

WESTERN Recorder

June 19, 2012

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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Gospel in Motion

By trailer, by bus, Simmonses take God's word on the road

By Shirley Cox



Jack (left) and Wilma Simmons (center) help children during craft time aboard Salem Baptist Association's "mobile chapel." The couple, who are Mission Service Corps missionaries, make three stops at mobile home communities each week, offering children's activities and Bible studies. (Photo by Dannah Prather/KBC)

West Point—Jack and Wilma Simmons first heard God's call to missions more than 20 years ago when they met an associational missionary who told them about the needs in Indiana.

"After looking over the area for a time and trying to get something started, it seemed we just couldn't get it done," Jack said. Eventually, they realized God was calling them back to Wilma's Kentucky hometown, West Point.

"In West Point, we felt a need to start mission work with the people who lived in the trailer parks because the churches weren't reaching them," Jack recalled. "We began meeting with the kids in one of the trailer parks each week, even though we had to meet outside."

With help from the Kentucky Baptist Convention, Jack and Wilma purchased a mobile home to use as a meeting place. After floods destroyed the first two trailers, a third was donated by Ron Morgan, a member of Immanuel Baptist Church in Frankfort.

The Simmonses also converted a school bus into a "mobile chapel" so they could minister to residents of two other mobile-home communities in the area.

The children's program includes Bible stories, crafts, play time and refreshments. Services that include adults are held in the evenings and on Sunday mornings.

Wilma prepares and shares Bible presentations with the children who attend the bus ministry, and she organizes a craft project for all three mission points each week.

"Each week, I pray and ask God to give me the Scripture verse or Bible truth He wants to send into
□ See Mobile ministry ... Page 2

SBC church plants up 27 percent in '11

Alpharetta, Ga.—A recent report from the North American Mission Board shows the number of church plants reported by state convention partners grew by 27 percent—from 780 to 990—between 2010 and 2011.

These figures represent the first two-year span using a new church planting reporting procedure instituted in 2010, whereby all NAMB-reported plants were required to have received an SBC ID.

Distributed by LifeWay Christian Resources, SBC IDs usually are obtained through Baptist associations, state conventions or the SBC Executive Committee and are essential to identify and track congregations uniquely.

"I think it is important for people to
□ See Church plants increase ... Page 6

Southern Baptist membership continues to decline

By Adelle Banks

Nashville, Tenn.—For the fifth year in a row, the Southern Baptist Convention has seen a drop in its total membership.

The denomination's membership in 2011 was 15,978,112, a drop of nearly 1 percent from the 2010 figure of 16.1 million, LifeWay Christian Resources reported last week.

This week, the denomination is expected to elect its first African-American president, Fred Luter of New Orleans. Some black Southern Baptists say they hope more African-Americans may be drawn to the predominantly white denomination if Luter is elected.

Last year, as the denomination faced its fourth consecutive year of decline,
□ See SBC membership ... Page 3



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KBC Mission Board to meet next week to consider new hires

By Dannah Prather

Louisville—The Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board will meet June 26 at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown to consider candidates for key positions in the restructured convention staff.

The special meeting is in response to last month's decision to make significant adjustments in how Mission Board staff deliver services to the KBC churches.

In May, board members voted to eliminate 37 staff positions, a combination of full-time, part-time and contract jobs. Twenty-seven KBC employees accepted retirement or resignation incentive packages prior to the restructuring.

Currently there are 11 vacant staff positions, some of them newly approved by the Mission Board. A few are existing jobs recently vacated for reasons other than restructuring.

Candidates will not be presented for each vacancy at the June 26 meeting, but KBC Executive Director Paul Chitwood said the board will be asked to consider filling several key posts including:

- Associate executive director for convention relations and communications.
- Evangelism and church planting team leader.
- Regional pastoral ministries consultants.

A full-time church planting strategist also will be presented to the board. This new staff member, whose salary is funded fully by the North American Mission Board, will be tasked with identifying geographic and cultural communities in Kentucky that lack a strong evangelistic presence, and then working with existing congregations to start new churches in those areas.

Chitwood praised current KBC staff "for doing a great job continuing to serve Kentucky Baptists during this time of transition."

"Beginning July 2, all of our staff—whether they are current employees in the same jobs, current staff in new roles or brand new staff members—will be taking a fresh look at our services and how we provide them to our churches," Chitwood said. "There's a lot of hard work ahead of us, but it's also an exciting time."

The restructuring was in response to Kentucky Baptists' declining support of the Cooperative Program, the unified fund that makes possible a variety of missions and ministries. The bulk of the training and support services provided by the KBC Mission Board staff is funded from CP gifts.

Additionally, Chitwood said, it was time to re-evaluate the work of the Mission Board staff to eliminate the

duplication of services and to focus more of its energies toward assisting small- to medium-sized congregations.

"The Kentucky Baptist Convention was created by churches, for churches," Chitwood said. "Going forward, we want to maintain a sharp focus on how we serve the local church."

More than 1,300 KBC churches welcome fewer than 100 people to worship services each week. An additional 536 have an average attendance of less than 300.

"That represents more than 70 percent of our entire convention," Chitwood noted. "These churches are incredibly important in the life of the KBC."

Other restructuring news

Part of the restructuring is the transfer of youth ministry resources and the youth summer mission program Kentucky Changers to Crossings Ministries. Formerly known as Kentucky Baptist Assemblies, Crossings is Kentucky Baptists' camp and conference center program.

Following the May Mission Board meeting, Crossings hired Joe Ball, director of the KBC's youth ministry department who will depart at the end of the month, as Kentucky Changers director. Last week, Crossings announced they had hired former Paducah youth pastor

Roger Palmer as director of its new center for youth ministry.

Additionally, it was announced that this fall, Louisville-area Crossings staff will move their offices from rental space in east Louisville to the Kentucky Baptist Building.

High priorities after the June 26 meeting will be filling remaining staff vacancies and also the formation of committees to study two aspects of Kentucky Baptist ministry not included in the initial restructuring plan: campus ministries and KBC-affiliated agencies and institutions.

Both ministry areas receive support through the Cooperative Program. Chitwood said additional time was needed to study the areas before possible changes were presented for the Mission Board's consideration.

Kentucky Baptist campus ministries serve on more than 20 college and university campuses across the commonwealth.

KBC-affiliated agencies and institutions include Kentucky Baptist colleges, Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union, Sunrise Children's Services, Oneida Baptist Institute and the weekly newspaper, the Western Recorder.

Chitwood said he expects the two study committees to be formed some time next month. (KBC)

Fla. Baptists challenge abuse ruling

Tavares, Fla.—The Florida Baptist Convention is contesting a May 17 jury verdict that found the organization liable for sexual abuse committed by a former church planter.

The Florida Baptist Witness reported that the convention's lawyer filed motions asking a Lake County circuit judge to overturn the jury's decision and grant a new trial.

The verdict found the state convention negligent for failing to check with former employers about Douglas Myers, now in prison for molesting a 13-year-old boy he met at a church he started with support from Florida Baptists.

Attorney E.T. Fernandez said the motions will be considered at a hearing Aug. 1. If they are denied, he said the convention will appeal. That would have to wait until completion of a second trial to establish the amount of

damages the convention owes.

The jury agreed with Fernandez that Myers, who planted two mission churches that no longer exist, was not an employee of the convention, but determined that Florida Baptists implied endorsement of him by listing him as a church planter in the convention annual and the state Baptist paper.

Fernandez said it was inconsistent for the jury to hold the state convention responsible for actions of someone that it did not hire or supervise. He called the verdict an attempt to "create new law" by allowing a plaintiff to seek damages from a larger organization with more resources than a local association or church. Sponsoring Lake County Baptist Association and Bay Street Baptist Church were both named in the lawsuit but reportedly settled out of court. (ABP)

LifeWay pulls 'Blind Side' from stores

Nashville, Tenn.—LifeWay Christian Stores will no longer sell videos of "The Blind Side" after a Florida pastor proposed a resolution for this week's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting protesting the sale of a PG-13 movie that contains profanity and a racial slur.

Officials at LifeWay Christian Resources decided to pull the movie, a film starring Sandra Bullock that tells the true story of a white Christian family that adopted a homeless black teenager who went on to play in the NFL, to avoid controversy at this week's SBC annual meeting in New Orleans.

The decision came after Rodney

Baker, pastor of Hopeful Baptist Church in Lake City, Fla., submitted a resolution to the SBC Resolutions Committee voicing concerns he first raised with LifeWay two years ago. Baker, who got a similar resolution passed at the Florida Baptist Convention last fall, said there is much about the film to be commended, but there is no place in a Christian bookstore for a movie that includes explicit language that includes taking God's name in vain.

He also said the film's use of a derogatory slur for African-Americans could hinder attempts underway to increase black participation in the nation's second-largest faith group. (ABP)

Mobile ministry

Continued from page 1

the homes of these children, and then to give me an idea for a craft to go with it," she said. "He has never let me down yet."

"I use flannel graph stories, magic and science-related items to present a Bible lesson," she added. "The children who attend our bus ministry range in age from preschoolers to teenagers. They do not relate well to just listening to a Bible story since most of them have never heard one."

Wilma said a volunteer helps with the children's program at the West Point Mission.

"When the children first attend, sometimes they won't share or they hit each other or throw things all over the floor without picking them up," Wilma said. "After a while, they begin to share with each other and even start to help me clean up."

Even without a traditional church facility, the Simmonses have become pastoral leaders of their flocks.

"We also minister by providing food, performing weddings and funerals and making hospital visits," Jack said. "Each Christmas, we distribute over 400 shoe-box gifts."

The couple says that as they serve, they watch God use their efforts to transform children's lives.

"When Dallas began coming to the chapel at West Point, he was failing school and was always in trouble," Jack said of one particular child. "After a while, he began listening and reading the Bible. Finally, he committed his life to Christ. Before long, Dallas was on the honor roll and was one of the best behaved kids in our meetings."

Jack said he also has watched God change the life of a man who had a repu-



STORY TIME Wilma Simmons gathers children for a Bible story on Salem Baptist Association's "mobile chapel." These children live at the Pleasant Hill mobile home community in Flaherty. (Photo by Dannah Prather/KBC)

tation of being the meanest, toughest person in town.

"It was said people walked on the other side of the street when they saw Danny coming because they were afraid of him," Jack said. "Somehow, we made friends with him, and he asked me to perform his wedding. His children came to the chapel, but we could never get him to attend anything."

After Jack visited Danny for months to talk about the Bible, Danny accepted Christ.

"He did a complete turnaround," Jack recalled. "He became the most gentle, loving person. His brother later became a Christian because of his testimony."

In addition to their work at the three mission points, Jack farms and leads a small rural church.

"I continue to serve the Lord through ministry because I don't believe God expects us to quit just because we get older," he explained. "Don't forget, Moses was 80 years old when God called him."

The Simmonses are among dozens of Mission Service Corps missionaries serving in Kentucky. MSC missionaries are self-funded servants who assist churches, local Baptist associations and individual ministries. For more information about these missionaries, visit www.KyBaptist.org/MS. (KBC)

Western Recorder wants to know:

'Why do you go?'

Ky. Baptist pastors discuss why they attend SBC, what they're eager to see in New Orleans this week

The Southern Baptist Convention is holding its annual meeting in New Orleans this week. The gathering is expected to be a historic one with the anticipated election of the convention's first African-American president. Messengers also will consider adopting an alternate "Great Commission Baptists" moniker for the 167-year-old convention.

Last year's SBC meeting in Phoenix drew the fewest number of messengers since the mid-1940s. More than 100 of those were Kentucky Baptists. With a significant election and a number of important business items on the agenda this week, it is likely this year's Southern Baptist messenger count will far surpass last year's total.

The Western Recorder caught up with a trio of Kentucky Baptist pastors who are in New Orleans this week. We asked them why they attend the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, why it's important for other local-church leaders like them to do the same, and what items on the agenda they're most looking forward this week. (Some answers have been edited for length and clarity.)

Justin Compton has been the pastor at Springfield Baptist Church for nearly three years now. The 31 year old is attending his fourth SBC annual meeting, his first being the one 2009 gathering in Louisville.

Why do you attend the SBC?

I enjoy the whole experience. I enjoy seeing old seminary friends and fellow pastors I know and with whom I used to serve. I enjoy hearing reports from the various entities, especially NAMB and IMB. I also enjoy being a part of the governing process as a messenger and doing my small part to preserve and further the unity, health and mission of the Southern Baptist Convention for the glory of King Jesus.

Do you believe it's important for local-church leaders to attend?

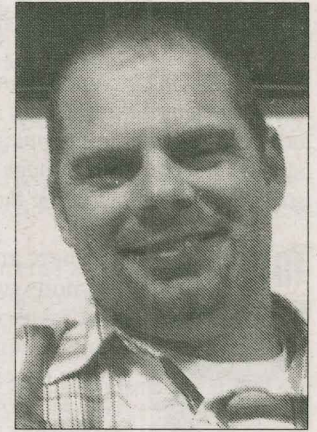
Yes! The SBC exists for and because of local churches. It exists because we believe that autonomous local churches can join hands and do more together than we can apart. Local churches fund the entities of the SBC and local



Justin Compton



T.J. Francis



Josh Landrum

churches make decisions and approve decision makers for the entities of the SBC. I consider it a great honor and privilege to be a messenger and represent my local church.

The only reason the SBC escaped the clutches of liberalism during the Conservative Resurgence is because "small-time" and "small-town" local-church messengers took part in the process and changed the direction of the SBC.

What item of business are you most interested in this week?

I am excited about the election of Fred Luter as SBC president. I believe Luter is a great man of God and a fantastic candidate for president.

I am intrigued about how the descriptor name issue will pan out. The name change issue is complicated on several levels. I am for adding the descriptor and believe it is best move we can make in regard to the name issue.

Do you participate in any other SBC-related events?

I participated in Crossover a few years ago in Louisville and had a blast. The Pastor's Conference is my favorite event. It is always so refreshing and such a blessing for both my wife and me. I always attend and enjoy the Baptist21 luncheon and panel discussion.

T.J. Francis, 34, has served as the pastor at First Baptist Church of Walton for the past three years and currently is the Kentucky Baptist Convention's second vice president. This week, he's attending his second SBC annual meeting.

Why do you attend the SBC?

Two reasons: 1) To participate in SBC life; 2) To spend time with pastor friends who I don't see at any other time.

Do you believe it's important for local-church leaders to attend?

Yes! Cooperation means participation!

What item of business are you most interested in this week?

The election of the first black SBC president. This will be a historic year for the SBC.

Josh Landrum is the 31-year-old pastor of Knoxville Baptist Church in Williamstown, where he has served since February 2010. Like Francis, Landrum is in New Orleans this week attending the SBC for the second time.

Why do you attend the SBC?

Primarily, I attend the annual meeting so that my local church has a voice at the national level. I believe the convention and local associations are here to help and serve the local church.

Therefore, for my church's voice to be heard concerning the direction and decisions of the SBC, I must attend, vote, serve and be involved in any way that I am able.

Secondarily, I enjoy the convention because of the spiritual-rejuvenation in the Pastor's Conference, presidential address, hearing what is going on in the convention and the time reconnecting with pastors across the world.

Do you believe it's important for local-church leaders to attend?

Yes. I believe attending the SBC annual meeting is part of a pastor's service to his local church, giving his church a voice in making the SBC's decisions. Obviously, many pastors are not able to attend due to economic or location situations, but I believe if a pastor can attend, he should.

What item of business are you most interested in this week?

I am most interested in the presidential election. Pastor Fred Luter's nomination is a historic event for the convention and will deservedly receive the most interest from attendees.

Do you participate in any other SBC-related events?

I will be participating in the Pastor's Conference, attending the Southern Seminary alumni luncheon, NAMB's Send North America luncheon and the Baptist21 luncheon. (WR)

SBC membership

Continued from page 1

members adopted a proposal to be more intentional about placing racial and ethnic minorities on SBC committees and agency staff.

As of 2010, African-American churches comprised 8 percent of the denomination's churches; 50 percent of Southern Baptist churches started in 2011 were non-Anglo.

Southern Baptists, who remain the nation's largest Protestant body, reported slight increases in total number of churches and baptisms last year.

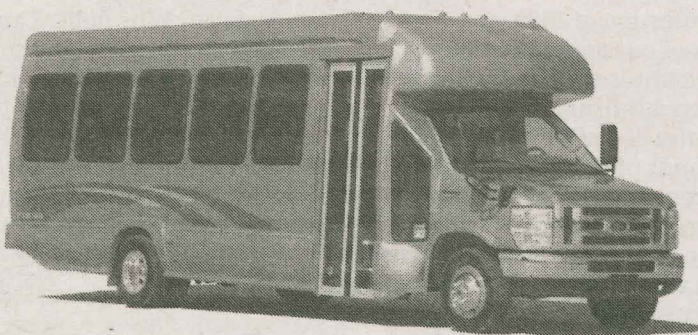
The church total in 2011 was 45,764, a 0.08 percent increase over the 2010 total of 45,727. Baptisms rose 0.70 percent to 333,341.

"An increase in baptisms is something to be celebrated," LifeWay President Thom Rainer noted. "God's word is being proclaimed and God's Spirit is continuing to move in the hearts of people." (RNS)

Additional reporting by LifeWay Christian Resources

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The following is a guest column by Eric Allen, who joined the KBC staff in 2000 and focuses his energies in equipping Kentucky Baptists to serve others through practical ministries that facilitate sharing the gospel.

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

There are many opinions swirling around about the realignment of the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board staff. The Cooperative Program redistribution formula that shifts funds away from the state, new strategies at the North American Mission Board, and decreased offerings

from churches forced the mission board to make some very hard decisions that involved staff reductions, elimination of ministries and a more focused approach to the areas of greatest need.

But I'm optimistic about the future of Kentucky Baptists because there are still more than 60,000 active volunteers looking for ways to penetrate spiritual loss through mission involvement. Our most valuable resources are those individuals who chose to serve voluntarily wherever they are needed because of their passion for sharing Christ.

Have you noticed the retiree responding to disaster call-outs, or the teenager who shares Christ through a backyard Bible club in Appalachia?

Give thanks for the young man who puts a roof on the home of an elderly widow during a Kentucky Changers project, or the woman who prepares and serves a meal in the local shelter one day of every week.

Don't forget the couple who helps a small church in western Kentucky host Bible school, or the church youth group that will spend a week sharing Christ through a sports camp for inner-city children.

There are so many ways that volunteers work to make a difference in the spiritual lives of people by first meeting a physical, educational or practical need.

Currently there are 126 Mission Service Corps missionaries serving in Kentucky. Most of them are considered volunteer because they receive no salary or financial benefit from their ministry. One-third of Kentucky's active MSC missionaries moved their primary residence in order to obediently respond to God's calling.

There are so many Kentucky Baptists who give sacrificially of their time, energy and talents in an effort to present the gospel through mission service. It is the task of the KBC to mobilize and coordinate this valuable resource that leads thousands of people each year to a personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I'm thankful that the restructured KBC places an even greater focus on missions mobilization because the people in the pews of our churches most certainly are our greatest asset. I remain optimistic in the face of change all around us because Kentucky Baptist volunteers respond effectively to the needs of people in the name of Christ—and that will not change.

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Anticipating some positive news from NOLA

This week the Southern Baptist Convention is meeting in New Orleans for the first time since Hurricane Katrina and the devastating flooding that followed. From early indications, I believe we have good reason to be optimistic about this year's annual session. Here are some of the positive news stories to watch for coming out of NOLA:

Adoption of a descriptor, "Great Commission Baptists," to accompany our convention's name—or, in some instances, be used instead—is the major business item on the agenda. A recent LifeWay poll suggests that we may be somewhat divided on this issue, with 54 percent of pastors saying they likely would not use it. I'm a bit of a "traditionalist" who grew up in the Bible Belt. Yet, I also recognize the SBC is now comprised of Baptists from across the nation with diverse cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and we've grown to include many nationalities through our international mission efforts. That's a very good thing! We, Southern Baptists, are busy sharing the gospel in our neighborhoods and with the nations.

So, if asked, I really don't mind being called a "Great Commission Baptist" too. It fits us well, especially if it enables us to share the gospel even better. Kevin Smith, an African-American pastor in Louisville, was on the mark when he recently told a BP reporter: "I've not met people resistant to the gospel because our church is Southern Baptist or Kentucky Baptist. People resist the gospel because they're sinful and they don't desire to repent of their sins. But again, I'm not in one of these New York City, high-impact areas, so if that's a conceptualization problem for them, I think that descriptor can be helpful." Certainly, if it helps win more for Christ, use it!

Election of our first African-American president is sure to garner its share of headlines, but there is much more to this story than a good headline. When I first heard that Fred Luter would be nominated, the image that immediately came to mind was a BP photo taken of "the caring pastor," grieving for his people as he surveyed the devastation of his beloved New Orleans from a helicopter. For me, that emotionally-fraught snapshot captured the very heart of our Southern Baptist disaster relief efforts. Luter, who currently is SBC vice president, spoke at the



After Thought

By Todd Deaton

KBC's Evangelism Conference last year, urging us to accept the challenge of Jesus found in Matthew 9:38 and to "break the huddle, get out of the four walls, and go." Not only is Luter known as a powerful preacher, but he backs up his message as a strong supporter of cooperative missions. In 2010, Franklin Avenue Baptist Church gave more than \$261,000 through the Cooperative Program. That's a commendable quality in any candidate for denominational leadership. Messengers also should hear some good news from our mission agency heads, Tom Elliff and Kevin Ezell. The Lottie Moon offering set its fourth-highest mark, increasing by \$1.1 million as Southern Baptists gave \$146.8 million in 2011. Meanwhile, our missionaries and their national partners saw more than 333,800 baptisms and started nearly 28,875 churches. "I think that when people look at these statistics, Southern Baptists have every reason to rejoice," Elliff remarked. And, while our overall ranks did shrink slightly, baptisms were up across the nation as well as the number of church plants. SBC churches baptized more than 333,340 people in 2011, a 0.7 percent increase, and according to the North American Mission Board, the number of church plants reported by state conventions grew by 27 percent last year. While leaders were expecting around 650 new churches, 990 were actually started. "It's way ahead of where we thought we would be," remarked Aaron Coe, NAMB's vice president for mobilization. "It's a very positive sign." Indeed, it is.

Few conventions, however, are exempt from some controversy, and a potential spark for some lively discussion this year circles around a recent statement critiquing Calvinism, which is already igniting plenty of online comments. The document, "A Statement of the Traditional Southern Baptist Understanding of God's Plan of Salvation," was posted at SBCToday.com. If the subject emerges as a topic of discussion in New Orleans, it would be sad to see a heated debate divide and detract from what could otherwise be a positive-news-generating convention, and our objective should remain to foster greater understanding in order to build a consensus that honors God by promoting a spirit of unity and cooperation among all Baptists.

Forget it and work together

It seems that a group of brothers are asking us to affirm a theological position which I believe would cause some of us to deny our historic local church confessions of faith, and would involve all of us in a denial of part of the doctrine of salvation in the "Baptist Faith and Message."

I serve a church which was organized in 1835, 10 years prior to the establishment of the SBC. Our church was founded on the doctrines of grace in a statement which is the theology of the Charleston Manual in small space. That manual contained the

Baptist Confession of 1689, and was the matrix of our denominational doctrinal commitment. Our church has supported the missionary enterprise of the SBC with thousands of dollars and, more importantly, with much prayer, for 167 years. If anybody has the right to use the term "traditional" Southern Baptist, surely we do.

Brothers, who is working against the peace of Jerusalem here? Do we not agree that Christ Jesus is the only hope of sinners? Do we not agree that justification is by faith alone, in Christ alone? Do we not agree that the atoning death of Christ is sufficient to save all who come to

Him by faith? Why fight? I am sick to my stomach over this, and so disappointed in men for whom I have personally been an advocate in the past.

It is good for brothers to dwell in unity. Let's forget all this sort of thing, and work together for the cause of winning the nations to Christ.

Joe Nesom, pastor
First Baptist Church,
Jackson, La.

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Box 43969
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Southern Baptists, we're not in Zion anymore

By Trevin Wax

My grandparents remember the day when "religious diversity" in the South referred to the presence of multiple Christian denominations.

Of the various Protestant denominations that have yielded influence in the South in the past 60 years, the churches belonging to the Southern Baptist Convention have been most dominant. Even today, the SBC still stands as the largest Protestant religious group in the United States. And yet the cultural rivers have shifted away from the quiet waters of a "Southern Baptist Zion" to the rushing rapids of accelerating cultural changes.

My hometown of Murfreesboro, Tenn., is a case in point. Once a sleepy suburb well outside Nashville, Murfreesboro boasted of dozens of Southern Baptist churches. Twenty years ago, there were 46,000 residents. Today, there are 110,000. Though the number of Southern Baptist churches remains almost the same, Murfreesboro is, in many ways, a very different city. Recently, there was controversy surrounding the development of a Muslim mosque. The dominance of evangelical Christianity in this city has been dwarfed by multi-culturalism, religious diversity and an exploding population that our church plants aren't able to keep up with. Murfreesboro is a microcosm of the population explosion throughout the country and the new cultural setting we find ourselves in.

It won't do for us to bemoan the disappearance of cultural Christianity. There were dangers then, too, including an often watered-down gospel as well as cultural respectability that masked unregenerate hearts. Each generation faces its own challenges.

My point is that the cultural setting we are called to

The Healing Separation

By James Stillwell

Q: My wife and I have been separated for a while. I heard somewhere there is something called a "trial separation." Could this help us reconcile?

A: "Trial Separations" often do not work for a variety of reasons, usually because there is no structure that facilitates reconciliation. However, in a "Healing Separation" there can be a real chance of success. This approach is described in Bruce Fisher and Robert Alberti's book, "Rebuilding." It is a true alternative to divorce, and when done well, can result in reconciliation.

Key elements in a healing separation include the following:

- You each dedicate yourselves to personal growth.
- It is a process of building a bridge. One of the important principles of building a bridge is that you don't start in the middle. Each one starts building his or her side. It is a scary process, but worth the risk.

Values of a healing separation:

- It takes pressure off a "stuck" and troubled relationship, yet does so with structures of grace.
- You work on the only part of the stumbling blocks you really have control over—yourself.
- The goal is transformation beyond anything you've ever thought possible.

Guidelines include:

- You both have to commit to making it work.
- Start by making a list of what an ideal marriage would look like.
- Commit to communicating openly and honestly.
- Do not file for divorce.
- Spend quality time together when it works for both of you.
- Do self-care. Find ways of self-restoration.
- Do this work under the guidance of a qualified professional marriage therapist.

If done right, and under the right circumstances, this can be a journey in fulfilling the vision of 1 Corinthians 5:19—God has committed to us "the ministry of reconciliation."

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

be faithful in today will be very different than the one our parents and grandparents knew. Christians will need to be equipped for a new day—a day when the offensiveness of the gospel spreads not only from the core of our message (Christ crucified and raised) but to its implications for Christian morality. A day when

FIRST PERSON

Christian morality is no longer seen as decent but repressive, bigoted and intolerant. A day when beliefs in traditional tenets of the Christian faith—the exclusivity of Christ, the reality of hell, Jesus' resurrection—are openly mocked in ways that the tenets of other religions are not.

Two ways to respond

How will Southern Baptists cope with the disappearance of "Zion"?

We could just choose to blend in, as some have. For years, Roman Catholic leaders have expressed concern over parishioners who attend Mass as upstanding citizens, wear the badge of their religious faith with honor, but all the while distance themselves from their Church's views on birth control, abortion, homosexuality, etc.

A few months ago, I had lunch with a retired pastor of a large, respected evangelical church. He commented about how the culturally prominent members of his congregation, whenever questioned about the church's unpopular views on morality, would simply state their disagreement with their church's doctrine and move on. "I don't agree with my church on that." In other words, people belong to a church without subscribing to its beliefs. As a convictional Baptist, I hope we avoid a future that leaves us with only the cultural shell of Christianity and not its substance.

Another response to the disappearance of "Zion" is to become increasingly inward focused and insulated. Blinded by the cultural dominance we once had and banking on the social capital that belonged to our grandparents, we could fail to see the urgency of this hour and the utter lostness of those around us.

We might choose to expend too much energy debating over how to allocate shrinking funds or maintain the structures of yesteryear. Blogs and newspapers would provide space for endless conversations about the finer points of soteriology and the pros and cons of adopting a descriptor. Meanwhile, as we talk amongst ourselves, we lose perspective, blow our differences out of proportion and become increasingly deaf to our new cultural setting.

A better way

But there is a third way. To make the most of the opportunity before us.

Over against the first option that maintains numbers at the expense of convictions, we ought to take advantage of the opportunity for the light of true Zion to shine forth ever brighter in the darkness of Babylon. Just think! In a day where cohabitation is normal, the president affirms same-sex marriage and the pressure is on to celebrate all kinds of sexual expression, Christians can seem extraordinary by simply living what was once ordinary Christian morality. By cherishing once-common things, such as marriage between a man and woman for life, and core Christian doctrines, such as the exclusivity of Christ for salvation, Christians have the opportunity for our ordinary obedience to shine even brighter in a pluralistic world that bows to Aphrodite.

Over against the second option that turns inward and insular, we have the opportunity to lay aside our differences, unite around our common confession and lock arms for the cause of Christ and His Kingdom. When we look inward, we see all the things that divide us. When we look outward to an increasingly hostile culture, we see all the things that unite us—our belief in the gospel, our Baptist distinctives and our submission to the authority of God's inerrant Word.

Time is short. The Evil One's specialty is to sow seeds of division, spread discord and create enmity between brothers. The only way to push back is to display open friendship and trust, to unite on the gospel and its power to save. When we do engage in debates about theology and strategy (and doubtless, we should), we will keep them in perspective as we seek to be ever faithful

Helping adult children financially

By Jeremy White

After your children are out on their own, your parenting—or at least, coaching—continues. I hear frequently from my clients about their concern of how much to help their adult children with their financial problems.



The parents want their children to be independent and reap any consequences of their decisions. Yet, they don't want their children (and grandchildren) to suffer from too much debt or other financial burdens. Many times, parents are at the stage of life

where they are in a better financial position to help with money. But, is it best?

How can you give to your children so that it is a blessing for both of you? Here are some guidelines:

- Give in a way that doesn't alter their lifestyle dramatically. Consider giving a washer and dryer, not a down payment for a house they can't afford.

- Respect the sanctity of their marriage and the need of the husband to provide.

- Share with them some of the financial decisions about giving, investing or spending that you are now making and why. Communicate your failures and lessons learned.

- Stay out of the way of God dealing with your children.

- Pay for a financial seminar or small group study if overspending is a problem. Locate professional advisers and counselors for them. Perhaps you can pay for the appointments.

- Consider giving a small inheritance now so that you can help them but also test them in their responsibility. Giving now also has the benefit of being available for help and guidance.

- Give with no relational or manipulative strings attached. It would be tempting to make a gift and add that you expect them to visit more often with the grandchildren, but avoid trying to control.

- Consider "matching gifts." You will help only if they are also doing their part.

Jeremy White is CPA with Blythe, White & Associates in Paducah.

to our calling of fulfilling the Great Commission.

This is no time for us to be like Elijah in 1 Kings 19, cowering in the corner convinced we are alone and need to retreat. Our God is the God of Mount Carmel. He will not be forever upstaged by idols.

The good news is all evangelicals have something to gain from Southern Baptist faithfulness. As we move among the crumbling remains of Christendom, we can smile. After all, we're used to being on the outs with the state. Even more, we're used to being on the outs with the church-state too! We're Baptists. Like that of the early church, our identity has been forged in the midst of cultural alienation and exile.

Baptists in other parts of the world know firsthand what social ostracism looks like. The more you get to know Baptists in other parts of the country, the more you realize that the cultural dominance we have enjoyed in the South is the exception, not the rule.

The tributaries that have come together to form the rushing river of Baptists today (Anabaptists, general Baptists, particular Baptists) all knew something of persecution. We've been belittled and mocked before, sometimes by other Christians. Why not again, this time by secularists? And what if, at this very hour, we will be the ones to help other evangelicals learn how to thrive in lean times?

Let's not shrink back from the future that awaits us. We may be given the honor of suffering for the Name. So let's willingly put ourselves at odds with the culture, expect the social ostracism we can see on the horizon and stand joyfully amidst the ruins of Christendom while we continue to proclaim the excellencies of the Risen One.

We may have to dig deeper and stand stronger than ever before. But no matter how mighty Babylon may seem or how dim the future looks, we must remember one thing: There is an empty tomb in Jerusalem. (BP)

Trevin Wax is managing editor of The Gospel Project, a curriculum line developed by LifeWay Christian Resources.

2011 Lottie Moon gifts up more than \$1 million from year before

By Don Graham

Richmond, Va.—"Extremely grateful." That's what International Mission Board President Tom Elliff is saying about Southern Baptists' gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, which reached \$146.8 million last year—the fourth-highest total in the offering's 123-year history.

"These are the greatest days of opportunity ever faced by the Christian church in its 2,000-year history," Elliff said. "That opportunity comes because hearts across the world are plowed up by need—physical need, emotional need, social need. God is at work stirring hearts; He is changing lives."

Church plants up

Continued from page 1

know that we take the task of tracking these new plants very seriously," said Aaron Coe, NAMB's vice president for mobilization. "We have pastors' names and emails so that we can contact them, encourage and support them. And we have the physical addresses of the churches to assist us in strategic placement of future new plants."

This reported increase comes after NAMB announced a new goal of a net gain of 5,000 new congregations by 2022. To reach that goal, the number of church plants will have to continue to climb. Because an average of 880 SBC churches per year ceased to exist from 1999 to 2009, NAMB officials estimate Southern Baptists will need to start more than 13,000 churches during the next decade to reach the 2022 goal.

The growth in the number of church plants in 2011 is a pleasant surprise to NAMB leadership. Coe said he expected the number of church plants either to remain the same or slightly decline in 2011.

"We thought our starting point might be 650 or so—instead it's 990," he said. "It's way ahead of where we thought we would be. It's a very positive sign."

NAMB President Kevin Ezell credited churches and state convention partners for the increase.

"The changes we've been making at NAMB have not yet fully impacted the field, but Southern Baptist churches and state convention partners are doing the work to start new churches," Ezell said. "I can't wait to see what God will do in the years ahead."

Coe believes the increased convention-wide focus on church planting, a focus by NAMB on mobilizing bivocational planters and a more effective equipping plan for church plants and partnering churches will boost the number of plants over the goal in the coming years.

The Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, the Georgia Baptist Convention and the Florida Baptist Convention all showed significant increases in the number of new churches with SBC IDs in 2011. (NAMB/BP)

"It would be a tragedy if we did not effectively take the seed of the gospel and sow that seed into the furrows of troubled hearts all over the world—hearts that would eagerly embrace the gospel if they could only hear it," Elliff added.

When the first Lottie Moon offering was collected in 1888 (though it was not yet known by that name), the \$3,315 raised by Southern Baptist churches was enough to send three more single female missionaries to help Moon in China. The 2011 Lottie Moon offering totaled nearly \$147 million.

Today, in conjunction with the Cooperative Program, it helps support a network of nearly 5,000 Southern Baptist missionaries serving around the globe, providing salaries, housing, medical care and children's education. The cost averages about \$49,800 per year for each missionary.

"Missions offerings represent one of the unique aspects in Southern Baptist life," said Wanda Lee, executive director of Woman's Missionary Union.

"As a former missionary, it was a great comfort to my husband and me knowing we could truly focus on the ministry God had called us to without concern about financially supporting our family," she said. "As Southern Baptists, it is our collective responsibility and privilege to remember those who have committed their lives to following the Great Commission so that the gospel may be proclaimed among all people."

According to the most recent report, that support enabled missionaries and



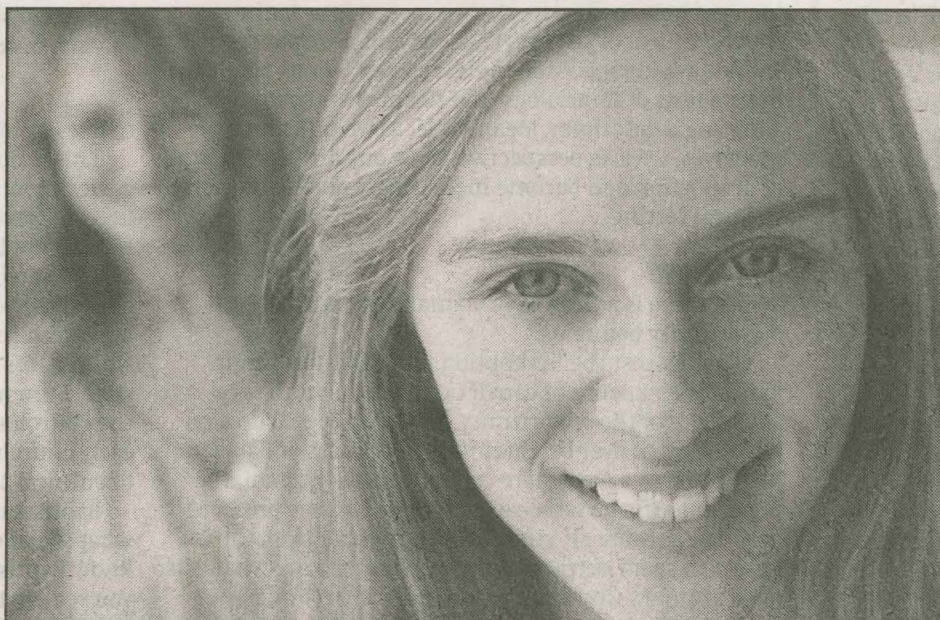
TO ALL THE WORLD International Mission Board missionaries pray over a mother and child suffering through famine in the Horn of Africa. The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering enables these missionaries—like Lottie herself 140 years ago—to live and work at the forefront of lostness, extending Southern Baptists' witness through their full-time ministry. (IMB photo)

their national partners to present the gospel to more than 2.2 million people, baptize 333,823 new believers and start 28,873 new churches.

"I think that when people look at these statistics, Southern Baptists have every reason to rejoice," Elliff said. "And it ought to be a sign that we could certainly accomplish much, much more if more was given. We could send out more missionaries, we could partner with more nationals—there definitely would be a direct impact in terms of evangelism and church planting."

Though short of the \$175 million goal, the 2011 offering is a \$1.1 million increase over the \$145.6 million Southern Baptists gave in 2010. The largest Lottie Moon offering in history was given in 2007, totaling \$150.4 million, shortly before the 2008 economic recession.

Elliff pointed out that 3,328 of the world's 11,000-plus people groups are both unengaged and unreached by the gospel. Those 3,328 groups represent more than 266 million people around the world who may know little or nothing about Jesus. (IMB/BP)



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Black So. Baptists temper expectations for Luter presidency

By Adelle Banks

Randallstown, Md.—With the Southern Baptist Convention poised to elect its first African-American president in New Orleans this week, the mostly black congregation at Colonial Baptist Church is equal parts excited and astonished.

"The denomination has come from 180 degrees," said Vernon Gaskins, 83, after a Sunday morning service at the church outside Baltimore. "I am quite shocked to see it, but I'm glad to see it."



PASTORAL SUPPORT Pastor Robert Anderson preaches at Colonial Baptist Church in Randallstown, Md., where he prayed for Luter's impending election as Southern Baptist Convention president this week. (Photo by Doug Kapustin/RNS)

The small band of black members in the overwhelmingly white denomination isn't expecting wholesale changes in the election of New Orleans pastor Fred Luter. And Luter, for his part, also is trying to keep expectations low.

"I don't think it will change drastically but I do think there will be a change, where African-Americans who really never considered being part of the SBC will now look at it," Luter, 55, said.

Yet for a denomination that was founded in 1845 in defense of slave-owning Southerners, Luter's election nonetheless carries enormous symbolism in the nation's largest Protestant body, which only 17 years ago apologized for its racist history.

The pastor of one of Louisiana's largest Southern Baptist congregations has been answering emails from people who are wishing him well and fielding calls, including a black Chicago pastor.

"Brother Luter," the pastor told him, "I never thought I'd see the day."

Colonial's pastor, Robert Anderson, is the sole African-American member of the SBC's Executive Committee, which last year recommended the denomination take more proactive steps in recruiting blacks and other minorities for committees and agency posts.

At Anderson's church, worshippers applauded efforts to fight a Maryland same-sex marriage law and helped raise money for a local crisis pregnancy center. They also prayed for Luter's election.

"We pray, Lord, for the new coming president, Fred Luter," Anderson prayed.

"Lord, I pray that you give him wisdom, discernment, strength to represent well, more than the Southern Baptist Convention, to represent the kingdom of God, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ."

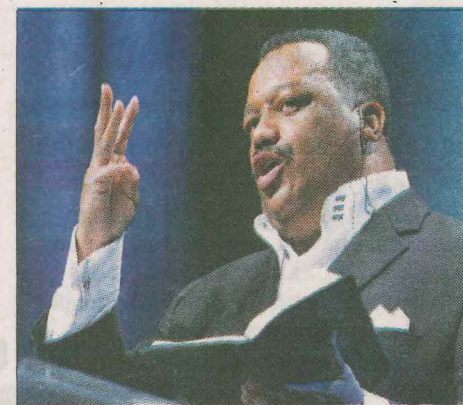
T. Vaughn Walker, a professor of black church studies at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, said he's frequently asked by white students why members of black Baptist denominations don't close up shop and join the SBC. "I say there's one reason: power."

That's also why he's trying to temper his excitement over Luter's election.

"I'm so delighted that he's going to have this opportunity," said Walker, who in 1986 became the SBC's first full-time black seminary professor. "I have no illusions that he's going to change much."

While the president of the historically black National Baptist Convention, USA, "basically runs the convention from his church," for example, the SBC president has influence but limited power. He is the "face of the convention," Walker said, but SBC structure leaves many decisions in the hands of the Executive Committee. The president has more power in board and agency appointments.

Dwight McKissic, pastor of a predominantly black Southern Baptist church in Texas, called the racial milestone "good news" but a symbolic action. "The bad news is the day after he's elected, nothing substantially changes for minorities" in the SBC, he said. "We still will not have one person that's a minority that's in charge of a budget or personnel or who serves as an entity head."



New Orleans pastor Fred Luter

While some critique the denomination for how far it still needs to go, others say it's important to recognize how far it's come.

Mark Croston, treasurer of the SBC's National African American Fellowship, said blacks have served as officials of some Southern Baptist agencies in recent years. Compare that to the 1970s and the "uproar" over a Sunday School publication that featured an interracial photo.

"So, we can see the progress," Croston said. "Has it happened in all the levels of leadership? Not as much as we would like it to but we're seeing it."

Southern Baptist officials say the number of African-American congregations has grown by 85 percent, up from 1,907 in 1998 to 3,534 in 2010.

Luter, meanwhile, said people shouldn't expect "overnight" change, but nonetheless "the ball is in motion."

"I have no doubt you will see more change in having more ethnics in positions of authority," he said. "And eventually I have no doubt you'll see one of us leading one of the entities." (RNS)

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We say, 'Thank you'

Father's Day offering funds mission to see OBI students' lives changed

The Father's Day Offering for OBI was collected a few days ago (though gifts don't have to be collected just on Father's Day), and I want to say a big "thank you" from the following people:

■ Austin, the motherless sixth grader who came to Oneida because he needs a safe place to be while his widowed father goes to school and work.

■ Samantha, the seventh-grade 'D' student who doesn't want to do her homework but wants to be a doctor or an astronaut. She has problems with lying and stealing "just for the thrill of it."

■ Murray, the seventh-grade orphan who joined us when his widowed grandfather/guardian recognized that he needed more attention and discipline than he could give him after working all day. When grandpa picked Murray up at the end of the school year, he introduced his grandpa to the head of our tutoring lab, who "made me do my work."

■ Cecilia, the sophomore who had trouble with academics and behavior but has begun to make progress after accepting Christ, even with little spiritual encouragement from her family.

■ Stanford, the junior who wants to "start again" after making many wrong decisions about drugs, shoplifting, lying and friends. Unless he tells them, no one on campus will know what is in Stanford's past. He has a blank page upon which to write a new future.

■ McKenzie, the almost-ready-for-college senior who has returned to take three quarters of summer-school math to finally get the total number of cred-

its required for graduation.

■ Spencer, the junior who couldn't attend the Christian school where his father was the headmaster due to Spencer's very low grades. Since he's been at OBI, Spencer has blossomed through the help of the tutoring lab, by beginning to put aside his frustrations and by "keeping on keeping on" with the academic process, even when it is challenging.

■ Bill, the internationally born adoptee who came to us with a second-grade reading level. With two years of hard work and the help of teachers and tutors, Bill was able to reach all the requirements for graduation and walk across our chapel platform last month. He came as

a Christian and he left praising Jesus.

■ Elwin, the senior who came to us after having runaway issues. In three short months, Elwin learned that God is not just someone you call on when you are in trouble, but someone with whom you need to have a daily relationship through faith in His Son, Jesus.

■ Mohammed, the international senior who made a series of wrong choices while living with his uncle in the U.S. He had a choice of coming to OBI or being deported. Within six months, he began to reconsider his relationship with God. Mohammed accepted Jesus as his Savior and was baptized near the end of the school year.

From all of these young people, their classmates, families and all of our faculty and staff, "thank you" for supporting OBI through the Father's Day Offering and your other gifts. God bless you.

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

Prepared to serve

Recent graduate now in the pulpit thankful for Clear Creek education

Graduate Matt Black already was on the church field when he recently walked through graduation to receive his diploma. He started serving as pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Wilmington, Ohio, a few weeks before graduation.

"This is what God has prepared me for," Matt said. "I remember coming to Clear Creek with the calling of Jeremiah 29:11 on my heart. I knew when God called me here, He had called me to pastoral ministry. Over the last four years, God has grown me in the understanding of the Bible while connecting me with great mentors to help me understand what ministry is all about.

"As I sat under my professors I gained valuable application by learning how to apply my studies," he added. "That's so important to me. You can teach me the Bible, but how do I apply it? God has grown me tremendously in the understanding of His word and how to apply the word to myself first.

"After just a few weeks on the field I understand that there are just some things in ministry that cannot be taught in the classroom," Matt noted. "I

am thankful that my education at Clear Creek has prepared me to know where to turn when even those things come up in ministry. Most importantly, Clear Creek has taught me to stay faithful to God when things get tough. That lesson was literally affirmed my first week on the church field.

"When I think back over my time at Clear Creek, I am thankful for the opportunities God gave me to be mentored by different people there," Matt said. "God blessed me with some special relationships that I still hold close today. Some dark times came to my life during my time here. I'll never forget the encouragement I received from people

when I wanted to give up. They reminded me that my calling was to God and not to my circumstances.

"I am excited about the future for God's church here where he has planted me," Matt said. "In just these few weeks now, visitors are coming every week. God is blessing the faithfulness of the church. We are excited about reaching our community for Christ."

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@ccbbc.edu.

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

Kentucky Baptist youth choir to tour state June 27-July 1

Louisville—The Kentucky Baptist All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra is touring Campbellsville, Winchester, Erlanger, Cold Spring, La Grange and Louisville June 27-July 1.

A total of 72 students from 29 churches across Kentucky were selected during spring auditions for the choir and orchestra. All musicians currently are in grades 9-12 and are active in the music ministry of a Kentucky Baptist church.

This year's schedule is (all times EDT):
June 27, Campbellsville Baptist Church, 6:30 p.m.

June 28, Central Church in Winchester, 7 p.m.

June 30, Baptist Village in Erlanger, 10:30 a.m.; First Baptist Church of Cold Spring, 7 p.m.

July 1, La Grange Baptist Church, 10:45 a.m.; Hurstbourne Baptist Church in Louisville, 3 p.m.

Members of this year's Kentucky Baptist All-State Choir and Orchestra are:

Ashton Bain, Alto, Sovereign Grace Church in Lawrenceburg.

Matthew Bain, Sovereign Grace Church in Lawrenceburg.

Olivia Baird, Hartford Church (orchestra member).

Joshua Baldauff, Forest Park Church in Bowling Green.

Moriah Bartley, Coral Hill Church in Glasgow.

Leah Beach, Lone Oak First Church of Paducah (orchestra member).

Alex Beard, First Church of Albany.

Loren Been, Fern Creek Church in Louisville (orchestra member).

Abby Boone, Hurstbourne Church in Louisville.

Andrew Butler, First Church of Brandenburg.

Lucas Butler, First Church of Brandenburg.

Hannah Campbell, First Church of Albany.

Gillian Casey, Bethel Church in Harrodsburg (orchestra member).

Kira Clayton, Highland Church in Louisville.

Corey Cobb, First Church of Owenton.

Samuel Cobban, Middletown First Church of Louisville (orchestra member).

Alissa Cook, First Church of Albany.

Emily Couch, First Church of Lawrenceburg.

David Cruz, Severns Valley Church in Elizabethtown.

Hannah Deaton, Hurstbourne Church in Louisville.

Austin Desjardins, Gilead Church in Glendale (orchestra member).

Brady Diehl, Parkland Church in Louisville.

Jenny Fackler, First Church of Brandenburg.

Daniel Fathergill, Immanuel Church in Lexington (orchestra member).

Morgan Fathergill, Immanuel Church in Lexington.

Mary-Margaret Gamblin, First Church of Madisonville.

Kathryn Green, Versailles Church.

Laura Haney, First Church of Richmond.

Emily Harris, Hillside Church in Louisville.

Tristan Hines, Cedar Grove Church in Olaton (orchestra member).

Mary Hodgen, Springfield Church.

Glen Hooper, Stithton Church in Radcliff (orchestra member).

Rachel Hoskins, Little Flock Church in Shepherdsville.

Ellen Howard, Edmonton Church (orchestra member).

Sydney Jessee, First Church of Lawrenceburg.

Faith Kamphaus, Stithton Church in Radcliff (orchestra member).

Natalie King, Lone Oak First Church of Paducah.

Nathan King, Lone Oak First Church of Paducah (orchestra member).

Savannah King, Victory Church in Lexington.

Kirtley Kinman, Versailles Church (orchestra member).

Paige Kinman, Versailles Church.

Alexandria Kirby, First Church of Lawrenceburg.

McKenna Lewis, First Church of Lawrenceburg.

Hallee Mason, First Church of Frankfort.

Marjorie Mason, First Church of Frankfort (orchestra member).

Shelby Mattingly, Versailles Church.

Ryan McBride, First Church of Richmond (orchestra member).

Jordan McCay, First Church of Madisonville (orchestra member).

Joseph Miller, Lewis Lane Church in Owensboro.

Stephanie Morgan, Hartford Church (orchestra member).

Wesley Newman, First Church of Richmond.

Andrew O'Neal, Hurstbourne Church in Louisville.

Elizabeth Peeff, May's Lick Church.

Chelsey Pomeroy, Parkland Church in Louisville.

Mason Rice, Lyttleton Church in Manchester (orchestra member).

Paige Ruddell, First Church of Fisherville (orchestra member).

Robbie Sams, Millville Church in Frankfort.

Ronnie Sams, Millville Church in Frankfort.

Joshua Saylor, Cornerstone Church in Lexington.

Morgan Anne Schussler-Williams, Crescent Hill Church in Louisville (orchestra member).

Mason Sims, Second Church of Hopkinsville.

Peyton Taylor, Canton Church in Cadiz (orchestra member).

Sadie Theodore-Powell, First Church of Richmond.

Courtney Thompson, First Church of Frankfort.

Victoria Walker, First Church of Madisonville.

Erin Warner, Cornerstone Church in Lexington (orchestra member).

Andi Wash, First Church of Owenton.

Kathryn Weeks, Hurstbourne Church in Louisville.

Casey Wheeler, Stithton Church in Radcliff (orchestra member).

Margaret Whitworth, First Church of Frankfort.

Neill Young, Parkway Church in Bardstown.

Natalie Zoglman, Lewis Lane Church in Owensboro. (KBC)

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Bible Crosswords

By Evelyn Boyington

Across

- 1 Cry
- 4 Dream or organ
- 8 ___ team
- 12 Mouth (pl)
- 13 "The children of ___ of Hezekiah, ninety and eight" (Ezra 2:16)
- 14 Jewelry setting, with no metal showing
- 15 By means of
- 16 Nurture
- 17 Great Lake
- 18 Masculine name that is an amalgam of Abraham and Noah
- 20 Make ___
- 22 Prim and proper
- 24 In Arthurian legend, the wife of Geraint
- 25 Writing ___ (what Zacharias asked for in Luke 1)
- 26 "___ thou not unto his (God's) words" (Proverbs 30:6)
- 27 Gazelle
- 30 Biblical exclamation
- 31 Possessive pronoun
- 32 "Thou hast enlarged my steps that my feet did not ___" (Psalm 18:36)
- 33 Affirmative
- 34 Compass pt
- 35 Obeys, to an AKC member
- 36 He was a prisoner on Patmos
- 37 Obliterate
- 38 Stick
- 41 Mentally acute
- 42 Not present and unaccounted for (abbr., pl.)
- 43 What commandos do
- 45 Anger
- 48 Parchment shade
- 49 "He saw others standing ___ in the marketplace" (Matthew 20:3)
- 50 Not (prefix)
- 51 "And they straightway left their ___, and followed him" (Matthew 4:20)
- 52 Minister to
- 53 Our Father

Down

- 1 Absorb
- 2 Crude metal
- 3 He accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey
- 4 Procession
- 5 Article on a list
- 6 Legume

7 Missions

- 8 ___ trap
- 9 Give notice
- 10 Like many golfers?
- 11 What to wear when golfing? (pl.)
- 19 Nard, olive, et al
- 21 Word that precedes day or air
- 22 Between check-in and check-out
- 23 "We spend our years as a ___ that is told" (Psalm 90:9)
- 24 All gone!
- 27 "Yet ___ grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree" (Isaiah 17:6)
- 28 Sesame, canola, et al
- 29 Usually the east end of a church
- 31 "For such as be blessed of him shall ___ the earth" (Psalm 37:22)
- 32 Arid
- 34 Conjunction
- 35 Noticed
- 36 "Even so, come, Lord ___" (Revelation 22:20)
- 38 So be it
- 39 Prepare vegetables for cooking
- 40 "As the ___ panteth after the water" (Psalm 42:1)
- 41 Oven
- 44 Fruit drink
- 46 One of Pooh's pals
- 47 "And then shall the ___ come" (Matthew 24:14)

Last puzzle's solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
L	O	P		E	L	I	E	L		S	O	D
A	B	I		M	A	T	T	E		H	A	Y
M	A		A	P	S	E		B	R	A	K	E
P	L	A	N	T	S		S	A	U	L		
		W	A	Y		A	P	O	S	T	L	E
E	D	E	N		T	R	U	T	H		E	D
L	O	D		M	O	R	E	H		B	A	G
A	R		M	E	D	A	D		L	I	F	E
N	A	M	E	D	A	Y		P	O	T		
		I	D	L	Y		P	A	R	E	N	T
T	H	R	E	E		P	A	I	D		O	R
E	A	T		Y	E	A	R	N		D	O	E
A	S	H		S	A	T	E	S		O	N	E

Mission:Dignity Sunday

GuideStone ministry seeks to help retired servants maintain dignity

You may not realize how many men and women there are who served God's people faithfully across the years and now find themselves struggling to meet even basic needs of food, medicine and electricity. Most of these ministers served in small, rural churches that paid them very modest salaries and could not afford to contribute toward their retirements. In many instances, they had to work extra jobs to make ends meet.

Mission:Dignity is the name GuideStone Financial Resources, SBC, has given that part of its mission which provides critical financial assistance to thousands of retired ministers and their widows across the nation for housing, food and medications, while seeking to ensure a well-deserved dignity and independence. And 100 percent of your gifts go to help someone in need with nothing taken out for administrative expenses.

You will be pleased to know your Kentucky Baptist Foundation partners with GuideStone in supplementing those Mission:Dignity recipients living in Kentucky. This supplement is provided from the earnings of the Baptist Minister's

Aid Endowment Fund, which was established 122 years ago.

You can participate in this important "relief" ministry by sending a designated gift directly to GuideStone and/or to the KBF. Your gift can be in the form of a check, appreciated assets like stocks or real estate, a beneficiary designation of life insurance or retirement account, and/or a bequest in your will.

For more information about this ministry and how you can support it, visit www.Mission-DignitySBC.org, call toll free (888) 984.8433 or call me toll free at (866) 489.3421.

What an opportunity to assist a generation of God-called servants who loved their

churches and their churches loved them, but for whom planning for the future was not emphasized when they began serving. They went into the ministry with no turning back. They trusted the Lord to provide, and they put the needs of their churches first. Now they need and deserve our help. Let Mission:Dignity Sunday, June 24, be the day you decide to help.

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

Ky. Baptist Foundation



Barry Allen

Summer fun for students

WMU offers variety of overnights, camp experiences for girls & boys

Throughout the summer, campers and chaperones are learning about missions during WMU-sponsored camps and overnights. Campers also are participating in Bible studies, recreation, crafts and a variety of missions activities. Beautiful wooded settings with great outdoor recreation make summer missions camps the place to be.

WMU camps and overnights are taking place in June at Cedar Crest, the WMU camp at Cedarmore, and for one weekend of overnights in July at Jonathan Creek. There also will be the Royal Ambassador Camp Courage in August at Laurel Lake Baptist Camp in Corbin.

WMU camps and overnights are made possible by your gifts to the Cooperative Program and the Eliza Broadus offering. Because fees paid by campers cover only lodging and meals, EBO provides the expenses for the camp staff, missionaries and others who assist in the camp programming. EBO also makes it possible for chaperones to attend camp with the campers at Cedar Crest at a greatly reduced rate and provides scholarships for needy campers.

Camp director Stacy Nall and Jonathan Auten, WMU's RA consultant, have worked hard to plan great camp experiences for the girls and boys. We also have partnered with the KBC's collegiate ministries department this summer to have an Acts 1:8 team serve as our camp staff at Cedar Crest. The team will work with us

throughout June, then go to Haiti in July to lead children's camps there. Nall, Stacey Gish and Maryann Lee will lead our overnights at Jonathan Creek in July. Auten will direct Camp Courage for boys in August.

Please pray for the campers and chaperones attending this summer. Pray that children who have not made professions

of faith will do so at camp. Pray for wisdom in responding to questions and in encouraging the campers to participate in all activities. Pray for God to call missionaries through camp experiences.

It's not too late to register for Overnights at the Creek, July 13-14, and Camp Courage, August 3-4. For more information, visit www.KyWMU.org/Camp.

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

EBO at Work



Joy Bolton



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June

- 19-20** Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, New Orleans.
- 22-23** Father/Son Overnight, CedarCrest Camp, Bagdad.
- 22-23** Mother/Daughter Overnight, CedarCrest Camp, Bagdad.
- 23-29** Kentucky Changers, Paducah.
- 24-7/1** All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra Tour, Campbellsville University and various locations.
- 25-29** Mission Adventure Camp for Boys and Girls, CedarCrest Camp, Bagdad.
- 30** Kentucky Baptist Nursing Fellowship Summer Meeting, Elizabethtown.

July

- 7-14** Kentucky Changers, Somerset.
- 13-14** Acteens Splash, Jonathan Creek Camp and Conference Center, Hardin.
- 13-14** Girls in Action Overnight, Jonathan Creek Camp and Conference Center, Hardin.
- 13-14** Mother/Daughter Overnight, Jonathan Creek Camp and Conference Center, Hardin.
- 27-28** Excel WMU Leadership Development Event, First Baptist Church, Hodgenville.

August

- 3-4** Camp Courage, Laurel Lake Baptist Camp, Corbin.
- 4** Calvinism: Concerned? Curious? Confused?, Crestwood Baptist Church.

Black pastors: 'Great Commission Baptists' could help

By Diana Chandler

Philadelphia—As Southern Baptists vote on the adoption of the descriptor "Great Commission Baptists," African-American pastors are adding insight on how well the reference will improve the convention's cross-cultural attraction.

K. Marshall Williams, chairman of the Southern Baptist African American Advisory Council, said the adoption of the descriptor would be a step in the right direction and could improve the SBC's effectiveness in kingdom building.

"I think it will be helpful—very helpful—in expanding our capacity as kingdom citizens to fulfill our biblical mandate issued by the Master," said Williams, senior pastor of Nazarene Baptist Church in Philadelphia. "It's a clear declaration of who we are and what we're about, namely the exaltation of the Almighty and the edification and evangelization of all nations."

Williams said he would use the name on his church stationery and website and "would be proud to wave that banner as an identifier of who we are, whose we are and what we're about."

In February, the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee approved the recommendation brought by SBC President Bryant Wright who had appointed a task force to advise him on the advisability of changing the name of the SBC.

Based on their advice, Wright brought a recommendation to the Executive Committee that the convention keep its name but adopt an informal, non-legal "Great Commission Baptists" descriptor, to be used by any church that wishes to use it.

Task force member Ken Fentress, who leads multiethnic Montrose Baptist Church in Rockville, Md., has said the inclusion of "Southern" in the SBC's name is a barrier to many in the African-American community, who find the term reminiscent of the

Confederacy.

"The name has not only been a source of difficulty for church planters serving in areas outside the American South," Fentress told the Executive Committee in February, "but also that the name has been a source of some difficulty among African-Americans."

Robert Anderson, a Maryland pastor who is finishing eight years on the Executive Committee, explained the anticipated effectiveness of the proposed descriptor.

"In any game, everybody likes to see a home run. If I could talk about this game of life and ministry that we have, I

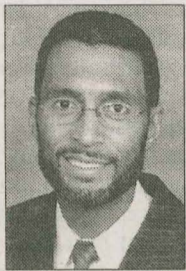
think this is a home run," Anderson said. "This is not a home run that wins the game, ... but it is a home run in the game."

While the SBC is predominantly white, Anderson pointed out the 3,500 African-American churches in the SBC comprise some 8 percent of the 45,700 membership congregations.

Anderson said the SBC last year made a significant move when messengers passed an ethnic diversity report that encourages the SBC president, when he makes his various appointments, to "give special attention to appointing individuals who represent the diversity within the convention, and particularly ethnic diversity." The report cites the "need to be proactive and intentional in the inclusion of individuals from all ethnic and racial identities within Southern Baptist life."

Kevin Smith, pastor of Watson Memorial Baptist Church in Louisville, said that while the adoption of the descriptor may be helpful to church planters, any regional identity problems they face also can be reversed by placing a greater emphasis on state identity.

"I think we should make a bigger deal about our state convention identity because that gives us the more contextualized, familiar terminology for our setting," Smith said. "But I have no problem with the Great Commission descriptor."



Kevin Smith

"When I meet someone in evangelistic conversation, before they know I'm Southern Baptist, I mean, they know I'm Kentucky Baptist," he added. "We're one of 2,400 churches cooperating here in Kentucky for the gospel of Jesus Christ."

"I've not met people resistant to the gospel because our church is Southern Baptist or Kentucky Baptist," he continued. "People resist the gospel because they're sinful and they don't desire to repent of their sins."

"But again, I'm not in one of these New York City, high-impact areas, so if that's a conceptualization problem for them, I think that descriptor can be helpful. But it would also be helpful if they

would tell people they're a New York Baptist and make sure that they make those state identifications."

Smith, who is also assistant professor of Christian preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, said the SBC's name signifies more than a region.

"I think I have been one of those people against any type of name change because I think Southern Baptist Convention says something organizationally, it says something historical and in the days we're living in now," he said, "it certainly says something theological. To say Southern Baptist is a theological statement as much as anything else." (BP)

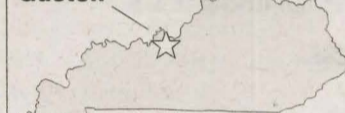
MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

- **BRODHEAD**—Ottawa Church will hold "Croquet Day" June 23. **Jim Craig** is pastor.
- **CADIZ**—New Jerusalem Church recently called **Donny Garner** as pastor.
- **CORBIN**—Central Church will host South Union-Mount Zion Association's "Evening for Missions" event June 26, 6:30 p.m., with a dinner and special music by **Straight Creek** and the church's praise team. There also will be information about the association's upcoming mission projects in the Ohio and the Ukraine and Russia. **Chad Fugitt** is pastor.
- **FLAT LICK**—Turkey Creek Church recently called **Eli Broughton** as pastor.
- **GREENVILLE**—Second Church will hold a "Celebrating All Things June" ladies event June 22, 6 p.m., with Muhlenberg County Sheriff **Curtis McGehee** as guest speaker. **H. Ray England** is pastor.
- **LEBANON**—**Greg Haynes** recently resigned as pastor of Woodlawn Church.
- **LOUISVILLE**—Cloverleaf Church will host the **Mark Trammell Quartet** in concert June 21, 7 p.m. For more information,

Spotlight on ...

Guston



Hill Grove Church will celebrate its 190th anniversary with homecoming services June 24, 11 a.m., with **Dan Francis**, pastor of Latonia Church in Covington, as guest speaker. A fellowship meal will follow the morning service. The church also will hold an afternoon celebration at 2:30 p.m. **Eric Stephens** is pastor.

call (502) 367-0218. **Geoffrey Lacefield** is pastor.

Fern Creek Church will host the Fern Creek/Highview United Ministries benefit concert June 22, 7:30 p.m., featuring the **Compass Quartet**. The church also will hold a missions recognition service June 24, 5:30 p.m., to acknowledge and hear from those who have attended mission trips in the past year. **Linda Barnes Popham** is pastor.

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NEEDED: Pictures and information from friends of Panola Baptist Church, Waco, Ky., to help with 200th anniversary 9/30/2012. Send information to: Pastor Philip Ronk, 8 Poplar Dr., Winchester, KY 40391.

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SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Woodlawn Baptist Church located in Central Kentucky. Please send resumé to Jerry Albertson, 620 George St., Lebanon, KY 40033.

SEEKING: Administrative assistant/secretary; 30 hrs. per week; proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel Publisher; experience preferred; Please email resumé to: bjwoosley@aol.com; or mail to: Deer Park Baptist Church, 1733 Bardstown Road, Louisville, KY 40205, Attn: Personnel Committee.

SEEKING: Caretaker (very light maintenance, raking leaves, etc.) for Camp Lewis, a Christian camp for kids. Free rent, free utilities, home on site. www.camplewis.com. campprayerchain@aol.com. (800) 457-5678.

SEEKING: Full-time bookkeeper (G/L A/P) for the Accounting Services Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention. Requires 3-5 years related experience; offers competitive salary and benefits package. For more info, please submit resumé to Accounting Services Dept., www.kybaptist.org/administrative by 6-22-2012.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for Salyersville First Baptist Church. Resumés may be mailed to PO Box 616, Salyersville, KY 41465; or emailed to salyersvillefbc@hotmail.com.

SEEKING: Minister of music (12-15 hours/week): A man with a heart for God and people to minister through music (blended style) at North Oldham Baptist, Goshen, Ky. Email resumé to worship@nobck.org. www.nobck.org. (502) 228-4325.

New Orleans churches, ministries showing Christ's love to city

By Diana Chandler

New Orleans—Sue Yocum thought the man was crazy. He had approached her in Washington Square Park during one of her daily strolls with her daughter Lena, who was only 7 months old.

"Your baby is very pretty," the man said. The proud mother thanked him.

"Can I buy her?" he asked. "Can I buy your baby?"

Yocum recalled, "It didn't click. I asked 'excuse me?'"

The stranger repeated his question.

Assuming he was insane, Yocum quickly returned to Baptist Friendship House across the street, a Southern Baptist mission and her home since a boyfriend deserted her after their child was born. There, staff members explained to Yocum what really happened. The man had asked to buy her baby as his property.

Unable to support herself and her baby, Yocum's circumstances placed her in two groups the Friendship House works diligently to help: the homeless and those vulnerable to human trafficking.

"To know that underaged girls are bought, obtained, prepared, packaged and distributed like products into strip clubs, online pornography and prostitution breaks my heart," said Kay Bennett, Baptist Friendship House executive director. "God has given me a passion to reach out and help women, one at a time."

Yocum temporarily found work in Birmingham, Ala., for six months, but returned to New Orleans in March to reunite with Baptist Friendship House, the only family she knows. The mission allowed her to clear her head, encounter God and re-learn how to pray. The home, she said, is providing for all her needs.

"One of the biggest things that Baptist Friendship House did was give me the ability to pray and be a stronger person," Yocum said. "This is my extended family."

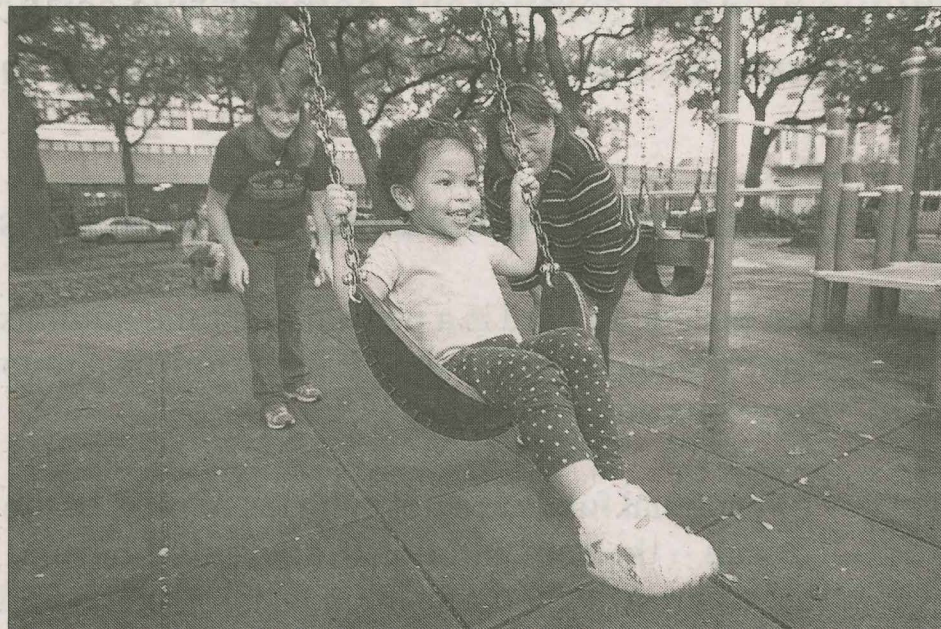
About 10 miles away at Celebration Church in Metairie, a New Orleans suburb, 34-year-old Andrea Robertson considered hers a lose-lose situation. Facing her husband's infidelity and alcoholism, she was ready to end their marriage.

"There was no doubt I was done. I was at the end of my rope," Robertson said. "If I leave him, I lose, and if I stay, I lose."

She and her husband, Eddy, enrolled in counseling classes at Hope Center, a ministry of Healing Hearts for Community Development, a nonprofit arm of Celebration Church. Hope Center helped Andrea deal with the "paralyzing pain" of betrayal. Eddy enrolled in Celebrate Recovery, a sister ministry at Celebration Church incorporating 12 Christ-centered steps and eight biblical recovery principles. Eddy has been sober and faithful for the past six years.

Today, Andrea and Eddy are still married and providing a loving home for their four children, ages 7 to 18.

Southern Baptist churches and ministries are fighting numerous social ills in a city known for good times and easy living. In efforts to fulfill God's



MOTHER'S REFUGE Kay Bennett (left), Baptist Friendship House executive director, spends time on the playground with Lena and her mother, Sue Yocum, in Washington Square Park across from the Baptist Friendship House in New Orleans. Yocum, a single mother, is being helped by the ministry. (Photo by Ted Jackson/On Mission magazine)

command to love the least of these, Southern Baptists are leading souls to Christ and penetrating lostness in North America.

The North American Mission Board, meanwhile, has launched "LoveLoud," an initiative to encourage Southern Baptists to engage in community transformation through compassion ministries, evangelism and church planting.

What does it mean to love loud?

"It means loving neglected and hurting people as Jesus did—and pointing them back to Him as the source and ultimate author of that love," said Al Gilbert, executive director of LoveLoud. "It means a daily commitment from churches and individuals to connect mercy ministries with missional living in support of church planting and church strengthening."

Modeling God's love for widows, orphans, foreigners and the poor, reminiscent of Zechariah 7:10, pastor Dennis Watson described Celebration Church as "compassion focused."

"Most of our current church attendees are people who have been won to faith in Christ through our compassion ministry efforts following Katrina," Watson said.

Hurricane Katrina in 2005 permanently displaced 60 percent of Celebration's congregation, plunging weekly attendance from 2,500 to 800, the pastor said. He now counts weekly attendance at 4,000, higher than pre-Katrina numbers. "We have rebuilt our congregation through compassion ministry."

David Crosby, pastor of First Baptist Church of New Orleans, called it the "Care Effect," pointing to a three-pronged benefit of compassion ministry blessing the giver, the recipient and the community.

"Jesus said it's more blessed to give than receive," Crosby said. "We believe that compassion is essential, not optional. When the church fails to be a people of compassion and caring, we actually cut the legs out from under the gospel."

"We authenticate the good news of the gospel by loving those in trouble."

Baptist Friendship House, Celebration Church, First Baptist and Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, among many others, are modeling the love of Christ in ministries improving the lives of people who are homeless, hungry, poor, elderly, sick, fatherless and vulnerable. Each ministry uses available resources to reach various populations in need. Ministries range from the sophisticated to the seemingly simple, some utilizing hundreds of thousands of dollars in funding; others done for the cost of a prayer.

Fred Luter, at the outset of his tenure at Franklin Avenue Baptist, began reaching the community by hosting gatherings at his home for up to 25 men to watch pay-per-view boxing matches.

"That was one of the hooks we used to get guys to the church," Luter said.

In those early days more than 20 years ago, Luter would not hand out tracts or hold Bible study during the gatherings, but the sporting events drew the men to Sunday services, much to the delight of their wives.

"I just feel that if you save the man," Luter said, "the man will save his family."

More recently, since the construction of the church's Family Life Center, sporting events include prayer. Basketball games break every 20 minutes for 10 to 15 minutes of prayer and a Bible devotion.

"It's amazing how that never was a problem for the men," Luter said. "They wanted to play basketball. It's a good way of reaching them."

Franklin Avenue has a myriad of mission initiatives, including ministries to the elderly, the sick and shut-ins, including worship services in nursing homes.

"We take the service to them," church member Brenda Bowman said. "We're just there to remind them we're serving the same God, even though they're not at home."

It's a ministry that doesn't require a large budget, she said.

"We may not be able to go out with money, but we can go with a prayer and a word," she added.

Franklin Avenue avoids duplication of services and increases efficiency through its Love in Action ministry, which brings together all the missions of the church for fellowship and edification. Love in Action allows missions teams to work together jointly on a project, including annual stateside mission trips and a retreat for mission workers.

"There's strength in numbers, and you don't duplicate services," said June Pittman, Love in Action coordinator.

Franklin Avenue's community outreach has included the Neighborhood Rebuild Project in partnership with Samaritan's Purse, speeding the repopulation of the city's St. Roch neighborhood surrounding the church. Samaritan's Purse built nearly 30 homes during the course of the project.

Franklin Avenue provided sleeping quarters for up to 70 volunteers at a time and paid for a full-time cook to prepare three meals daily for volunteers.

Luter said compassion is critical to the church's mission.

"The church needs to be a place where people know there's compassion there," he said. "As you've done it to the least of these, you've done it unto me, and that's our motivation."

At Celebration Church, Healing Hearts for Community Development practices compassion through mental-health counseling and substance-abuse treatment. It was through HHCD's Hope Center that Andrea and Eddy Robertson were able to save their marriage.

"We're very grateful for the Hope Center and especially Michele," Andrea Robertson said, referring to Michele Louviere, Hope Center's clinical director and a former NAMB missionary.

"We sit in really dark (psychological) places with people," Louviere said. "They naturally want hope. I personally have had clients who were not saved, but in the course of counseling accepted Christ."

Hope Center provided 12,000 hours of direct services last year, impacting clients from 10 New Orleans parishes. The organization's Christian foundation draws many to its programs, HHCD Executive Director Freddie Landry said.

"Most of our clients do come to us looking for the faith-based counseling, but we don't require that," Landry said. "We are always encouraging our clients to go to church, either at our church or another church. Our goal is to bring hope and healing to the hurting people in our community."

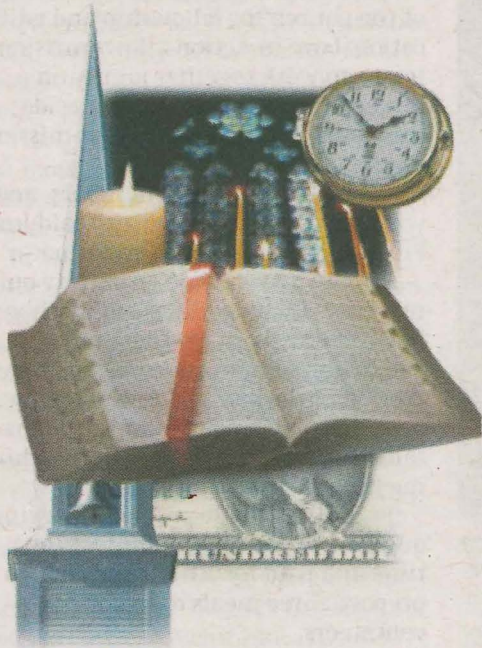
Deploying 100 volunteers weekly in a wide spectrum of ministries, New Orleans First Baptist offers hope and healing through its Care Effect initiative.

Through its Baptist Crossroads project in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, First Baptist has built 71 homes in New Orleans, utilizing volunteer labor. Baptist Crossroads was created before Hurricane Katrina with the hope of providing 40 homes to low-income working families. Crosby's vision expanded after the storm, which destroyed 90,000 housing units in the metro area. (On Mission/BP)

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