

WESTERN Recorder

November 20, 2012

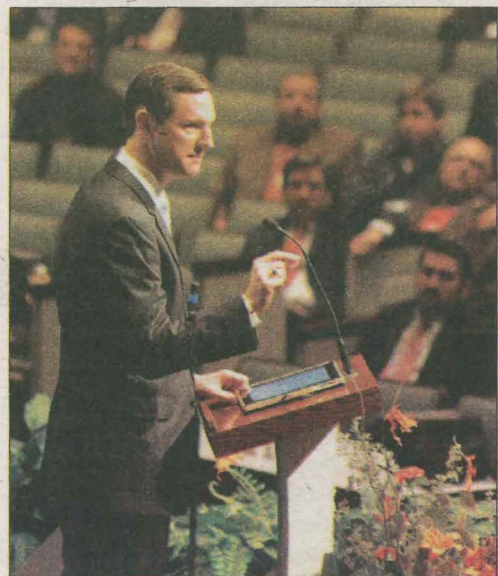
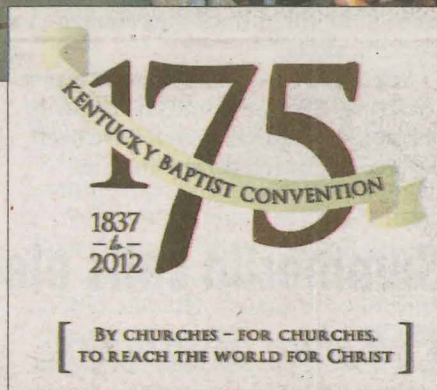
Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 186, Issue 45

To the ends of the earth



■ Above & left: The student body and faculty members from Oneida Baptist Institute join President Paul Davidson for his report to the Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington. It was Davidson's first report to KBC messengers since he was elected OBI president in January. Of the school's more than 250 students, approximately 20 percent of them come from other countries. (Photos by Robin Cornet Bass)



BUDGET MATTERS Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Director Paul Chitwood lays out his plan to accelerate the KBC's Cooperative Program allocation budget to a 50/50 split between KBC and Southern Baptist Convention causes by 2013-14.

KBC fast-tracks move to 50/50 CP budget split

By Drew Nichter

Lexington—With approval of the 2013-14 budget, Kentucky Baptist Convention messengers have fast-tracked a move to split their Cooperative Program funds down the middle with the Southern Baptist Convention.

KBC Executive Director Paul Chitwood last week presented a CP allocation budget for the coming fiscal year that will see the convention achieve a 50/50 split between KBC and SBC ministries much sooner than the 10-year goal that was recommended by the Kentucky Great Commission

Task Force in 2010.

Two years ago, KBC messengers adopted a report from the task force that established a decade-long plan for achieving an even distribution of CP funds, minus shared expenses.

The 2013-14 budget accelerates that plan by several years, factoring in 10 percent of the budget as shared expenses. In the original plan, the GCTF called for such expenses to account for only 4 percent of the budget.

At \$22.5 million, the total budget goal is \$1 million less than that of the current fiscal year.

□ See KBC budget ... Page 2

Kentucky Baptists take stand on health care law, same-sex marriage

By Drew Nichter

Lexington—One week after an Election Day that saw President Obama re-elected and a handful of victories for same-sex marriage, Kentucky Baptists urged Christians to "contend for religious liberty" and "express their deepest convictions in the public square" in the face of growing opposition to "biblical morals."

Messengers to last week's Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting in Lexington overwhelmingly approved a resolution on protecting freedom of speech and the exercise of religion in the United States.

The resolution refers specifically to President Obama's Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. □ See Religious liberty ... Page 2



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Western Recorder 11-20-2012

Chitwood: 'Historic year of transition' for KBC

By Drew Nichter

Lexington—Since his first address as executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention last year, much about the convention has changed.

In that time, the Mission Board staff structure has been overhauled. There are more than three dozen fewer convention employees than in 2011; fewer departments as well.

The convention's mission statement has been revamped to reflect a greater focus on helping churches, either through consultation, revitalization or missions involvement.

With all of the changes taking place in the KBC, Chitwood used part of his report to re-introduce Kentucky Baptists to the Mission Board teams and staff.

"It's been a historic year, a very active year," he acknowledged.

The new staff structure was approved by the Mission Board back in May and immediately implemented. Chitwood commended KBC employees for their hard work, often over long hours, to ensure a smooth transition during the reorganization process.

The convention's church-centric mission statement is "more old than new," Chitwood said, recalling the KBC's founding in 1837, when churches united in a belief "they together could do more to advance the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in Kentucky and to the ends of the earth than they could do so working alone."

Within the reorganized convention structure, Chitwood said the majority of resources and personnel have been devoted to church consulting and



INTRODUCTIONS Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Director Paul Chitwood is joined by three members of the KBC's new missions mobilization team and Curtis Woods (left), the convention's new associate executive director during Chitwood's report to messengers. The missions mobilization staff includes (from left to right) Teresa Parrett, Kentucky missions mobilization coordinator; Scott Pittman, Acts 1:8 partnership consultant; and Eric Allen, missions mobilization team leader. (Photos by Robin Cornet Bass)

revitalization ministries. He cited research that suggests 72 percent of Kentucky Baptist churches have plateaued or are in decline.

"We know that many of those churches want to be helped," Chitwood explained, "and we want to be able to help them."

In the area of missions mobilization, Chitwood announced that Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief will begin a pilot project in sub-Saharan Africa, in partnership with Baptist Global Response, to respond to natural disasters and

humanitarian crises in that area of the world. "The needs are unspeakable" in that region, Chitwood said. "We want to do what we can ... to help meet those needs."

Chitwood also expressed personal gratitude to Kentucky Baptists for their prayers as his wife, Michelle, continues her battle with breast cancer. After being prayed over on his wife's behalf at a recent associational meeting, Chitwood said Michelle probably is the "most prayed-for lady in the state of Kentucky right now." (WR)

Summerlin calls election 'historic,' will preside at home church

Full slate of officers elected by acclamation

By Drew Nichter

Lexington—For the first time in more than five decades, a convention president will preside over an annual meeting at his home church.

Paducah pastor Dan Summerlin was elected Kentucky Baptist Convention president last week. When the 2013 meeting convenes at Lone Oak First Baptist Church of Paducah next November, it will mark the first time since the General Assembly of Baptists in Kentucky was renamed the Kentucky Baptist Convention in 1961 its president will be pastor of the host church.

All five convention officers elected last week ran unopposed and were elected by acclamation.

In addition to Summerlin, they are: **Tom James**, pastor of Eastwood Baptist Church in Bowling Green, first vice president.

Tommy Tapscott, associate pastor of First Baptist Church of East Bernstadt, second vice president.

Wilma Simmons, a member of Big Spring Baptist Church, secretary.

Pat Reaves, a member of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Louisville, assistant secretary.



2012-13 CONVENTION OFFICERS

The Kentucky Baptist Convention officers who will serve this coming year are (from left to right): Pat Reaves, assistant secretary; Tommy Tapscott, second vice president; Dan Summerlin, president; Tom James, first vice president; and Wilma Simmons, secretary. All candidates ran unopposed and were elected by acclamation.

Summerlin called his election a historic one, saying it "means a lot to a lot of people." There also is a comfort level that will come with standing at a familiar pulpit. "It's going to be nice on a personal level," he said. "I know my church. I know the people who do the sound. I know the ushers."

Preaching at his home church is the easy part. Helping lead a convention of 2,400 churches in flux is a more difficult task.

Summerlin will be the first president to serve a full term with the newly reorganized KBC Mission Board staff. With its appeal to see ailing churches revitalized, healthy congregations strengthened further and new churches started, Summerlin said the key, ultimately, is the gospel.

"The emphasis is talking to churches and saying, 'You need to evangelize. You need to share Christ. You need to do the Great Commission,'" he noted. "Start focusing on that and then watch as God

grows the church—then everything else takes care of itself."

The "everything else," according to Summerlin, includes money, specifically Cooperative Program funds earmarked for state, national and international missions and ministries.

But the focus should not be on money, he advised. "You focus on doing what God wants you to do," he urged. "And as God strengthens the church, then there's not an issue."

That will be Summerlin's message to churches as the convention looks for back-to-back increases in Cooperative Program giving. Kentucky Baptists' gifts to the missions funding channel increased slightly in 2011-12, the first such uptick in four years.

Keeping that momentum going, Summerlin said, begins in all Kentucky Baptist churches, large and small. "If we can build the local churches and they begin to grow," he said, "then there is more money for missions." (WR)

KBC budget

Continued from page 1

While the budget is presented as an even split between KBC and SBC causes, the 10 percent in shared expenses—\$2.25 million—will remain with the KBC to be used for promoting the Cooperative Program, benefitting both the state and national conventions. In actuality, 45 percent will be distributed to the SBC. If the budget goal is met, that would total \$10,125,000.

Like the current budget, any CP funds received above and beyond the budget goal will be distributed according to percentages established in the "More for Christ" challenge. This year's allocation would be 63.5 percent for SBC causes, 36.5 percent for KBC causes and 4 percent for shared expenses.

In presenting the budget to messengers, Chitwood said the plan to accelerate the transition to a 50/50 split is a two-step process. Approval of the 2013-14 budget is step No. 1.

Step No. 2 comes with the 2014-15 budget that will be voted on at next year's annual meeting in Paducah. The shared expenses—or "Cooperative Program resourcing," as Chitwood termed it—will be reduced from 10 to 7 percent.

Chitwood acknowledged the increase in shared expenses from 4 percent to 10 percent—and eventually 7 percent—as a significant one from what the GCTF originally recommended. He cited three reasons for making such a change.

First, the original plan, he explained, was based on unrealistic expectations for CP growth.

"The formula to get more funds to the nations required significant growth in the amount of funds coming from our churches," Chitwood said. "That growth just hasn't taken place," and is unlikely to given the state of the economy.

Secondly, the 4 percent of shared expenses called for by the task force was based on an "arbitrary number," the KBC exec noted. "No study was undertaken to see how much we have been spending or we ought to be spending on Cooperative Program promotion and resourcing."

Chitwood said a study has since been done that found the KBC spends at least 10 percent of its budget on such activities. "We are committed to getting that down to 7 percent and holding the line."

Third, the new budget is simplified, making it easier for the KBC Mission Board staff to work with, Chitwood said. It eliminates the need to make "unpredictable budget adjustments" each year, he pointed out.

In the 2011-12 fiscal year, Mission Board staffers were forced to trim their budgets twice, cutting a total of \$1.7 million from the \$23.5 million budget approved by KBC messengers in 2010.

The new budget plan "acknowledges some realities that could not have been known by the task force" three years ago, the executive director said. "But now we have a clear picture of where CP is and where we think it's going. We're making adjustments."

Chitwood said Kentucky "stands alone" in getting more resources to parts of the world "where the gospel isn't."

Most other old-line state Baptist conventions are making plans to increase their giving to an even distribution of CP funds, Chitwood pointed out. "But right now, Kentucky is out front and leading the way." (WR)

Mission Board postpones vote to end Georgetown partnership

By Drew Nichter

Lexington—Ties between the Kentucky Baptist Convention and Georgetown College will remain intact for at least one more year.

The KBC Mission Board voted unanimously last week to postpone a vote to end a 7-year-old partnership agreement with the college. Convention messengers were notified of the board's decision at the KBC annual meeting the next day.

The decision to delay the vote to sever ties between the two entities came on the heels of an announcement from Georgetown College President William Crouch that he plans to retire next year.

Chairman of the KBC's administrative committee, Floyd Paris, told the Mission Board Nov. 12 that the school is in a time of transition and the vote should be delayed "to see which direction they're going to go" in finding a new president.

Crouch announced Nov. 2 that he

would end his 21-year tenure at Georgetown College on June 30, 2013. A 12-member committee to find his successor has been formed. The group still is in the preliminary stages of its work and has not announced a timetable for naming a candidate.

According to the Georgetown College website, the search team has been directed by school trustees to "find a person of strong Christian faith" and "an effective leader who will maintain Georgetown's commitment to faith and academic integrity and freedom."

H.K. Kingkade, Georgetown's director of religious life, attended the Mission Board meeting and said he was pleased that the vote to end the ministry partnership was delayed.

"Georgetown has had a long history with the KBC, and we want to always have a relationship," he told the Western Recorder. "We understand the issues, so we're hopeful that we can find a way to

remain in partnership agreement."

Now-former KBC president, Adam Greenway, said Georgetown's leadership transition offers a window of opportunity for a "resetting of the relationship" between the two entities.

The search committee's selection could determine whether there can be a "greater reconnection between Georgetown and KBC or bring a final resolution of that relationship," Greenway said.

Of the next Georgetown College president, Greenway said he hopes that person would be a Baptist and, therefore, would want to see a ministry relationship continue.

In recent years, rifts have developed between the school and the convention, prompting a KBC workgroup in September to recommend severing all ties to the college.

In contention, according to the workgroup, were issues related to the Baptist Seminary of Kentucky, with ties to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, that is housed on the Georgetown campus; a recent, broader revision of the school's "Christian Identity" statement; and removal of a prior requirement from college bylaws that 75 percent of the trustees be Kentucky Baptists.

Georgetown College is the oldest Kentucky Baptist-affiliated educational institution, dating back to its founding in 1829. An agreement between the KBC and Georgetown inked in 1942 allowed the convention to select the school's trustees in exchange for annual funding.

In 2005, the school and the convention negotiated a deal that allowed Georgetown to revert back to an independent, self-perpetuating board of trustees. Yearly Cooperative Program contributions to the school were phased out over four years, ending in 2009, leaving only the existing ministry partnership.

In other business:

- Mission Board members approved a

revised business and financial plan for the KBC.

Specific changes deal primarily with highlighting the Cooperative Program as the primary channel for state and world missions and ministry efforts. Paragraphs added to the document urge churches to "seriously consider increasing their support through the Cooperative Program in their new budgets," and recommend that offerings taken through Vacation Bible Schools be given as CP gifts.

Additionally, the document affirms existing special state, national and international missions offerings, such as the Eliza Broadus and Lottie Moon offerings. It also gives the Mission Board approval over other such offerings that may be proposed in the future.

■ The board signed off on a revised document reflecting the reorganized structure of the KBC Mission Board staff.

In the document, Mission Board committees are renamed in accordance with the newly formed KBC teams that were approved back in May. The teams—church consultation and revitalization; evangelism and church planting; and missions mobilization—now are represented.

They are among the now six Mission Board committees, along with the agencies and institutions committee, the business and finance committee, and the nominating committee. The resource development and communications committee has been eliminated.

Additionally, the Mission Board's administrative committee has been reduced from 15 members to 12. It will consist of the chairmen of the other six committees and six at-large members.

With recent changes to the Mission Board's composition that will decrease the number of members to approximately 120, the 12-member administrative committee better reflects a "proper proportionality" between it and the full board, Greenway said. (WR)



'ALL IN FAVOR' Messengers to last week's Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting cast their votes during a morning business session. Messengers passed five resolutions, all without discussion and only one without a unanimous vote. (Photo by Robin Cornet Bass)

Kentucky Baptists urged to reach growing immigrant population

By Drew Nichter

Lexington—With approximately 140,000 foreign-born people living in Kentucky, the opportunity to minister to the world at home is greater than ever.

The call to churches "to recognize the opportunity God is providing us by bringing the world to us" is at the heart of a resolution adopted by Kentucky Baptist Convention messengers last week.

"Kentucky has undergone quite a seismic shift in demographics over the last few years," resolutions committee chair Chip Pendleton told messengers.

That shift includes more than 3 percent of the state's population coming from other countries. It is estimated that as many as 50,000 of those individuals are undocumented.

With public policy related to U.S. immigration reform such a hot-button

issue, the resolution specifically states that its approval is not an "endorsement of a partisan idea."

"Rather this is about gospel stewardship and faithfulness," it notes.

Acknowledging that all men and women are "endowed with the image of God," the resolution condemns "any form of bigotry, mistreatment or exploitation" of Kentucky's foreign-born population. It also encourages repudiation of "harassment or exclusion from human rights on the basis of immigration status."

The resolution ultimately encourages Kentucky Baptist churches to organize ministries for the ethnic people groups in their communities, ministering both to their physical and spiritual needs.

"We pray for our congregations to demonstrate the racial reconciliation which is only possible through the gospel," it states. (WR)

Religious liberty

Continued from page 1

Act, as well as growing public support for same-sex marriage. In the face of both issues, it urges Kentucky Baptists to "support candidates and policies that are consistent with a biblical worldview."

Furthermore, the resolution affirms that Americans' exercise of religion "requires a faith that is public," and denounces "any labeling of a historical, orthodox interpretation of Scripture as 'hate speech,' 'bigotry' or 'prejudice.'"

The KBC is "standing with individuals, businesses, nonprofit organizations and educational institutions who are trying to follow their freedom of religion and their right to follow biblical standards," said Chip Pendleton, the resolutions committee chair, in introducing the motion to messengers.

In recent months, a number of federal lawsuits have been filed in regard to the health care law, specifically its contraceptive mandate. It requires all employers and educational institutions to provide insurance coverage for contraceptives, including those that act as abortifacients. Such requirements violate the

"conscience and morals of many people of faith," the resolution states.

Hobby Lobby and Christian publisher Tyndale House are among the businesses that have filed lawsuits. A trio of Baptist schools in Texas—Criswell College, East Texas Baptist University and Houston Baptist University—also have sued.

The resolution also affirms those who speak in favor of a "traditional definition of marriage as a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman."

On Nov. 6, same-sex marriage was legalized by voters in three states, Maine, Maryland and Washington. Minnesota voters rejected a constitutional measure that would have banned gay marriage.

In regard to the various state actions, the resolution declares that "the state is not ultimate and the actions of laws of government are accountable to God."

Despite mounting opposition to "biblical morals," the resolution reminds Kentucky Baptist that they are to be salt and light in the world. "Regardless of any outside interference or oppression by individuals or government," it states, "Kentucky Baptists and their churches will preach the gospel and strive to be faithful to the mission and mandate of our Lord Jesus Christ." (WR)

Convention reflections

My thanks go to the ministry staff and members of Immanuel Baptist Church and to our Mission Board staff for the tremendous job they did in host-

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

ing our annual meeting. The meeting presented a timely opportunity for Kentucky Baptists to be updated on the new organization of the Mission Board and the kingdom work being accomplished by our churches and the agencies and institutions of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

These days of economic strain have brought tremendous clarity to the work of the KBC. A revised mission statement takes us back 175 years to the cause of our founding, back when churches and associations came together in 1837, rightly believing they could do more to advance the gospel in Kentucky and around the world by cooperating with other churches than by working alone. The new statement reads: "The Kentucky Baptist Convention: Created by churches, for churches, to help churches reach Kentucky and the world for Christ."

As we craft our ministry of helping churches, we also have committed ourselves to accomplishing the mandate given by the churches when they adopted the Kentucky Great Commission Task Force recommendations. To that end, we are accelerating the transition to a 50/50 split in a two-step process that prioritizes getting the gospel to where it isn't.

The 2013-14 budget adopted at the annual meeting last week is the first step. In that budget, the KBC and Southern Baptist Convention each will receive 45 percent of the Cooperative Program funds given by KBC churches, with 10 percent being designated for Cooperative Program Resourcing (CPR) on behalf of the national and state conventions. CPR is the investment state conventions have been charged to make on behalf of the SBC to promote CP.

Step No. 2 comes with the 2014-15 budget that will be voted on at our annual meeting next year. That budget should reduce the CPR line item from 10 to 7 percent, thus allowing additional funds to flow to mission work outside of Kentucky and, ultimately, to the International Mission Board, where the overseas missionary force has been dramatically downsized due to a lack of funds. For the foreseeable future beyond the 2014-15 budget, these percentages will remain the same: a 50/50 split that includes 7 percent for CPR for the SBC and KBC.

The GCTF recommendations called for 10 years to accomplish the shift of funds to 50/50 and included a 4 percent shared expense line item rather than 7 percent. Why these changes? This new, simplified budget plan, endorsed by the GCTF, gets us to a 50/50 split sooner and provides for maintaining a larger investment in CPR with the hopes that the investment will yield greater resources for the mission both at home and abroad.

Might the Lord continue to use Kentucky Baptists to accomplish His mission!

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

KBC annual meeting: Short & sweet, yet still significant

It was short and sweet. The program was streamlined; business sessions were expedited; reports, delivered with rapidity; the overall tone was harmonious and congenial. But that doesn't mean actions taken by convention messengers in Lexington were any less significant.

Messengers observed the 175th anniversary of the Kentucky Baptist Convention last week. With historical banners displayed around the sanctuary and with a resolution, they commemorated the founding of the General Association in 1837, which later became the Kentucky Baptist Convention. They also heralded the upcoming 125th anniversary of Woman's Missionary Union in 2013.

They heard exciting reports of kingdom advance on their college campuses, at their camps and by their benevolent agencies. For example, Campbellsville University reported 500 professions of faith through its various programs; Crossings Ministries reported more than 10,000 participants and 700 decisions for Christ; and Sunrise Children's Services served approximately 2,000 children.

But, the most memorable moment occurred when nearly 200 Oneida students—wearing bright red, yellow, blue, green and light blue T-shirts and carrying flags of more than 30 countries and states—streamed down the aisles. They left an indelible impression of the mountain school's mission as they sang "Our God Is Mighty to Save," and exited the auditorium with the words to "We Are Walking in the Light of God" gradually fading as more and more of them carried the light out into the world.

The messengers made an exceptional choice in selecting Paducah pastor Dan Summerlin as president. He will make an outstanding convention spokesperson, having previously served as a first vice president and as a member of its Great Commission Task Force. He also will be a strong voice for the Cooperative Program, having led Lone Oak First Baptist Church to rank third in the state in CP giving.

A potential point of controversy was averted when the Mission Board backed away from severing partnership ties with its oldest affiliated college, Georgetown. No action was taken this year as board members opted to postpone any decision while awaiting the outcome of the college's search for a new president. It was a wise move for now in seeking to preserve a historic relationship.

The most monumental action, however, was adoption of the 2013-14 KBC budget that, in effect, fast-tracks the convention's advance toward an equitable split of Cooperative

Program giving between KBC and SBC causes. In 2010, the Great Commission Task Force revised its recommendations following the Mission Board's meeting prior to the annual meeting, extending the time frame from seven to 10 years and lessening upfront cuts for Kentucky ministries. The changes afforded both the Mission Board and its agencies and institutions "a little more wiggle room" for strategizing how best to meet the challenges without hampering essential ministries.

For the immediate future, the new budget accomplishes the split through a sizable shift in a shared expenses category—now called "Cooperative Program Resourcing"—raising it from 4 to 10 percent. The following year, however, this will be reduced to 7 percent, an adjustment of about \$675,000. Sending more of our mission dollars to the ends of the earth likely will mean continued sacrifices by Mission Board staff and by KBC agencies and institutions, which now will have to make further adjustments much sooner than anticipated.

Many were particularly glad to hear our executive director's heart—not only for the nations, but also for Kentucky. In his report, Paul Chitwood spotlighted one of our own counties, Elliott, with a population of 7,850 that is slightly more than 2 percent evangelical. By the International Mission Board's criteria, this small, northeastern Kentucky county borders on being considered an unreached people group. "We don't send missions dollars outside of Kentucky because Kentucky doesn't need them, nor because a soul in Africa is worth more than a soul in Kentucky," Chitwood assured. "We are still focusing on missions in Kentucky, but recognize that the Acts 1:8 charge and Great Commission mandate require us to invest sacrificially and proportionally in gospel work at home and abroad."

While the budget's approval almost certainly will require additional sacrifices, what must be kept in mind and celebrated is the ultimate goal: Sharing Christ with Kentucky and the nations. It is, indeed, our hope that Kentucky Baptists will respond to the sacrificial commitment of their Mission Board and their institutions and agencies by being so led to increase their support of the Cooperative Program, and thereby lessen the impact upon their state missions and ministries, while at the same time further advancing the gospel among the nations. Then, we can celebrate together that Kentucky Baptists are "leading the way" in getting more resources "to the places in the world where the gospel isn't."

After Thought

By Todd Deaton



Successful dating?

By Scott Wigginton

Q: How can we help our teenagers approach dating and engagement differently, so that they have a better chance at a successful marriage?

A: There is a radical difference between the cultural approach to marriage and a Christian approach. The cultural approach begins with passion and romance, which leads persons to pseudo-intimacy and commitments based on the selfish desire to feel good. Because the relational fuel is emotion, the post-marital ebbing tide of passion

leads many to believe they have made a commitment to the wrong person. Failure to understand that emotion is not meant to be the engine of marriage, but rather the caboose, often is a fatal flaw in the foundation of marriage.

Christian parents must guide teenagers to approach dating and relationships wisely. The Message Bible translation of Philippians 1:9-10 puts it this way: "Learn to love appropriately. You need to use your head and test your feelings so that your love is sincere and intelligent, not sentimental gush."

Since marriage is supposed to be an earthly demonstration of the love Christ the bridegroom has for His bride, the

church, we must teach our teens to think carefully through their non-negotiables in a potential partner before beginning an exclusive dating relationship. Taking time to build a strong friendship marked by servanthood and sacrificial love then becomes the prelude to a marital commitment.

Critical questions that must be answered in the young-adult years are: "Where am I going?" and "Who will go with me?" Answering these questions in the wrong order may mean that a young adult chooses a partner before getting clarity about one's vocation or career. If at all possible, it is wise to try to discern one's vocational direction before committing oneself to a person who may or may not have a compatible calling.



WESTERN Recorder

Box 43969
Louisville, KY 40253

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THOMAS C. TOWNSEND
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Western Recorder is published weekly 49 weeks a year by Western Recorder Inc., an agency of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253. It will not be published the first week of January, the week of Independence Day or the week of Christmas. Periodicals postage paid at Louisville, Ky. (USPS 679-380)

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'Raising the Standard' objective for 2012 Pastors' Conference

Lexington—A half-dozen preachers representing different facets of Southern Baptist life encouraged their Kentucky brethren to remember the theme of "Raising the Standard" during last week's Kentucky Baptist Pastors' Conference.

This year's slate of speakers was assembled by conference president, Jeff Noffsinger, pastor of Dripping Spring Baptist Church in Olmstead.

Kara Blackard

Kara Blackard, pastor of Wheeler Grove Baptist Church in Corinth, Miss., used "the Rose of Sharon," a descriptive title found in Song of Solomon as "an excuse to brag on Jesus."

"In many ways this book is like a picture gallery with portraits hanging on every wall, each of which have been placed there by the hand of God to tell us more and more about His precious story," Blackard said, describing the Lord as "God's beautiful rose."

"No matter where you are today, I want you to know that God is there with you walking beside you," he said. "So, if your world is ominous and dark, remember He says, 'I am the light of the world.' If your friends have forsaken you, He declares, 'I am the friend that sticketh closer than a brother.'"

The Song of Solomon magnifies the Savior, Blackard said, illustrating his point by borrowing from an unknown source: "To the architect, He is the chief cornerstone; to the astronomer, He is the light of the world; to the baker, He is the living bread; to the banker, He is the hidden treasurer; to the carpenter, He is the door; to the sick, He is the great physician; to the geologist, He is the rock of ages; to the gemologist, He is the pearl of great price."

Explaining that roses have been used through the ages for washing, as medicine and as a refreshment," Blackard compared its restorative and fragrant qualities to the transformation that happens whenever someone accepts Christ.

Future meeting site, convention preacher named

Lexington—Convention messengers will gather at a familiar venue when the annual meeting convenes three years from now.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting will return to Elizabethtown in 2015 as Severns Valley Baptist Church will again be the host church. Messenger approved the meeting site last week. Severns Valley previously hosted the convention in 2009.

In the same vote, messengers approved Severns Valley Pastor Bill Langley as the preacher of next year's convention sermon. Ben Stratton, pastor of Farmington Baptist Church, is the alternate. The 2013 KBC annual meeting is set for Nov. 12 at Lone Oak First Baptist Church of Paducah.

In 2014, the convention will return to Bowling Green, meeting at Living Hope Baptist Church. (WR)



PASTORS' CONFERENCE OFFICERS At the conclusion of last week's meeting, Wesley Noss (left) took over the presidential duties of the Kentucky Baptist Pastors' Conference. The pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Versailles will preside over the 2013 gathering. Steven Hill (right), pastor of New Horizon Baptist Fellowship in Glendale, was elected by acclamation to the role of president-elect. He will coordinate the 2014 Pastors' Conference. (Photo by Drew Nichter)

Blackard added that what he most wanted others to see was "the broken rose," referring to Jesus' crucifixion, and proclaimed that Jesus is "the blooming rose" since "up from the grave He arose."

Jerry Chaddick

Louisiana evangelist and pastor, Jerry Chaddick, discussed the modern-day application of Luke 13:1-9, particularly, in light of the nation's recent presidential election. In the passage, Jesus gives the warning: repent or perish.

While many pastors at the conference may have been advocates for a change in the White House, as Chaddick admitted he was, the evangelist questioned how many first sought change in their own hearts. He said, instead, there has been far too much finger pointing and, as a result, "the church of America is perhaps colder now than ever before."

"It is real easy for us to get in our holy huddles and play the blame game and say the reason America is the way she is, is because of all the politicians, but might I remind you what the Bible says, that judgment must first begin in the house of God," Chaddick reminded.

Some pastors shy away from preaching about judgment and God's wrath, the evangelist said, but now is the time to run to the Lord and repent.

"If it's true God is in control, then there is no one else to blame for all that's going on in our nation," Chaddick declared. "God is trying to awaken our church. Because as goes the church so goes the culture. I believe if we get serious and repent, God is going to bless us."

"These could be days that draw us 'nearer to thee.' These could be days to stir within us a real desire to repent," Chaddick said. "These could be the greatest days we'll ever experience. These could be the days where we get so desperate that we have no other choice but to run to God."

Paige Patterson

It is widely believed that John, the author of the Book of Revelation, was at least 100 years old when he was instructed by God to take a scroll from the hand of a towering angel.

The 10th chapter of the Bible's final book provided the crux of Paige Patterson's message to Kentucky Baptist pastors. In it, John follows God's command and is told by the angel to "take it and eat it." A pastor's assignment, Patterson said, is much the same: "consume the holy book."

"The preacher's job is to help the people read the word of God," the president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary reminded, "but you can't help the people read what you don't know."

A minister is not equipped to preach God's word until he has consumed it and it has consumed him in return, Patterson added.

Bob Pitman

During his Pastors' Conference sermon, Bob Pitman drew a parallel between the wayward nation of Judah and modern-day Christians living in the United States.

"I have never seen a day when so many of God's people were so content to live so far away from God," Pitman observed. "You can only push God so far. You and I live in a nation that has just about pushed God too far."

Pitman, who serves as dean of the Adrian Rogers Center for Biblical Preaching at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, Tenn., offered hope to today's Christians from Habakkuk 17-18. The passage paints a desperate picture of a once-plentiful economy being stripped of all its major crops and livestock—yet, the author rejoices.

"Remember the power of 'yet,'" Pitman said, drawing meaning from the first word in verse 18. "It means the last chapter has not been written yet. The fat lady has not sung. It may be darker than it has ever been, but don't give up."

"You see, as Christians, we do not belong to ourselves," Pitman continued. "The Bible says we have been bought for a price. We belong to somebody."

That somebody is Yahweh, Pitman said—the God of mercy, gentleness and kindness. And in the Lord's provision of salvation, Christians can celebrate regardless of their circumstances.

"Even when things seem like they

can't get any worse, if we will remember it's not over until He says it's over, if we will remember the power of 'yet,' if we will remember to whom we belong, if we remember our salvation," Pitman concluded, "you can rejoice and dance before the Lord in your heart."

Herb Reavis

Herb Reavis, senior pastor of North Jacksonville (Fla.) Baptist Church, outlined four main characteristics of "the church God attends," based on Revelation 1:9-20.

"The issue is not what kind of church do the students want, what kind of church do the senior adults want, what kind of church does generation X, Y and Z want," he said, "the issue is what kind of church does God want, because if God doesn't show up, you can't have church."

The kind of church God attends produces a dynamic Christian, gathers on the Lord's day, fulfills its unique responsibility in being light in a dark world, and worships a living Savior.

"Today we have a bunch of consumer Christians running around and shopping for churches," Reavis charged.

"That's not the way it was done in the New Testament," he countered. "They made disciples. They built believers. They constructed dynamic Christians."

Pointing to John as an example of the kind of Christian birthed by the early church, Reavis asserted, "A Christian is not simply somebody who has hell insurance. ... A Christian is a committed follower of Jesus Christ."

To produce dynamic Christians, he noted, churches need to teach important truths to disciples: pressure produces a dynamic prayer life, worship, humility and casting oneself on the Lord's sufficiency; there is only one King, Jesus Christ, and nothing else; and faithfulness is what God views as success.

Dan Summerlin

After 28 years as a pastor, Dan Summerlin understands one thing for sure: "The ministry is tough."

So tough, in fact, research shows only one in 10 ministers starting out today will retire as ministers. Whether through burnout, moral failings or congregational contentions, only 10 percent of pastors will make it in ministry, Summerlin explained.

The Paducah pastor said the only way to deal with the pain that comes with the pastorate is to grow in God's grace.

"If you do not understand God's grace," Summerlin said, "you will never understand the gospel, and you will not survive in the ministry."

Drawing from Paul's letter to Timothy, encouraging him to remain focused on God in serving the church at Ephesus, Summerlin encouraged pastors to remember three things in their own ministries: be faithful to God, stay single-minded in serving Him, and submit only to His will.

As a pastor's ministry comes to an end, it will not matter how large a church he served or how many degrees he earned, Summerlin noted. "At the end of the day, the only issue is: Did you keep the rules? Did you do the work with integrity?" (WR)

Compiled from reporting by Robin Cornetet Bass, Todd Deaton and Drew Nichter.

President's address

Greenway offers three principles for Kentucky Baptists' future

By Todd Deaton

Lexington—As the Kentucky Baptist Convention celebrated 175 years, President Adam Greenway took the occasion in his address during the KBC annual meeting last week not just to look back on all that God has done, but also to turn attention to the convention's future.

"It won't be that long, if Jesus tarries, before we will be gathering to celebrate the bicentennial of the convention," Greenway observed before posing the question: "What will this convention look like?"

Turning to Acts 28, the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary professor of evangelism and apologetics proclaimed, "Until Jesus comes, the story of the church advances, and the gospel continues to go on."

Now, several centuries removed from what happened in Acts, at the KBC's dodransbicentennial, it is important to know "the rock from which we are hewn," he noted.

In reading the minutes of the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky's first meeting held in Louisville in 1837, Greenway acknowledged, "It is fascinating to look at the reason for the occasion that called together Baptists from across this commonwealth to form a new organization for the perpetuation of the Great Commission mandate."

Redirecting the focus to the next 25

years, though, Greenway honed in on three key principles Kentucky Baptists need to maintain if they are going to make sure "that every day God gives us until Jesus comes again, we will be about the task of the Great Commission."

First, the priority must be spreading the gospel, he began.

"We are living in a day in which we are seeing the dying of the light of our culture," Greenway noted. "We are seeing things happening in our culture today that (a generation ago) would have been absolutely unfathomable—things that are being not just tolerated, but celebrated in our culture."

Declaring that Kentucky Baptists are to be "the light of this commonwealth," Greenway charged that the reason our culture is declining isn't just because the darkness is advancing, but because "someone is not shining forth the light."

Urging Kentucky Baptists to recommit to spreading the gospel, Greenway observed, "We are at our best when we are a gospel-saturated, gospel-centered, gospel-proclaiming people."

Second, Kentucky Baptists' authority must be the Bible, Greenway emphasized.

"We must never be discouraged when people reject the gospel," he said, pointing out that even Jesus and Paul faced rejection. "Brother, you and I are going to face rejection," he asserted.

Although believers may encounter the growing callousness of people to hearing



Adam Greenway

the word of God, the greater challenge faced relates to its authority, accuracy and sufficiency.

"I wonder if sometimes, we spend more time trying to get the right YouTube clips, the right music and the right atmosphere, ... and (while) not saying that we deny the word of God, maybe what we are saying is that we are not really sure if the word of God alone is sufficient," Greenway suggested.

Calling for Kentucky Baptists to renew their commitment to being a

Bible-centered people, Greenway noted, "At the end of the day, we can trust that our authority is not in the eloquence of our speech. It's not in the presentation that we can package. It's not in our program, the capabilities of our staff or anything else." The gospel is what God uses to change lives, he reminded.

Third, Kentucky Baptists must leave a legacy of faithfulness, Greenway urged.

Pointing to Paul's example, Greenway observed, "What do we see throughout the book of Acts—whether it is shipwreck, prison, beatings or opportunities to save his own neck by denying or discrediting the things of God? You see faithfulness, regardless of cost."

One of the great travesties of the ministry is those who have fallen due to moral or ethical failure, Greenway lamented. "Do everything you can to be so in tuned with the things of God, so communing with the Spirit of God, that you will not become a casualty," he counseled.

"Do not give the enemy a foothold, because if the enemy gets a foothold, he will turn it into a stronghold," Greenway warned.

"If we are blood-bought, Spirit-filled children of God, may we live as changed people—not perfect people—but people whose only hope is daily dependence on grace," Greenway charged, exhorting Kentucky Baptists to "be persons of holiness and integrity, so God can use us." (WR)

Bowling Green pastor to Kentucky Baptists: 'We're not in Jerusalem anymore'

By Todd Deaton

Lexington—"The world is changing drastically, and our views of hope, our dependence on faith, are not widely held or agreed upon," Jason Pettus assessed in his convention sermon last week.

In issuing a "reality check" based on Jeremiah 29, Pettus cited a Pew Forum study indicating a recent increase in those claiming no religious affiliation. He urged Kentucky Baptists to prepare for ministry in that kind of world by regarding themselves as exiles in a pagan land.

"Most of us want to see the people of this nation return to God. We want to see their lives, at least in some way, be responsive to God's call," Pettus noted. But Kentucky Baptists must first come to grips with the reality that they are living in a post-Christian culture, he said.

"Do we give up? Do we simply sit on the sidelines where the culturally elite and the powerful have placed us?" he asked. "God has not given us that option."

Declaring that the Great Commission remains, he said, "We are still under orders of our Savior and King, and we are to go into all nations, and we are to make disciples, and we are to baptize them, ... and we are to teach them to obey all the things that the Lord has given to us."

Even though the task may be more difficult, it is not impossible, Pettus said.

Affirming that God always will have a people, His church, Pettus countered, "The question is, 'How do we serve Him?'"

"The Acts 1:8 challenge still stands,"

Pettus reiterated, asking: "But how do we do that from a country that is now post-Christian? How do we go to the nations (with the gospel) from this place where we are a shrinking minority?"

Kentucky Baptists are going to have to change the way they think, he asserted. "We are going to have to live in reality that this is not our home. We are exiles. We are no longer in Jerusalem (a church-centric culture). ... We live in Babylon.

"I know this hurts to hear: We are a conquered people. The secularists have

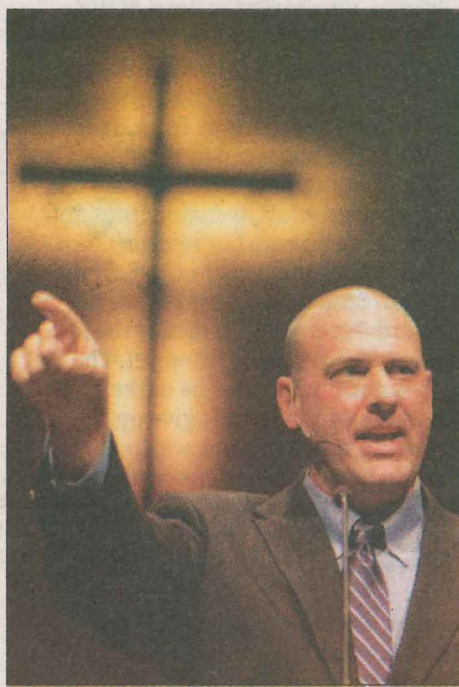
taken over. We live in a pluralistic society," he continued. "We need to grasp that and figure out, 'What are we supposed to do now?'"

Jeremiah sought to shepherd His people so they could withstand the temptation to fall away from the Lord and fall into the customs of a pagan society, Pettus explained. God's prophet told the exiles to "settle down" among the Babylonians and contribute to the society of

their temporary home.

Similarly, to thrive as exiles in today's culture, Pettus suggested Kentucky Baptists view themselves as salt and light and be a blessing to our society by providing "a taste of compassion (and) kindness in a cutthroat, divided country."

"We must show our world our gospel, and then we must share with our world our gospel. Then we must invite our world to believe our gospel." (WR)



Jason Pettus

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Cooperative Program now criteria for KBC messenger representation

By Drew Nichter

Lexington—Continuing the appeal to emphasize Cooperative Program giving among its churches, the Kentucky Baptist Convention now will require such gifts as qualification for messengers at its annual meetings.

Messengers last week approved a change to the convention's constitution and bylaws that requires a church to have been a "bona fide contributor through the Cooperative Program" in the prior fiscal year in order to be represented at annual meetings.

The change received a first reading at last year's convention in Florence. It passed unanimously, far exceeding the two-thirds majority vote needed for adoption.

The reworded Article IV also decreases the minimum number of churches' messengers from two to one. Moreover, the criteria for additional church representatives was amended as one messenger for every 250 "resident members." The maximum messengers a church can appoint remains at 10.

According to the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws, the changes reflect the committee's belief that "the Cooperative Program should be the uniform financial baseline for determining if a church is in friendly cooperation with the KBC."

Immediate past KBC president Adam

Greenway affirmed the constitutional change, noting that among the most important items of business messengers conduct each year is to approve a Cooperative Program allocation budget.

"It seems, in a sense, kind of odd that you have persons perhaps voting on a Cooperative Program budget whose church has not contributed anything through the Cooperative Program," he said.

Greenway also said he did not expect a significant dip in messengers because of the change. Most churches that do not contribute to CP likely do not send messengers to the annual meetings, he noted.

Among other constitution changes approved last week was the authorization of electronic media to conduct KBC committee meetings.

The change stems from Mission Board action in 2010 that recommended utilizing telephone and video conferences for committee meetings whenever possible as a way to reduce travel costs and, thus, be better stewards of convention funds.

It was presented, at the time, that travel costs for a 12-member committee to meet at the Kentucky Baptist Building in Louisville range from \$1,200-\$1,500, whereas the same hour-long meeting can be done electronically for as little as \$7 per person. (WR)



HISTORY LESSON A series of banners depicting significant moments in the Kentucky Baptist Convention's 175-year history line a hallway at the Kentucky Baptist Building in Louisville prior to being shipped to Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington. The banners were displayed throughout the sanctuary at the annual meeting. (Photos by Robin Cornet Bass)

KBC recognizes trio of milestones

Lexington—At its 175th annual meeting, the Kentucky Baptist Convention recognized its own history and that of its women's auxiliary in a pair of resolutions.

Messengers expressed their appreciation for the 175th anniversary of the formation of the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky, as the KBC was originally known. The name was changed to Kentucky Baptist Convention in 1961.

Convention-goers also looked ahead to 2013 when Woman's Missionary Union will celebrate its 125th anniversary and the Eliza Broadus Offering for State Missions will turn 100 years old.

In addition to marking the KBC's anniversary through messages and an official resolution, the KBC commemorated the milestone with historical banners around the Immanuel Baptist Church sanctuary. Each banner displayed significant moments and people in the convention's history.

The adopted resolution recognizing the anniversary noted that the convention "has survived and thrived through countless theological, spiritual, economic and cultural challenges."

It also commended Kentucky Baptist churches' contributions to the

Cooperative Program of nearly \$730 million since the funding channel was adopted in 1925.

The resolution expressed gratitude to God for His blessings and urged Kentucky Baptists to "commit ourselves anew to serving the cause of Christ together" and continue to support the Great Commission through giving to the Cooperative Program.

A resolution expressing appreciation for WMU and the Eliza Broadus offering cited Kentucky's involvement in forming the national organization. Three Kentucky women attended the 1888 meeting in Richmond, Va., at which the Southern Baptist Convention women's auxiliary was formed.

Kentucky WMU got its official start at a 1903 meeting in Winchester. Ten years later, it began taking up a yearly state missions offering. In 1975, that offering was named in honor of Eliza Broadus, an early, prominent figure in organizing women's missions and ministry efforts in Kentucky.

"WMU has as its vision to challenge Christian believers to understand and be radically involved in the mission of God," the resolution states. (WR)

Simmons: 20 years as KBC secretary

Lexington—Annual meeting locations may change, but one thing remains the same—Wilma Simmons.

As the 2012 gathering of the Kentucky Baptist Convention was called to order last year, Simmons marked her 20th consecutive meeting in the secretary's chair.

Since 1992, Simmons has listened intently to every item of business, every point of order, diligently recording it all. She said she considers her work a ministry. "You're writing history."

Simmons was elected to the post at the 1991 annual meeting at this year's host church, Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington. She succeeded

Doris Yeiser, who had asked Simmons to consider taking on the secretary post.

When reminded that 2012 was her 20th year as KBC secretary, Simmons said she wasn't even aware of it. "I haven't kept up with it," she said, but, "I keep showing up, like bad money."

Simmons said she considers it a privilege to record the convention minutes each year. When future generations look back on the KBC of today, they may only have Simmons' reporting on which to rely.

"Let's face it, this is the only record of what's happening in the Kentucky Baptist Convention that there'll ever be," she said. (WR)



KBC Secretary Wilma Simmons serves at her 20th annual meeting in Lexington. Beside her, as she has been for the past three years, is assistant secretary Pat Reaves.

WILL YOU PROVIDE A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS WISH FOR AN ABUSED CHILD?

While most children are thinking about the upcoming Christmas holidays with youthful innocence, that's not the case for the thousands of abused and neglected children in Kentucky who haven't had the promise of a warm, safe bed, let alone a Christmas tree or gifts. Give special meaning to the Christmas season for these hurting children. Sponsor a child's Christmas wish list personally or donate toward the Christmas fund and staff will take care of the shopping for you. Contact Cindy at (800) 456-1386 or e-mail chills@sunrise.org for a wish list and provide a merry Christmas to a child.


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Present with the Lord

Former student's sudden passing reminder to pray for those still lost

The news came suddenly, unexpectedly, like a black arrow in the darkest midnight striking the core of the heart and then continuing to pierce the deepest pit of the stomach and the innermost recesses of the mind: His 20-year-old sister, an OBI graduate less than three years ago, had been struck down by a drunk driver in a hit-and-run "accident" while she was walking with friends in a crosswalk on her college campus. Ramey was dead.

No longer would her beautiful smile quickly flash and her infectious laugh ring out. No longer would her voice rise in thankful songs of praise or knock on heaven's door in fervent prayer to worship the one she knew as her Lord and Savior—at least not in this world where her brother could hear it. No longer would the special "care packages" and phone calls come to cheer up a lonely teenage boy far from home, across an ocean from his roots and his parents. His world had suddenly and forever changed. Ramey was dead.

To be honest, I, too, was taken by surprise. Could it really be? And then the numbing truth set in: This young and vibrant life had been snuffed out, a bright candle of love and help for others extinguished in a moment. Why? I could not say, and as I write this today, I still cannot say.

What I can say is this: I am not worried about Ramey. I know where she is. I know that the Bible tells us that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8). I know her departure from this world also was her entry into the glorious presence of

the one who died on the cross for her sins, a gift of salvation which she had accepted and to which she bore witness through her words and deeds. I know that every day of her life was written in her Creator's book before she ever was born (Psalm 119:16).

Today, I have two other concerns. The first is her brother, who still is a student with us. How will we minister to Oliver when he returns and all the questions come and his faith is tested to trust in a God who has seemingly caused him inexplicable pain by allowing evil to triumph over good? Who among us will understand and dry Oliver's tears and endure his angry shouts as he wrestles with the one who has put a "limp" into his spirit? Oliver will need your prayers and ours—and those of Jesus, our great and compassionate intercessor.

My second concern is Ramey's cousin, who was a student at OBI when Ramey was here. Like Ramey, Lottie was a wonderful young lady to have in class and a delight to have on campus in general. She was not Ramey—she was much quieter and shyer, more reserved.

But the biggest difference was where it matters the most: While Ramey was a vibrant Christian, Lottie was a Muslim. To the best of my knowledge, in spite of faithful witness to her in chapel and in class, Lottie entered OBI as a Muslim and graduated as one. You now understand why I am concerned about Lottie. Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father, except by me" (John 14:6).

Please pray for Lottie.

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

At peace with God's call

First-year students says he knows he's right where God wants him

It took first-year student Luico Welch a while to get to Clear Creek, but he is glad to be here.

"I came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ when I was 17," Luico said. "I was attending a Christian youth camp at the time, and God really let me know where I stood with him. I had listened to things about God all my life growing up in a pastor's home, but that night I realized I needed to give my heart to Jesus Christ. I served the Lord with excitement for a while after that, but then I had some tragedy in my life and I turned away from the Lord for a few years.

"During this time, I joined the military and met my wife, Jan," Luico recalled. "She was a wonderful Christian influence on me and helped me in my walk with the Lord. When it came time for us to leave the military, we prayed for the Lord to show us where He wanted us to serve Him. We knew we weren't supposed to stay where we were. We both felt like the Lord was calling us to Kentucky where we had

no family or friends.

"We began to visit the state and looked at some other colleges, but we didn't feel any leadership to those places," Luico said. "My father knew about Clear Creek and he suggested

that since we were in the area, we should at least visit the college and see if we felt any leadership from the Lord. We came to visit the campus, and God told us this was where we needed to be. Within a few months, we had moved to Kentucky.

"When we first got to Kentucky, we had some things happen in our lives that actually kept us from coming to Clear Creek for about three years," Luico recalled. "But now we are here and we know we are where God wants us to be. God has affirmed to us that we are to study on the missions track. We are excited about seeing what God is going to do with that and where He is going to send us."

Donnie Fox is president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, 300 Clear Creek Road, Pineville, KY 40977; toll-free: (866) 340-3196; Web site: www.ccbcc.edu; e-mail: dfox@ccbcc.edu

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

KBC agency & institution reports

Campbellsville University—Michael Carter, president of Campbellsville University, provided a "small snapshot" of what's been happening at the school with a video presentation for Kentucky Baptist Convention messengers. CU reached record enrollment during the fall 2011 semester with nearly 3,600 students, and is expected to surpass 3,700 in 2012. The university will be able to reach even more students with several new academic programs, including a major in missions. University-supported ministries documented more than 500 decisions for Christ in the past year. "We're so thankful to see the movement of the Lord on our campus," Carter said.

Clear Creek Baptist Bible College—"Our one focus is to be the best Great Commission institution we can be," said Donnie Fox, president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. "Our students not only studied in a classroom, but they were involved in practical ministry and training opportunities." Clear Creek students have preached more than 4,000 biblical messages, Fox reported, taught more than 1,900 biblical lessons, distributed more than 3,600 pieces of evangelistic literature, shared their faith more than 1,100 times. "And this past year our student body has led 158 people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ," he said.

Crossings Ministries—"This last summer was, again, another record year," David Melber, president of Crossings Ministries told KBC messengers. "Every year has been larger than the year before, not just in attendance, but in decisions." During the past summer, Melber said there were 702 salvation decisions and another 744 commitments by students who felt called by God into full-time ministry. For the first time in Crossings' history, a camp was held in a foreign country. Crossings in Haiti was attended by more than 230 adults and teens over three weeks and plans are to add more weeks to the camp in 2013. The growing ministry also founded the Crossings Center for Youth Ministry, a new partnership with the KBC to help train and equip student pastors. Crossings also has been entrusted with guiding the future of the Kentucky Changers ministry.

Kentucky Baptist Foundation—"At the heart of discipleship is financial stewardship for kingdom advancement, about which Jesus had more to say than any other discipline," said Barry Allen, president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation. "And the mission of Kentucky Baptist Foundation is to teach the disciples of Jesus Christ how to obey the biblical mandates of financial stewardship." Allen encouraged church leaders to invite KBF leaders to help their members "connect the dots" between discipleship and financial stewardship. "How we handle our estates may be the single-most important act of financial stewardship we shall ever make," Allen said.

Oneida Baptist Institute—New president Paul Davidson recognized the 175th anniversary of the Kentucky Baptist Convention by bringing nearly all of his Oneida Baptist Institute students to the annual meeting. Members of the OBI choir raised their voices in song as fellow

students carried in flags of various states and countries. Of the \$20,000 it costs to educate each student annually, Davidson said families typically pay less than 30 percent. The remaining portion is funded through endowments, investments and gifts from churches, individuals and groups. Nine percent of OBI's funding is provided by the KBC through the Cooperative Program.

Sunrise Children's Services—Bill Smithwick, president of Sunrise Children's Services, said he was coming before messengers with a heavy heart. Despite efforts to get the message out about missions opportunities through Sunrise, he still hears from Kentucky Baptists who do not even know the ministry exists. "We are your mission arm to serve abused, neglected and victimized children in Kentucky," Smithwick said. Last year, Sunrise served more than 2,000 children through its residential treatment programs, in-home services, Youth Support Center and foster care.

University of the Cumberlands—Jim Taylor, president of University of the Cumberlands, presented a video for KBC messengers highlighting many of the ministry and academic accomplishments of more than 4,500 students attending the southeastern Kentucky school this past year. In that year, students collected and sent 301 pairs of shoes to Africa as part of the "Fall Awakening" series. Nearly 70 decisions for Christ were made during an evangelistic event Sept. 22 for youth and college students. The 2011-12 academic year saw 982 students graduate who are now "equipped as leader servants and ready to make a difference in their world."

Western Recorder—"We are more than just a newspaper. We are an invitation to all Kentucky Baptists to get involved in sharing Christ with the world," said Todd Deaton, editor of the Western Recorder. In a video presentation, Deaton showed KBC messengers news highlights of the past year as Baptists near and far seek to "reach Kentucky and the world for Christ." The state Baptist newspaper reaches 25,000 print subscribers and has expanded its reach with a new online subscription model for readers who use their computers, tablets, smartphones and other mobile devices for news. Business Manager Tom Townsend encouraged pastors to join 50 other churches and associations that are utilizing the Recorder's church subscription plan.

Woman's Missionary Union—Joy Bolton, executive director of Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union, congratulated the KBC on its 175th anniversary and noted WMU will be recognizing two of its own milestones in 2013. The national organization will turn 125 years, old and it will be the 100th anniversary of Kentucky WMU's Eliza Broadus Offering for State Missions. While total receipts from the 2011 EBO fell short of the \$1.25 million goal, offerings still increased \$70,000 from the previous year. The 2012 goal also is \$1.25 million. Every dollar "has been budgeted, and we pray that we will reach and exceed the goal so additional ministries are possible," Bolton said. (WR) Compiled by Robin Cornet Bass

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Bible Crosswords

By Janet Adkins

Across

- 1 Rascal
- 4 Le Cote ____ (W. Africa region)
- 7 Son of Enoch (Genesis 4:18)
- 11 Woman was made from ____ (2 words)
- 13 Her name means "life"
- 14 Spy (colloq.)
- 15 ____ de soie (rich, silken material)
- 16 Fall flower, for short
- 17 "A flattering mouth worketh ____" (Proverbs 26:28)
- 18 Of considerable size, as a drink
- 19 "And Israel dwelt in all the cities of the ____" (Numbers 21:25)
- 21 Used to be
- 23 WWII red-letter day (abbr.)
- 24 "A virtuous ____ is a crown to her husband" (Proverbs 12:4)
- 27 "And Saul smote the Amalekites from ____ until ... Shur" (1 Samuel 15:7)
- 32 "And Israel ... spread his tent beyond the tower of ____" (Genesis 35:21)
- 33 "Therefore God ... hath anointed thee with the ____ of gladness" (Psalm 45:7)
- 34 One conquered by Persia
- 35 Stringed instrument resembling a lyre, in the Bible
- 37 Aussie tennis great
- 38 And (Fr.)
- 39 ____ Harbor, NY
- 40 "Lest ... when I have preached to others, I ... should be a ____" (1 Corinthians 9:27)
- 45 ____ the Terrible, Russian czar
- 49 Ancient Hebrew dry measure
- 50 Broadcast
- 51 Mount ____, in the land of Moab (Deuteronomy 32)
- 52 Bill of fare
- 53 Louis XV, par exemple
- 54 First name in murder mysteries (and Perry's creator)
- 55 ____bellum South (period following Civil War)
- 56 Gov't. drug prevention org.
- 57 Affirmative

Down

- 1 Like Queeg or Bligh (abbr.)
- 2 ____ code
- 3 Popular soap
- 4 "Luke, the beloved physician, and ____, greet you" (Colossians 4:14)
- 5 Mature female cell

- 6 Dismissal
- 7 Son of Bani (1 Chronicles 9:4)
- 8 Defeat utterly
- 9 "When he speaketh ____, he speaketh of his own" (2 words, John 8:44)
- 10 Cubs' "cribs"?
- 12 Fortress
- 20 N.T. book (abbr.)
- 22 Article
- 24 NBA great Unseld
- 25 Harem room
- 26 Son of (Scot., prefix)
- 27 Used physical force
- 28 "How long will ye ____ mischief against a man?" (Psalm 62:3)
- 29 O.T. book (abbr.)
- 30 Summer drink
- 31 Pronoun
- 33 "For which cause we faint not; ... though our ____ man perish" (2 Corinthians 4:16)
- 36 Feminine nickname
- 37 Calif. city
- 39 Mideast country
- 40 Unconscious condition
- 41 "So be it"
- 42 Faxed
- 43 Factual and actual
- 44 Vowel quartet
- 46 "Every thing that he had made ... was ____ good" (Genesis 1:31)
- 47 Skilled; competent
- 48 Greek form of father of Shem, and his namesakes

Last puzzle's solution

- Across**
- 2. North American 3. Crouch 5. Bolton 7. Taylor 8. Western Recorder 9. Cooperative 12. Allen 14. Bagdad 16. Rice 18. Pittman 21. Louisville 22. Cooper 23. Seventy 25. Kentucky 26. Fox 27. Commission 30. Pavy 31. Appalachian 32. Sunrise 33. Severns Valley
- Down**
- 1. Davidson 3. Chitwood 4. Woods 6. St. Louis 8. Whitaker 10. Webb 11. Daley 13. Nashville 15. General 17. International 19. Murray 20. Ashby 24. Elkhorn 28. Mackey 29. Stars

Best practices: annual audit

Yearly review shows foundation in conformity with accounting codes

The value proposition statement of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation is: "The KBF brings the highest business and Christian ethical standards and methods as a fiduciary of funds and a facilitator of life-changing legacies for kingdom advancement."

The KBF's tagline is this: "Steadfast and solid for kingdom advancement since 1945."

In keeping with the value proposition and tagline, and consistent with best practices for a not-for-profit corporation, the KBF engages annually an external accounting firm to conduct an audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the U.S. Those standards require the auditors to plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement.

The audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by the KBF, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

On Oct. 24, the audit committee of the KBF board of directors met with the auditors to receive their "independent auditors' report." I am pleased to inform you the KBF received "an unqualified opinion" that the financial statements for the period ended Aug. 31 presented fairly in all material respects the true financial position of the KBF, and that the changes in its net assets and cash flows were in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States.

The board of directors will receive a report from the audit committee at the board's next quarterly meeting in December.

Furthermore, in accordance with the covenant agreement with the Kentucky Baptist Convention, we have provided the KBC's audit work group with the KBF audit as part of the foundation's accountability to the constituency it serves.

Oliver Wendell Holmes advised, "Put not your trust in money, but your money in trust." There is no finer instrument of sacred trust than your Kentucky Baptist Foundation.

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

Ky. Baptist Foundation



Barry Allen

'I give thanks'

WMU counts many blessings, how Kentucky Baptists give to missions

I've noticed that a number of people on Facebook are posting things for which they are thankful. The hymn "Count Your Many Blessings" reminds us to "name them one by one." So, in this short column, let me name a few.

I am thankful for the privilege of leading Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union and for being a spokesperson for missions education and involvement. I am grateful for opportunities to promote state missions and the Eliza Broadus offering. I appreciate Kentucky Baptist leaders who value the offering and our emphasis on state missions. I give thanks for WMU leaders and churches that faithfully give, pray and get involved in ministries across our state.

Thank you Kentucky Baptists for the largest month ever in EBO history. We received a total of \$541,986.82 in October, bringing the two-month total to \$558,403.58. This is well on our way to reaching our goal of \$1.25 million.

Does our giving make a difference? It did to more than 300 students who attended Engage, the international student retreat, held Nov. 2-4 in Cave City. During this event, international students—many of whom are still adjusting to life in the United States—find a

place to gather with others. They are welcomed, affirmed and loved during the weekend. They have fun and hear the gospel from other students, as well as from program presenters.

It made a difference to the 500 girls in grades 1 through 6 and their leaders who attended our state GA JAM event on Nov. 9. JAM stands for "Jesus and missions." It is a day-long interactive missions learning experience and provides many opportunities for girls to hear, see, touch and taste missions. With the theme "City Jam," participants learned about missions in the cities, including many of them in Kentucky.

EBO still is making a difference to people affected by Hurricane Sandy. Eliza Broadus funds for disaster relief help to put gas in vehicles, provide supplies and purchase equipment used in disaster responses. Most importantly, people are hearing the gospel from disaster relief volunteers.

The Eliza Broadus offering year runs from Sept. 1 to Aug. 31, but contributions are received all year long. It's never too late to give, and for that I give thanks. I thank the Lord and I thank you!

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

EBO at Work



Joy Bolton



December

10-11 KBC Mission Board, Kentucky Baptist Building, Louisville.

January

17-18 New Director of Missions Orientation, Kentucky Baptist Building, Louisville.

18-19 Disaster Relief Chaplaincy Training—Region 1, Liberty Point Baptist Church, Cadiz.

19 Disaster Relief Training—Region 1, Liberty Point Baptist Church, Cadiz.

24-26 Shepherding the Shepherd, The Downtown Hilton Hotel, Lexington.

February

1-2 Disaster Relief Chaplaincy Training—Region 3, Hardinsburg Baptist Church.

2 Disaster Relief Training—Region 3, Hardinsburg Baptist Church.

4-5 St. Louis Partnership Vision Trip, St. Louis.

8 Embrace the Ends of the Earth Conference, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

Compton and 26 churches singled out for CP support

Lexington—Billy Compton, pastor at First Baptist Church of Mount Washington, received the Distinguished Cooperative Program Leadership Award Nov. 13 for his decades-long support of the unified plan for funding missions in Kentucky and around the world.

In addition to Compton, messengers and guests to the 175th annual meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Convention thanked 26 congregations as top missions supporters through CP during the past year.

Bill Fort, pastor at First Baptist Church of Richmond, presented the awards to close out this year's annual meeting at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington.

Compton began serving Kentucky Baptists as a pastor in 1966 and is the former pastor of the two top Cooperative Program-supporting churches in the KBC: Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown and Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green.

Twice Compton was a member of the KBC Mission Board staff. Most recently he was the KBC's chief CP educator and promoter, appointed in 2008 as executive associate for Cooperative Program and resources.

Top contributors in total giving through the Cooperative Program in fiscal year 2011-12 were:

- Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown, \$384,695.
- Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah, \$299,567.
- Living Hope Baptist Church,

Bowling Green, \$288,623.

Top CP supporters in per capita giving for the year were:

- Countryside Baptist Church, Morganfield, \$280.
- Mexico Baptist Church, Marion, \$272.
- Good Hope Baptist Church, Campbellsville, \$229.

More than 20 congregations reached new million-dollar milestones through CP giving in the past year.

- Living Hope in Bowling Green reached \$6 million.
- First Baptist Church of Central

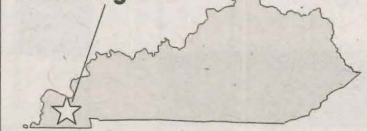


MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

Spotlight on ...

Farmington



Farmington Church held homecoming services and dedicated its new sanctuary Oct. 28 with former KBC president **Adam Greenway** as guest speaker. **Ben Stratton** is pastor.

Church's Haiti youth mission team will offer "Black Friday" child care Nov. 23 at the church from 6 a.m. or at parents' homes from midnight. **Darrell Morgan** is pastor.

■ **CADIZ**—Cadiz Church will host Little River Association's annual community Thanksgiving meal Nov. 22, 11 a.m. The church's Baptist Young Women also will hold a soup supper and cake auction Nov. 25, 7 p.m. All proceeds go to the church's Bangladesh mission team.

■ **GLENDALE**—Gilead Church will hold a "Deck the Halls" and missions testimony service Nov. 25, 6 p.m. Sam Hinkson is pastor.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Grace Church will hold a "Carol Sing" service, Nov. 25, 6 p.m. David Smith is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Parkland Church will hold a community Thanksgiving service Nov. 21, 7 p.m., with a pie fellowship to follow. Tom Curry is pastor.

■ **WILLIAMSTOWN**—Williamstown

City and First Baptist Church of Mayfield reached \$3 million.

Reaching \$2 million milestones were:

- Yellow Creek Baptist Church, Owensboro.
- Second Baptist Church, Greenville.

■ First Baptist Church, Franklin.

■ Bellevue Baptist Church, Owensboro.

Reaching \$1 million milestones were:

- Red House Baptist Church, Richmond.
- Graefenburg Baptist Church, Waddy.
- First Baptist Church, Cold Spring.
- Bloomfield Baptist Church.

■ Zion Baptist Church, Henderson.

■ South Jefferson Baptist Church, Louisville.

■ Highland Baptist Church, Shelbyville.

■ Cedar Creek Baptist Church, Louisville.

■ Bethel Baptist Church, Harrodsburg.

■ Concord Baptist Church, Hopkinsville.

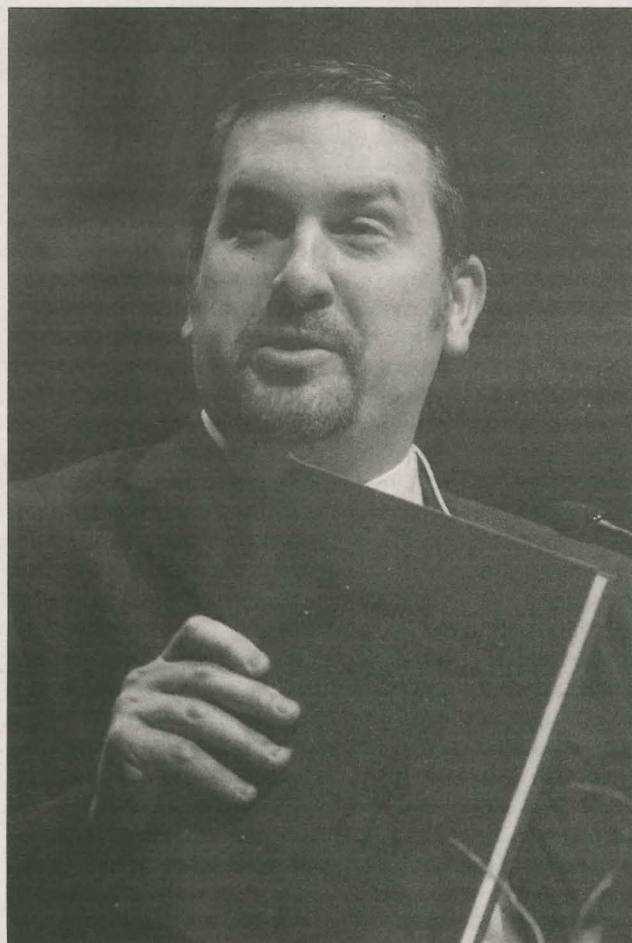
■ Rosebower Baptist Church, Paducah.

■ Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, Lewisburg.

■ Walnut Memorial Baptist Church, Owensboro.

■ First Baptist Church of Clinton. (KBC)

Kentucky Baptist history book



Ben Stratton, pastor of Farmington Baptist Church and treasurer of the J.H. Spencer Historical Society, presents the group's newly published volume of biographical sketches of prominent 20th century Kentucky Baptists. The book was unveiled at last week's Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting in Lexington. It features information on nearly 400 individuals who were influential in Kentucky Baptist life in the 20th century. The book's editor, Bill Whittaker, a retired pastor and former president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, worked with 90 other writers in the compiling the biographies. The Spencer group voted in 2010 to take on the book project. Copies can be ordered through the historical society for \$30. Send a check to J.H. Spencer Historical Society, P.O. Box 26, Farmington, KY 42040. (Photos by Robin Cornet Bass)

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: Christian, military and patriotic neckties, \$15 value, \$7; stripes and solid colors, \$7; clip-on ties, humor book with 500 jokes, "Laughter Doeth Good Like a Medicine" (1,400 sold), \$6. (606) 285-3051.

RESOURCES: Sound, projection, video, theatrical lighting; JCA Media, well known in the KBC, 20+ years of experience, installing quality equipment at reasonable prices. Jim Cottrell, owner, Elizabethtown, (270) 862-9586 or (270) 312-7492; Rusty King, project manager, Nashville, Tenn., (615) 972-8869; Amy Cottrell, operations manager, Louisville, acottrell@jcamediasolutions.com. References available. Email: jcot@windstream.net.

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 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

To place an advertisement:

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



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.

SEEKING: Owenton First Baptist Church is seeking a part-time minister of music. All inquiries can be made by calling (502) 484-2430. Resumés may be submitted to Owenton First Baptist Church, 213 N. Main St., Owenton, KY 40359.

SEEKING: Dry Ridge Baptist Church of Dry Ridge, Ky., is searching for a full-time pastor. Apply by sending a resumé to Dry Ridge Baptist Church, Attn: Pastor search committee, P.O. Box 14, Dry Ridge, KY 41035, or online to office@dryridgebaptist.com.

Forgiving the unforgivable

Wounded warrior now a servant of Syrian refugees he once hated

By Erich Bridges

Beirut—Forgive? Don't talk to me about forgiving. You didn't see what they did to my father, to my brother, to my daughter. You didn't see what my son's body looked like when they brought him home in a box.

A lot of Syrians will declare something like that—with blood in their eyes. The Syrian civil war that began last year has turned into a fight to the death between factions determined to destroy each other. Clans want payback. Families want revenge. Some of those hatreds seep across the border into Lebanon, where the same ethnic and religious tensions exist.

But Fadi*, a Lebanese follower of Christ, has learned about the power of forgiveness. And he wants to share it with Syrians, the people he once hated.

Now a 40-year-old husband and father, Fadi suffered terrible mistreatment by his father while growing up in a traditional Christian family in Lebanon. It was so bad that he ran away at 13 to join the Lebanese military, only to suffer even more brutal abuse in the ranks. Angry and bewildered, he stopped believing in God—or anything else. He threw himself into soldiering, eventually sustaining eight serious wounds in his unit's frequent cross-border clashes with Syrian forces. Any of the injuries could have killed him, but he survived to fight again.

A fellow soldier gave him a Bible, but he tore it up in anger. As an afterthought, however, he put the pieces in the breast pocket of his battle vest. The next time he saw combat, the Bible stopped a bullet meant for his heart.

"That incident affected me a lot," Fadi says. "The book that I refused safeguarded me from death. I started to desire to know more of Jesus. I prayed to Him, saying, 'If You are really the God of love, then help me to love You. Let me love my father and love those who abused me so I can know that You really love me.' In time, the love of Christ filled my heart toward those



Fadi (name changed) looks over a storage room filled with aid packages for Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Now a joyful servant of Christ, Fadi once hated Syrians. He fought them for years as a Lebanese soldier. But God taught him to love and forgive Syrians and others who hurt him. "When the war started in Syria in 2011, I went to my pastor and told him I'm ready to serve the Syrian refugees," Fadi says. "I was convinced that in order to love them, I needed to be available to show God's love in a practical way." (IMB/BP)

people. Since that date, I'm a new creation in Christ. I cannot forget the injuries or the pain, but they helped me discover God's love."

Fadi retired from the military, started a family and continued to grow in Christ. Still, he harbored deep hatred for his enemies: the Syrians. So he asked God to give him love for them, too.

"When the war started in Syria in 2011, I went to my pastor and told him I'm ready to serve the Syrian refugees," Fadi recounts. "I was convinced that in order to love them, I needed to be available to show God's love in a practical way."

In typical Fadi fashion, he put his life on the line to do it—visiting border villages under threat by Syrian forces.

"Many times, as we were serving the Syrian refugees on the borders, we were facing a direct attack from the Syrian army," he says. "I was trained because of my years of experience in the army not to be afraid of those attacks. One time we were visiting a family in a village divided from Syria by a riverbank. As we were there, this village started to be attacked randomly by the Syrian army—bombs and gunshots."

Another time he aided a Syrian family crossing a river into Lebanon. "Why are you risking your life to serve us?" the mother in the family asked.

"I shared the love of God in my life," Fadi says. "She told me that many times she had refused to accept a New Testament from her Syrian Christian friend. But

she said, 'As you have told me about the love of Christ, I promise you I'm going to read the New Testament. I want to know more about that love.'

"I don't know the reasons behind all that's happening in Syria," Fadi says. "But I know that God's reason is to share His message, His Word, with those people. I love to serve them."

Recently Fadi and a few co-workers visited a Syrian Muslim friend in Lebanon. Fadi's Muslim friend, Abu Khaled*, fled his town in Syria last year after 20 days of shelling by Syrian forces. He hid with his family in the sewers, then walked 50 miles to reach Lebanon. He hasn't seen his oldest son, captured in Syria, in more than a year. The son might be dead. But Abu Khaled, an influential older man who has become a leader among Syrian refugees, doesn't want revenge. He wants reconciliation.

"If we decide not to forgive, the cycle of death will continue," he said, rubbing his gray patch of beard. "But someone needs to sacrifice."

With his permission, the Christian visitors talked about Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God who became a sacrifice for all. Abu Khaled listened carefully. The conversations will continue.

As they prepared to leave, Fadi embraced Abu Khaled.

"He is my brother," Fadi said. (IMB/BP)

*Names changed. Erich Bridges is a global correspondent for the International Mission Board.

Growing up Jody: Students need adults who care enough to learn their names

By Joe Ball

For the first 13 years of my life, I was known as "Jody"—and depending on where I am, people still call me by that name.

There was a time I almost despised my name. It sounded like a girl's name, and the only other Jody I knew was from the old TV show, "Family Affair." In my opinion, that Jody was a sissy, and what boy wants to be known as that? So I changed it to "Joe."

Joe sounded manlier. It also was the name of the best man I knew: My dad. From then on I wanted to be called Joe.

One of the most prize possessions a student has is their name. It is our job as adults to know the names of the students that come through the doors of our churches. So, when Johnny wanted to be known as "John" and Gregoria asked to be called "Goria," "Gloria" or even "G.G."—I did my best to refer to them by the name they preferred at the time.

Each name represents a stage of life they are in, or a stage of life they want to leave behind. I drew the line, though,

when Tommy wanted to be referred to as "T-Rad."

Both, Chap Clark in his book, "Hurt," and Richard Ross in his book, "Student Ministry and the Supremacy of Christ," attest to the fact that teenagers need at least five adults in their lives who know their names, their hopes and dreams. These adults are necessary to help students navigate adolescence and grow as disciples. They need adults whose faces light up when they see that student at church.

I still remember as a child walking into Grandma Ball's house and it seemed like she was always glad to see me. I was one of 12 grandkids and each one of us was special to her. Each one of us, I am sure, felt like we were her favorite.

How awesome would it be if each student in our church had an adult in our congregation whose eyes lit up when they saw them and who could call them by name and was earnestly and regularly praying for them—someone who had almost become family for them?

Research has indicated that students who have these significant relationships with adults in the church, outside of

Youth Ministry Corner



Joe Ball

adults within the youth ministry, stick around longer and stay connected after they graduate. Some students may go through two or three youth ministers in their six years in the youth ministry, but those adults who know their name and genuinely strive to know who they are will make a lasting impression.

The impending holidays give us ample opportunities to put our students and adults together. Provide opportunities for students and adults to learn about one another and become a family.

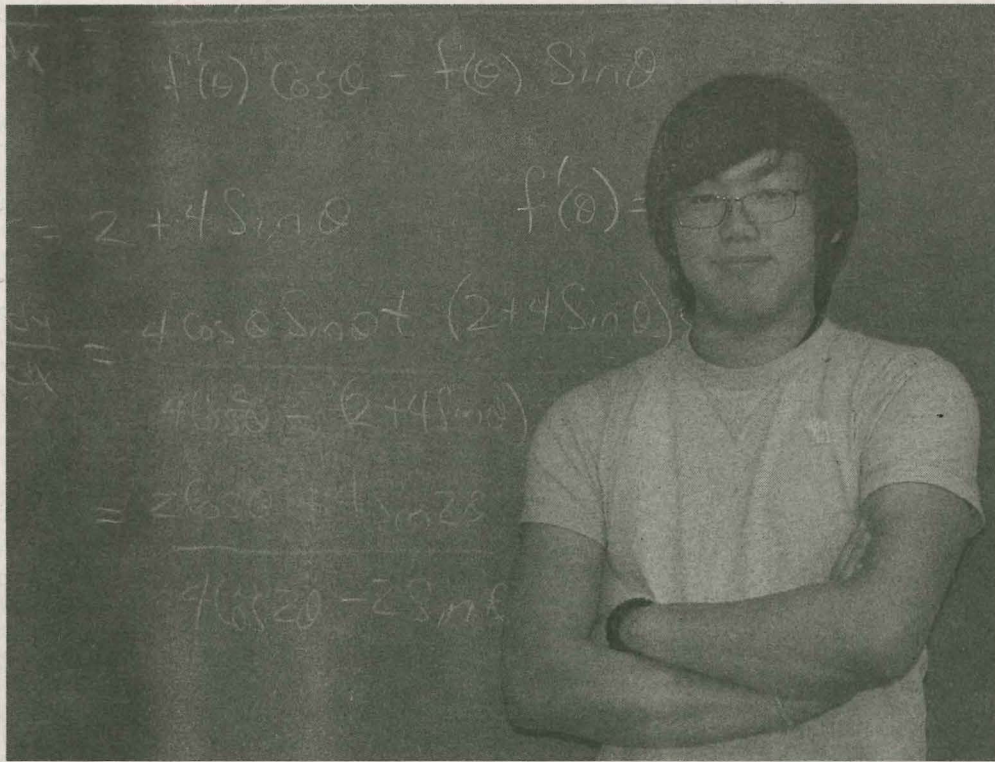
Instead of open seating at events, set up the fellowship hall family style and assign seating so that pairs students and adults are together? Then provide each table with a set of questions, like: What was your favorite holiday memories? What was the best present you ever received? What kind of traditions did your family have over the holidays?

Another suggestion for adults is to show up at school Christmas concerts and compliment students afterwards on the good job they did. Or, plan a couple of work days together. Rake the leaves of some senior adults, build a handicap ramp for a family, provide childcare for parents to Christmas shop without their kids, or clean out the storage areas of the church.

Instead of planning separate youth or adult projects, intentionally pair students and adults together. It is real hard to work alongside someone for an extended period of time and not learn something about them. The potential for doing life together, especially this time of year, is almost endless.

I know that in the next few weeks as we gather as an extended family to celebrate holidays, I will be called "Jody" way too many times to count. But that's OK. The people who call me that have known me the longest, and after all, they're family and being part of a family matters.

Joe Ball, a former youth minister at Edgewood Baptist Church in Hopkinsville, is youth ministry strategist for Crossing Ministries.



**When we try
to count our
blessings,
it gets
complicated.**

At this time of the year most people think a little more about what they're thankful for. Once we get started, we hardly know where to stop. God has blessed us in so many wonderful ways.

We thank the Lord for all who steadfastly remember us in prayer.

We are grateful for everyone who supports us with financial contributions and donated items.

We praise God for many who help us with short-term volunteer work.

We are thankful for our ministry team members who serve day in and day out.

And we rejoice in each student the Lord sends our way.



Please pray that God would grant us an abundant harvest as we minister to young people in His name.

Would you like to learn more about Oneida? Contact us!

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