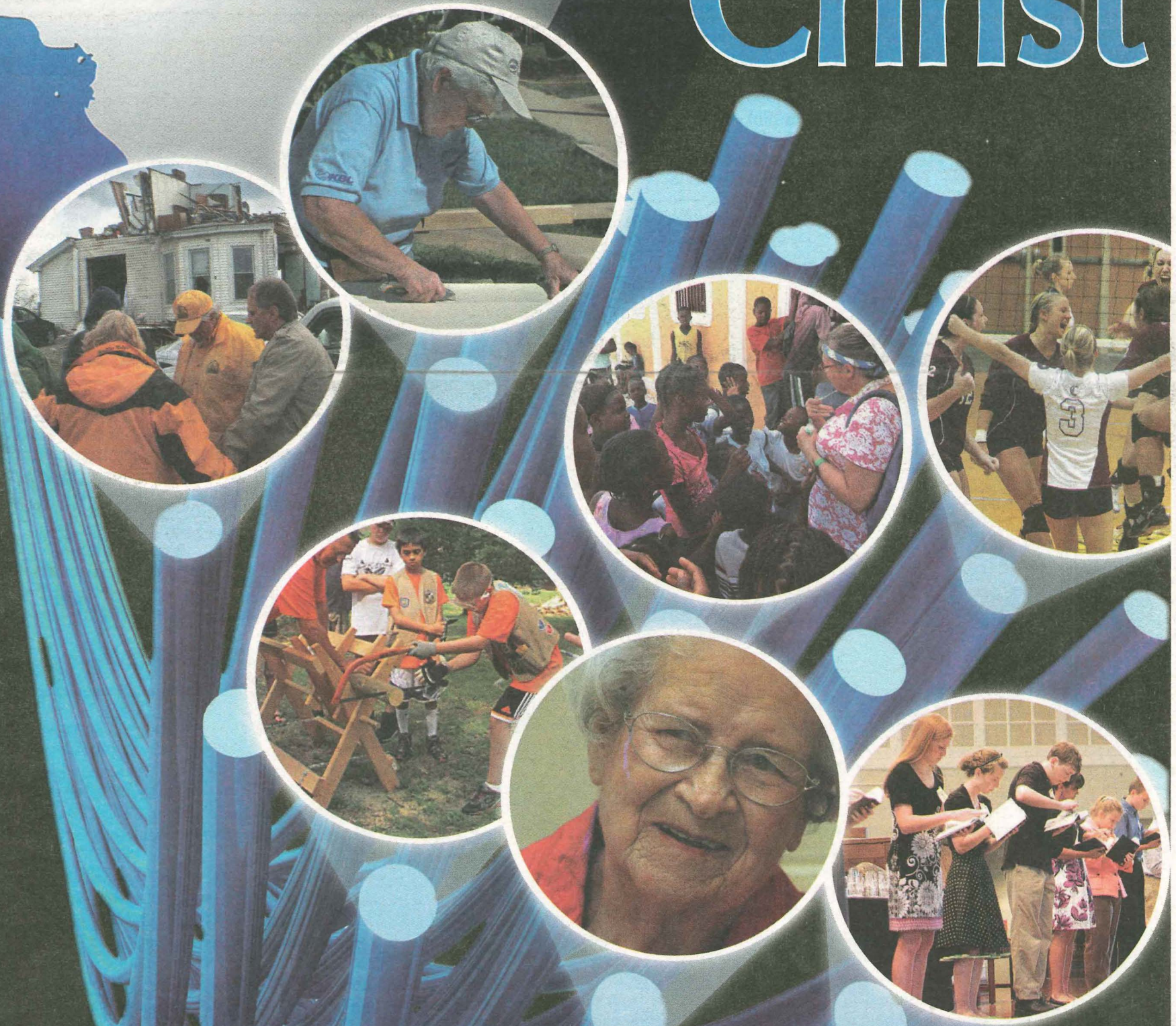


WESTERN Recorder

KBC CELEBRATES
175 YEARS

Reaching Kentucky
& the World for

Christ



WESTERN RECORDER

"Earnestly Contend for the Faith Once for All Delivered to the Saints" —Jude 3.

VOL. 186

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, NOVEMBER 13, 2012

No. 44

Kentucky Baptist Convention at 175

By Duane Bolin

"THE past is a foreign country; they do things differently there." Despite historian David Lowenthal's assertion, isn't it odd, isn't it eerie sometimes how much it seems that the past resonates in the present? In 2012, Kentucky Baptists are in the middle, along with everyone else in the Commonwealth and indeed the nation, of lingering economic difficulties. In fact, economic concerns led Southern Baptist Convention officials to propose and SBC messengers to pass recent centralizing measures which have had an impact on Kentucky and other state conventions across the nation.

Back in 1837 when the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky—what would be renamed the Kentucky Baptist Convention in 1961—was founded, the nation suffered economically in what came to be known as the Panic of '37. Critics referred derisively to the president, Martin Van Buren, the successor of Andrew Jackson, as Martin Van Ruin.



The General Association of Baptists in Kentucky grew despite opposition from hyper-Calvinistic Anti-missioners and those opposed to any organization that could "usurp ecclesiastical authority" of churches.

Critics of the new General Association came from two primary camps. One group feared increased centralization over the historic Baptist distinctive of the autonomy of the local church. These opponents suspected that the leaders of statewide organization had a "desire to usurp ecclesiastical authority over the churches." Backers of the General Association sought to assure the doubters that the goal was rather to "achieve the objectives of supplying destitute places with preachers, sending out missionaries, and raising and disbursing needed funds."

Such language did nothing to assuage a second group of critics: the hyper-Calvinistic Anti-missioners. Opposed to the General Association from the beginning, once the association was formed, the Anti-missioners leveled repeated attacks against the statewide organization year after year. Arguing "that it was unscriptural to raise monies for religious purposes, that the theological education was a detriment to preachers, and that it was both unscriptural and unnecessary to preach the gospel to sinners who could not repent and believe without divine grace," the Anti-missioners harassed General Association efforts at every turn.

Despite lingering doubts about the efficacy of increased centralization, the opposition of the Anti-missioners, and the economic hardships of an economic "panic," the work of the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky grew and prospered

for a time. From the beginning, the General Association emphasized missions first and foremost. At the annual meeting in 1850, The General Association stated its aim explicitly: "to secure representation from each district association in the state, to establish a Baptist church in each county seat, to sustain missionary labor in destitute areas, and to encourage the circulation of Baptist literature."

The Civil War, of course, disrupted the plans of Kentucky Baptists, devastated the state, and tore the nation asunder. The Kentucky Baptist historian, John Henderson Spencer, wrote that "in 1865, the War closed, and the survivors of the two great armies returned to their homes. Alas! What multitudes were left sleeping in unknown graves in the far off sunny South. Many active and valuable church members were lost in the fearful conflict that desolated our homes, our hearts and our churches. Some that survived were sadly demoralized."

Spencer likened the work facing Kentucky Baptists after the war to that of "God's ancient people on their return from Babylonian captivity. It was a time for rebuilding from ruins and repairing breaches. Not able debates nor sage counsel in conventions but earnest labor among the churches, was the need of the hour."

Kentucky Baptist women had conducted "earnest labor among the churches" throughout the war. In fact, with husbands and fathers gone off to fight on distant battlefields, women took on roles at home and in churches not open to them before the war. The war years laid the foundation for the leadership roles in missions and benevolent work that Kentucky Baptist women would take up in the post-war years.

Kentucky Baptists would weather other hard times in the General Association's first hundred years of existence: the economic downturns of the 1870s and 1890s, the Spanish-American War in 1898, America's involvement in the Great War from 1917 to 1919, another agricultural decline following the war in what some other parts of the country saw as "the Roaring Twenties," and then the Great Depression of the 1930s. Still a comparative chart indicated the growth of the General Association's first century:

1837	1937
One Baptist to 20 in population	One Baptist to seven in population
43 associations	80 associations
664 churches	2,043 churches
39,269 members	351,555 members
200 to 250 ministers	2,451 ministers
\$643.03 raised for all purposes	\$380,494.10 raised for all purposes

(from the "Proceedings of the General Association of Kentucky Baptists, 1937")

After peaking in baptisms, church enrollment, attendance, and financial figures following World War II in the 1950s, Kentucky Baptist Convention churches experienced a steady decline in the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s. Still, by 2012, under Executive Director Paul Chitwood, more than 780,000 members in almost 2,400 churches in 70 associations make up the KBC. And for the first time in four years, Kentucky Baptists increased their giving—albeit by 1 percent—to the Cooperative Program.

The KBC also experienced in 2012 a dramatic restructuring, as messengers at the annual meeting in 2011 decided to accelerate the convention's plan to reach a 50 percent/50 percent funding formula for SBC and KBC causes. The sacrificial giving of Kentucky Baptists was nothing new as Baptists in the Commonwealth had often taken the lead in SBC causes. After all, the idea for the Cooperative Program itself originated in Murray, Ky., a plan that was soon adopted by the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky in 1915, and then by the Southern Baptist Convention a decade later.

The 175 years of Kentucky Baptist history has been "a story of cooperation" for the most part. Will that spirit of cooperation continue? Only with the Lord's help, of course. Spencer described the task facing Kentucky Baptists following the Civil War: "God afforded his people grace to perform the duty." We pray for such grace today.

James Duane Bolin is the author of *Kentucky Baptists, 1925-2000: A Story of Cooperation*. He teaches in the Department of History at Murray State University and is a member of Murray's First Baptist Church.

WESTERN Recorder

November 13, 2012

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 186, Issue 44

Shielding Israel's children



Earl Cox (second from left), Ashkelon Mayor Benny Vaknin (third from left) and Bart Britt (center) help Israeli children try on the free ballistic-proof backpacks provided by Shields of David, a nonprofit organization based in Bowling Green. (Photo courtesy of Bart Britt)

Ky. nonprofit seeks to protect Israelis from attacks

By Robin Cornetet Bass

Ashkelon, Israel—Two hours before Bart Britt was scheduled to make a presentation, his mission to hand-deliver 500 ballistic-proof backpacks to children in Ashkelon, Israel, was greeted with violent confirmation.

Sirens wailed and loud warnings in Hebrew announced, "Code Red," as residents of the seaside city scrambled for shelter. Britt, executive director of the Kentucky-based nonprofit, Shield of David, said he contemplated where

he could flee in his rental car. When two rockets exploded near the city, Britt said the ground shook.

"It frightened me. I was caught out in the open. I didn't know if there would be more or where the closest shelter was," the Kentucky native recalled. "It put everything into perspective of what those people go through on a daily basis."

One of the goals of Shield of David, Britt said, is to provide a sense of comfort in a

□ See Ky.-based Shield of David ... Page 9

Nor'easter doesn't derail clean-up efforts

New York—A Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief kitchen unit escaped significant damage last week from the storm that dumped up to a foot of snow in parts of the Northeast.

The tent covering Kentucky's kitchen unit No. 4 on Long Island collapsed beneath the weight of the snow brought about by a nor'easter that struck the region already with the devastation left behind by Hurricane Sandy a week earlier. The collapse was only a temporary setback as the team had the kitchen back in operation within hours.

All Southern Baptist Disaster Relief operations were suspended for the duration of the Nov. 7 storm, but volunteers were back at work the next morning.

"The snow was not as bad as it

□ See Disaster relief ... Page 8



STILL GOING STRONG North American Mission Board President Kevin Ezell (right) encourages members of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Disaster Relief kitchen No. 1 at Aqueduct Racetrack in South Ozone Park, N.Y., last week. The cooking team has been preparing upwards of 20,000 meals a day. Ezell spent time last week in New York and New Jersey speaking and praying with SBDR volunteers, some 700 strong, who are serving victims of Hurricane Sandy. (Photo by Mike Ebert/NAMB)

10/11/12

College students mark unique date by sharing Christ on their campuses

By David Roach

Murray—An international student hears the name of Jesus for the first time.

A young woman considers the cost of committing her life to Christ. An agnostic agrees to meet with a Baptist campus minister weekly to discuss spiritual questions.

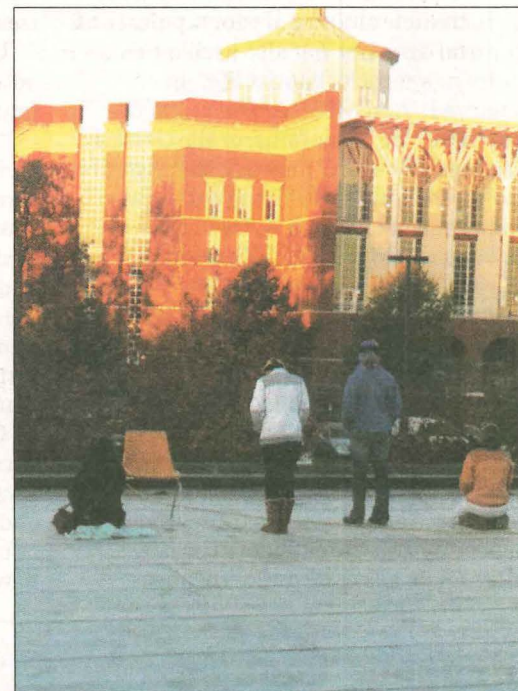
These were just a few of the results as hundreds of Kentucky college students participated in Engage24, a national, 24-hour evangelistic push on college campuses Oct. 11 organized by the Baptist Collegiate Network, a group of college ministry directors from Baptist state conventions across the country.

"We were looking toward Oct. 11 as a big push," said Mark Whitt, campus minister at Murray State University. "But what I have seen is that the specific day gave students the opportunity to be intentional and that it has been more on their mind to pray for their peers and share the gospel with them since that day."

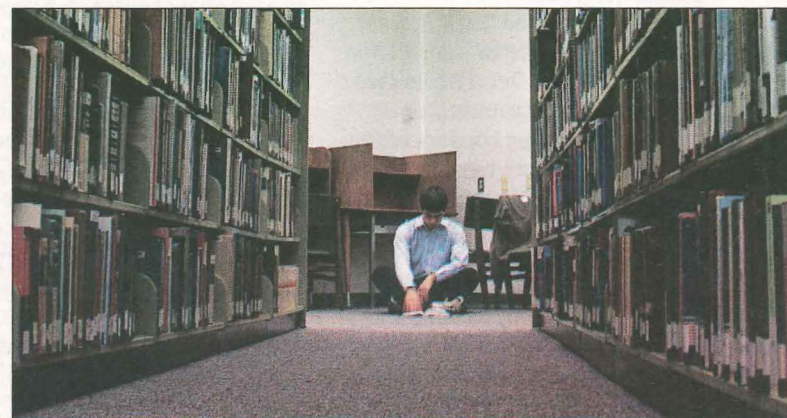
Kentucky Baptist Collegiate Ministry students shared their faith that day through servant evangelism, spiritual surveys, evangelistic gatherings and informal, one-on-one conversations. Engage24 also involved concerted prayer for those in spiritual need on campuses around the state.

At the University of Kentucky in Lexington, more than 100 BCM students participated in the outreach, receiving evangelism training in advance and sharing the gospel with nearly 200 fellow students Oct. 11. A 24-hour prayer chain ensured that at least two students were praying for the campus at all times.

□ See Students 'Engage' ... Page 4



MORNING GLORY The early morning sun illuminates buildings on the University of Kentucky campus as students pray around the clock Oct. 10 for their fellow students as part of Engage24, a day-long evangelistic initiative coordinated by Kentucky Baptist Campus Ministry groups and other BCM organizations across the country. (Photo courtesy of UK BCM)



PEER PRAYERS A Western Kentucky University student prays for his peers in the library on the Bowling Green campus during the recent Engage24 nationwide event. (Photo courtesy of WKU BCM)



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Greenway presidency full of meaning, historical significance

By Todd Deaton

Louisville—Elect the youngest-ever president to serve during the Kentucky Baptist Convention's observance of its 175th anniversary and 2012 has the makings of historic note.

Add to the mix a sweeping reorganization of Mission Board staff, the addition of the first African-American to the KBC's second chair, and an uptick in Cooperative Program giving and this year takes on even greater historical significance.

Reflecting upon his time at the top KBC officer, Adam Greenway described it as having been an "incredibly meaningful" experience.

"This role has provided me with the chance to literally be all across the state, preaching and meeting our pastors," he explained. "It has given me an even greater appreciation for what God has given us in Kentucky.

"We have such a beautiful state with an incredible amount of geographical and cultural diversity, but also such a rich unity in Kentucky Baptist life," he observed. "And, whether you are in the Purchase, the mountains, or the Golden Triangle, I do think Kentucky Baptists are Bible-believing, Jesus-loving people who want to see their friends, loved ones, coworkers and schoolmates reached for the gospel of Jesus."

But there's more to being KBC president than traveling and preaching, and Greenway's leadership has seen its share of course-setting actions. Among them:

■ A significant reorganization of the KBC Mission Board staff and structure. "The fact that the transition was done with grace and charity to those who were departing and the caliber of the new hires made has to be one of the most

significant episodes of my tenure," Greenway said.

In thinking back over the past 12 months, he said he finds it remarkable that even in the midst of a great deal of change, staff transitions and new beginnings, there has been a remarkable level of unity and harmony.

■ The election of Curtis Woods as the KBC's associate executive director, becoming the highest ranking African-American to serve in an old-line state convention position. "I think that it is a tremendous statement for Kentucky—and really for the SBC—to have someone of his character and competence in that key role," Greenway said.

■ An uptick in Cooperative Program giving for first time since 2007-08. "I have desired to use what little influence I have had to be a CP champion and promoter," Greenway said. "It is encouraging to see that at least over the last year that Kentucky Baptists were able to give more through the CP."

One of his chief goals, he said, was to be an advocate for the Cooperative Program and an encourager to pastors.

"The Lord has been very gracious in giving me opportunities to graich all across the commonwealth," he continued. "We have some incredible servants of God, leading churches across our state, and I am convinced that some of the best preaching is being done by guys whose names we've never heard of, but who are just faithfully serving God out in the churches—loving Jesus, loving people."

Greenway said he is particularly encouraged by the recent addition of Chuck McAlister as the KBC's evangelism and church planting team leader, as well as by the commitments Kentucky Baptists have made to church consulting and

revitalization with the addition of Steve Rice.

Highlighting the church-centric focus of the KBC's new mission statement, Greenway praised Executive Director Paul Chitwood's leadership in getting more resources deployed from Kentucky to the nations, yet still advancing the gospel here.

"I am more encouraged about the direction of the KBC than at any time I have been privileged to be a Kentuckian," he declared.

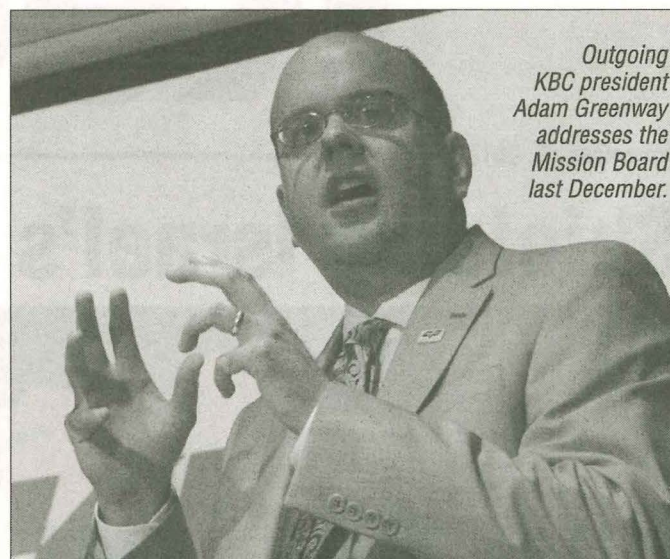
"We've been able to really do more with less," he noted. "And, at least from my vantage point, essential KBC ministries, missions and functions have not been harmed, compromised or rendered less effective.

"I do think Kentucky is providing an example that others can follow in terms of what it means to be a healthy, well-balanced, Great Commission-focused state convention."

One of the major challenges ahead for Kentucky Baptists, though, is the fact that lostness is increasing in our society, Greenway pointed out. "More people are being born each year than we are baptizing."

"So, each year, we see a greater and greater challenge in terms of what it means to reach Kentucky and beyond with the gospel."

As professor of evangelism and apologetics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Greenway said he believes people are starting further away from God



Outgoing KBC president Adam Greenway addresses the Mission Board last December.

now than perhaps at any other time in American history. Making sure believers not only have the ability to tell someone how to become a Christian, but also to explain why they should become one is paramount, he urged.

"Increasing secularism, increasing skepticism—it seems like the darkness is advancing," he noted. "That is why Kentucky Baptists have to be continually shining forth the light—shining like the stars."

Greenway offered these words of encouragement to Kentucky Baptists: "If we would keep our eyes on Jesus, and our hearts humbled before Him, then I believe there is nothing that God can't do through us.

"So, may we be a prayerful, humble, Christ-centered people, ... and for every ounce of success that God gives us, may He give us a pound of humility to remind us of who is actually doing the work and who deserves all the credit." (WR)

Students 'Engage'

Continued from page 1

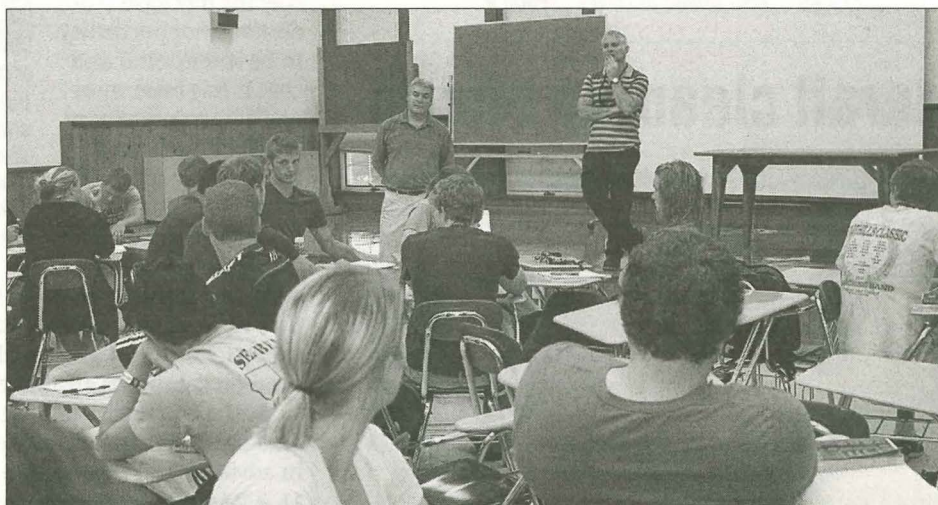
"One of the main purposes of Engage24 was not to do a day-evangelism event and feel good about ourselves," UK campus minister Daniel Berry said, "but to truly engage people with the gospel and continue the journey for them to have a personal faith with Christ.

"The story of 10/11/12 may not be completed for years," he added.

One UK student named Chris had hoped to share the gospel with a friend that day. But when that friend couldn't meet, Chris began a discussion about Jesus with an international student and discovered the student had never before heard the name of Jesus.

Another student named Natalie was considering giving her life to Jesus Christ before Engage24 and on Oct. 12 told two BCM students that she wanted to be saved but was afraid of the consequences. With encouragement from her friends, Natalie still was considering salvation.

At Murray State, 300-400 students heard the gospel through Engage24. BCM students handed out hot chocolate and snacks on a main campus walkway and talked about Christ with those who stopped to ask why they were showing such kindness. A "Telling Our Story" event featured three students who came to know Christ either in late high school or college sharing their testimonies.



HOW TO SHARE University of the Cumberland's Baptist Campus Minister Dean Whitaker (standing, left), and evangelist Dennis Pethers listen to UC students talk about sharing their faith with others in preparation for Engage24, a one-day evangelistic effort. The event was scheduled around the country for Oct. 11, but because Cumberland was on fall break that day, the school's BCM students held their day of intense prayer and witnessing earlier in the month. (Photo courtesy of UC BCM)

Engage24 impacted faculty members as well as students, Whitt noted.

"I have had several conversations with some professors ... that have encouraged me that Engage24 was also a catalyst for some of our staff and faculty to develop a heart for their peers," he said.

At Northern Kentucky University, campus minister Brian Combs encouraged BCM leaders to read Tim Keller's book, "The Reason for God," over the summer to prepare to share their faith on Oct. 11. Then Combs and evangelist Dennis Pethers trained students in evan-

gelism after the semester began.

As students engaged in spiritual conversations, one learned that a friend he thought was a Christian was actually an atheist—despite the fact that he led worship at a local church. The student and Combs were attempting to follow up.

At Western Kentucky University, servant evangelism, spiritual surveys and visual art were among the ways students shared their faith during Engage24. They also held prayer times during which they asked God to help them love people just as He does.

BCM President Alyson Cooke bought a freshman coffee at a campus hangout for Engage24 and told her that she wanted to show the love of Christ. Upon learning that the student had not attended church since coming to college, Cooke invited her to attend with her.

While taking spiritual surveys, campus minister Tommy Johnson met a student who said he was unsure about the identity of Jesus, if God exists and whether there is a higher purpose in life. The student agreed to meet weekly with Johnson to discuss spiritual questions.

For University of the Cumberland in Williamsburg, Engage24 fell during fall break. So, the BCM chose Oct. 1 as a day of prayer for the campus and planned strategic evangelism events throughout the semester. Through those events, approximately 1,200 students heard the gospel. When evangelist Tony Nolan spoke Oct. 22, 19 students professed faith in Christ for the first time and 19 others recommitted their lives to Jesus.

In the wake of Engage24, campus ministers across the state agreed the event had more than a one-day impact, encouraging students to be more active in witnessing every day.

"The day of Engage24 was really good," Berry said, "but it has been the after-effects and the continued emphasis of sharing the gospel that I'm most excited about. Students are sharing their faith and living the gospel out in front of their friends." (KBC)

Kentucky Baptists' mighty cord of missions

In Ecclesiastes 4, we discover that "two are better than one because they have a good reward for their efforts. For if either falls, his companion can lift him up." A few verses later, we are reminded that "a cord of three strands is not easily broken." It's a fundamental lesson about cooperation, particularly important in missions and ministry. When Christ is the third strand binding all together, the cord is mighty, indeed.

For 175 years, the Kentucky Baptist Convention has been encouraging churches in cooperating to reach Kentucky and the world for Christ. From its humble beginnings in 1837, its mission was clear: "to supply the destitute with the preaching of the gospel." Together, Kentucky Baptists have woven a multi-faceted cord of shared ministry, connecting individuals and churches through missions and evangelism. Our cooperative spirit and unity in purpose is the inspiration behind this week's cover art—designed by Robin Cornet Bass—depicting a strong cord of ministry stretching from Kentucky to the nations.

A series of historical banners being displayed at this year's annual meeting will help messengers better appreciate the rich heritage we share as Kentucky Baptists. Our story begins at the very birth of our nation in 1776, with pioneer preachers Squire Boone II and William Hickman, who delivered his first sermon on the streets of Harrodsburg. The first Baptist church west of the Alleghenies organized in 1781 at Severns Valley, now Elizabethtown. Two more churches formed soon thereafter: Cedar Creek and Gilbert's Creek, led by Elijah Craig, who brought his congregation from Virginia.

Baptist numbers grew rapidly. Just four years after the first churches formed, five gathered to launch an association, Elkhorn. Two others soon followed: Salem in Nelson County and South Kentucky in Madison County. Today, there are 70 associations, comprised of more than 2,400 churches with approximately 780,000 members. In 1837, Kentucky Baptist churches joined together to form the General Association, which changed its name to the Kentucky Baptist Convention in 1961.

Kentucky Baptists were instrumental in fostering an educational movement. Tracing its roots to Rittenhouse Academy in 1798, Georgetown College is the oldest, having incorporated in 1829. The University of the Cumberland grew from the Williamsburg Institute, which started in 1889. Today, its enrollment exceeds 4,600. Campbellsville University, which saw a record enrollment this year of nearly 3,700 students,

was first known as Russell Creek Academy, which opened in 1907. For 86 years, Clear Creek Baptist Bible College has equipped older adults for ministry, and for 113 years, Oneida Baptist Institute has served mountain children.

Though an anti-missions spirit among some threatened to thwart the General Association from its start, Kentucky Baptists quickly settled the issue and have since developed a love for cooperating in missions. Eliza Broadus' work with a women's organization led to the first state missions offering in 1913. This year, Kentucky Baptists gave more than \$1.1 million to state missions. And, Murray pastor Boyce Taylor first conceived of a plan to fund missions around the world in 1915, which was adopted by all Southern Baptists as the Cooperative Program. Since its inception in 1925, Kentucky Baptists have provided almost \$730 million to reach Kentucky and the world for Christ.

The KBC's ministry continues to expand. For instance, the first Baptist Student Union appeared on a Kentucky campus in 1938. Today, Baptist Campus Ministry groups meet on 20 campuses, involving more than 3,200 students. In 1949, the KBC purchased land for a camp, Cedarmore, and added another retreat, Jonathan Creek, in 1983. Now known as Crossings Ministries, more than 10,400 people attended one of its programs last year. In 1869, the women of Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville opened a shelter for orphans. Today, that ministry has evolved into Sunrise Children Services, which serves more than 2,000 abused and neglected children.

Kentucky Baptists also have become recognized for efforts in race relations, having developed a department of interracial cooperation in 1976. More recently, Kevin Smith was elected as the first African-American convention officer, and Curtis Woods became the first African-American to hold the associate executive director post. Carlos De la Barra joined the KBC staff in 2007 as its first Hispanic coordinator, and today there are 70 Hispanic congregations affiliated with the KBC.

But, these ministries just barely scratch the surface of the mighty missions cord of Kentucky Baptists. Thousands of disaster relief workers volunteer in the aftermath of hurricanes, floods and earthquakes. Hundreds of Kentucky Changers repair homes in cities across the state. And many have been mobilized for missions partnerships in Africa, Asia and Europe. So, our cover art takes on a futuristic dimension, as the KBC's ministry continues expanding, reaching generations for Christ.



After Thought

By Todd Deaton

Doing your best in giving

The sidewalks and streets of New York City have more homeless and beggars than we see in Paducah. On a recent trip to the big city with my family, we saw several beggars, and I wanted to be ready to give at least something and involve my kids.

I handed several dollars to a man who approached us for a handout. Rather than thank me, he cursed me and followed us along the sidewalk angrily asking for more. Later, my daughter dropped a few dollars next to a sleeping homeless man, but a gust of wind blew some of them away. Not exactly the warm, fuzzy feelings I had imagined.

Whether it is giving a few dollars away impulsively to the homeless or major philanthropic bequests, giving is not easy. Jesus experienced the same disappointment when He gave health to 10 lepers, yet only one thanked Him.

As we enter the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday seasons, the heart-tugging appeals increase. As you consider them, here are some principles:

- Plan your giving and be intentional. Review what you've given year to date. Are you behind your target?
- Concentrate your giving to make it count. Rather than the shotgun approach of \$25 to 10 different organizations, focus more money on a few. Consider giving mainly to those where your

passion is and those for which you can realistically pray and be involved.

- Involve your family. Let all participate in the joy—and the challenge and disappointments—of giving.
- Do some research. One excellent website for Christian ministries is MinistryWatch.com. It provides detailed financial information, complaint records or IRS actions about ministries. It also names the best ministries for stewardship and integrity, while listing the poorly managed ones.
- Make room in the plan for impulsive giving. You can't always plan for every need you encounter.
- Err on the side of generosity instead of frugality.

Jeremy White is a certified public accountant with Blythe, White & Associates in Paducah.

Religious freedom

By Curtis Woods

In his classic work, "City of God," Augustine reminds readers that even though this world is not our ultimate home, Christians have the responsibility to stand up for truth no matter the cost. Simply put, there are some causes worth dying for.

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

The freedom to express one's religious beliefs without fear of governmental reprisal is such a cause.

I find it necessary, as an American citizen of African descent, to ponder the importance of promoting religious freedom in the 21st century without becoming a historical revisionist.

For example, when Christian thinkers argue for religious freedom based on the principle that "ours is a history founded on religious freedom for the individual," it raises the question, to whom does the term "ours" refer? An honest look at history says "ours" cannot refer to all people groups transferred to or born on American soil. Thus, I contend that the verbiage can hurt our fight for religious freedom.

Frankly, my heart quivers when I hear dear Christian brothers and sisters euphemize U.S. history in order to heighten the sensitivities of the masses toward supporting a particular cause. A cursory reading of our history illustrates that first peoples, African peoples, Hispanics and Asians were not afforded opportunities to freely practice their religious beliefs.

The freedom of religion, or personal autonomy for that matter, certainly was not extended to African people groups. John Hope Franklin, in "Race and History," writes: "By the middle of the eighteenth century, laws governing Negroes denied to them certain basic rights that were conceded to others. They were permitted no independence of thought, no opportunity to improve their minds or their talents or to worship freely, no right to marry and enjoy conventional family relationships." This painful cloud overshadows the minds of many African Americans when Christ followers discuss religious freedom from the framework of historic American exceptionalism.

Does an ugly past mean that African Americans needn't champion the cause of religious freedom? To the contrary, we must! In fact, African Americans, whose forebears were denied the freedom to vocalize religious beliefs, a right sanctioned by the triune God, must become the greatest champions for the cause in honor of our God and ancestors.

I simply call for truthfulness as all Kentucky Baptists stand hand in hand to defend against the current threats to our religious freedoms. We can celebrate the tenacity of the Puritans for launching into the unknown for the freedom to express their religion without saying that our country was "founded" on a right so unequally bestowed and with such shameful baggage. We are ambassadors of grace and truth to the glory of the Father in Christ by the Spirit.

And we are defenders of freedom, a cause worth dying for.

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

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Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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2012 Report of the KBC Committee on Nominations

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Christian County (Region 2): 2014 Unexpired Term - Russ Stallons (Hopkinsville)
Crittenden (Region 5): 2014 Unexpired Term - Jay Holt (Williamstown)
Daviess/McLean (Region 2): 2014 Unexpired Term - Barry Rager (Utica)
Elkhorn (Region 6): 2014 Unexpired Term - Dan Russell (Paris)
Elkhorn (Region 6): 2014 Unexpired Term - Jeremy Couture (Lexington)
Elkhorn (Region 6): 2015 Term - Tony Thompson (Lexington)
Green Valley (Region 2): 2014 Unexpired Term - Phillip Basinger (Henderson)
Greenup (Region 8): 2014 Unexpired Term - Michael Rice (Russell)
Laurel River (Region 8): 2014 Unexpired Term - Andrew Dyer (London)
Liberty (Region 7): 2014 Unexpired Term - Walter Davis (Glasgow)
Little Bethel (Region 2): 2014 Unexpired Term - Paul Rideout (Madisonville)
Little River (Region 1): 2014 Unexpired Term - Paxton Redd (Cadiz)
Long Run (Region 4): 2014 Unexpired Term - Joel Carwile (Louisville)
Long Run (Region 4): 2014 Unexpired Term - Rick Bowden (Louisville)
Long Run (Region 4): 2015 Term - Norm Chung (Louisville)
Long Run (Region 4): 2015 Term - Garnetta Smith (Louisville)
Long Run (Region 4): 2015 Term - Jim Carpenter (Louisville)
Lynn (Region 3): 2014 Unexpired Term - J.D. Shipp (Upton)
Mercer (Region 6): 2014 Unexpired Term - David Crowe (Harrodsburg)
Muhlenberg (Region 2): 2014 Unexpired Term - Adam Brown (Central City)
Northern Kentucky (Region 5): 2014 Unexpired Term - Wes Roy (Independence)
Northern Kentucky (Region 5): 2015 Term - Ken Willoughby (Alexandria)
Ohio River (Region 1): 2014 Unexpired Term - Michael Jones (Marion)
Ohio Valley (Region 1): 2015 Term - Dale Ford (Sturgis)
Pike (Region 8): 2015 Term - Jason Johnson (Elkhorn City)
Pulaski (Region 7): 2015 Term - Donavon Burton (Somerset)
Red River (Region 8): 2015 Term - Stephen Howard (West Liberty)
Rockcastle (Region 7): 2015 Term - Randy McPheron (Mt. Vernon)
Russell County (Region 7): 2015 Term - Greg Estes (Greensburg)
Russell Creek (Region 7): 2015 Term - Gary Ervin (Greensburg)
Salem (Region 3): 2015 Term - Martha Martin (Payneville)
Shelby (Region 4): 2015 Term - Steve Price (Shelbyville)
Simpson (Region 3): 2015 Term - Jerry Gifford (Franklin)
South District (Region 6): 2015 Term - Steve Fegenbush (Danville)
South Union/Mt Zion (Region 7): 2015 Term - Albert Jones (Williamsburg)
Tates Creek (Region 6): 2015 Term - Wayne Dunn (Berea)
Union (Region 5): 2015 Term - Fred Workman (Foster)
Upper Cumberland (Region 8): 2014 Unexpired Term - Larry White (Loyall)
Warren (Region 3): 2014 Unexpired Term - Steve Hussung (Bowling Green)
Warren (Region 3): 2015 Term - Tim Colovos (Bowling Green)
Wayne County (Region 7): 2014 Unexpired Term - Philip Drake (Monticello)
West Union (Region 1): 2015 Term - Rick Keeling (Paducah)

BOARDS OF AGENCIES & INSTITUTIONS

Campbellsville University (Trustees)
 2016 Terms [11]: Pat Burkhart (Ft. Mitchell); Joel Carwile (Louisville); James E. Cason (Nashville, TN); Johnnie Clark (Louisville); John T. Conner (Brentwood, TN); Bruce Heilman (Richmond, VA); James Jones (Campbellsville); Mildred Newton (Murray); Joseph L. Owens (Lexington); Mike Pope (Somerset); Chris Reynolds (Campbellsville).

Clear Creek Baptist Bible College (Trustees)
 2016 Terms [7]: Paul Atchison (Winchester); Bill Boldt (Ewing); Roy Graves (Kingsport, TN); Rick Hatley (Mayfield); Kathy Lefevers (Stoney Fork); Keith Sands (Irvine); Jerry Tooley (Owensboro).

Kentucky Baptist Assemblies (Trustees)
 2016 Terms [2]: Lars Blythe (Paducah); Rusty Ellison (Louisville).

Kentucky Baptist Foundation (Directors)
 2016 Terms [4]: Arnold E. Caddell (Burlington); Robert D. Higgins (Louisville); Dean A. Warren (Bowling Green); Kenneth Winters (Murray).

Kentucky Ethics League (Trustees)
 2015 Terms [5]: Anthony Carter (Williamsburg); Ron Hunt (Richmond); Wesley Pitts (Louisville); Choe Sergent (Kings Mountain); Herschel Walker (Corbin).

Oneida Baptist Institute (Trustees)
 2016 Terms [6]: Herb Case (Bowling Green); Jeanie Haley (Elkton); Ken Hinton (Maysville); Diane Mastin (Hazard); Doug Williams (Shepherdsville); Tim Zimmerman (Somerset).

Sunrise Children's Services (Directors)
 2013 Unexpired Term [1]: Charlotte Whittaker (Beaver Dam); 2016 Terms [6]: James M. Gary (Louisville); William A. Hurley (Lexington); Terry M. Johnson (Florence); Michael D. Lyons (Salyersville); Jennifer B. Oldham (Elizabethtown); Alice J. Pepper (Elizabethtown).

University of the Cumberlands (Trustees)
 2016 Terms [7]: Linda Davis Booth (Inez); Georgetta H. Gannon (Mt. Sterling); Oliver Keith Gannon (Mt. Sterling); Bill Henard (Lexington); J. Hunt Perkins (Lexington); Donnie Rains (Williamsburg); Jerry D. Winchester (Corbin).

Western Recorder (Directors)
 2016 Terms [3]: Bill Edmonds (Louisville); Bill Ellis (Crestwood); Linda Polley (Elizabethtown).

Recommended by Committee on Nominations
Committee Members: Ed Amundson (Chairperson), Paul Badgett, Rick Bowden, Jim Castlen, Bill Clark, Dot Crace, Rodney Cude, Bob Ehr, Richard Gaines, Bob Haile, Steve Hill, Steve Hussung, Susan Hutcherson, Kevin Milburn, Kyle Noffsinger, Bill Patterson, Pat Reaves, David Roach, Kevin Roberts, Nick Sandefur, Mark Shelton, Jamie Ward, and Bill Wright.
Ex Officio Members: Executive Director, Paul Chitwood and Convention President, Adam Greenway.

2012 Report of the KBC Committee on Committees

- **Committee on Annual Meeting:** 2015 Terms - Brad Walker (Louisville) and Jerry Workman (Prestonsburg)
 - **Committee on Constitution & Bylaws:** 2015 Terms - Jason Lowe (Horse Cave), Mike O'Neal (Louisville) and Andrew Self (Hopkinsville)
 - **Committee on Credentials:** 2015 Terms - Jonathan Carl (Hodgenville), Kevin Smith (Louisville) and Darvin Stom (Smithland)
 - **Committee on Nominations:** 2015 Terms
 - Region 1: Ronnie Stinson, Jr. (Mayfield)
 - Region 2: David Tucker (Hopkinsville)
 - Region 3: Calvin Naylor (Russellville)
 - Region 4: James Carroll (Bardstown)
 - Region 5: Wilton Shelton (Covington)
 - Region 6: Harold Best (Lancaster)
 - Region 7: Chris Short (Glasgow)
 - Region 8: Shane Nickell (Barbourville)
 - **Committee on Public Affairs:** 2015 Terms - David Edmunds (Louisville), Charles Frazier (Benton) and Mike Harris (Elizabethtown)
 - **Committee on Resolutions:** 2015 Terms - Corey Abney (Florence) and Chris Turpin (Princeton)
- Recommended by Committee on Committees**
Committee Members: Floyd Paris (Chairperson), Darrell Crawford, Tom Curry, Phil Fisher, Bill Langley, Jeff Pennington, Andrew Sexton, and Charles Steger.
Ex Officio Members: Executive Director - Paul Chitwood and Convention President - Adam Greenway

2012 Report of the KBC Committee on Annual Meeting

- Persons to Report - 2013**
- **Preacher of the Annual Sermon:** Bill Langley (Elizabethtown); Alternate - Ben Stratton (Farmington)
 - **Obituaries:** James Jones (Campbellsville); Alternate - Kenneth Brown (Paducah)
- Recommended by Committee on Annual Meeting:**
Committee Members: Rodney Alexander (Chairperson), Howard Atkinson, Brandon Carrier, French Harmon, Jo Pelham, and Mark Swadley.
Ex Officio Members: Convention President - Adam Greenway; First Vice President - T. J. Francis; President, Pastors' Conference - Jeff Noffsinger; President, KBMC - Dave Love; President KBREA - Mark Quigley.
Permanent Member: Executive Director - Paul Chitwood

1-800-266-6477 • (502) 489-2101
 info@kybaptist.org • www.kybaptist.org
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Staten Island church making long-term plans

By Erin Roach

Staten Island, N.Y.—Several months ago when New York City tried to push churches out of public schools, Crossroads Church on Staten Island didn't know God was moving them to a new location that later would be right up the block from some of the worst devastation left by Hurricane Sandy.

"We see that as His providential hand, and we're just going with it," said Ray Parascando, pastor of the only Southern Baptist church on Staten Island.

Members of Crossroads were first on the scene in the neighborhood when morning broke after the hurricane cut a deadly path across the Northeast. Next door to the church, which meets in a theater on New Dorp Lane, is a pizza place owned by an Egyptian whom the church has been trying to lead to the Lord.

"He had some dough left over and we said, 'We'll buy you out. Make the pizzas,'" Parascando recalled. "We took 25 pizzas down, and we were passing them out to folks, walking up and down the streets, handing out water."

Church members handed out food and water on the streets until FEMA and the Red Cross arrived a few days after the storm, a slow response that has drawn criticism. Staten Island's assemblywoman mentioned the church by name on CNN, citing members' swift response.

"We were the first on the scene, and we're thankful that God put us there," Parascando said.

Southern Baptist Disaster Relief workers also arrived en masse on Staten Island, and Crossroads is using its connections with the local government to pass along information about needs for tree removal and mud-out work, the pastor said.

In the aftermath of the storm, Christians may be tempted to offer reasons for why such a cataclysmic event happened, Parascando said.

"Rather than try to ascertain what is hidden on purpose to us, we need to focus on the 'what do we need to do?' mentality of 'how do we need to contribute to the hurting



SIGN OF STRENGTH At a home in the New Dorp neighborhood of Staten Island, N.Y., where Crossroads Church meets, residents wrote, "You can take our home, but you can't take our heart!" The photo, posted on the Facebook page of Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis, illustrated the desperation felt by many in the region following Hurricane Sandy. (BP photo)

people?' and 'how might the Lord use this to bring honor to Him and to draw people who are lost to Him?'" he explained.

"That's how I'm looking at it. People try to play Monday morning prophet. They did the same thing with 9/11. Don't focus on that," Parascando said. "Focus on 'what do we need to do to help folks? What do we need to do to further the gospel? What do we need to do to love on people and meet practical needs?'"

"Our church took that to heart and got right in there from Day 1 and hasn't stopped," he pointed out. "Our church has become a distribution center. We've received thousands of supplies and have put thousands of supplies out."

Parascando said Crossroads is sensing a call from God to establish a long-term relief center on Staten Island.

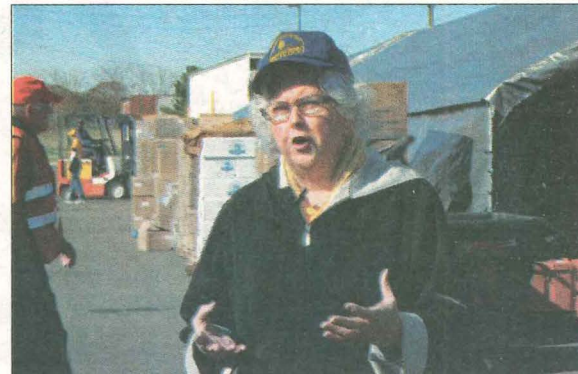
"The people are going to be hurting long after the cameras go away, long after the attention and the national spotlight and the helicopters stop flying over and FEMA rolls back out," the pastor said.

The church is looking to secure a facility next door to the theater where it can meet the needs of local residents for at least six months. Needs in the months to come will be "far beyond material," Parascando said.

People on Staten Island already were hurting before the hurricane came along, Parascando said, citing the weak economy. "You have compound suffering," he said, noting that one of the goals of the relief center will be to provide food to fill the cupboards of people who have lost much in the storm.

In just one week, Parascando said he has seen the power of partnership, referring to the way churches have pooled their resources for disaster relief. He said he hopes people also will be moved to help Crossroads get the relief center off the ground and even to contribute to the relief fund the church has established on its website.

"Pray for God to bring revival, for Him to use this, for Him to glorify His name through this—because people need it," Parascando said. (BP)



LEADING THE CHARGE Kentucky Baptist "blue hat" Karen Smith discusses the challenges volunteers have faced in responding to Hurricane Sandy. Smith, a member of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Shepherdsville, and her team of 37 volunteers are preparing meals at Aqueduct Racetrack in South Ozone Park, N.Y. (Photo by Laura Sikes/BP)

Disaster relief continues

Continued from page 1

could have been," said Fritz Wilson, the North American Mission Board's disaster relief coordinator. "Other than the Kentucky tent, we did not have any real issues. Everyone weathered the storm and is ready to get back to work."

Perhaps the most notable damage involving Southern Baptists from last week's storm was that to the home of Metropolitan New York Baptist Association Executive Director George Russ, when a 40-foot pine tree fell.

"It destroyed my front porch and did roof damage on the front and rear of the house," Russ said.

DR volunteers from Tennessee and Texas arrived at Russ' home Oct. 8 to remove the debris and put tarps on the roof.

Russ said recovery efforts in New York are going as well as can be expected. His office now is the New York incident command headquarters where NAMB DR team leader Mickey Caison is leading the effort.

"There are challenges here in the city," Russ said. "Southern Baptists do not have a lot of churches in the city, so finding places for volunteers to stay has been tough."

Kentucky Baptist "blue hat" Karen Smith agreed the going has been rough at times, but disaster relief crews will continue helping storm victims.

"We've faced some tremendous challenges, but we are still serving people despite it all," said Smith, who is coordinating the Kentucky kitchen unit at Aqueduct Racetrack, one of the first disaster relief teams deployed after Hurricane Sandy.

Smith and her crew of 37 Kentuckians have been preparing meals for two weeks now. They have supplied upwards of 20,000 meals a day to be delivered by American Red Cross volunteers into the surrounding communities. The kitchen unit is capable of producing as many as 50,000 meals per day.

Several professions of faith in Christ have been reported by volunteers, including two armed services members at a military base and a couple in coastal New Jersey.

As more DR volunteers arrive in the affected areas, plans are transitioning to recovery work, primarily chainsaw, mud-out and clean-up jobs.

Southern Baptist leaders cautioned against sending donations of supplies or collected items to the affected areas. Active recovery will continue for some time, leaders say, noting that the best way to help is to pray and to offer financial support.

"We're here for the long haul," Smith said. "We are first responders and we stay until the work is complete. I will be here until we shut down."

Southern Baptist Disaster Relief leaders received praise last week from the chief of the Federal Emergency Management Administration.

"It has been a busy time. The president and the rest of the team appreciate Southern Baptist Disaster Relief," FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate said during an Oct. 7 conference call. "This will not be a short response. We still have a lot to do. Until people are back in their homes, Southern Baptist (volunteers) will be needed. Thank you for all that Southern Baptist Disaster Relief has done." (NAMB/BP)

N.J. governor thanks Southern Baptist volunteers



New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie (left) greets Dave Karr, on-site coordinator for Oklahoma Baptists' disaster relief team serving in Middletown, N.J. Southern Baptist Disaster Relief team members attended the governor's visit to a nearby fire house last week. The neighborhood took on eight feet of water during the tidal surge from Hurricane Sandy. "We were standing in the back when one of his aides gathered us up and moved us to the front of the crowd," Karr recalled. Gov. Christie "thanked us for our service. I told him that we are here to serve and what our kitchens were capable of preparing. I told him we were ready to help in any way we can." (Photo by Laura Sikes/NAMB)

Ky.-based Shield of David seeks to protect Israelis from attacks

Continued from page 1

country filled with violence and uncertainty. The organization, headquartered in Bowling Green, seeks to accomplish this mission by giving away potentially life-saving backpacks to as many Israelis as possible.

Armored backpacks

Within each fully-functioning backpack is ballistic material capable of stopping a bullet traveling 2,150 feet per second. The soft armor insert is concealed in the lining closest to the body between the outer shell and a laptop compartment. Wearers conceivably could tuck into a fetal position and protect themselves from spinal cord and major organ injuries.

Britt and Earl Cox, an international broadcaster and founder of Israel Always, were in Ashkelon Oct. 16 to hand out 500 youth-sized backpacks during an event attended by the city's mayor, Benny Vaknin. Each ballistic-proof unit cost \$250 to manufacture and is purchased

primarily through individual contributions collected since Shield of David was formed nine months ago.

"We want to put a backpack on all 250,000 children in Ashkelon, and then we want to move on to the next city," Britt said. "Ultimately, we want to put a backpack on every child and citizen around Gaza, but our primary focus is the children because they are the most vulnerable."

Israeli children tend to be more susceptible to rocket debris, Britt said, perhaps because their small stature puts them in the path of projectiles. Often it is the schools that are intentionally targeted. Britt said he believes the purpose of these attacks is to eradicate the Jewish population, starting with the youngest generation first.

"There are an average of three rockets a day launched into Israel," Britt said, noting they primarily hit southern Israeli cities like Ashkelon. "Moms have to wonder, 'Should I send my child to school today? And if I do send my kids to



PROTECTED A pair of Israeli children receive their new ballistic-proof backpacks from Benny Vaknin (second from left), the mayor of Ashkelon, Israel, and Bart Britt (second from right), the executive director of the Bowling Green-based Shield of David. (Photos courtesy of Bart Britt)

school, will we see each other at the end of the day?"

On Oct. 24—just days after Britt's visit—Reuters reported Palestinians launched 79 missiles into Israel, wounding three people, destroying several homes and causing municipalities to close schools. Residents in Ashkelon and other southern cities were advised to remain indoors and within "15 seconds" of their safe rooms.

Fifteen seconds often is all the warning given the people of Ashkelon before a rocket fired from the Gaza Strip can rain destruction on their city. Many residents do not turn on the water taps in their homes, or even flush their toilets, for fear the sound might drown out missile sirens, Britt said. When rockets do strike, many contain crude projectiles like nails, glass shards and strips of metal.

" Hamas has one goal and that is to eradicate the Jewish people," Britt said. "These people live in fear every day just because they are Jewish. We do not want the Jewish people to go through another Holocaust. We do not want Christians to

sit on the sidelines and allow that to happen."

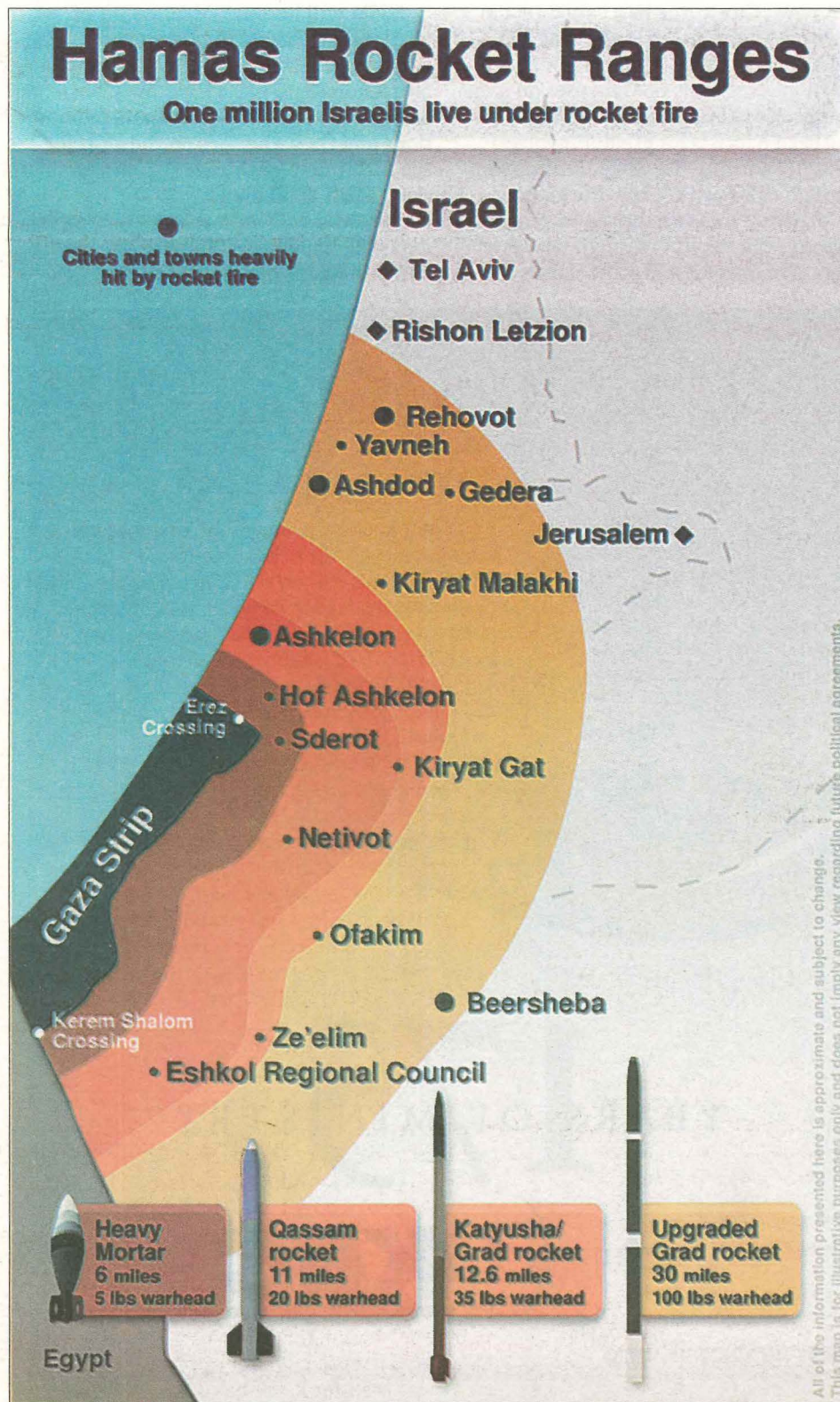
Jamie Ward, assistant lead pastor of Bowling Green's Hillvue Heights Church, said the backpack project provides an opportunity to take the gospel to the place where the gospel was born. Ward is affiliated with Lifeshield Technologies, the company that invented the ballistic material used in the backpacks.

"It is also an opportunity to show a people who have suffered so much throughout history that Christians love them and care for the safety of their children," Ward said.

While Britt spoke the name of Jesus several times during the recent backpack presentation, he said Shield of David's aim is to witness God's love through actions, not proselytizing.

"We're sharing the gospel through the gifts of these backpacks. We're living the gospel," Britt said. "For every life that is saved, there might be a Jewish person who becomes aware of who the Messiah is."

To learn more about the backpack project, visit theshieldof david.org. (WR)



HOW IT LOOKS Views of the ballistic-proof backpacks. The soft armor is made to withstand a bullet traveling 2,150 feet per second and is concealed in the lining closest to the body between the outer shell and a laptop compartment.

'Your help has been amazing,' part 2

'Thank you' note from international student affirms Oneida's mission

Here is the conclusion of a letter received from a 2012 graduate, Jake Webster:

"Spiritually: I feel this is our most important accomplishment. In the 12 years I was in the orphanage, I was taken to church one time. I knew then I wanted to know more.

"We came to visit OBI ... and when I heard that you went to chapel every day, I knew this was what I had been looking for. Not only would someone help me learn better, but I could learn more about Christ and His plan in my life.

"Ever since I went to church that one time, I prayed for a family. By 12 years old, I knew my chances weren't too good, but I kept praying, and sure enough my adoptive parents chose me, and I finally had the family I prayed for all of those years.

"Although Montana wasn't the America I had imagined, I had a family and that was all that mattered. I learned to love it there, but I really like Kentucky. Now I am much closer to more of my family and I was able to come here. Many true friends helped my family by giving money so I could come to this school. I know the Baptist church also donated money so I could attend. Thank you to everyone who made this possible.

"You also let me stay part of last summer to be in the work program. I am so grateful that God answered my prayers and put all of you in my life. Now I want to ... tell everyone about the good news that I have learned here. I want to be His follower and show oth-

ers how to become followers also.

"I know the staff here isn't paid lots of money. You are all here because you love God and His children. I appreciate being His child, and I appreciate all that this school and you have done to help me. I will be eternally grateful to all of you.

"Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Thanks to you, OBI, Jake Webster is on the right track!"

I don't know about you right now, but I feel like singing:

"Now thank we all our God / with heart and hands and voices / who wondrous things has done / in whom this world rejoices / who from our mothers' arms / has blessed us on our way / with countless gifts of love / and still is ours today. / O may this bounteous God / through all our life be near us / with ever joyful hearts / and blessed peace to cheer us / and keep us in His grace / and guide us when perplexed / and free us from all ills / in this world and the next. / All praise and thanks to God / the Father now be given / the Son, and him who reigns / with them in highest heaven / the one eternal God / whom earth and heaven adore / for thus it was, is now / and shall be evermore."

Happy Thanksgiving in the name of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who is able to do exceedingly and abundantly above all that we can ask or think. Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.

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

Working it all together for good

New employees see God at work in bringing them to Clear Creek

God calls everyone to serve here at Clear Creek, not just our students. We are glad God has called Jacob and Kim Yates, along with their two children, Marcus and Audrey, here to Clear Creek. Jacob serves as our new registrar and teaches church history. Kim teaches English, fine arts and humanities.

Jacob and Kim grew up in Clintwood, Va., and both attended Clintwood Baptist Church. They met and began dating in high school and have been married for a few years now.

"God has called us to an academic ministry," Jacob said. "It's amazing how God has opened the door for both of us to be here at Clear Creek. Back in 2001, our church called Malcolm Hester, Clear Creek's academic dean, as interim pastor of our church. I had never heard of Clear Creek at that time. But over the two years he was our pastor, I got to know him well. Those were some very formative years for both Kim and I.

"When we left Clintwood, we attended Tusculum College," Jacob recalled. "My work study position at

Tusculum was in the registrar's office. The Lord blessed me with a great experience there. We then went on to study at divinity school, and I was able to get a position as assistant registrar at Trinity International University and gain some

more experience in academic record keeping.

"After coming back to Virginia after graduation, we both worked in a number of positions in education in the county," he said. "I was also able to serve as a ministerial assistant at Clintwood Baptist Church during this time. It was during this time that I received a call from Dr. Hester that Clear Creek was searching for a new registrar.

With my background, I was qualified for the position. I also had the academic credentials to teach church history which was my area of concentration in my graduate studies. The college also had a need for an English professor. ... Looking back on it now, we see everything as God working it together for our good to bring us here."

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

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

IMB seeks missionaries for reaching global marketplace

Ecuador—In the mountains of Ecuador, Scott Tye's small office serves as more than just a satellite for his business, which is based in Allen, Texas. And it does more than provide an income for eight of his employees.

Tye recently hired a young Ecuadorian couple to manage the office. Their goal is to eventually serve as missionaries in another country.

"They were looking for several businesses that they could use to provide a part of their support," Tye said.

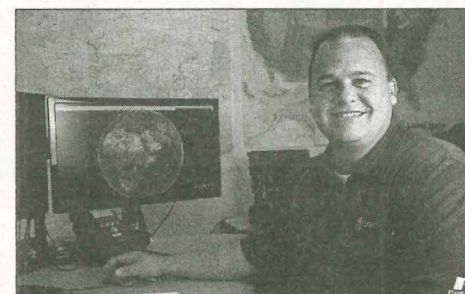
By hiring them, he is helping to do just that, as well as expanding his business in other countries—all for the sake of kingdom work.

International Mission Board President Tom Elliff said he sees Tye's efforts as recapturing the first-century model that led to the expansion of the early church throughout their known world.

"Traveling along sea lanes and roads, on the back of commerce," Elliff said, "followers of Christ began to carry the message far and wide."

A new office at the IMB called Global Strategic Mobilization is assisting Tye and others like him who work in the global marketplace. GSM focuses on identifying, connecting and equipping Southern Baptists for greater involvement in fulfilling the Great Commission through their work across the globe.

"We want to do all we can to get the gospel to the nations through whatever doors God opens," said Scott Holste,



DOUBLE DUTY Scott Tye's small office in the mountains of Ecuador is more than just an extension of his Texas-based business. It is a way of using his expertise in the global marketplace to advance the gospel throughout the world. (Photo by Matt Miller/IMB)

IMB's vice president in charge of the initiative, so that "marketplace professionals in our churches are poised to join with IMB missionaries and others to help finish the task."

Elliff said he sees GSM as a way of advancing IMB's purpose of helping Southern Baptist churches fulfill their mission to reach the world for Christ.

"GSM will become IMB's means of challenging corporate leaders and employees, as well as other marketplace professionals, to place their lives, businesses, resources, international connections and their energies on the altar for the fulfillment of the Great Commission," Elliff explained.

GSM also will explore ways to complement the knowledge and skill of existing IMB personnel, he added. (IMB/BP)

A 'kingdom mindset'

St. Louis Baptists thankful for Kentucky Baptist missions partnership

By Ken Walker

St. Louis—Located in northern St. Louis County, Florissant Valley Baptist Church is an aging congregation whose members have found new hope, thanks to the Kentucky/St. Louis partnership.

Launched at last year's Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting, the partnership has mobilized approximately 15 teams of Kentucky Baptists to serve in St. Louis this year. A greater number is expected in 2013.

Southern Baptist pastors in the Gateway City say they are grateful for the partnership—whose goals are to revitalize churches like Florissant Valley and plant new ones.

"We have a lot of struggles because we're small, but I love the kingdom mindset that exists in this area," said Florissant's pastor, Ronn Brooks. "The Kentucky partnership is an awesome extension of that."

Among teams traveling west this year were from Muhlenberg Baptist Association, which helped stage Florissant Valley's Vacation Bible School in late July. Ten children accepted Christ as Savior that week.

In late October, the church welcomed a team from Three Forks Baptist Association, based in Hazard. The group helped stage a "Trunk or Treat" Oct. 31, an event that usually draws 200 youngsters.

"We're enormously grateful for that," said Brooks, whose congregation averages 75 in Sunday attendance. "It would have been very hard to pull off without their help."

Tom Firasek of St. Louis Metro Baptist Association said many of its 140 churches have fewer than 125 members or regular attendees, so extra manpower is needed for special projects.

"We're very pleased," said Firasek,

who will visit Lexington to help staff an information booth at this week's KBC annual meeting at Immanuel Baptist Church. "We've had several churches looking at long-term partnerships. One did survey work for a new start that launched Sept. 1."

This activity symbolizes the closeness developing between Baptists in Kentucky and St. Louis.

'We love Kentucky Baptists'

Scott Pittman, the KBC's mission strategies & partnerships consultant, attended the St. Louis association's annual meeting in mid-September. The convention also helped fund a late-August church planting conference in St. Louis.

"I've gotten a very positive response from people I talked to there," Pittman said. "I had a booth at the association meeting and one woman came up and said, 'We love Kentucky Baptists.'"

The partnership isn't a one-way street. Ken Lovelace, pastor of Amazing Love Community Church in St. Louis, recently was a guest preacher at First Baptist Church of Richmond. Ron Boyd, a missions committee member at the church, extended the invitation to Lovelace after the Kentucky congregation helped host a VBS and a block party at Amazing Love.

"We'll be back," Boyd said. "I wouldn't be surprised if we return in the next few months. There are so many needs there—physically, financially and others."

The partnership has inspired some Kentucky Baptists to venture beyond the state's borders. After hearing about it at last year's annual meeting, Lexington pastor Jeremy Couture sensed God answering his prayer about a missions opportunity.

The six members of Parkway Baptist Church who traveled to St. Louis in late

July marked the first time the 125-person congregation had sent a mission team outside the state.

Parkway Baptist helped a new church, Confluence Baptist, by distributing literature door to door, prayer-walking and passing out free water and snow cones in several area parks.

"For those who went, I think it's made them more aware of church planting and outreach opportunities right here in Lexington," Couture said. "I hope it also serves as a platform to take more outbound mission trips in the future."

One of the most active KBC churches this year has been Lone Oak First Baptist Church of Paducah, which sent five groups to tackle various projects in St. Louis.

They included a pair of youth teams led by Minister of Students Brian Isbell. The teens completed a spring break construction project at one church and community improvement work at another.

Jeff Wallace, Lone Oak's minister of global outreach, said he recently received inquiries from a Sunday School class and a men's Bible study group about getting involved.


"St. Louis is just three hours away from us and very do-able," Wallace said. "One of the cool things about the partnership is all the guys in leadership are from St. Louis. They grew up there and have a passion to reach that city for the Lord."

That passion, coupled with Kentucky Baptists' willingness to help wherever needed, is proving to be a dynamic combination.

"They didn't come to be stars, they came to be servants," Brooks said. "That's what Kentucky should celebrate. You're getting known for that servant mindset." (KBC)




JOINING FORCES Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Director Paul Chitwood (right) and last year's KBC president, Floyd Paris (left), look on as Jim Breeden, director of missions for St. Louis Baptist Association, signs his name to a missions partnership agreement between his association and the KBC at last year's annual meeting. (Photo by Robin Cornetet Bass)




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Group studying Calvinism holds second meeting

Nashville, Tenn.—An advisory team looking at the issue of Calvinism met for the second time Nov. 5-6 in Nashville, Tenn., Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee President Frank Page reported last week.

Page appointed the unofficial committee in August to develop "a strategy whereby people of various theological persuasions can purposely work together in missions and evangelism."

The only information from last week's meeting came in the form of a statement from Page reiterating his initially stated goals for the advisory team. He has stated that he hopes the group can craft a statement regarding a strategy for working together on the issue of Calvinism.

The 19-member group will meet again in early 2013. (BP)



November

- 13** KBC Annual Meeting, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington.
- 13** Kentucky Baptist Men's Chorale and Wind Orchestra Concert, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington.

December

- 1** KBC Mission Board, Kentucky Baptist Building, Louisville.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **CADIZ**—Cadiz Church will hold a community Thanksgiving service Nov. 18, 6 p.m.

■ **FULTON**—Liberty Church will hold a community Thanksgiving service Nov. 20. **Jimmy Keeling** is pastor.

■ **GLENDALE**—Gilead Church will hold a community Thanksgiving service Nov. 18, 6 p.m. **Sam Hinkson** is pastor.

■ **HODGENVILLE**—First Church will hold "The Art of Marriage" video event Nov. 16, 6:30 p.m.; Nov. 17, 9 a.m. For more information, call (270) 358-3193. **Paul Richey** is pastor.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Grace Church will hold a "Cabaret Night" Nov. 17, 7:30 p.m., featuring performances by University of Kentucky students. **David Smith** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Bethany Church will hold its 2nd annual Missions Festival Nov. 17-18, featuring reports from missionaries. **Ken Vickery** is pastor.

Deer Park Church will host Highlands Community Ministries' Thanksgiving luncheon Nov. 15, noon, followed by a brief worship service. **David Platt** is pastor.

Ralph Avenue Church recently called **Samuel Vance** as pastor.

St. Matthews Church will hold a seminar on transitioning senior adults to assisted living facilities Nov. 13, 11 a.m., with **Patti Naiser** of Senior Home Transitions as guest speaker. **Greg Barr** is pastor.

Walnut Street Church will hold its annual Christmas Gift Shoppe Nov. 17, 9 a.m. **Rusty Ellison** is pastor.

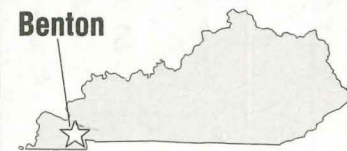
■ **MOUNT WASHINGTON**—First Church will host Mount Washington Community Ministry's community thanksgiving service Nov. 20, 7 p.m. **Billy Compton** is pastor.

■ **PADUCAH**—Former Kentucky Baptist director of missions and pastor **Ray Provow** died Oct. 21. He was 73. Provow served as DOM for West Kentucky Association from 2002-10 and was pastor of several Kentucky Baptist churches, including Sedalia Church, First Church of Arlington and New Hope Church in Paris. Provow is survived by his wife of 53 years, Shirley, five children, 17 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren. Funeral services were held Oct. 26 at Beulah Church in Fancy Farm.

■ **SOMERSET**—First Church will hold "Another Great Hymn Sing" Nov.

Spotlight on ...

Benton



Zion's Cause will dedicate its new sanctuary and education building Nov. 18, 9:30 a.m., with **Larry Purcell**, professor and associate dean of ministry studies at Southeastern Seminary, as guest speaker. **Charles Frazier** is pastor.

15, 11 a.m. The church also will hold a recognition service for military veterans Nov. 18, 9 & 11 a.m. **French Harmon** is pastor.

■ **WILLIAMSTOWN**—Williamstown Church will hold a community-wide Thanksgiving service Nov. 18, 7 p.m. **Darrell Morgan** is pastor.

Campbellsville University's Bill Neal, 69, remembered as beloved professor

Campbellsville—Bill Neal, an English professor and chair of the humanities division at Campbellsville University, died Nov. 3. He was 69.

Neal, who had taught at the school since 1991, was remembered as a dedicated member of the faculty.

"His love of teaching is evidenced in the lives and professional careers of countless individuals who studied English and literature in Dr. Neal's classes," CU President Michael Carter said.

Neal was "committed to his students and the Christian higher education mission of CU," Carter added.

"Bill Neal was respected by all the faculty and loved by his students," said Frank Cheatham, CU's senior vice president for academic affairs. "His death is a tremendous loss for Campbellsville University and to me personally."

Neal was named chair of the school's humanities division in 1991. Prior to arriving at Campbellsville, he taught at schools in Pennsylvania and Arkansas, his home state. He earned degrees from Arkansas College (now Lyon College), the University of Arkansas and the University of Mississippi.

In 1981, Neal received the Governor's

Certificate of Merit from then-Arkansas Gov. Frank White. The award recognized Neal's community service for his part in reactivating a college education program for inmates in Arkansas prisons.

Some of Neal's current and former students at Campbellsville expressed sadness about Neal's passing. Junior English major, Aaron Celeste Presley, had Neal as an academic adviser.

"It was obvious that he loved his job, and as his students, we felt the benefits of that daily," Presley said. "He will be greatly missed, but it is a great comfort to know he is with the Lord."

Alumnus Rebecca Ballard Colvin said she has very fond memories of Neal.

"When my schedule did not allow me to be in two classes he taught one summer, Dr. Neal allowed me to take those classes by appointment. He met with me individually and gave of his personal time to make sure I could get my degree," she recalled. "He was that dedicated to his profession and even more importantly to his students."

Neal is survived by his wife, Beth Ann, a son, a daughter and a step-son and two step-grandchildren. Funeral services were held Nov. 7 in Campbellsville. (CU)

LifeWay launches new e-bookstore, e-reader app for multiple devices

Nashville, Tenn.—LifeWay Christian Resources has launched a new e-bookstore at LifeWay.com and a new mobile e-book reader, making it more convenient for customers to take their favorite books with them wherever they go.

The LifeWay Reader app now is available as a free download from Apple's App Store for iPhone and iPad and from Google Play for Android devices. LifeWay's new app allows users to build a personal library from a growing list of ebooks and resources from the same publishers found in LifeWay Christian Stores and at LifeWay.com. The website's e-bookstore currently offers more than 8,000 titles.

The LifeWay Reader app comes with a free pre-loaded copy of the Holman Christian Standard Bible.

"The Bible features in the LifeWay Reader app make it stand apart in the market," said Tim Vineyard, president of LifeWay Christian Stores.

All e-books with Scripture references are automatically linked to the related Bible passage. Users can click on the link to display a pop-up window in the app without having to switch apps or wait for a new browser program to start.

Another benefit for customers is the ability to digitally house their LifeWay content in one place. Any e-books purchased by customers with a free LifeWay ID is available to them in the app and at Reader.LifeWay.com.

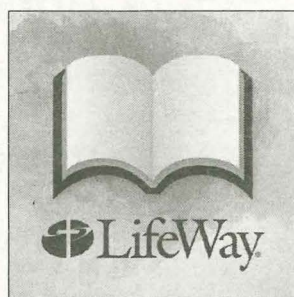
To purchase additional digital Bibles, e-books or other content for the app, users need to make purchases through LifeWay.com or MyStudyBible.com.

"The LifeWay Reader app contributes to LifeWay's omni-channel plan for the digital world," Vineyard said. "We want to provide life-changing resources to churches and individuals in the format they prefer."

Designed to give users a pleasing reading experience, the app comes with standard user customization controls, such as text size, contrast, line spacing and font choices.

Future updates to the app will include additional user customization, annotations, social sharing, improved integration with LifeWay's various Bible study platforms and thousands of new titles.

Visit LifeWay.com/ebooks to learn more, register for a free LifeWay ID, shop for ebooks and explore the LifeWay Reader apps. (LW/BP)



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SEEKING: Part-time music minister at Brookside Baptist Church; please send resumé to Attn: music search committee, 1351 Wilmore Road, Nicholasville, KY 40356. Resumés can be emailed to pam@brookside-baptist.org.

SEEKING: Hardinsburg Baptist Church is searching for a full-time minister of music and youth; average 175 in a.m. service. Responsibilities for both ministries, as well as work cooperatively with the children's minister. Seminary degree or working on one required; send resumé to: Search Committee, Hardinsburg Baptist Church, 515 West U.S. 60, Hardinsburg, KY 40143.

SEEKING: Greensburg Baptist Church is seeking a part-time student minister; active bus ministry. Info: www.greensburgbaptist.com/job or resume@greensburgbaptist.com.

SEEKING: Gilead Baptist Church, Glendale, Ky., is seeking a part-time pastor of worship whose responsibilities will be planning and leading worship for a congregation that embraces various worship styles. A candidate should have musical

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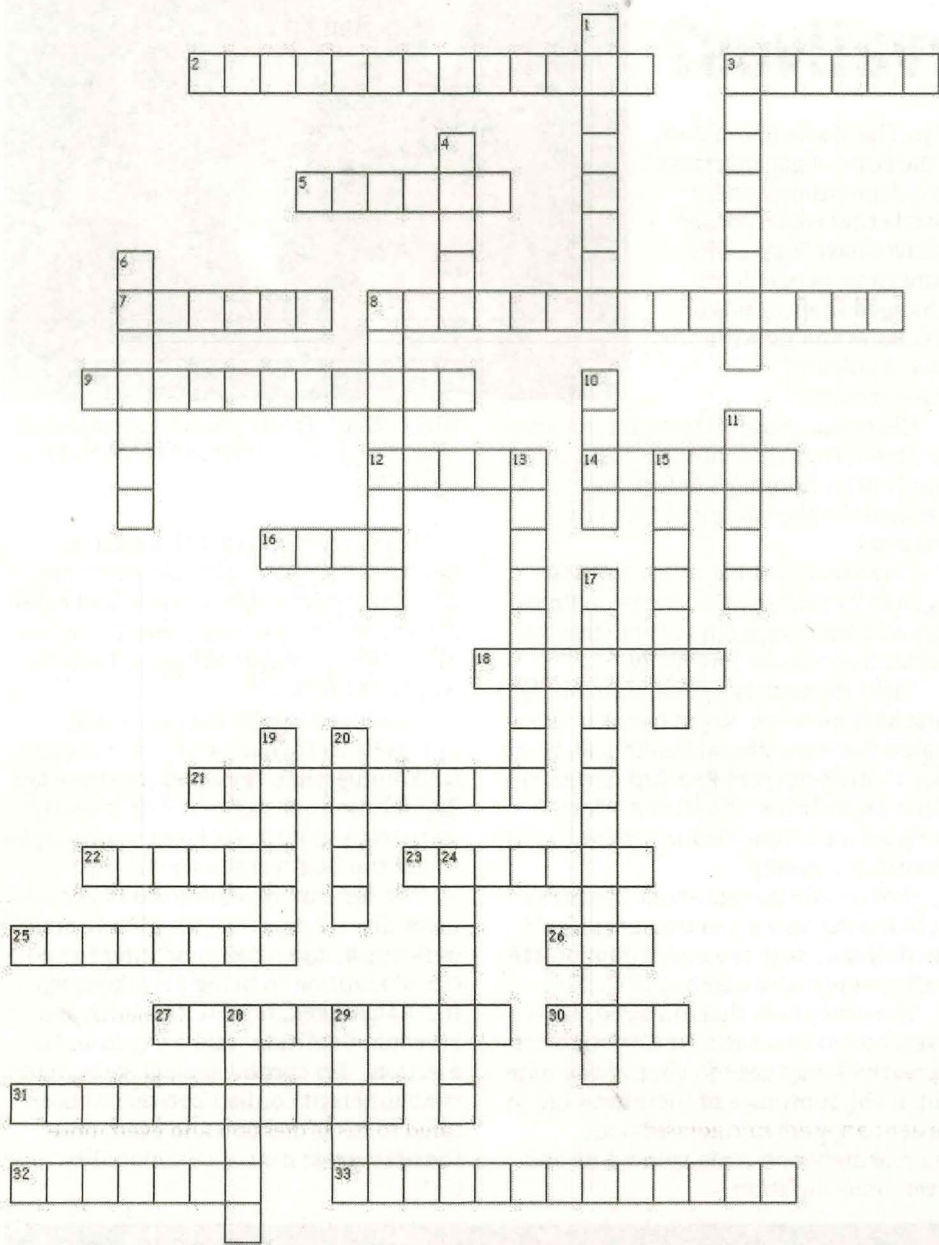


training/experience. A complete job description can be found on Gilead's website, www.gileadbaptist.com; submit resumé to info@gileadbaptist.com.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church, Olive Hill, Ky., is seeking a full-time senior pastor. Send resumé to Pastor search committee, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 568, Olive Hill, KY 41164.

SEEKING: Twelve Oaks Baptist Church in Paducah, Ky., is accepting applicants for a full-time minister of worship. Duties will include directing adult choir; coordinating children's music program; youth praise band and the worship praise team; and leading congregational worship music by blending traditional/contemporary selections. Additional tasks include visitation, leadership, VBS music, PowerPoint presentations and managing audio/visual equipment and musical instrument. Prospective minister of worship must possess a Master's degree from a seminary or college. Submit resumé and cover letter to the attention of the Minister of worship search committee at Twelve Oaks Baptist Church, 2110 New Holt Road, Paducah, KY 42001.

Puzzled by Kentucky Baptists



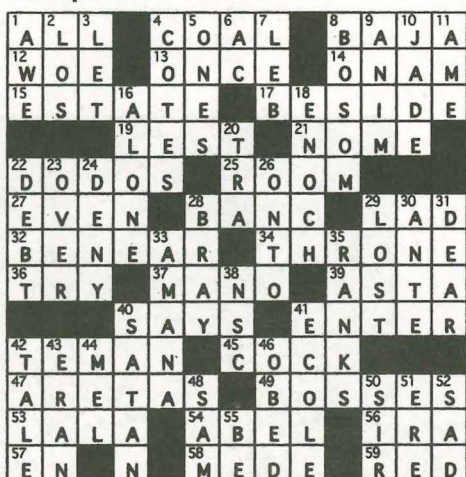
Across

- 2 Domestic missions agency
- 3 President of Georgetown College
- 5 State WMU executive director
- 7 President of Univ. of Cumberlands
- 8 Name of state Baptist newspaper
- 9 Program: Missions giving channel
- 12 President of Baptist Foundation
- 14 Location of Cedarmore Baptist Assembly
- 16 Church Consulting & Revitalization leader
- 18 Acts 1:8 Partnership consultant
- 21 Location of KBC building
- 22 State WMU President
- 23 Number of Baptist associations in state
- 25 _____ Lake where Jonathan Creek is located
- 26 President of Clear Creek Bible College
- 27 New SBC tagline: "Great _____ Baptists"
- 30 Collegiate minister at Campbellsville
- 31 Mountain ministry in eastern Ky.
- 32 KBC children's services ministry
- 33 First Baptist church in Ky. (2 words)

Down

- 1 President of Oneida Baptist Institute
- 3 KBC Executive Director
- 4 Associate executive director of convention relations
- 6 "Send" City with which KBC has a partnership
- 8 Collegiate minister at Cumberlands
- 10 State disaster relief director
- 11 Well-known former editor of Western Recorder
- 13 Location of SBC Executive Committee building
- 15 _____ Association: Name of KBC prior to 1960
- 17 Foreign mission board
- 19 Church where Cooperative Program started
- 20 KBC Business team leader
- 24 First Baptist association in Ky.
- 28 Immediate past Executive Director
- 29 WR Slogan: "Shine like _____"

Last puzzle's solution



Continued prayers for Haiti

Traveling to Haiti offers reminder that only the gospel can heal it

I recently was blessed to travel to Haiti to spend a few days with our ministry partners there as we look to the future. It seems hard to believe that our involvement there started less than two years ago. So much has taken place it seems as if we have been involved for years.

Each time I'm in Haiti, I am encouraged to see so much progress since the earthquake. At the same time, it is deeply troubling as there is so much left to do. The effect of poverty is everywhere as demonstrated by the poor living conditions and lack of food.

Hurricane Sandy passed by while we were there, and as we tried to stay dry, we thought much about the people who had no hope of being dry. Flooding during that time has taken the lives of more than 50 Haitians. I realize that we, too, have experienced loss in this country. However, Haiti just received large amounts of rain, yet so many died.

It is always convicting when our travels take us to another country, especially one that is classified as

"Third World." The poverty is overwhelming and even more significantly, the spiritual oppression is beyond imagination. Haiti has been ravaged by idolatry for decades, and it likely will take decades more to see a change. The

great news is that the gospel does change everything. Our hope is to be focused completely on the gospel for our efforts in Haiti; that we would see Haitians freed from the bonds of sin to lives in Jesus Christ.

Through the Haitian people being empowered by the gospel, the country can change. I think we have clearly demonstrated by the world's efforts that simply sending money to

"build and repair" Haiti does not have any lasting effect.

The truth is the gospel is our only hope from day to day. I am in just as much need of the gospel today as anyone in the world. I am thankful for God's ever-present work to build His kingdom, and we are prayerful to see Him build a kingdom that lasts forever among the Haitian people.

David Melber is president of Crossings Ministries. Contact Crossings at (502) 491-7000 or www.GoCrossings.com

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Now that President Obama has been re-elected, What's next for religious conservatives?

By David Gibson

Washington—Mitt Romney failed in his bid to win the White House back for Republicans, but the biggest losers in Tuesday's voting may be Christian conservatives who put everything they had into denying President Obama a second term and battling other threats to their agenda.

Instead of the promised victories, the religious right encountered defeat at almost every turn. Not only did Obama win convincingly, but Democrats held onto the Senate—and the power to confirm judges—and Wisconsin elected the nation's first openly gay senator, Tammy Baldwin.

Meanwhile, Republican senate candidates Todd Akin and Richard Mourdock went down to unanticipated defeat in large part because of their strongly anti-abortion views, and an effort in Florida to restrict abortion failed. For the first time ever, same-sex marriage proponents won on ballots in four out of four states, while marijuana for recreational use was legalized in two out of three states where the question was on the ballot.

Even Michele Bachmann, an icon among Christian conservatives, barely held onto her House seat in Minnesota while Tea Party favorite Allen West lost his congressional district in Florida.

"Evangelical Christians must see the 2012 election as a catastrophe for

crucial moral concerns," Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, wrote in a sobering post-mortem.

Yet as bad as the results were for social conservatives, they may now face an equally difficult fight as they try to defend their agenda. Sifting through the electoral rubble, some conservatives and GOP leaders argue that the party's positions and presentation on issues like gay marriage and abortion rights turn off more voters than they attract.

This internal battle is in many respects the natural aftermath of a painful political loss, and Republicans already are involved in a process of soul searching that likely will continue for some time as the GOP tries to figure out how it can find a winning formula.

But this time around, more than in previous election cycles, Christian conservatives are a particularly large target, and they are feeling especially exposed to criticism.

Even before the votes were counted, for example, Romney's shift to the center—he studiously downplayed social issues like gay rights and abortion in the last month of the campaign—coincided with a surge in the polls and bolstered arguments that the party should soft-pedal traditional sexual morality in order to win elections and promote economic conservatism.

As Jennifer Rubin, a conservative columnist who backed Romney, wrote Nov.

7 in *The Washington Post*, "the issue of gay marriage is a generational one, a battle that social conservatives have lost. ... The American people have changed their minds on the issue and fighting this one is political flat-earthism."

Christian conservatives are not about to accept that view, however, and in the hours after Romney's defeat they seemed to take two main tacks in rebuttal.

One was to double-down on their agenda by pinning the blame on Romney and his campaign for not stressing social issues more forcefully.

"Mitt Romney is a good man, but let's just be honest—we Republicans nominated the most liberal Republican nominee in history," said Rep. Jim Jordan, an Ohio Republican who joined a Nov. 7 webcast with Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council.

Jordan said doubts about Romney's convictions, as well as his campaign's modulation near the end, disappointed values voters and doomed the ticket.

The other tack that emerged, however, was to concede that Christian conservatives may need to change the tone if not the substance of their message in order to appeal to voters who are increasingly non-male, non-white and even non-Christian.



FIRST FAMILY President Obama celebrates his re-election with his family on Election Night. (BP photo)

"No party can win if it is seen as heartless," Mohler said. "No party can win if it appeals only to white and older Americans. No party can win if it looks more like the way to the past than the way to the future."

Indeed, exit polls indicated that evangelicals turned out more strongly for Romney than they had for any other Republican in history—but that nearly 80 percent margin still was not enough to put the GOP ticket over the top.

"We have more work to do to become more diverse, but the party has to start building bridges and practicing the politics of addition to bring more people in," Ralph Reed, head of the Faith and Freedom Coalition, said a day after the election. "My corollary message is there is no inherent conflict between those folks coming in and us. In most cases, there's a great deal of commonality." (RNS)

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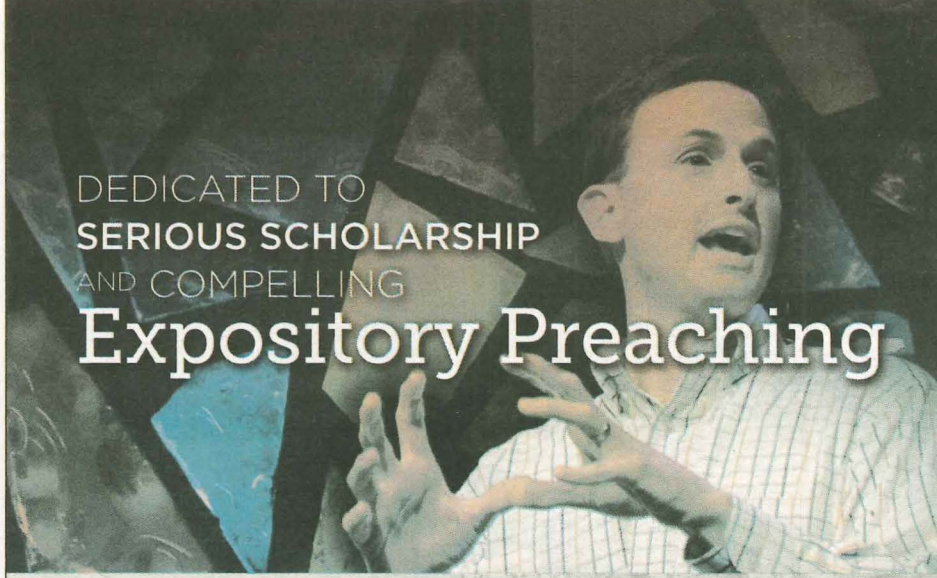

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Seven primary functions of state conventions

By John Yeats

Baptist state conventions are not the church. State conventions are nowhere in Scripture. Only the local church was given by Christ to fulfill the purpose of His kingdom.

Local Southern Baptist churches, though, autonomously have decided to cooperate, and one of the best ways of achieving such cooperation is by affiliating with a state convention. Consequently, state conventions can play a vital role in assisting churches and associations as they fulfill ministries under the direction of Christ.

So, what are the unique things state conventions do to help churches and associations carry out their assignments for the kingdom of God? Here are seven:

Sound the trumpet

In Old Testament times, leaders in a particular jurisdiction were given the privilege, permission and power to convene the people—to sound a trumpet and assemble the people for a common purpose. Old Testament prophets were called on to assemble the people.

In the context of Southern Baptist life, this is the role of the state convention. No one church or national entity can summon those Southern Baptists who live in a particular state or region. The state convention can do so because of a principle called “jurisdictional leadership.”

Here is how jurisdictional leadership works: Churches summon their local members. Associations call together the

people who live in their particular area. State and regional conventions call Southern Baptists living in that jurisdiction together to determine the protocols of their cooperative ministries. Southern Baptist leaders call Southern Baptists together to determine the scope and practice of national and international ministries. Every level has the power to convene the people.

Southern Baptists use the term “leadership” rather than jurisdictional “authority.” Southern Baptists have a history of resistance to hierarchical structures in our ecclesiology. In Southern Baptist life, there are four levels of jurisdictional leadership founded on the Acts 1:8 model. Every level cooperates in shared ministry. Every level values the other levels for the significant contributions they make to the work of the kingdom. There is the sense of partnership and fraternity, not dominance, over each other.

This is part of how we do our work as cooperating Southern Baptists. Somebody must lead the cooperative work in a state or region. State conventions and their respective state missionaries have that particular assignment.

Strengthen churches

State conventions are only as strong as the churches in their jurisdictions. Effective church leaders are perpetually engaged in strengthening their local

congregations in the seven functions of a local church. Those seven functions are worship, evangelism, discipleship, leadership, stewardship, ministry and missions.

State convention leaders are constantly equipping church leaders with tools for improving these functions. This makes for stronger churches and ministries that impact churches, associations and the greater cooperative global work. State conventions assist churches with leadership training and organizational structuring so that local churches become more effective in evangelizing, discipling and congregationalizing.

Commentary



John Yeats

Support pastors & staff

The most important key to healthy, evangelistic and missions-minded churches is effective leadership. State conventions facilitate the work of pastors and staff through leadership training, strategic planning and personal mentoring initiatives. Leadership equipping is vital for 21st century ministry.

When relational trauma erupts in a congregation or association, the state convention is a primary resource for navigating potential hostilities. Most state conventions have some level of coordinated care ministries for pastors and staff members who experience forced terminations. Many local churches turn to the state convention for the training of search committees and transitional leadership. State conventions ought to have a goal: No church without a pastor. No pastor without a friend.

Start churches

Every New Testament church is a Great Commission church. Every church with effective evangelism, discipleship and missions ministries is engaged in starting new churches. Churches start churches, but who coordinates the churches that are ready to launch a new church? Who works with churches and associations to launch churches, equip the leaders and develop standards and benchmarks of accountability? That work is one of the primary tasks of the state convention.

The state convention synergistically works with multiple churches, associations and a pool of church planters to strategically facilitate churches planting churches in a state or region. One church alone cannot begin to do that.

Send the light

In multiple spheres, state conventions are involved in sharing the gospel to the ends of the earth. One of the ways it does this is through promotion, collection and distribution of Cooperative Program mission funds received from churches. This requires careful accounting and clear protocols so that funds from churches are moved through the state convention and on to national entities.

Another way a state convention sends out the gospel light is through strategic planning of multigenerational ministries. Only a small minority of churches has the capacity to provide multigenerational and multi-people group ministries. Such a task can be overwhelming for the majority of local churches, so state conventions orchestrate ministries with churches and

associations to accomplish this goal.

State conventions also facilitate missions networks for volunteers. Whether coordinating trained disaster relief teams or Baptist Builders, state conventions harness the willingness of volunteers from multiple congregations to make a difference for the sake of the gospel.

Another component of state convention work is that of promoting special missions offerings. Through the network of Southern Baptists in a particular state, promotional materials and training and motivational events, are provided. These encourage individual Baptists and their churches to use special offerings for the purpose of reaching the state, the nation and the ends of the earth with the gospel.

Synchronize entities' work

The organizational work of cooperative churches is an amalgamation of state and national entities that are constantly working together toward Great Commission goals. Whether it is a state Baptist liberal-arts college, the International Mission Board, an associational camp, student work on a college campus, equipping conferences, disaster relief ministry or children's services, there must be a “synchronizer.” This is so that institutions avoid duplication of ministries and minimize holes in the safety net.

The state convention, through its leadership, is the organizational “touch point” that promotes fraternal relationships between churches, associations, state convention entities and national ministries. This is so that Great Commission ministries are accomplished with maximum effectiveness and efficiency.

Shine the light

State conventions have a powerful cooperative voice in state legislatures for good and right. Any legislator will tell you that in a congressional hearing, a person representing an individual church does not carry the same weight of influence as a person sharing the perspective of 1,900 churches. Cooperating churches shine a greater light in the public square.

There was a day when legislators and administrations respected the domain of churches. They understood the valuable contribution they made to a community's infrastructure. In many places, that perspective has evaporated with the growing secularization of the culture. The state convention is the most effective and efficient means of addressing a state's moral, social, regulatory and liberty issues with prudence and strategic statesmanship.

So, what do state conventions do? State conventions serve at the direction of cooperating Southern Baptist churches. Congregations assign to state conventions larger-scale functions that are more than a single church can do. State conventions work with small and large churches and associations to fulfill those functions.

The beauty of Southern Baptists is that no matter the size, every church is valuable. Every association has worth. Every state convention is needed. Every SBC entity has an immeasurable role to play in the kingdom of God. It's how Southern Baptists do our work, now and until the day of the Lord.

John Yeats is executive director of the Missouri Baptist Convention and recording secretary for the Southern Baptist Convention.

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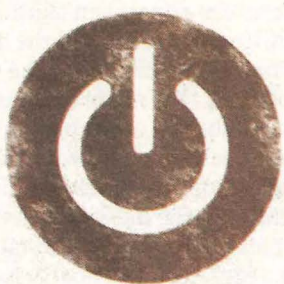
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