 250 volunteers on multiple trips to the Cleveland area in 2011.

Litchfield said Kentucky Baptists have provided prayer and financial support, manpower and a morale boost for church planters.

This and other partnerships that are developing give Litchfield the hope of

seeing 250 new churches started in northern Ohio by 2020. He said that would lower the ratio of SBC churches from one for every 46,000 residents to one for every 6,000.

News of the assistance that believers in Cleveland are receiving from churches in Kentucky and elsewhere is reaching pastors and recent seminary graduates.

Patterson said that when the Go Metro partnership began, Litchfield reported only two church planters expressing an interest in serving in Cleveland. Today there are 20.

Renovations recently made to a downtown Cleveland church will provide accommodations for up to 100 volunteers at a daily cost of \$10 per person. A portion of that fee will help support a coordinator in the local association who will work with visiting partners on a variety of projects similar to those undertaken by Kentucky Baptists.

The Pittsburgh partnership was formalized last year at Severns Valley Association's annual meeting. The ceremony was the second time leaders from the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania/South Jersey had visited the commonwealth as part of the partnership. Members from the central Kentucky associations have been to Pittsburgh twice.

Relationships produced by these exchanges are growing, helped along by a Facebook page promoting Kentucky's connection with the Steel City, Lowery said.

"There's an excitement about it," he said. "I definitely see it growing. It's been very easy sharing the need."

Church planters in Pennsylvania express similar enthusiasm, according to Barry Whitworth, multiplying churches team leader for the Penn-Jersey convention.

"At this point this relationship ... is affecting (local) churches," Whitworth said. "We feel this has a viable connection. We're getting calls, asking what churches can do here."

There are only 52 Southern Baptist churches in a nine-county area around Pittsburgh, most outside the city. One of the first projects is to renovate a guest house to accommodate the many out-of-town volunteers needed to help support the church-starting effort.

Despite the size of the challenge, Whitworth said he foresees great progress.

Just as the Kentucky partnership was getting underway, three church planters were making plans to move into the Pittsburgh area.

These days, church planters are contacting the convention. "We don't have to go looking for them," Whitworth said. "I think it's part of the environment God is creating."

After serving 17 years in the Pittsburgh area, Mission Service Corps missionaries Melanie Hart and her husband, Larry, say they are pleased to see the new partnership.

"There is a huge yearning from established church planters," said Hart, who oversees partnerships for Baptist Association of Southwestern Pennsylvania.

"We have so many communities and neighborhoods that lack an evangelical presence. We're excited about what God is getting ready to do here." (KBC)

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Graduation season

OBI seniors enjoy final celebration as their time on campus nears end

At OBI, it definitely is "graduation season." On the fingers of just two hands we can count the number of school days left.

As I write today, our seniors and their class sponsors are away on their senior trip to King's Island, an annual event signaling that the end of the school year is just about here. Lord willing, next week will be our student council and FFA-sponsored Spring Fling, an afternoon of games, food and fun for OBI.

In two weeks, our seniors and their families and friends will gather in the chapel with the OBI faculty and staff to celebrate the milestone of high school graduation. It promises to be an exciting and memorable day in the life of the Class of 2012.

The real beginning of "graduation season," however, was last Saturday when we had our annual senior banquet. In place of a junior-senior prom which many high schools have, we had a special meal with luscious, palate-pleasing food. Our food services staff (which always does a wonderful job of feeding the staff and students three times a day, seven days a week) went to greater-than-usual lengths to make the meal a special one for our seniors.

Many students and staff members spent long hours preparing for this event. Students who seemed to live in blue jeans and T-shirts arrived in tuxedos and formal wear. Hundreds of pictures were taken and the fellowship was sweet. It was a time of making special memories for our senior class.

Though the room was beautiful, the

clothes were stunning, the food was outstanding and the fellowship was encouraging, the highlight of the evening was to be found in none of those elements.

After the meal was finished, some of our seniors shared their talents and thoughts with all who attended. An impressive acoustic guitar solo, a humorous rendition of the Veggie Tales song, "The Pirates Who Don't Do Anything," original poetry and testimonies sharing what it has meant to our students to have lived, learned, laughed and loved at OBI. The senior banquet 2012 was not just a feast for the taste buds; it was a feast for the soul. We listened, we laughed, we cried—it was too wonderful for words.

One of the songs shared that evening seemed to tell it all—the journey of our students through tough, uncertain and growing times, and God being faithfully and unceasingly at work in their lives.

"Beautiful Things," by the band Gungor says: "All this pain/I wonder if I'll ever find my way/I wonder if my life could really/Change at all/All this earth/Could all that is lost ever be found/Could a garden come up from this/ Ground at all. You make beautiful things/You make beautiful things out of the dust/You make beautiful things/You make beautiful things out of us. All around/ Hope is springing up from this old ground/Out of chaos life is being/ Found in You. You make me new/ You are making me new."

The Lord makes all things beautiful in His time. Hallelujah!

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

This is Oneida



Paul Davidson

Senior memories

Clear Creek graduates reflect on God's provisions while on campus

The month of May means graduation time at Clear Creek. It has always been a tradition to share the favorite memories of each graduate as they walk across the stage to receive the diplomas they have worked so hard to get. Here are some of those memories:

"I have many fond memories of my online education at Clear Creek. One fond memory is remembering the warm reception that I received when I enrolled for my very first semester at Clear Creek back in the spring of 2005. The online education experience was a great one for me at Clear Creek, and I am thankful for having had many meaningful interactions with both my instructors and my fellow classmates. I am blessed to have had the opportunity to gain an education from Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, and I give praise to God for each one of my instructors, and my brothers and sisters in Christ, who shared their wisdom and knowledge with me. (James Bradley Gover)

"I went on a mission trip to Michigan in the summer of 2010. It was the first time I had actually met or talked

with anybody from Clear Creek in person. Those 10 days encouraged me and confirmed my belief that I am in the right place and doing the right thing. I felt the presence of the Spirit from the time I pulled in the parking lot, all the way through the mission." (Timothy Hall)

Clear Creek Chronicle



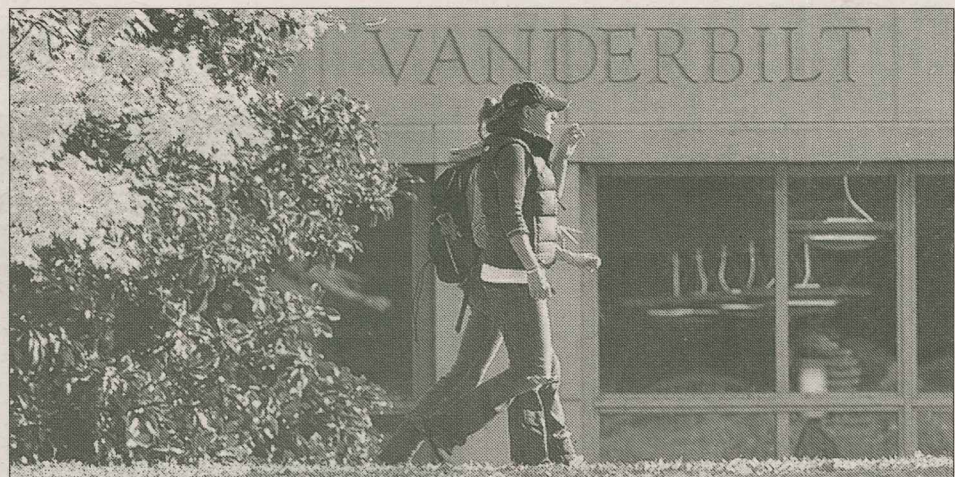
Donnie Fox

"My favorite memory is marrying my husband and having our first child while at Clear Creek. I also made some wonderful friends while I worked at the child development center. God has provided for and blessed me abundantly while at Clear Creek." (Demetria Nicole Dean)

"When God answered my prayers about financial struggles: I had about \$17 in my bank account, I went to the mailbox and found \$50. It wasn't much, but to me it was reassurance that God heard me and was still with me." (Christine Nicole Bledsoe)

"Even during the hardest times there was always a support system around to guide me through the valleys. I have made friendships that will last forever." (Matthew Black)

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.



Baptist campus group opts not to comply with Vanderbilt policy

Nashville, Tenn.—The Baptist Collegiate Ministries at Vanderbilt University has reversed course and now says it will not comply with the school's new non-discrimination policy.

The Tennessee Baptist & Reflector reported May 7 that while the university has approved the Baptist ministry as a recognized student organization on campus, BCM will decline that status. The Tennessee Baptist Convention owns the Baptist Collegiate Ministries building, which is located in the center of campus.

Earlier Vanderbilt BCM director Thom Thornton said he was assured that a new policy requiring that membership in any campus organization be open to all students still would allow the group to select leaders who are committed to the organization's mission.

Randy Davis, however, executive director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, wrote members of the convention's executive board to say that signing on to the policy would require the BCM, "if the occasion should ever arise, to open the

leadership to those who were not Christian."

"Perhaps we should have known this earlier, but we did not," Davis wrote, adding that both Thornton and TBC Collegiate Ministries coordinator Bill Choate are supportive of the decision.

According to The Nashville Tennessean, 27 religious groups have said they will comply with the non-discrimination policy next year, while 14 have refused.

Tennessee lawmakers passed legislation designed to pressure Vanderbilt to drop the policy, but Gov. Bill Haslam said he would veto the measure, not because he agrees with the policy but that he believes the state has no business meddling in the affairs of a private university.

On May 7, 36 members of the Congressional Prayer Caucus in Washington urged Vanderbilt to exempt religious groups from its "all-comers" policy, saying it discriminates against faith-based groups by requiring them to accept members who don't share their core beliefs. (ABP)

Church planter elected SBCV exec

Glen Allen, Va.—Brian Autry has been elected as executive director of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia in a unanimous vote by the state convention's Executive Board.

Autry, 41, founding pastor of Parkway Baptist Church in Moseley, Va., will take office May 16.

The SBCV's former executive director, Jeff Ginn, left the post he had held for three years in August 2011 to become pastor of Istrouma Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, La. Doyle Chauncey, the convention's founding executive director and current treasurer, was named interim exec upon Ginn's departure.

"Brian did not seek the position, but we sought him," said search committee chairman Kelly Burris, pastor of Kempsville Baptist Church in Virginia Beach. "He had been recommended to us by several people. The more we began to talk with him, the more impressed we were of the passion that he had for the SBC of Virginia."

Autry said he is optimistic about the opportunity to serve SBCV churches.

"I look forward to seeing how God is going to continue to use the SBC of

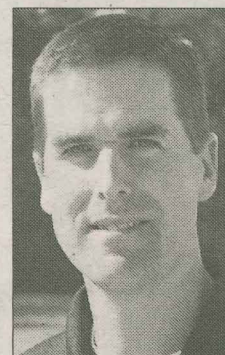
Virginia as a marvelous coalition of churches of great kingdom impact and advance the gospel of Jesus Christ," Autry said.

Autry has been part of the SBC of Virginia for 16-plus years. He began working for the convention in 2000 as its student evangelism director. In 2002, he left that role to plant Parkway Baptist.

In addition to his work with the SBC of Virginia, Autry was a missionary with the North American Mission Board from 2000-05. His ministry goes even further back, having worked as associate pastor of students and education at Kempsville Baptist Church from 1996-2000.

Autry graduated from James Madison University in 1992 with a bachelor of science in both psychology and political science. He earned his master of divinity from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in North Carolina in 1996. In 2002, he received his doctorate from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary with a focus in evangelism, church growth and church consulting.

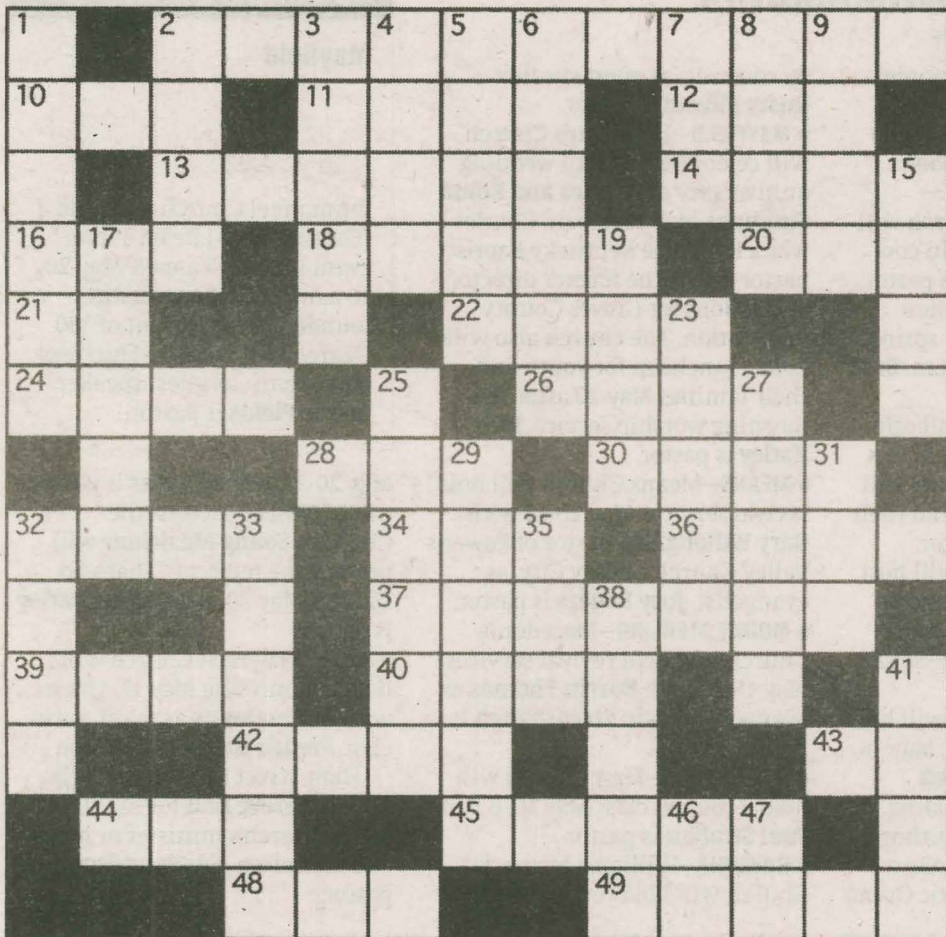
Autry and his wife, Jennifer, have three children. (SBCV/BP)



Brian Autry

Bible Crosswords

By Michael J. Landi

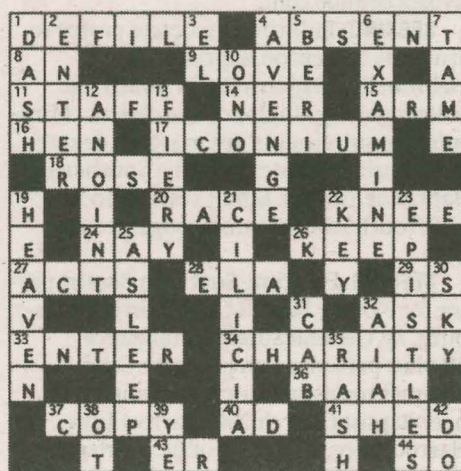


Across

- 2 Metamorphosed
- 10 "He took ____ of his ribs" (Genesis 2:21)
- 11 Crasher or keeper
- 12 Partake
- 13 Missing ingredient in manna
- 14 Form of "drachma"
- 16 ____ Aviv
- 18 "But glory, honour, and ____, to every man that worketh good" (Romans 2:10)
- 20 Pal, to Philippe
- 21 ____ in (first point scored after deuce?)
- 22 Loan
- 24 "Burning ____ and a wicked heart" (Proverbs 26:23)
- 26 "He revealeth the ____ and secret things" (Daniel 2:22)
- 28 Conjunction
- 30 What April brings
- 32 "The ____ of all Israel are upon thee" (1 Kings 1:20)
- 34 One of David's men (1 Kings 1:8)
- 36 "Sow ... in righteousness, ____ in mercy" (Hosea 10:12)
- 37 "Enter into the rock ... for the glory of his ____" (Isaiah 2:10)
- 39 "But ____ wrought evil in the eyes of the Lord" (1 Kings 16:25)
- 40 What Isaac named the well at Gerar (Genesis 26:20)
- 42 Roman emperor with whom Paul had an audience
- 43 Not A.D.
- 44 Zaftig, but more bluntly perhaps?
- 45 "Call me not ____, call me Mara" (Ruth 1:20)
- 48 "Ye have made the heart of the righteous ____" (Ezekiel 13:22)
- 49 Aeries

- 6 "____ cities, with walls, gates, and bars" (2 Chronicles 8:5)
- 7 ____ Sea
- 8 Feminine name that means "bitter"
- 9 Rock where Samson lived after slaughter of Philistines (Judges 15)
- 15 "Come, buy wine and ____ without money" (Isaiah 55:1)
- 17 Enlighten
- 19 Head of a family of Gad (1 Chronicles 5:13)
- 23 Runs swiftly
- 25 "For the ____ things are passed away" (Revelation 21:4)
- 27 "Learn first to show ____ at home" (1 Timothy 5:4)
- 29 "To every man that asketh you a ____ of the hope" (1 Peter 3:15)
- 31 "____, in all these things we are more than conquerors" (Romans 8:37)
- 32 Town of the tribe of Dan (Joshua 19:43)
- 33 Apostles and others
- 35 At ____-abarim, in the wilderness before Moab, Israelites pitched tents (Numbers 21:11)
- 38 Chief Philistine city (1 Samuel 6:17)
- 41 New Testament book
- 46 Its capital is Augusta (abbr.)
- 47 "For God ____ my witness" (Romans 1:9)

Last puzzle's solution



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Down

- 1 "Let not sin therefore reign in your ____ body" (Romans 6:12)
- 2 Do ____!
- 3 Meal shared by early Christians
- 4 Hub of a wheel
- 5 "We pray you in Christ's ____, be ye reconciled" (2 Corinthians 5:20)

Gone in 90 days

Widower calls on KBF to assist in leaving legacy through his estate

A widower arranged to meet with Laurie Valentine, our trust counsel, and me to inform us of his desire to demonstrate through his estate plan his love for Christ and his family. He was seeking our assistance in how best to accomplish his estate stewardship objectives. He and his late wife had tithed out of their incomes all their lives, and he wanted to continue that faithfulness out of the accumulated assets with which the Lord had blessed them.

He testified to us, "I've trusted the Lord all of my life to provide, and He has blessed me far beyond my expectations." What an example of the biblical stewardship to which each of us is called.

This gentleman had owned a small business, and along with his and his wife's frugal lifestyle and stewardship faithfulness, had accumulated a nice nest egg for their retirement years. He attributed his success to his faith in Christ, common sense, desire to learn, self-confidence, honesty, integrity and a supportive wife.

Neither of his two adult children was interested in the business. Furthermore,

he did not feel either of them had the skills or the temperament to manage their portion of his estate. Thus, he was seeking a solution whereby he could provide his children the benefits of their portion of his estate without giving them control of it. He told us if he gave them control, it would be gone in 90 days.

After reviewing several options with us and his advisers, he concluded a Charitable Remainder Annuity Trust was the best solution. Through the CRAT, he would receive tax-advantaged income for his lifetime; at his death, the children would receive income for their lifetimes; and at the death of the second to die, the balance of

the trust would establish a permanent endowment, the income from which would be distributed in perpetuity to Sunrise Children's Services as a lasting legacy of his and his wife's love of Christ and His mission in this world.

If you have a similar circumstance in your family, give us the privilege of assisting you.

Ky. Baptist Foundation



Barry Allen

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

KBC reorganization & the WMU

Changes at the KBC require closer look at WMU's primary objectives

Many people are asking: Does the KBC reorganization affect Kentucky WMU? The answer is yes and no. Yes, we are affected as people we have worked with in different roles will change. No, in that we are an auxiliary to the KBC and, as such, determine our own staff and finances.

As an auxiliary, our role always has been that of "helper" to the convention and Kentucky Baptist churches. So, who we help and the missions priorities to be pursued will change in the months ahead, but our role as helper will continue.

Kentucky WMU also will continue to challenge Kentucky Baptists to be radically involved in the mission of God. We will continue to equip believers to respond to God's call, and we will be partners in fulfilling the Great Commission.

WMU has six objectives that guide our work. They are our priorities, and we set goals, plan events and utilize our resources in fulfilling these objectives. While they are familiar to many, it is vital that we revisit them often. Everything we do in WMU should help us achieve one or more of these objectives:

- Pray for missions.
- Engage in mission action and witnessing.
- Learn about missions.
- Support missions.
- Develop spiritually towards a missions lifestyle.
- Participate in the work of the church and denomination.

EBO at Work



Joy Bolton

Kentucky WMU will continue to partner with the KBC and all Kentucky Baptists to achieve these objectives. We are grateful for Cooperative Program support that allows us to have a top-notch missions education staff and for the Eliza Broadus Offering which helps us provide missions materials, events and resources.

EBO will be at work this weekend as we host SALT (State Association Leadership Training) at Elizabethtown Baptist Church. Your EBO gifts provide this leadership development opportunity for associational WMU leaders who, in turn, lead churches to achieve the WMU objectives. And when those objectives are carried out, the results are felt across Kentucky and around the world.

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

D.K. PREACHER'S KIDS

BY DAVID AYERS



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May

- 15 Iron Sharpening Iron, Grove Marina on Laurel Lake, London.
- 15 PLACE Workshop, Warren Baptist Association office, Bowling Green.
- 17 Iron Sharpening Iron, Jonathan Creek Camp and Conference Center, Hardin.
- 19 The Call Leadership Conference, Parkway Baptist Church, Bardstown.
- 19 WMU State Associational Leadership Training, Elizabethtown Baptist Church.
- 21 Encounter: Women of Worth Lifestyle Evangelism Conference, First Baptist Church, Shelbyville.
- 21-22 Youth Ministers' Spring Retreat, Thomas & King Leadership and Conference Center, Georgetown.
- 22 Encounter: Women of Worth Lifestyle Evangelism Conference, Briensburg Baptist Church, Benton.

June

- 9-16 Kentucky Changers, Harrodsburg.
- 11 Mission Adventure Camp for Boys and Girls, CedarCrest Camp, Bagdad.
- 15-16 Father/Son Overnight, CedarCrest Camp, Bagdad.
- 15-16 Mother/Daughter Overnight, CedarCrest Camp, Bagdad.
- 17-18 National WMU Missions Celebration and Annual Meeting, New Orleans.
- 18-22 Mission Adventure Camp for Boys and Girls, CedarCrest Camp, Bagdad.
- 19-20 Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, New Orleans.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

- **CADIZ**—Cadiz Church will hold a veterans' appreciation service May 19, 2 p.m. A reception will follow the service.
- **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Campbellsville Church will hold a Media for Ministry Banquet May 20, 6 p.m., with **Mike Richey**, vice president of development for the University of Kentucky, as guest speaker.
- **CRESTWOOD**—Crestwood Church will hold a dog show May 19, 11 a.m. The cost to enter a dog in the show is \$10. For more information, call (502) 241-8534. **Donnie Patrick** is pastor.
- **ELIZABETHTOWN**—Severns Valley Church will hold "Friend Day" May 20, 9 a.m., with Evangelist **Scott Camp** as guest speaker. Kite flying and a barbecue dinner will precede an evening worship service at 6 p.m. **Bill Langley** is pastor.
- **FULTON**—Cayce Church will hold spring revival services May 20-23. **Mike Farmer** is pastor.
- **KUTTAWA**—First Church will host Caldwell-Lyon Association's missions celebration banquet May 18,

6:30 p.m., featuring testimonies from missionaries and church members who have participated in mission trips. **Carl Nelson** is pastor.

- **LEXINGTON**—Victory Church will host **7eventh Time Down** in concert May 19. **Brian Bond** is pastor.
- **LOUISVILLE**—Carlisle Avenue Church will hold a ladies' spring tea gathering May 19, 11 a.m. **Brad Walker** is pastor.

Green Acres Church will offer free oil changes for single moms May 19, 1 p.m. Refreshments will be provided for mothers and their children. **Phil Ellis** is pastor.

St. Matthews Church will host the **Cornerstone Chorale** in concert May 20, 6:30 p.m. For more information, call (502) 896-8882. **Greg Barr** is pastor.

Walnut Street Church will hold a women's ministry event May 18, 6:30 p.m., with **Tori Murden McClure**, president of Spalding University in Louisville, author and the first woman to make a solo crossing of the Atlantic Ocean

by rowboat, as guest speaker. **Rusty Ellison** is pastor.

- **MAYFIELD**—High Point Church will celebrate the 60th wedding anniversary of **Charles and Roma Simmons** May 19, 2 p.m. Charles was a longtime Kentucky Baptist pastor and is the former director of missions for Graves County Association. The church also will hold a luncheon for youth and their families May 20 after the morning worship service. **Rick Hatley** is pastor.

- **MEANS**—Means Church will hold revival services May 20-25 with **Gary Willoughby**, pastor of Powells Valley Church in Clay City, as evangelist. **Joey Rogers** is pastor.

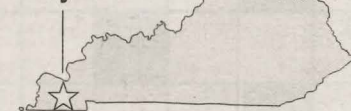
- **MOUNT STERLING**—Macedonia Church will hold revival services May 18-20 with **Darrin Thomas** as evangelist. **Kevin Strausbaugh** is pastor.

- **OWENSBORO**—First Church will hold a coupon class May 16, 6 p.m. **Paul Strahan** is pastor.

- **RAVENNA**—Williams Memorial Church will hold revival services

Spotlight on ...

Mayfield



Emmanuel Church will hold a "Getting Your Life on Target" event May 19, 8 a.m. & May 20, 10 a.m., with **Steve Austin**, founder and president of 180 Degree Ministries in Murfreesboro, Tenn., as guest speaker. **Duane Fields** is pastor.

May 20-23. **Jeffrey Ryder** is pastor.

- **SCOTTSVILLE**—Scottsville Church's **Young Musicians** will present the musical "That's So Daniel" May 20, 6 p.m. **Dale Darley** is pastor.

- **SOMERSET**—First Church will hold a hymn sing May 17, 11 a.m., with **Adam Owens** as guest musician. **French Harmon** is pastor.

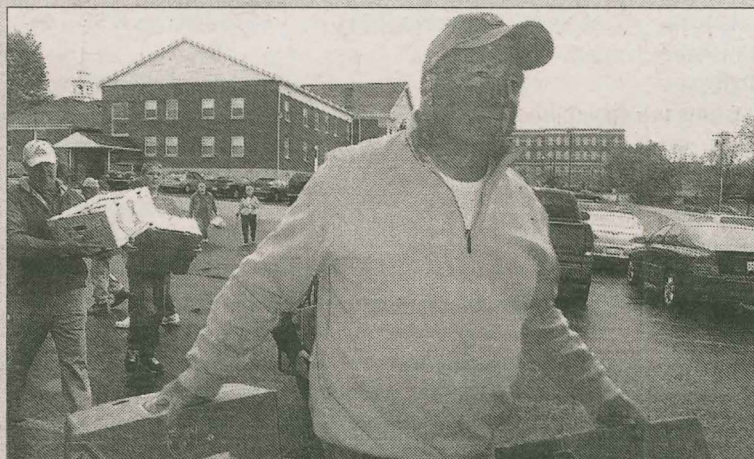
High Street Church recently honored **Steve Hall** for his 20 years as the church's minister or music and education. **Ed Amundson** is pastor.

'Tintinnabulation'



Beacon Hill Baptist Church in Somerset held its first "Bells at Beacon" conference in April. Forty ringers from four bell choirs were directed by guest clinician **Christine Anderson**. Churches represented at the event were Westport Road Baptist Church in Louisville; Little Flock Baptist Church in Shepherdsville; Beechland Baptist Church in Louisville; and the host church. The conference culminated in a free concert for the Somerset community, featuring guest brass musicians from Beacon Hill, First Baptist Church of Monticello and Nelson Valley Baptist Church in Somerset. Next year's festival is slated for April 19-20. **John Francis** is minister of music at Beacon Hill.

Burlington Cares



Burlington Baptist Church recently served nearly 1,000 families with 7,500 pounds of food from the Freestore Food Bank in Cincinnati. Church members also distributed gift cards to law enforcement officers, fire department personnel and 911 operators, and they delivered baked goods to the public library and to fire departments in Hebron and Union. A senior adults group, "The Solid Rockers," under the direction of **Bob Hickman**, sang at a local nursing home, and about 200 people attended an outdoor concert and carnival that provided opportunities to connect with families and share the love of Jesus with the community.

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RESIDENCE AVAILABLE: IMB missionaries only. Stay 1 month to 1 year; pay utilities; 3-bedrooms; no pets; no smoking; open now. Convenient to SBTS (2 hours), Ky. Wesleyan, Western Kentucky Univ., community colleges (half hour). Contact Terril Riley, (270) 733-4056; triley@bigrivers.com.

SEEKING: Full-time senior pastor at Hebron Baptist Church (www.hebronbaptist.org), a conservative Southern Baptist church affiliated with SBC, KBC, adhering to 2000 Baptist Faith & Message. Send resumé to Pastor Search Committee, Hebron Baptist Church, PO Box 92, Hebron, KY 41048; or email hbcpastorSearchTeam@googlegroups.com.

SEEKING: Part-time worship leader (16-20 hrs/week), Buckner Baptist, Oldham County. Above-average pay for above-average minister. Worship band, choir leadership, keyboard skill preferred. Email resumé with cover letter and references to bucknerbaptistchurch@insightbb.com.

SEEKING: Part-time worship leader for Long Ridge Baptist Church in Owenton, Ky. We are looking for a kind, loving, Baptist man. Long Ridge is a small, traditional church with Sunday morning attendance average of about 90. For information, call (502) 484-2622. Resumés should be sent to longridgebaptist@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Part-time associate pastor for Ferguson Baptist Church in Somerset, Ky. For details and job description, contact (606) 679-1690. Send resumé to PO Box 247 Ferguson, KY 42533; or email fergusonkybapt@yahoo.com.

SEEKING: Full-time associate pastor to students at Hebron Baptist Church, Hebron, Ky. Responsible for youth and college/young singles of the church. Minimum requirements are master's degree or pursuit of master's from a Southern Baptist seminary. Email resumé to HBCYouthSearchTeam@googlegroups.com.

SEEKING: Full-time Southern Baptist pastor for Pioneer Baptist Church in Harrodsburg, Ky. General Sunday attendance: 80-plus; parsonage on property. Send resumé to Pastor Search Committee, Pioneer Baptist Church 260 Sparrow Lane, Harrodsburg, KY 40330; or pioneerbaptistchurchpsc@gmail.com (corrected email). by May 31, 2012.

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

SEEKING: Senior pastor for Salem Baptist Church (150+ attendance) in rural Western Kentucky. Prefer 7+ years pastoral experience and seminary degree. Send resumé with references, along with video of recent sermon to: Glenn Gordon, Pastor Search, 1145 Pinckneyville Road, Salem, KY 42078; or email: ggordon@csiweb.com. Fax: (270) 575-4614.

Fleeing a 'city of ghosts'

Refugees from Syria's mayhem find Christian friend across border

By Erich Bridges

Northern Jordan—Muhammad*, two of his sisters and an elderly uncle sit on the floor of a rented house beside a trash-strewn gully in a town near Jordan's northern border with Syria.

The uncle fingers his prayer beads and looks into space as a mosque nearby sounds the Muslim call to prayer. Children of various ages trek in and out of the room, playing games to stave off boredom. A little boy clutches a stuffed teddy bear; a girl admires her reflection in a pink hand mirror. The women hastily cover their faces when a visitor's camera appears—not for modesty or religious reasons, but for fear of the long arm of the ruling Assad regime in Syria.

Life for this Syrian refugee family now consists of sitting and waiting. But it's better than the hellish existence they endured for months in Homs, the besieged city across the border they fled in March. Much of Homs, one of the centers of the year-old Syrian uprising, has been shelled to rubble by Syrian military forces bent on crushing the widening rebellion.

"Homs is a city of ghosts now," Muhammad says, sipping tea with his visitors. "There is no value to a human life there."

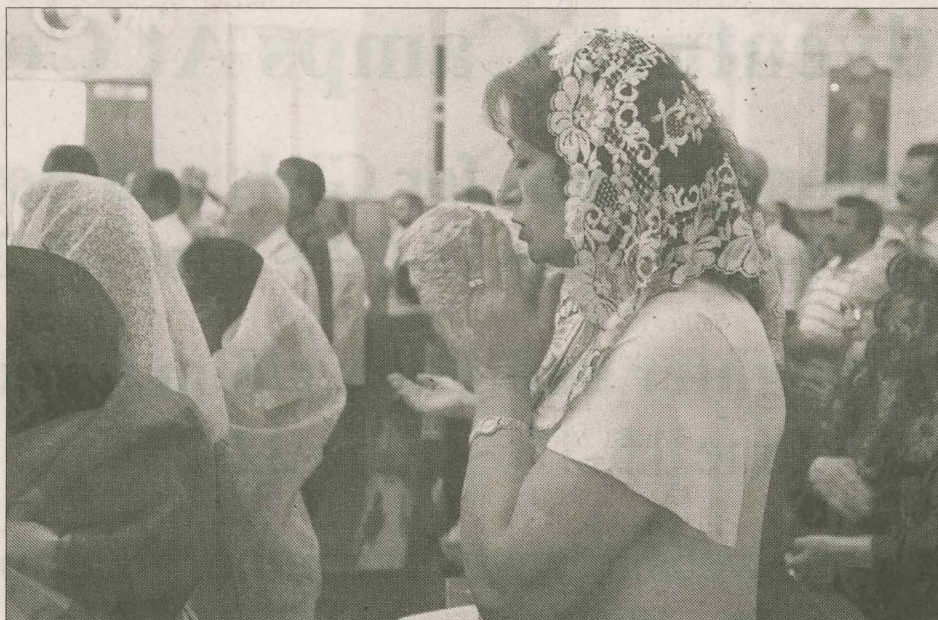
He should know. The 41-year-old Sunni Muslim refugee has lost three family members to the violence. His wife's brother was arrested, tortured and killed before his abused body was released to the family more than a month later. Another brother joined the rebel forces and died in a bombing. Most heartbreaking of all was the fate of his 12-year-old nephew—shot dead during a street demonstration. They rushed him to a makeshift clinic used to treat injured demonstrators and rebels, but he was gone.

"He was just bringing water to the people," says Doaa*, the dead child's mother, producing a snapshot. A smiling, fresh-faced boy stares out from the photo. She turns her head and weeps without a sound. Muhammad was arrested and beaten for hours because he was seen wearing a shirt soaked in his dying nephew's blood. Authorities accused him of being a terrorist.

"After losing my son, my life has no meaning now," Doaa declares after wiping her tears. "But I have two daughters, and I am living for them. After all these people have died, we must continue until we get our freedom. We have lost a lot. We owe it to them."

The family stayed in Homs until staying seemed suicidal. They fled, first driving south, then walking kilometers—despite Muhammad's broken leg, sustained in an earlier incident—to cross the Jordan border to safety.

Syrian forces and hired thugs in Homs were "killing children and women, raping women," charges Soreah*, another sister, her voice shaking with anger. "What you see on TV is only a



PRAYERFUL MINORITY A woman joins others in prayer in a church in Damascus, Syria. Syrian Christians account for up to 10 percent of the Mideast nation's population. (IMB photos)

part. We didn't want to leave our country, but after we saw these things, we had to leave."

Syrian refugees streaming into Turkey and Lebanon have garnered most of the international media attention. But more than 90,000 Syrians, mostly Sunni Muslims, had crossed into northern Jordan by early April, according to one unofficial government estimate. More slip across the desert border each night, walking secret routes to avoid the guns of Syrian soldiers—or bribing border guards to let them pass. Some are injured. Some carry elderly family members and small children. Most are traumatized, terrified and enraged by what they have experienced in Syria. At best, they face an uncertain future in Jordan, where housing is cramped and expensive, and jobs are scarce.

An unexpected friend

But the overwhelmingly Muslim refugees who come to this part of northern Jordan have found an unexpected local friend: Nour, a Christian pastor who leads an evangelical church in the border town.

"This is our call, to reach out," says Nour, a softspoken man with a neatly clipped graying mustache. "Our door is open to Christians or Muslims anytime."

Nour has become a one-man clearing-house for aiding Syrian refugee families. He helps them find places to live (so far, there are no official refugee camps in the area). He and his church members deliver food, blankets, mattresses, medicine and other basic supplies. He coordinates assistance from a variety of other churches and Christian groups in and beyond Jordan, including Baptists. He cooperates with the local Islamic aid society, which refers many refugees to the church.

Most of all, he listens.

"They respect the Christians, because we are helping the Muslims," he explains. "This makes a difference to them. Plus, we go into their houses. We don't want them walking in the street asking for help. We are making personal visits with them, drinking tea with them, sharing their life, asking them to see what they need."

"We never turn off our mobile phones.

Always we are ready to receive their phone calls. If I can't answer it, I call them back. We love them, and we want to serve them. Always I tell them this: 'I am here to serve you.' This gives them comfort and encouragement. They know that if I have what they need, I will give it to them."

He stops to emphasize an essential part of helping hurting people anywhere:

"Always, we are smiling in their faces. All the time. Even when it is difficult. We never complain because of them. Some of them maybe feel frustrated at times because of lack of things, maybe a little bit angry sometimes. But even then we keep smiling to them, because we know it's not easy for them to leave their own houses and country and come to this area having nothing."

If Nour's church members and ministry partners don't go to the refugees, the refugees come to the church. A constant parade of Syrians knock on the door of his informal "welcome center," a parlor with several comfortable chairs and couches near the church sanctuary.

On a recent morning, a nervous, apparently shell-shocked man seeking aid recounts horror stories from Homs. Before he leaves, two young women with four children arrive, asking for mattresses and blankets. They are followed by a widow, age 57, with her grandson in tow. She and the women in her family crossed the border a month ago, she recounts, fearing rape.

She rented two rooms near the border town and lives in them with eight family members, but expects 19 more to arrive any day. She needs a small refrigerator so the food she cooks won't spoil overnight. Nour guides her to another room to select some clothes while her grandson plays nearby.

Nour is no newcomer to refugee ministry. He started more than 20 years ago when refugees poured across the Iraq-Jordan border during the first Gulf War.

"We have a saying in Jordan: 'Who is next?'" he confides with a wry smile. "We receive the Palestinians, the Iraqis, the Syrians, the Libyans."

So when the Syrian conflict began to heat up, he knew the initial trickle of refugees into Jordan would become a flood. The church, which started out helping about 30 refugee families, now coordinates regular assistance to more than 270 families, at least 1,000 people. Nour estimates more than 1,000 refugee families live in the area—with many more on the way if conditions in Syria don't improve soon.

The new arrivals are even more traumatized than the earlier ones.

"These are people who stayed and saw when they started bombing Homs more, entering the houses, killing people, burning the houses," the pastor explains. "These are the stories we are hearing now. Also, people who were injured were not able to come before. Now they are starting to come. We are seeing most of the people coming now smuggling (themselves out) because they are not able to cross the borders with their passports."

His church already has reached its capacity—and beyond. (IMB)



BASIC NECESSITIES A Syrian widow picks out some clothes for her family at the evangelical church in a Jordanian town near the Syrian border. She and the women in her family crossed the border a month ago, fearing rape amid Syria's increasingly bloody civil war. She rented two rooms near the town and lives there with eight family members, but expects 19 more to arrive soon.

Missions Challenge

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