

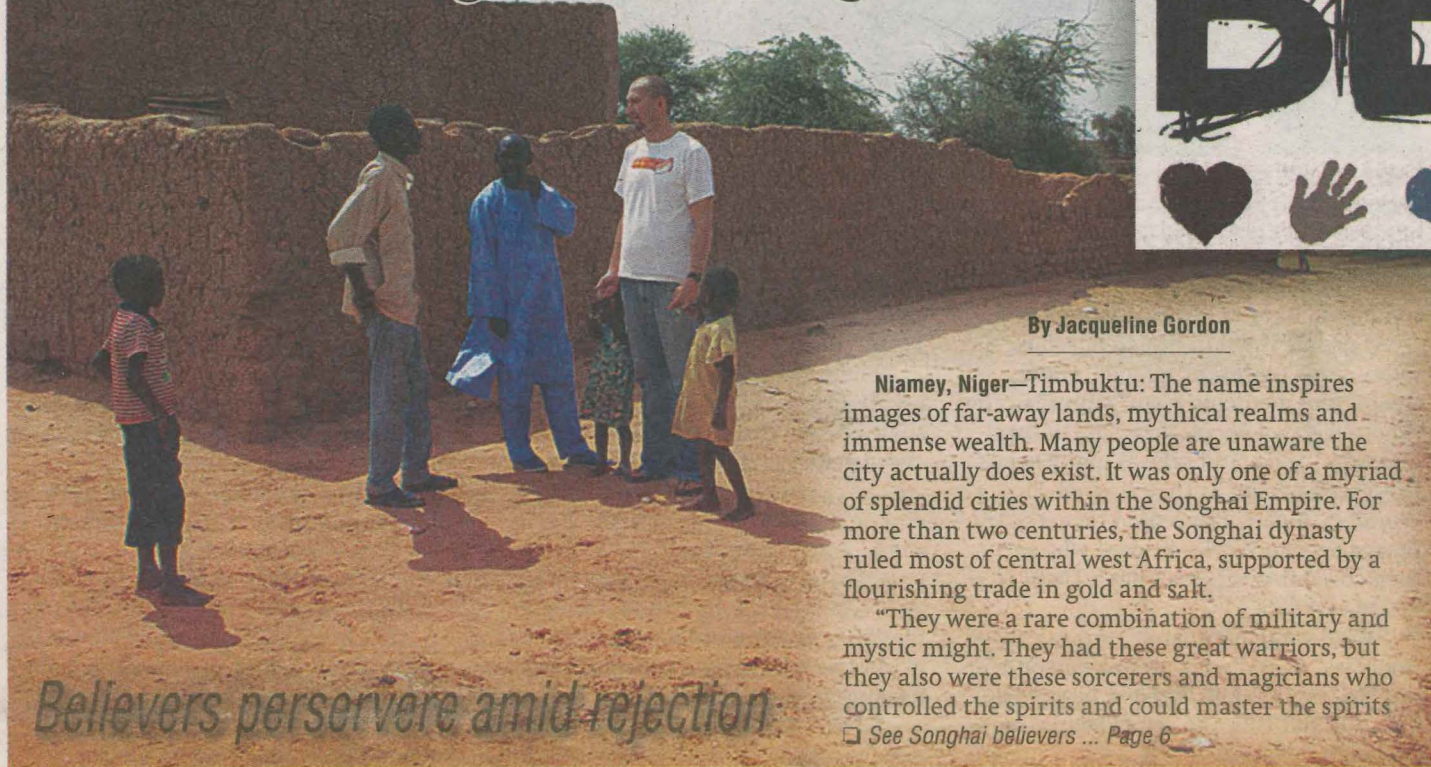
WESTERN Recorder

December 4, 2012

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 186, Issue 47

Life among the Songhai



By Jacqueline Gordon

Niamey, Niger—Timbuktu: The name inspires images of far-away lands, mythical realms and immense wealth. Many people are unaware the city actually does exist. It was only one of a myriad of splendid cities within the Songhai Empire. For more than two centuries, the Songhai dynasty ruled most of central west Africa, supported by a flourishing trade in gold and salt.

"They were a rare combination of military and mystic might. They had these great warriors, but they also were these sorcerers and magicians who controlled the spirits and could master the spirits"

□ See Songhai believers ... Page 6

Believers persevere amid rejection



LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING

2012 Week of Prayer for International Missions
Dec. 2-9

Nepalese pastors brave threats and bombs to see Christ's name glorified in the Himalayas. Believers in West Africa bury a Christian woman, uniting in a strong witness to the Songhai community that refused her a proper burial.

In Central Asia, an International Mission Board doctor's greatest concern isn't for safety, but that his ministry will make a difference for the kingdom. In war-torn Somalia of the 1990s, an IMB worker knew he'd have to be willing to die for Jesus—an experience that led him to spend years learning how and why believers in persecution grow unimaginably strong in the faith.

This year's "Week of Prayer" stories remind Southern Baptists that engaging people groups in the hard places comes with risk and sacrifice, not just for missionaries but also for all who obediently choose to be His heart, His hands and His voice. Most of us are not threatened

□ See Lottie Moon ... Page 6

Partnerships soon to pair students with disaster relief at home, abroad

By Ken Walker

Morehead—On the verge of their planned departure last spring to help clean up after a tornado in Alabama, the Baptist Campus Ministry at Morehead State University shifted gears.

Instead of making an eight-hour trip, its spring break missions teams traveled 30 miles south to West Liberty. There, 75 students joined adult leaders from Kentucky and Virginia for training and disaster relief work following the March 2 tornado.

It included massive chainsaw operations and other cleanup in the town of 3,500 and neighboring Menifee County. Students also served breakfast and dinner in West Liberty for nine days.

"This was a unique experience," said Gene Parr, the school's Baptist campus minister. "One of our students came back in tears and said, 'I just spent the day cleaning up somebody's life. It was spread all over the hillside.'"

Morehead State's students did more than help Kentuckians recover from disaster. They planted the seeds for a collegiate disaster relief program, eyed for a 2013 start along with a new international emphasis.

While dates and sites aren't set, Coy Webb, disaster relief director for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, said the KBC soon will offer campus training to help mobilize student crews after a disaster strikes.

Phillip Ritchey, director of missions for Anderson Baptist Association, and Raven Weaver of Carter Creek Missionary Baptist

□ See DR partnerships ... Page 2



STRATEGY SESSION North American Mission Board staffers Susan Peugh (left) and Vince Alderman discuss logistics for involving collegiate students in Hurricane Sandy disaster relief ministry in New Jersey during the students' winter break. NAMB is partnering with the Kentucky Baptist Convention and others to get college students more involved in disaster relief efforts. (Photo by Susan Whitley/NAMB)

Study shows selflessness, spiritual maturity link

Nashville, Tenn.—Selfless service to God and others both impacts and is impacted by transformational discipleship, according to a study conducted by LifeWay Research.

The survey shows 58 percent of Protestant churchgoers in the United States agree with the statement: "I am intentionally putting my spiritual gift(s) to use serving God and others." Seventeen percent disagree with the statement.

A greater percentage of respondents indicate they look for opportunities to serve others in the community. Asked to respond to the statement, "I intentionally try to serve people outside my church who have

□ See Selflessness ... Page 3

Transformational Discipleship SPIRITUAL GIFTS and SERVING OTHERS

Survey of 2,830 American Protestant churchgoers

Spiritual Gifts

I intentionally use my spiritual gifts to serve God and others.



Sacrifice

I intentionally give up certain purchases so I can use that money for others.



Serving Others

I intentionally try to serve people outside my church who have tangible needs.



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Western Recorder 12-4-2012

Church's 'game' raises \$30,000 for hunger fund

By Mark Hunter

Amite, La.—Instead of preaching a sermon for World Hunger Sunday, Pastor Mike Foster divided the congregation into three groups and played the "Poverty Bean Game."

The activity, which demonstrates the disparity of wealth between developed countries, like the U.S., and Third World countries, stirred members of First Baptist Church of Amite, La., to give nearly \$30,000—more than three times the usual Sunday offering.

"It was amazing—it just confirmed that God is great," Foster said. "It really opened our eyes to see there is a world out there that needs help."

The World Hunger Fund is the channel Southern Baptist churches use to provide financial resources for hunger ministries in North America and overseas.

Foster, who served with the International Mission Board in Mexico and Costa Rica before becoming First Baptist's pastor, said he was inspired to play the Poverty Bean Game after his wife and two daughters returned from summer camp burdened for the world's hungry.

According to the rules of the game, the congregation is divided into three groups. Five percent of the congregation represents First World countries, receiving 20 beans of "money" per person. Fifteen percent of the congregation represents Second World countries with 15 beans per person and the remaining 80 percent represent Third World countries with 10 beans per person.

"The First World is like the United States and Canada which has plenty," Foster said. "The Second World is like Russia, up-and-coming nations which have almost enough to survive, and the Third World—not near enough to survive."

To win—or at least survive—each per-



FACES OF JOY The World Hunger Fund, to which a Louisiana church has given more than \$30,000 recently, assists such initiatives as Tabitha Ministries in Sweetwaters, South Africa. Fund-provided food parcels are distributed to more than 6,000 orphaned children living in child-headed households in a community devastated by HIV/AIDS. (BGR photo)

son had to have 17 beans at game's end.

As people stood in line to purchase index cards representing food, water, shelter and medicine from "stores" in the sanctuary, two people acted as "natural disasters" and could take as many beans from each person as they wanted. First Worlders, meanwhile, could take a bean from a Second World resident who in turn could take a bean from a Third World resident.

As the game progressed, several "missionaries" would walk up to a person and say, "In Jesus' name, here is a bean," Foster said. "But they ran out of beans pretty quickly."

When the game was over, the First World went to one side of the auditorium, the Second World went to the other side and the Third World residents filled the center. "Just about everybody in the First World survived, and just about everybody in the Second World survived," Foster

said, "but we quickly realized most of the Third World died out."

"There were kids trying to hide because they didn't want people to take their beans," Foster said. "Some people chose not to participate, and that was part of the sermon, too. We sometimes choose not to participate in the Lord's work—and who suffers?"

Activities like the Poverty Bean Game offer a dose of reality to those who don't realize how difficult life is for most of the world's people, Baptist Global Response Executive Director Jeff Palmer said.

"More than 385 million people live on less than \$1 a day, and another 275 million people live on less than \$2 a day," Palmer said. "If you haven't traveled into that world, it's hard for an American to fathom the poverty. But Southern Baptist workers who serve in the really hard places see the harsh reality every day." (Louisiana Baptist Message/BP)

DR partnerships

Continued from page 1

Church in Greenville, have joined with Webb to organize the program.

"It was a good response and worked well," Webb said of the Morehead State project. "It demonstrated to us the potential college students offer."

The KBC won't relax its standards requiring training to respond to a disaster, Webb said, but fewer lectures and more video and hands-on training could be the standard for collegiate volunteers.

Kentucky will join Florida, California and Alabama Baptists in offering college training, according to Fritz Wilson, the Southern Baptist Convention's national disaster relief director.

Wilson said so many volunteers are retirees, students will bring a freshness and enthusiasm to the field, as well as a passion to share the gospel.

"Kentucky's collegiate program, like those in other states, is an investment in the future of Southern Baptist Disaster Relief," Wilson said.

"Many students who train and respond will get what we call the 'disaster bug,'" he added. "It will also allow them to see that if God can use them in a disaster setting, He can use them in their everyday lives."

Though a relative newcomer to the

program, Weaver has served with the National Guard for 10 years, including in the aftermath of the 2009 ice storm that blanketed Kentucky.

She said she anticipates that collegians will be interested in another new KBC initiative which will coordinate international disaster relief services through Baptist Global Response.

Overseas response

Working through international missionaries, and Ashland-area natives, Mark and Susan Hatfield, the program will send teams to sub-Saharan Africa to assist with "level 2" disasters. The term refers to calamities that don't attract the kind of international media attention that recent earthquakes in Haiti and Japan did.

While attending training on water purification, Weaver said Webb's mention of the new initiative caused "bells and whistles" to go off in her mind.

"I see myself as one of those leaders taking a group overseas," she said. "They will be able to plan for a summertime mission trip. I can see where students would be eager to be involved."

The new program is to include representatives from the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia.

Ironically, Virginia's response to Hurricane Sandy prevented two members of that unit from attending an Oct. 31

planning meeting at the Kentucky Baptist Building which otherwise attracted about 40 people.

Mark Hatfield called the session encouraging. The veteran missionary said focusing on the 41-nation region will help expand BGR's reach and provide more assessments after disasters.

Recent flooding in Niger is one example where Kentuckians can help. Another is a brush fire, which can wipe out a village and its crop harvest.

"In Niger we were just asked if we can help with shovels and picks," said Hatfield, who lives in Kenya. "It can take people a long time to get back to where they were before."

Hatfield said he hopes to host a vision tour by the KBC during the first half of 2013 and several community development teams after that. The latter would get involved in such projects as providing clean water, nutrition and hospice care.

And, because of the long-term nature of many regional disasters, Hatfield said he believes the new college teams can play a valuable role in international relief.

Parr, who has served 30 years as campus minister at Morehead State, said he is gratified that MSU students helped inspire some of this activity.

"I'm so glad that Coy has jumped on this," he said. "We currently have a generation of students that is very interested in making a difference." (KBC)

Summerlin names KBC committee chairs for '12-'13

Louisville—In his first official action as Kentucky Baptist Convention president, Dan Summerlin last week appointed 14 Kentucky Baptists to chair convention committees for the coming year.

The pastor of Paducah's Lone Oak First Baptist Church tapped nine pastors, two church staff members, a director of missions, a seminary professor and a vocational evangelist to head the committees through 2013. Two of the appointees are former convention presidents.

The appointments to the seven Mission Board committees are the first since the convention's reorganization that was approved in May. Three board committees were officially renamed last month to reflect the new Mission Board staff teams created in the restructuring. A previous committee, resource development and communications, was eliminated.

The individuals appointed by Summerlin to chair the Mission Board committees are:

Daryl Cornett, pastor, First Baptist Church, Hazard, agencies and institutions committee.

Chad Fugitt, pastor, Central Baptist Church, Corbin, nominating committee.

Adam Greenway, professor and associate dean, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, administrative committee.

Don Mathis, vocational evangelist, member, Eastwood Baptist Church, Bowling Green, business and finance committee.

Kevin Milburn, pastor, Union Baptist Church, church consultation and revitalization committee.

Chris Turpin, pastor, Donaldson Baptist Church, Princeton, evangelism and church planting committee.

Doug Williams, pastor of preaching and teaching, Bullitt Lick Baptist Church, Shepherdsville, missions mobilization committee.

Those Kentucky Baptists appointed to chair the KBC's seven standing committees are:

David Edmunds, adult pastor, Highview Baptist Church, Louisville, Committee on Public Affairs.

Greg Faulls, pastor, Bellevue Baptist Church, Owensboro, Committee on Credentials.

Bill Langley, pastor, Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown, Committee on Committees.

Bill Patterson, director of missions, Green Valley Baptist Association, Henderson, Committee on Nominations.

Ben Stratton, pastor, Farmington Baptist Church, Committee on Constitution and Bylaws.

Mark Swadley, minister of music, Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah, Committee on the Annual Meeting.

Michael York, pastor, Durbin Memorial Baptist Church, Lexington, Committee on Resolutions. (WR)

Land: Proposed charitable deduction cap would be 'devastating' for organizations

By Tom Strode

Washington—A proposal to limit charitable deductions would be devastating for churches, religious organizations and other nonprofits if adopted by the federal government, according to a Southern Baptist church-state expert.

Leaders in both political parties have suggested further restricting charitable deductions for at least some Americans who itemize on their tax returns as a way of helping avert the "fiscal cliff" facing the country Jan. 1. Without congressional action, the tax cuts implemented under President George W. Bush will expire on that date, producing about \$7 trillion in tax increases. At the same time, inaction will result in sequestration—automatic cuts to defense and non-defense spending of \$55 billion each.

The idea of capping the charitable deduction "is as serious a threat to religious organizations as anything the

federal government has done in recent decades," said Richard Land, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

"This would be catastrophic in its impact, particularly on those large gifts that many religious organizations, colleges, universities and ministries, as well as churches, depend upon for continuing operations," Land told Baptist Press last week. "Everything we know from past experience tells us if they cap deductions, it will seriously erode charitable giving."

In a Nov. 28 email alert, Land urged Southern Baptists and others to ask their members of Congress to oppose further limits on charitable deductions.

Enacting such restrictions not only would reduce giving to churches and charities, but would harm services such organizations provide to the needy,



Richard Land

according to Land and other opponents of the proposal.

"At a time of severe economic dislocation, when the people's demand for the services of charitable institutions is particularly high, it would be extremely counterproductive and illogical to implement tax policies which would result in crippling cuts to the budgets of charitable institutions, rendering them far less able to help the most vulnerable in our society," Land said in a Nov. 29 column posted on Baptist Press.

In his budgets, Obama has proposed capping the itemized deduction at 28 percent for couples whose incomes are at least \$250,000 and individuals who make at least \$200,000 a year. High-income earners now can deduct at least 33 percent in charitable gifts.

The proposal could reduce charitable donations by as much as \$7 billion a year, according to an estimate cited by Independent Sector, which leads a network of about 600 nonprofit and philanthropic organizations. (BP)

Court rules against abortion mandate

St. Louis—For the first time, a federal appeals court has issued an order against the Obama administration's abortion/contraceptive mandate.

The Nov. 28 order from a three-judge Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals panel prevents the government from forcing a Missouri business, O'Brien Industrial Holdings, LLC, to cover contraceptives and abortion-causing drugs in its employee health care plans as the appeals process is completed. The panel's temporary injunction came two months after a lower court tossed out the lawsuit.

It marks the fourth time this year that a federal court has issued an order or ruling against the mandate, which applies to businesses and religious organizations. There are about 40 cases nationwide seeking to overturn the mandate, which was implemented by the Department of Health and Human Services after President Obama signed the health care bill into law.

The lawsuit by the American Center for Law and Justice says the mandate would force the business' owner, Frank

O'Brien, to violate his "religious beliefs and company policy." The mandate violates two federal laws, as well as the First Amendment guarantee of religious freedom and free speech, according to the suit. If the court does not intervene and O'Brien does not follow the mandate, he would face steep fines. O'Brien's company and its subsidiaries employ about 85 people.

"The order sends a message that the religious beliefs of employers must be respected by the government," ACLJ attorney Francis Manion said. "We have argued from the beginning that employers like Frank O'Brien must be able to operate their business in a manner consistent with their moral values, not the values of the government."

While this suit involves a private business, many challenges against the mandate involve religious organizations. Tyndale House Publishers, which publishes Bibles and Christian books, won in federal court last month when a judge issued a temporary injunction preventing it from being forced to follow the mandate. (BP)

Mo. Baptist university reports theft

St. Louis—A Missouri Baptist University employee has been charged with embezzling about \$107,000 since being promoted to the university controller's position in 2009.

St. Louis County prosecutors charged 48-year-old Melinda Okai with theft of more than \$25,000, a felony carrying a penalty of between five and 15 years in prison.

According to media reports, Okai allegedly executed fraudulent refund checks and took out numerous emergency student loans for her husband, who had been a student at Missouri Baptist University, between December 2009 and May of this year.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported that Okai confessed to her employer but refused to make a statement to police.

The newspaper quoted court documents alleging that Okai used two strategies. One involved refund checks that are issued when a government educational loan exceeds the amount of charges from the university. The other was

emergency loans of up to \$1,000 that are credited to students' accounts in anticipation of receiving loan payments.

Police said Okai executed numerous loans on her husband's account but never credited the loans to his tuition. She was listed as the responsible billing party, so the checks were listed in her name and posted to her personal bank account.

Discrepancies reportedly totaling \$107,406.39 were discovered during an internal audit.

Opened in 1957 as an extension of Hannibal-LaGrange College, Missouri Baptist College was chartered as a four-year liberal-arts college in 1964. It was renamed Missouri Baptist University in 2002, and today enrolls about 5,000 students on its main campus in St. Louis County and several satellite campuses.

The school is one of five former Missouri Baptist Convention institutions sued over charter changes in 2000 and 2001 removing the MBC from electing their boards of trustees. The litigation between the two is ongoing. (ABP)

Selflessness

Continued from page 1

tangible needs," 60 percent agree—although only 17 percent strongly agree. Fifteen percent disagree with the statement.

"Serving God and Others" is one of eight attributes of discipleship that consistently show up in the lives of believers who are progressing in spiritual maturity, according to LifeWay Research.

"Service doesn't just happen in a church," the organization's president, Ed Stetzer, said. "It must be modeled and encouraged. As we look at the breakdown of attributes and correlated disciplines, the data shows that praying expectantly, getting involved in the

community and discipling others fosters a posture of serving. As such, disciples are serving in, through and beyond their churches for the cause of Christ."

But just 9 percent of churchgoers strongly agree with the statement: "I intentionally give up certain purchases so I can use that money for others." Thirty percent somewhat agree and 32 percent disagree.

Approximately a quarter of respondents selected "neither agree nor disagree" as their answer for the three statements.

"Service and activism have become popular in our culture today, especially among younger adults," Stetzer pointed out. "However, most of this benevolent activity is fairly low-level involvement that does not cost the giver much. The

midrange responses on the 'Serving God and Others' attribute reveals lots of good intentions and some occasional actions, but much lower intentionality, consistency or sacrifice."

Serving clearly impacts growth, Stetzer summarized. "The study shows that individuals who have positive scores for 'Serving God and Others' have higher scores in the other seven attributes of the Transformational Discipleship study, as well.

"For example, scores for 'Sharing Christ' jump 24 percent when individuals have positive 'Serving God and Others' scores and 51 percent for individuals with the highest 'Serving God and Others' scores," he explained.

Likewise, Stetzer pointed out that positive responses in the other seven

attributes of discipleship correlate with higher scores in "Serving God and Others."

"Growth leads to service and serving leads to growth—it's deeply connected," he noted. For example, Stetzer said that positive scores in "Bible Engagement" result in a 17 percent increase in scores for "Serving God and Others" compared to those who do not have positive scores for "Bible Engagement."

"We saw most say they were serving in some way, but far too many are sitting down on the job—particularly when the Bible says everyone should ... 'use it to serve others, as good managers of the varied grace of God,'" Stetzer said, referring to 1 Peter 4:10. "There is a huge gap between this passage and most churches' practice." (LW/BP)

Thankful for CP

Hearing a "faith-funded" missionary couple appeal to messengers for financial support during an associational meeting earlier this year reminded me of the

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

challenges many missionaries face in raising support. Surprisingly, God also used the experience to remind me of His calling on my life. How so?

Like the typical missionary, this couple was making a desperate plea for funds from anyone willing to listen. They also were taking

precious time away from their mission field and gospel work in order to raise financial support, knowing their work is always in jeopardy if the pledges aren't kept. As much as my heart was touched by their emotional appeal, I left the meeting thanking God for churches and pastors who support Great Commission work through the Cooperative Program.

Why am I so thankful? Three reasons rise to the top, among many.

First, I am convinced that CP missions dollars go far. For example, just as a gallon of milk is cheaper at Walmart than at the gas station, the evidence suggests that a dollar invested in the strategic focus and expertise of the largest overseas missionary sending agency in the history of missions (the International Mission Board) can get more boots on the ground among the world's unreached than a dollar given to support an independent missionary.

Second, CP missions dollars have high accountability. At home and abroad, bureaucracy in Southern Baptist missions has been deeply cut, resulting in much leaner support and accountability structures. But those structures still exist and are very effective at providing appropriate oversight and accountability to frontline missionaries who will safeguard the work.

Third, CP missions dollars are focused. Instead of every missionary taking time from the harvest field for extensive travel to raise funds, the Southern Baptist system provides for a limited number of people to promote the work among the churches and keeps the missionaries in the field.

Listening to this passionate couple share about their work and how they longed to return to it, I realized anew the privilege God has given me. When I accepted my current ministry assignment from the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board, I told the members of the Mission Board that I would consider being "Cooperative Program fundraiser-in-chief" as one of my primary responsibilities. Why? Because I believe in not so much a Southern Baptist program, but God's Great Commission program, and I see how the Cooperative Program of Southern Baptists is accomplishing God's Great Commission "program." And I am grateful for the privilege of setting before our churches the cause of Christ in Kentucky and to the ends of the earth, so those missionaries who are on the frontlines can stay on the frontlines.

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

We, too, are to be His heart, His hands, His voice

Matthew 16:24-25, the theme passage for the Week of Prayer for international missions, is one of those disconcerting sayings of Jesus—not because His words are difficult to comprehend, but because they are so challenging to live out daily. What is required of would-be disciples is radical obedience, extreme commitment.

In two short verses, Jesus lays out the prerequisites of discipleship: to deny self (set aside one's goals, dreams, ambitions, needs, even friends and family) and to take up a cross (undertake His mission of seeking and saving the lost—no matter the cost). The demand is so central to what it means to follow Him that it also is found in Mark's and Luke's Gospels. Just how central? Jesus states in Matthew 10:38 that "anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me."

But by denying one's self, we aren't talking about giving up something we desire for a while, as the phrase is popularly understood. In the Broadman Bible Commentary, Henry Turlington informs us: "It requires submission to a new King in one's life, replacing the selfishness inherent in our persons." Nor is bearing our cross merely carrying a burden or enduring hardship. It entails "an absolute commitment, even to death." Luke adds the word "daily" to drive home this point.

What does "picking up the cross" look like today? It means:

My heart becomes His heart. We share God's passion for reaching people with the gospel. In a Baptist Press story, I was surprised—no, not so much surprised as delighted—to see Sarah Cowen, a young adult from a church where my family attended years ago in South Carolina, featured in a Week of Prayer story. She comes from a fine family with a heart for missions, so serving as an International Mission Board journeyman seems a natural expression of God's love flowing through her veins. Missions is in her blood.

My hands become His hands. Most disciples are aware they should be serving in, through and beyond their churches, "but far too many are sitting down on the job," LifeWay researchers found (see story on page 1). In his reflections on Psalm 66 in a soon-to-be devotional classic, "In the Secret

Place" former IMB President Jerry Rankin concurs, "There are many nominal Christians whose commitment is only a pretense. ... Many, not in outward rebellion but with a subtle attitude of self-centeredness and self-sufficiency, exalt themselves." He then corrects, "Marks of authentic faith among those who have seen and experienced the glory of God's grace are an abiding joy and a heart of praise that are seen and are evident to others. That will always be our most effective witness, to the nations as well as to our family, neighbors and colleagues."

My voice becomes His voice. Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union Executive Director Joy Bolton in a recent blog writes, "We are His voice as we share in witnessing to the lost. International missionaries depend on us to be His voice locally as they go globally. Our own participation in sharing the gospel is vital. Not only are we surrounded by lost family, friends, classmates and neighbors, but our communities are now home to people from the nations." Opportunities to be His voice abound right here in Kentucky.

So, what does it mean to be radically obedient? With Lottie Moon, we must boldly declare, "I cannot be silent" (see story on page 5). Some not-so-well-known trivia about Lottie, recorded by Historian Duane Bolin, is her Kentucky connection. She once was called, "The angel Danville entertained unaware." That story is found in the May 5, 1982 Western Recorder, in which Catherine Allen, then-assistant to the executive director of the national WMU, paid tribute to "the legend" as a historical marker was unveiled outside First Baptist Church of Danville. Lottie lived in Danville from 1866-71 while teaching at a female institution run by the church.

Lottie Moon's sacrificial commitment of nearly 40 years to share the gospel in China, of course, inspired our Christmas offering for international missions. "May this place be a reminder that today, we may be entertaining tomorrow's great ones," Allen said at the marker's unveiling. May her sacrifice also remind us that we, too, are to be His heart, His hands and His voice.

After Thought

By Todd Deaton



Tips for hosting a purposeful caroling party

Now, here's a fun, church-wide Christmas project: Plan a gigantic caroling blitz with an outreach purpose. Try these simple tips for planning.

cars at fire stations, Christmas tree lots and mall parking lots (with permission).

■ The homes of recent visitors to your church and their neighbors.

Fresh Ideas



Diana Davis

Tip 1: Make caroling maps

Each caroling team will receive a unique list of homes and prospective members to visit. Design a plan that fits your church and community, considering distance and time. Mappers will try to set one pre-arranged appointment for each team, such as a homebound member or church guest. Where to carol?

■ The homes of homebound members and their neighbors.

■ All homes within a few blocks of your church or an entire subdivision.

■ Your town's mayor, police chief or other leaders.

■ A nursing home (with permission).

■ "Drive-by" teams, including those with mobility issues, carol from their

Tip 2: Offer multiple party times
For best participation, offer a choice of caroling hours and perhaps a choice of days.

Tip 3: Recruit great leaders

You will need mappers, cocoa servers and a promotion team. Most importantly, recruit lots of caroling team leaders. Set a big goal for the number of teams.

Tip 4: Add extras

Caroling team leaders set a joyful atmosphere. They may bring Santa hats, long scarves, kazoos, sleigh bells or tambourines. Make signs like "Merry Christmas" and "From (your church name)." They may even decorate their cars with battery-operated lights and garland.

Tip 5: Advertise

Create excitement. Provide online registration. Hang sign-up sheets at church or pass them around in meetings, classes and worship.

Tip 6: Caroling day

Caroling team leaders arrive early to choose a mapped assignment, and pick up church brochures and invitations to Christmas events. As carolers arrive, they immediately join a team. They sign Christmas cards to deliver, and when a team has six to 12 people, they pray together and depart.

Tip 7: The after-celebration

Carolers return to enjoy music, fellowship, hot cocoa and Christmas joy. A board is updated as teams arrive to show the grand total of people visited. Sharing the joy of Christmas with your community—now, that's something to celebrate.

Diana Davis is author of "Fresh Ideas" and "Deacon Wives." A sample instruction sheet for caroling team leaders is available at www.DianaDavis.org.

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Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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Week of Prayer: Lottie Moon, 100 years later

By Erich Bridges

She died on board a ship 100 years ago Christmas Eve—sick, exhausted and brokenhearted over leaving her beloved Chinese friends in their time of suffering.

It was a bittersweet end to a long and fruitful life, but it wasn't the end of Lottie Moon's story. What is it about this woman that has inspired so many Southern Baptists, for so many years, to give their own lives and treasure to God's mission?

Born into privilege on a pre-Civil War plantation in Virginia, rambunctious young Lottie received the best education money could buy. But the difference between the fine words she heard from adults and the realities of life troubled her.

A young, unbelieving Lottie told classmates her middle initial, 'D', stood for "Devil." She pulled pranks, missed chapel and scoffed at religion. She was a brilliant scholar, however, and became one of the most educated women of her era. But knowledge alone couldn't satisfy her soul. She began a search for truth.

Lottie's spiritual struggle came to a dramatic climax one night, sealing her commitment to serve God and others. She witnessed the ravages of Civil War, which destroyed the old society she had known. Matured by the experience, but just as independent as ever, she boldly joined her sister to become one of the first single female missionaries to China.

Little did she know what lay ahead.

Lottie arrived in north China in 1873, just as the last imperial dynasty was beginning to crumble. She struggled to learn the ways of Chinese culture as her sister suffered mental and emotional breakdowns. Despite bitter opposition from many Chinese—and the bunker mentality of other missionaries—Lottie was determined to take the message of God's love to the vast countryside. She went to the villages, often on her own.

"Here I am working alone in a city of many thousand inhabitants," she wrote in one of her many letters home. "It is grievous to think of these human souls going down to death without even one opportunity of

hearing the name of Jesus. How many can I reach? The needs of these people press upon my soul, and I cannot be silent."

She experienced isolation and loneliness. She had an opportunity to marry and return home. Her response: "God had first claim on my life, and since the two conflicted, there could be no question about the result." She persisted through war and famine, because the Chinese needed to

know her Lord.

Disease, turmoil and lack of co-workers threatened to undo Lottie's work. But she gave her life completely to God, helping lay the foundation of what would become the modern Chinese church, one of the fastest-growing Christian movements in the world.

She once wrote to the Foreign Mission Board, "Please say to the (new) missionaries they are coming to a life of hardship, responsibility and constant self-denial."

Lottie Moon died at 72, ill and in declining health after she had made decades of sacrifices for her beloved Chinese.

Who can relate to her today? Many Americans, particularly young people, have all the material things they want—but it's not enough. In an aimless era, they crave direction and purpose for their lives. The more challenging the cause, the better. Her life speaks powerfully to a generation desperate for meaning and heroic role models.

Thousands have followed Lottie's example during the century since her death, going just as boldly, obediently, sacrificially.

But not without Southern Baptists' gifts to support them. Giving has its own call to obedience and sacrifice.

Lottie said it best 100 years ago: "How many there are ... who imagine that because Jesus paid it all, they need pay nothing, forgetting that the prime object of their salvation was that they should follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ in bringing back a lost world to God."

She followed to the end—and changed history. A new generation will change it again, if you make it possible for them to go. (BP)

Erich Bridges is the IMB's global correspondent.

COMMENTARY

Key words for retirement planning

By Don Spencer

Which would you rather do over the weekend: plan for next summer's one week vacation or do some retirement planning? Too often, people spend more time planning a vacation than they do for 20 or 30 years of retirement.

Studies show that about one-third of adults in their 50s have never established a retirement plan. Here are four key words to keep in mind:

Participate. Do not assume that your employer or retirement plan provider is looking out for your retirement needs. You must be involved. You must set goals for 10, 20 and 30 years into the future. Even the best financial advisors cannot help you until you have established these goals. Financial professionals can help you identify your risk tolerance, but it must be yours, not theirs. It's your responsibility to make sure that retirement plan incorporates your Christian values.

Harmonize. A plan for financial security in retirement cannot be done in isolation. Some folks deal with the rest of their financial life and treat their retirement plan like it is in another world. A well-designed retirement plan will always take into consideration other aspects of your financial life.

Anticipate. There will be unforeseen things occur in your retirement years. Make provisions for these as much as possible. Things that have a direct financial impact include unusual market volatility affecting one's investments, changes in tax laws, change in health conditions and medical costs, unexpected family crises, and changes in your life expectancy. Also factor in the changing world as it might be in 20 or 30 years. Only a few years ago, no one would have anticipated needing computers and cell phones.

Discipline. No retirement plan will help unless you have the commitment and discipline to stick to it. Set your goals, make your plan to achieve those goals, then make it an integral part of your life.

Don Spencer is a certified financial planner and a consultant with the Kentucky Baptist Convention's church financial benefits department.



Creating a Christmas countdown

By Valerie Vincent

Q: My spouse is already getting caught up again in the holiday season and its countdown. What can I do to keep the right focus?

A: The retail world has begun the countdown to Christmas and its version of the season of giving. Commercials and calendars take note of just how many days are left until the big day. So, how about a Christmas countdown making use of Gary Chapman's "Five Love Languages"? It can be easy to get caught up in the busyness of the holidays and the pressure of shopping for family. What if you and your spouse create a unique countdown of your own until Christmas Day?

Chapman outlines five love languages: words of affirmation; quality time; receiving gifts; acts of service; and physical touch. By turning each of these into a gift of the season, you could create a calendar of 25 days until Christmas by devoting five days to each of these love languages. The two of you could come up with a plan where each of you focuses on the same language at the same time or choose randomly, as long as all are covered.

You even could change the song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas," to focus on the five love languages. On the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, not a partridge, but quality time. On the second day of Christmas, my true love gave to me, not two turtle doves, but words of affirmation. By focusing on your relationship rather than commercial expectations, you honor the gift of relationship God gave in Christ which is celebrated Christmas Day.

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



A father's love says, 'I will never leave you'

By Cheryl Robinson

Earlier this year, my newly divorced son, who is actively serving in the U.S. Navy, decided to spend a weekend with his three children at Balboa Park in San Diego. He made plans for an exciting, fun-filled day since he had recently returned

from a deployment overseas. That morning, Jonathan, 14, Joshua, 9, and Stephanie, 5, were taking in the museums, attractions and venues when out of the clear, blue sky, Joshua was gone.

Joshua is a smart little guy, often becoming sidetracked, wandering off to take a closer look at something he finds interesting or peculiar. There was so much for his curious mind to absorb, and he couldn't wait to investigate all Balboa Park had to offer.

Once Joseph realized Joshua was missing, an agonizing and intense search ensued. Joseph and Jonathan, with Stephanie in tow, ran, searching frantically, through the park for an hour, but Joshua was nowhere to be found.

Out of sheer terror, Joseph knew he had a decision to make and ultimately reported Joshua as missing at the information booth.

His decision was made, and Balboa Park came to a screeching halt.

An Amber Alert was issued, the gates were locked and doorways into the museums and other attractions were put into lockdown mode. Everybody—moms and dads, police and park staff—joined in the search.

As Joshua's grandmother, I can't begin to imagine what was going on in his mind. I'm sure he must

have been just as frightened as Joseph was. He must have run through the park, too, thinking, "I'm in this huge place with all of these people. How on earth am I going to find my dad?"

Finally, in his 9-year-old mind, he made the decision to return to the spot where he thought his dad would eventually come looking for him.

The search drug on for nearly half an hour when Joshua finally was found in the enormous parking lot, shaking nervously in the mid-day sun next to his dad's truck amongst a sea of other cars. By the time he was found, Joshua was pretty shaken up, as was the rest of his family and everyone at the park that day.

All he could think of to say was, "I thought you left me." Joseph lovingly responded, "I will never bring you some place and then abandon or leave you." What a wonderful thing for a frightened child to hear.

Our Heavenly Father has made the same promise to us. Throughout

Scripture, the Lord reminds us that He will never leave us nor forsake us. Forsake is defined as to quit, abandon, leave behind or to cease from.

God, in His sovereignty, holds and shapes every life He's ever created in His powerful hands. If we can begin to wrap our minds around what this means and the promise He has made to those who belong to Him, we should never have moments when we feel far from Him and His love.

In Deuteronomy 31:6, God says He will never leave us or forsake us. Allow that truth to sink into your heart and soul the next time you feel afraid or alone and be truly grateful and full of praise for a God who loves you this much.

I'm reminded of a phrase I learned years ago: There is nothing I can do to make God love me more, and there is nothing I can do to make Him love me less.

Knowing and embracing this truth should transform our lives into a desire to live to honor Jesus Christ and Him alone. If we're walking in true communion with God's Holy Spirit, we will take enormous comfort in knowing that He is in control of our lives. Are we willing? Are we able to get past our own agendas and follow God's will for our lives, trusting and clinging to the words He has promised? (BP)

Cheryl Robinson is a writer from Woodstock, Ga.

FIRST PERSON

BE

HIS HEART / HIS HANDS / HIS VOICE

Songhai believers persevere amid persecution

Continued from page 1

of the river," said John Smythe,* an IMB missionary who's been working among the Songhai of Niger since 2006.

Ruled by a dynasty of Muslim kings, the empire expanded through a combination of practical politics and holy war. The meteoric rise of the empire was matched by its sudden invasion and downfall in 1591.

Modern Songhai are mainly subsistence farmers, coaxing millet and rice out of the clay of the Niger River valley. It's a land of flat-topped hills and wide, washed-out valleys, with deep, rain-cut channels between.

Songhai villages consist of mud-brick houses; walls surround spacious, bare yards. Trash litters the streets—there is no other place for it. Animals wander wherever acacia fences do not keep them out. Village life is highlighted by scent. The heat bakes out the odor of moist sand and green growth. The smell of sweat and wood smoke is prevalent.

"Community is life" to the Songhai, Smythe explained. "They understand that tomorrow, I might not have enough rice to feed my family, so I'd better rely on the community."

While officially Muslim, the Songhai generally practice animism. Alongside daily prayers and reciting the Quran, "there are still spirit-possession ceremonies. ... They are involved in all sorts of witchcraft," Smythe said. Less than 1 percent of the population is Christian.

Out of the ruins of vanished empires and ancient superstitions, however, a new kingdom is being built among the Songhai, Smythe pointed out. "A kingdom not built with human hands; a kingdom that's being built by God made out of living stones."



FOLK ISLAM IMB missionary John Smythe and his family once lived in this Songhai village. While animism—alongside daily prayers and reciting the Quran. Less than 1 percent of the population is Christian.

This kingdom has not been built without struggle. According to Smythe, Songhai conversion is "a traumatic experience." Those who step outside of accepted practices are ostracized, even exiled, by their communities. Many villagers refuse to buy or sell with a convert, and family members often shun believers. Pressure to return to the old ways comes from all directions.



DEDICATED FOLLOWER ■ Top: Ibrahim is a Songhai man who used to practice folk Islam. Now he is a dedicated follower of Jesus Christ and often faces severe persecution for his faith. ■ Above: International Mission Board missionary John Smythe and Southern Baptist volunteers from Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green travel to a Songhai village where there are no Christ followers. They share Bible stories with the village chief and others, most of whom practice folk Islam. (IMB photos)

The harshest confrontation came after Smythe and his family moved away from the small town where they had been ministering for three years, when a believer's wife died suddenly. Ibrahim had been a dedicated Muslim who prayed five times a day, gave to charity and donated animals for religious festivals. "I thought in my heart if I (did these things), I was receiving forgiveness," he said. "I could never know that in my heart ... if I was being forgiven or not."

After repeatedly dreaming of a light "that was Jesus Christ" coming between him and enveloping darkness, Ibrahim became a determined Christian despite rejection by his neighbors and refusal of business. His dedication and encouragement soon led his wife to Christ as well.

Unity of believers

When his wife died, the village leaders, noting that neither Ibrahim nor his wife were Muslim, refused to have her buried, claiming she would be treated like an animal and left to rot. Only if Ibrahim confessed Islam would his wife be buried and prayed for as culturally required. He refused and set out to bury his wife alone. But other believers rallied around him and came to his aid.

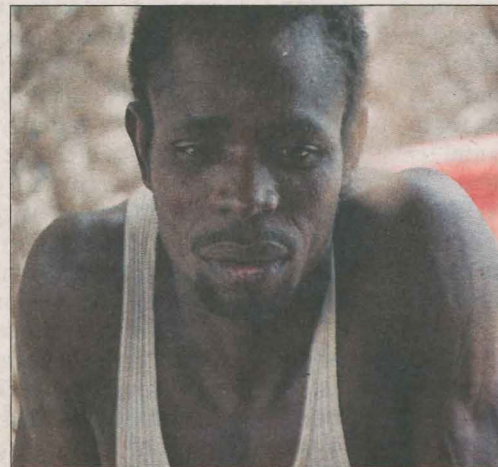
This unity in the face of cruel rejection was a turning point for the local church. It demonstrated the church could endure, even without the Smythes' presence.

"It was (a) testimony that, 'We are not going to go back to our old faith, we're here to stay,'" claimed Smythe, who now lives two hours away in Niamey, Niger's capital.

In the face of opposition, the Smythes and

Lottie Moon:

"If the joy of the Lord be their strength, the blessedness of the work will more than compensate for its hardships."



Lottie Moon

Continued from page 1

because of our faith, but we need to be in prayer for those who are—not that persecution will end, but that believers in persecution will stay courageous and bold.

This December is the 100-year anniversary of the death of Lottie Moon, the namesake of Southern Baptists' offering that supports global missionaries. The emphasis celebrates her life and looks to her as a portrait of obedience—a single woman who went to China despite the risks and persisted through war and famine because the Chinese needed to know her Lord.

Lottie wrote home to the Foreign Mission Board (now the IMB): "Please say to the missionaries they are coming to a life of hardship, responsibility and constant self-denial," she warned, yet acknowledging, "If the joy of the Lord be their strength, the blessedness of the work will more than compensate for its hardships."

Giving also is a call to obedience and sacrifice. Gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering enable IMB missionaries—going just as boldly as Lottie—to live and work at the forefront of lostness and to extend a witness through their full-time ministry.

As Lottie said more than 100 years ago, "How many there are ... who imagine that because Jesus paid it all, they need pay nothing, forgetting that the prime object of their salvation was that they should follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ in bringing back a lost world to God."

Each individual and church is called to be His heart, hands and voice and to continually take the next step in obedience so that Christ is glorified, even to the ends of the earth.

The core question is, then, "What am I doing and what is my church doing to be obedient, to be His heart, hands and voice, no matter the cost?" (IMB)

their team "literally got to watch history change," as this small group of believers grew into the first church ever in the region. That church "has continued to grow and understand what it means to be the church," Smythe said. "They are a true community that gives as anyone has need and shares as anyone has need."

The transformation of believers is apparent to villagers. Boubacar, once the "No. 1 bandit" in town and leader of the local gang, was so altered that his friends asked him what medication he was taking. He claimed, "My medicine is Jesus Christ."

Boubacar went that very day to break off the engagement, despite having already paid the bride price. When asked about his decision, he claimed, "Everything Jesus says, that's what I want to do."

Boubacar was one of those who helped Ibrahim bury his wife. His example has led many in his former gang become believers.

Ibrahim and Boubacar now are leaders in the town church. Men meet in Ibrahim's compound to sing worship songs, pray together and listen to the "Proclaimer," an audio Bible in the Songhai language. Female believers meet separately or listen to the Bible with their husbands at home.

"You can't see a building," Smythe said of the blossoming movement among the Songhai. "Instead it's a group of men, it's a group of ladies huddled under a tree praying together, it's a group studying God's word under a hanger, and it's a new kingdom being ushered in. ... It's that kingdom that's going to endure." (IMB)

*Name changed for security reasons

84 new missionaries brings IMB ranks to 4,908

By Tess Rivers

Springfield, Mo.—A deer meat processor and a doctor; a nanny and a nurse; a soldier and a statistician. These are just a few of the jobs previously held by 84 men and women recently appointed by the International Mission Board.

From as far away as Thailand and as near as the hills of Tennessee, the appointees shared testimonies of being called by God to a journey to be the heart, hands and voice of Jesus to the nations.

Prinna Puakpong was born in Thailand, where she was raised in a Buddhist home. Her journey led her first to Atlanta, then to Chattanooga, Tenn., where she earned a master's in business administration with an emphasis in finance. Disillusioned by the stock market crash of 2000, Puakpong prayed that God would reveal Himself to her.

"I prayed, 'God, I don't want to be confused anymore,'" Puakpong told those gathered at Second Baptist Church of Springfield, Mo. "Please reveal Yourself to me in a way that I can understand."

In a Bible study for international students in Chattanooga, Puakpong met Christians who showed her God's love, and the direction of her life changed. Now, more than 10 years later, her journey will take Puakpong and her husband to Japan to be the voice of Jesus



SENT FORTH International Mission Board trustee John Edie dedicates 84 new missionaries to do God's work in an appointment service Nov. 15 at Second Baptist Church of Springfield, Mo. (Photos by Paul Lee)

among those who have not yet heard the gospel.

For pharmacist Sarah Smythe*, her journey entailed a series of personal challenges during her college years—a time when she came to understand what it means not just to follow Jesus, but to rely on Him.

"I realized my need," Smythe recalled. "I needed to rely on God. I needed to be in community with His

people, and I needed to loosen my grip on academic excellence."

During her first week in pharmacy school, Smythe knocked on the door of a stranger who had advertised a Bible study. Through that study, she developed a heart for the nations and spent the next two summers working among Asian college students. Soon, she will return to East Asia with her husband, Drew*, and their two daughters to carry the gospel to those who are hurting.

The Nov. 15 appointment service brings the number of Southern Baptist missionaries serving around the world to 4,908. IMB President Tom Elliff challenged the audience to pray, "I will embrace whatever God is telling me about world missions" to reach the more than 3,100 unengaged, unreached people groups.

However, "embracing" does not necessarily mean God is calling everyone to "go," Elliff reminded.

"He may be calling you not to go but to let go," Elliff said. "Or to help go—to pray for and support those who are going." (IMB/BP)

*Names changed for security reasons



MISSIONARIES Jack Wattanawongsawang (left) and Prinna Puakpong (center), new International Mission Board appointees who will work in Japan, talk with Ken Kuwahara, an IMB trustee from Hawaii, and others at a reception following an appointment service last month at Second Baptist Church of Springfield, Mo.



Tom Elliff

IMB's Elliff: Global 'harvest' at hand

Springfield, Mo.—Is the "unthinkable" about to happen?

Are Southern Baptists about to miss one of the greatest harvests for Christ the world has seen? International Mission Board President Tom Elliff asked these questions in his recent report to IMB trustees.

"This is harvest time, folks," he urged. "It is no time for us to be asleep."

The world "is filled with people who desperately need to hear the gospel," Elliff continued, and the IMB's assignment is to assist fellow Southern Baptists in bringing the gospel to the world.

Despite this crucial need, Southern Baptists no longer are giving through the Cooperative Program as they used to, Elliff pointed out. It has been in decline for the past five years.

Elliff called this a "tragedy" because CP and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions are the two "lifelines" that support Southern Baptist missionaries.

"We don't determine how many missionaries (are sent). Southern Baptists, by their giving, tell us how many people (they will) have on the field," Elliff said.

"When we think about the way doors have opened ... in corners of this world that have been so dark and so closed for so many years, it is unthinkable ... that Southern Baptists would not provide more missionaries, more laborers for the harvest," he said.

Evidence of the harvest work around the world was shown through the IMB's Annual Statistical Report, which summarizes the work of Southern Baptist missionaries and their overseas ministry partners in 2011.

More than 1.4 million people heard a gospel witness. Of those, more than 337,000 became believers and more than 266,000 people were baptized. Missionaries and local believers with whom they partner started 24,000 new churches.

Trustees approved the IMB's 2013 budget of \$323.8 million, \$175 million of which is expected to come through this year's Lottie Moon offering. The budget is down by a half million dollars from the previous year.

Trustees also approved the election of Gordon Fort to a new position, that of senior vice president for prayer mobilization and training.

John Brady, the IMB's affinity global strategy leader for northern Africa and the Mideast, will assume Fort's vacated vice president for the global strategy office role, effective Jan. 15. (IMB/BP)



embrace

the ends of the earth

A global missions equipping event led by IMB President Tom Elliff

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville

Feb. 8, 2013, 8 a.m., EST
(registration opens at 7:30)

\$20 per person (\$10 for SBTS students)
Register online: call2embrace.org
Questions? 1-877-462-4721

244 million people have never heard the gospel.
How will you respond?





Adventures in Haiti, part 2

OBI staff member recalls mission trip to Haiti working with orphans

This week we share the conclusion of an essay written by OBI ministry team member Katy Price about her recent week-long mission trip to Haiti with World Orphans:

"Wednesday, the team, along with a Haitian doctor, got to do a free medical clinic at the church, and around 150 people went through the clinic. The people we got to see have no means for medication, and this is one of their chances to get medicine for them and their families.

"We had seven stations going on at all times while we were there. There was the sign-in station, two stations for taking temperature and taking blood pressure, a waiting area, a station for seeing the doctor, a pharmacy station, and the prayer station. We prayed with each family that came through the clinic immediately before they left. Of course, while the kids were waiting, we had things to occupy them.

"Thursday, we had the privilege of doing another free medical clinic with another Haitian doctor in a remote village about two hours away. The village is by a beautiful lake and their livelihood is fishing. They have animals freely wandering around, and most of the children do not have clothes because the parents can't afford them. The children loved to be held and played with. The smiles on their faces, even though they don't have much, were beautiful; they truly love life.

"While we were packing up, some of the kids were coming home from school and they wanted to see the doctor. The doctor got out of the van and came over

and saw them and their parents, even though we were done. He had gotten on their level and had talked and played with them and had just loved on them.

"Friday, we had the privilege of going to an orphanage called 'His Home' and also to a special-needs home. At His Home, we were able to take the children outside, play with them on a playground and love on them. We were there for a while before we moved on to the special-needs home. Most of the children have a condition called hydrocephalus and they lie in their beds all day long and can't do anything for themselves.

"One of the little boys named Justin would laugh at us every time he would see one of us, and his laugh was so contagious. When he started laughing, some of the other children would start laughing too and then pretty soon most of them would be laughing. Our team then was able to go to a park and play with some more children the rest of the evening.

"Throughout the trip, whenever we were in the van we saw what they called tent cities all through Haiti. Because of all the devastation, many people have lost their homes, and so the government put them in tents. It cost \$200 to get a family out of a tent and into an apartment. They don't have that kind of money, so many will live there for years in the tent.

"Our team had an amazing and God-honoring experience in Haiti and met so many wonderful people. Please pray with us for the people in Haiti."

This is Oneida



Paul Davidson

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

Preparing to stay

Soon-to-be graduate follows God's call to serve on local mission field

Senior Ryan Martin, from nearby Tazewell, Tenn., will complete his studies this month. He thought when he first came to Clear Creek a few years ago that God was calling him to a mission field far away from here. Now, he is following God's call to serve on a local mission field.

"I thought I was preparing to go to Africa as a missionary," Ryan said. "I had already been there twice on mission trips. We had seen thousands come to Christ. God has given me a heart for the people of Africa.

"I was also serving as a missionary at Camp Jubilee, which is a local Christian youth camp in Tazewell, Tenn., where I am from," he noted. "I have been serving at Camp Jubilee while I have been a student at Clear Creek.

"Camp Jubilee is a wonderful mission opportunity for me," Ryan said. "We have four camps during the summer months for children and youth. We usually have around 600 kids during the summer. We also do a corn maze during the fall and a revival event

called 'Fire on the Mountain.'

"God has now given me a vision to go full time in this ministry after I graduate," Ryan shared. "Last year, I came to a crisis of call in my life. I was questioning God in what I really needed to do with my life. I thought I was supposed to go to Africa, but God had not clearly defined that call for me. I prayed and asked God to show me specifically what He wanted for me on the mission field.

"I tried to tell God that He had called me to be a missionary but I was not on the mission field," Ryan recalled. "God spoke to me and told me that He had called me to be a missionary. He

said I want you to be a missionary at Camp Jubilee. He told me that he had sent me into the harvest when I went to Africa, but now He was going to send the harvest to me at Camp Jubilee.

"God has given me a heart for the younger generation. I want to use Camp Jubilee to help our young people grow in relationship with Christ."

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

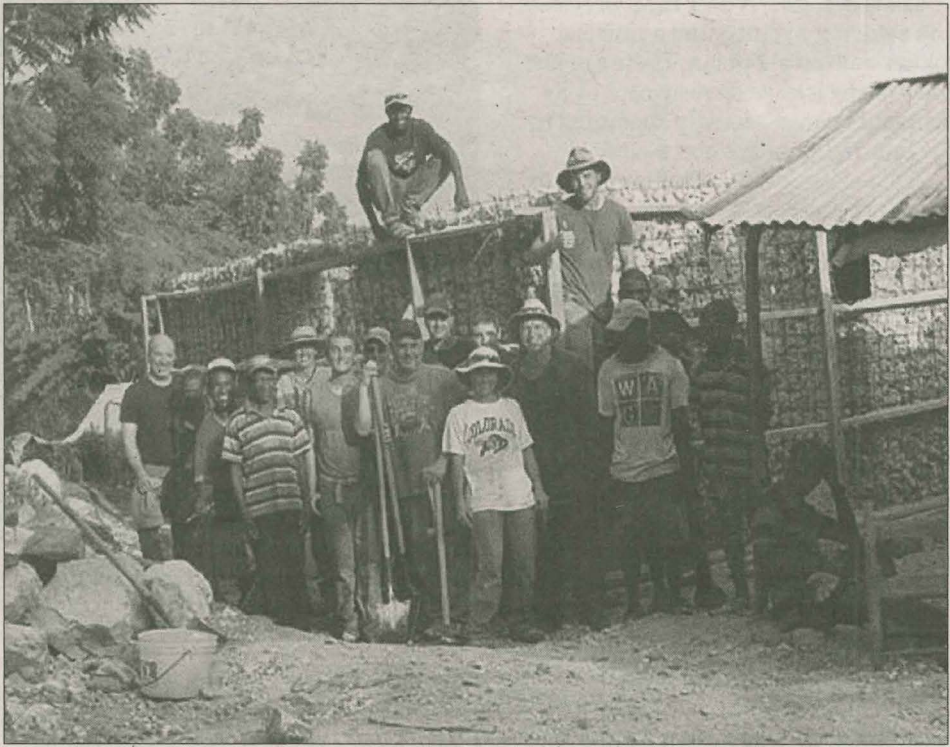
Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

"It's life and death to get them housing."

—Brian Varble, minister of missions and recreation, Calvary Baptist Church in Lexington



MISSIONS TEAM Members of Calvary Baptist Church in Lexington spent time in Haiti last month helping to build houses. (Photo by Donna Chaffin)

Holiday gratitude boosted by short-term Haiti mission trips

By Jeff Brumley

Grand Goave, Haiti—A handful of churches are proving that short-term mission trips aren't just for spring break anymore. Calvary Baptist Church in Lexington and First Baptist of Gainesville, Ga., sent mixed youth and adult groups to Haiti in October and November, respectively. First Baptist Church of Rome, Ga., saw its group return from the island nation on Nov. 21.

Organizers say the timing of the trips has mostly to do with school break schedules, but proximity to the holiday season compounds the feelings of compassion and gratitude associated with this time of year.

"It's impacted everything in my life," Emily Jernigan, 17, said of First Baptist of Gainesville's mid-October mission trip to build homes in Grand Goave, a coastal town located about 35 miles west of Port-au-Prince.

"It changed the way I appreciate people and the things that people do for me," said Jernigan, a high school senior.

Both the location and the work Jernigan's church and the others have done in Haiti are practically guaranteed to have that effect, participants said. All three of the churches coordinated their fall mission trips with Conscience International, Inc. The organization has partnered with Southern Polytechnic State University in Marietta, Ga., to design and build homes for victims of the 2010 Haiti earthquakes.

The project involves collecting rubble from homes and other structures destroyed by the quake to build "rubble houses." Like many other volunteers, the Baptist mission workers spent their time in Haiti pounding large chunks of concrete into smaller bits of rubble,

which is then used in construction.

The work was back breaking but spiritually uplifting, said Brian Varble, minister of missions and recreation at Lexington's Calvary Baptist.

"You know you are providing housing for someone who is in a tent," Varble said. He noted that the recently harsh Haitian environment was extra motivation.

"When (Hurricane) Sandy came through Grand Goave, a mother and her four children living in a tent lost their lives in a mudslide," Varble recalled. "They were on a list to get a house in January.

"It's life and death to get them housing," he added.

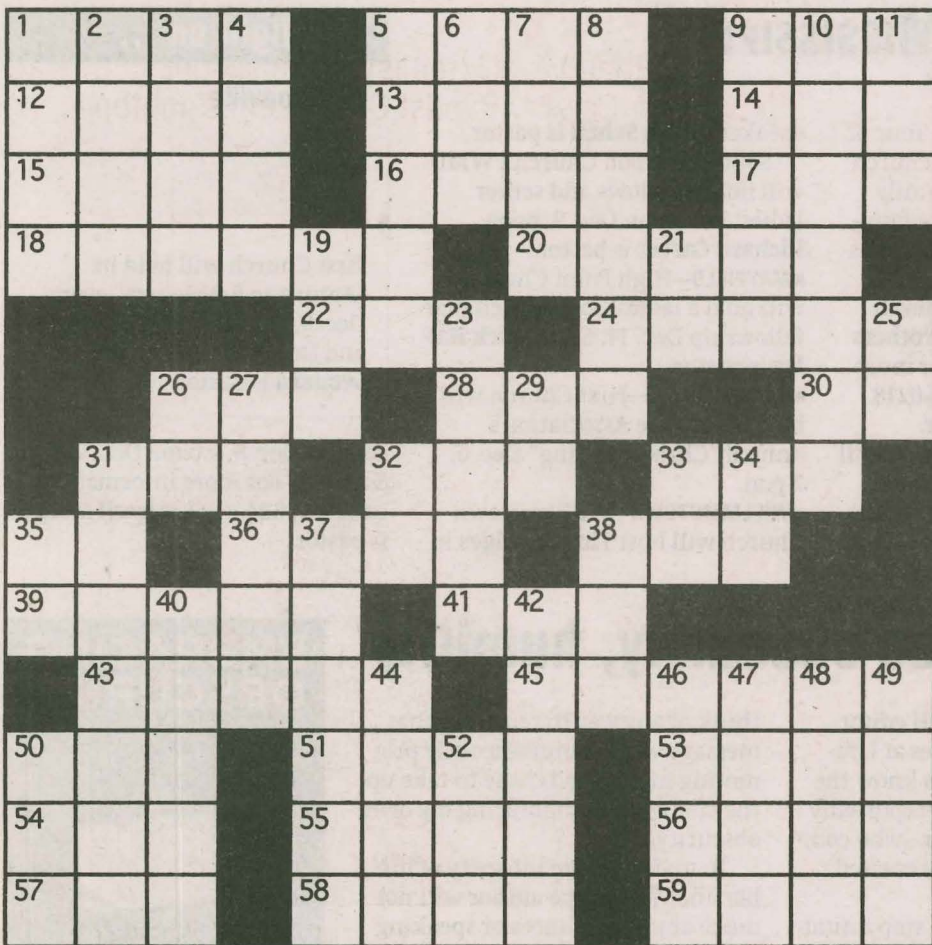
Seeing the poverty in Haiti and the challenges of everyday life led one student at First Baptist, Gainesville, to start referring to his own challenges as "first-world problems," said Chris Burns, student ministry pastor at the church.

"If my iPhone is not charging right, that's a first-world problem," Burns said. "They are not really problems; they are inconveniences."

Burns said being in Haiti at the beginning of the holiday season was a reminder that with great resources and power come great responsibility to serve others. "You realize, after seeing that, the blessings we take for granted such as food and clean water," he said.

Inspiration also comes from seeing how joyful Haitians are despite their conditions, said John Uldrick, minister of students and missions at First Baptist of Rome, Ga.

"You realize how resilient they are," Uldrick said. "You realize how little they have, and yet how happy they are. ... That's a pretty intense experience." (ABP)



Bible Crosswords

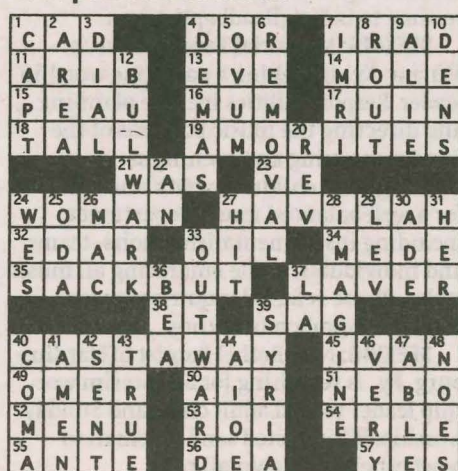
By Janet Adkins

Across

- 1 Father, by another name
5 Possesses
9 "Why make ye this ____, and weep?" (Mark 5:39)
12 Idol worshiped
13 "How beautiful are the ____ of them that preach the gospel" (Romans 10:15)
14 Receptacle
15 Summers on the Seine
16 "Lest he ____ my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces" (Psalm 7:2)
17 Shakespearean sonnet, perhaps
18 "Let us therefore come boldly unto the ____ of grace" (Hebrews 4:16)
20 "The spirit truly is ____, but the flesh is weak" (Mark 14:38)
22 School subj.
24 "Therefore if thine ____ hunger, feed him" (Romans 12:20)
26 Stern, nautically speaking
28 Tennis call
30 ____ of the Chaldees
31 Simon ____-Jona
32 Preposition
33 Sibling, for short
35 "____ will not forsake thee" (Deuteronomy 4:31)
36 "Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of ____" (Genesis 10:21)
38 Big ____
39 "For his ____ endureth but a moment" (Psalm 30:5)
41 Biblical exclamation
43 The witch of ____ (visited by Saul)
45 Prophet of God who convicted David of his sin
50 Organization similar to 4-H (abbr.)
51 Hardy cabbage
53 Vigorous
54 Brand name to "dye" for
55 "Feed me ... for I am faint: therefore was his name called ____" (Genesis 25:30)
56 Feminine name
57 ____ a girl!
58 Like most gossips
59 Sea mammal

- 8 "Arise, and go into the ____ which is called Straight" (Acts 9:11)
9 Dwelling
10 Greek form of Thomas
11 Bill of currency
19 Take-home pay
21 Article
23 "The ____ of the Lord shone round about them" (Luke 2:9)
25 Part of a century (abbr.)
26 Twelve-step group (abbr.)
27 "For he that is dead is ____ from sin" (Romans 6:7)
29 Sound of hesitation
31 "They are faithful and beloved, partakers of the ____" (1 Timothy 6:2)
32 Iron (abbr.)
33 "____ habla Espanol"
34 Preposition
35 Laughing syllable
37 "The sacrifices of God are a ____ spirit" (Psalm 51:17)
38 Sheep's comment
40 Irritating insects
42 "Thou hast been ... a strong tower from the ____" (Psalm 61:3)
44 Famed watchmaker
46 "____ same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven" (Acts 1:11)
47 Tortoise's tormentor
48 Egyptian dancing girl
49 Actress Patricia
50 Day of the wk.
52 ____ Alamos

Last puzzle's solution



Down

- 1 Aid in wrongdoing
2 Noted hot springs locale
3 TV's "Beverly Hillbillies" actor
4 Besides
5 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem ... how ____ would I have gathered thy children" (Matthew 23:37)
6 Tiny
7 Not too far away

Harvest plentiful, workers few

Lottie Moon offering is opportunity to consider support beyond tithes

International Mission Board President Tom Elliff has posed the following question to each of us Southern Baptists: "Does anyone in the darkest corners of this broken world have a legitimate reason to believe that because you care, someone will soon be there with the gospel?"

In Matthew 9:35-36, we find Jesus going through all the towns and villages teaching, proclaiming the good news and healing; and when He saw the crowds He had compassion because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

The harvest Jesus is calling us to lift up our eyes and see consists of 7 billion people—330 million in the U.S. and 6.67 billion outside the U.S.

name of Jesus. Two people die every second. The equivalent of a city of 150,600 people disappears into eternity every 24 hours.

Ky. Baptist Foundation



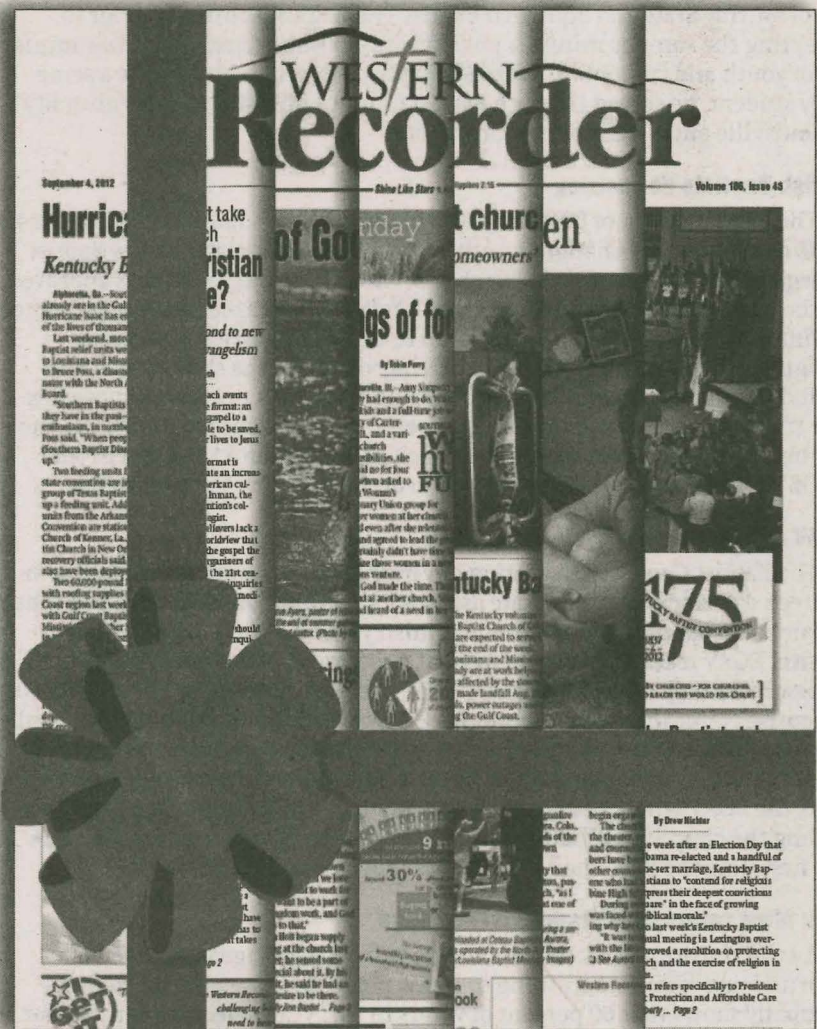
Barry Allen

The IMB provides the best screening, training, sending and supporting of missionaries available anywhere in the evangelical world. And people who are compassionate for the lost and passionate about taking the gospel to the ends of the earth are responding to the call to missions.

As you prayerfully ponder what you will give through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering this year, also consider including a missions component in your estate plan that will perpetuate your passion to reach the lost beyond your lifetime.

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

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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.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **COLUMBIA**—Bethany Church recently called **Jimmie Cox** as pastor. An ordination service for him will be held Dec. 9, 1:30 p.m.

■ **GLENDALE**—Gilead Church's adult and children's choirs will hold a "Christmas Sing" Dec. 6, 6 p.m., with a dessert fellowship to follow the musical service. **Sam Hinkson** is pastor.

■ **HODGENVILLE**—First Church will hold its Christmas musical presentation, "Christmas Joy," Dec. 7-9. **Paul Richey** is pastor.

■ **HOPKINSVILLE**—First Church will

hold its annual Christmas Tour of Homes Dec. 11, 6 p.m. The church also will hold its annual family night Dec. 16, 6 p.m., where families can share a special Christmas-related talent.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Cloverleaf Church will host the **Blackwood Brothers** in concert Dec. 7, 7 p.m. For more information, call (502) 367-0218. **Geoffrey Lacefield** is pastor.

Melbourne Heights Church will hold its annual Christmas banquet Dec. 7, 6 p.m., with guest artist **Kim Wigginton** as guest

speaker. **Adam Schell** is pastor.

South Jefferson Church's WMU will hold a widows and senior ladies' luncheon Dec. 9, noon.

Richard Carver is pastor.

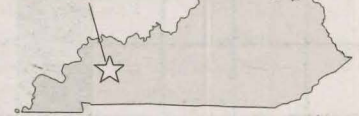
■ **MAYFIELD**—High Point Church will hold a ladies' cookie exchange fellowship Dec. 11, 6 p.m. **Rick Hatley** is pastor.

■ **SALYERSVILLE**—First Church will host Enterprise Association's annual "Christmas Sing" Dec. 6, 7 p.m.

■ **WILLIAMSTOWN**—Williamstown Church will host **Three Bridges** in

Spotlight on ...

Madisonville



First Church will hold its "Return to Bethlehem" event Dec. 8, 5 p.m.; Dec. 9, 2 p.m.; and Dec. 10-11, 5 p.m. **Joe Leonard** is pastor.

concert Dec. 8, 6 p.m.; Dec. 9, 8:45 & 11 a.m. For more information, call (859) 824-4102. **Darrell Morgan** is pastor.

Anonymous author embraces obscurity, humility

Nashville, Tenn.—The world is filled with people who live and die in anonymity. To those who yearn for true success as modeled by Jesus, the anonymous author of a new book points toward humility, service, sacrifice and surrender.

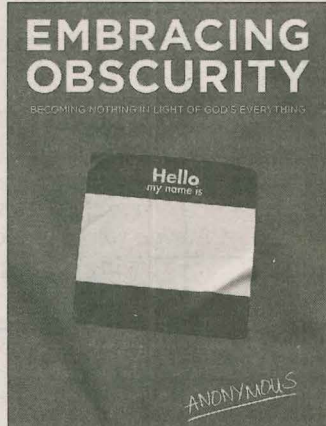
The author of "Embracing Obscurity: Becoming Nothing in Light of God's Everything," chose to publish under the name "Anonymous" and to maintain near-complete

anonymity. Only one B&H editor and a couple of executives at LifeWay Christian Resources know the identity of Anonymous—reportedly a well-established author—who communicates via a specially created email address.

"This book is a call to stop imitating the world's formula for success and instead follow the model of our humble King," Anonymous said in quotes provided by B&H. "I couldn't

think of any way to reconcile that message while simultaneously promoting myself, so I chose to take up the challenge of embracing my own obscurity."

To maintain the integrity of his/her anonymity, the author will not make any appearances or speaking engagements in support of the book. The author, however, will interact with readers at Facebook.com/EmbracingObscurity. (LW/BP)



BRIEFLY

Murray State campus minister moves to LifeWay

Mark Whitt, the Baptist campus minister at Murray State University, has accepted a position with LifeWay Christian Resources. Whitt, who has served at Murray State since 1999, begins Jan. 1 as collegiate and young-adult ministry specialist. He will help direct LifeWay's national work in leadership development specifically for young adult and college ministries. Whitt is a graduate of Murray State and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Prior to accepting the campus minister position at his alma mater, Whitt was minister of youth and students at Westside Baptist Church in Murray. As a seminary student, he served through Baptist Campus Ministry at the University of Louisville and Virginia Tech University.

British Baptists downsizing

The Baptist Union of Great Britain will downsize its national staff from 46 to 32 employees and change the way it works with associations and Baptist colleges to better serve local churches in the 21st century. Changes approved by the Baptist Union Council last month followed a year-long study prompted by financial concerns but broadened to re-examine mission structures designed for the 20th century. The driving vision for the shift, which also includes reducing the size of the governing council, is to create a more flexible structure that moves decisions closer to the local church. In March, the Baptist council received report of a deficit of more than \$1 million in the BUGB Home Mission Fund, attributed to declines in giving by churches.

BGAV upholds church ouster

The Baptist General Association of Virginia has upheld a leadership committee's decision to end the state association's affiliation with a church that ordained an openly gay man to the ministry. At its annual meeting last month, BGAV messengers voted against a motion to refer the decision for review by a study committee. In October, the Virginia Baptist Mission Board's executive committee asked Ginter Park Baptist Church in Richmond to withdraw its BGAV membership by Dec. 31, after the congregation ordained an openly gay man in September. If Ginter Park declines to withdraw by that date, the BGAV will no longer accept its financial contributions, essentially ending the church's affiliation with the state association. This would mark the first time the BGAV has dismissed a church over homosexuality.

Poll: Most voters back traditional marriage

A solid majority of voters nationwide believe marriage is between one man and one woman, according to a new poll. The survey by the Polling Company shows that 60 percent of voters in this year's election agreed that "marriage is between one man and one woman." In total, 34 percent of voters disagreed with the statement. Last month, residents in Maine, Maryland and Washington state voted to legalize gay marriage, while voters in Minnesota defeated a constitutional amendment that would have defined marriage as between one man and one woman.

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: 1994 Dodge 15-passenger van, 74,000 miles, \$2,900, call (859) 734-5534.

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.

RESOURCES: "Small Does Not Mean Struggling" is an encouraging book by a small-church pastor for small-church pastors. Available in e-book and print at your favorite book retailer.

RESOURCES: Do you need a church pianist? Try our piano CDs for churches to sing by; hymns, gospel, Christmas, choruses. Call Worship Service Resources at (877) 977-6800; free demonstration; www.wsrpianocds.com.

SEEKING: Gilead Baptist Church, Glendale, Ky., is seeking a part-time pastor of worship whose responsibilities will be planning and leading worship for a congregation that embraces various worship styles. A candidate should have musical training/experience. A complete job description can be found on Gilead's website, www.gileadbaptist.com; submit resumé to info@gileadbaptist.com.

SEEKING: Memorial Baptist Church, Murray, Ky., is seeking a part-time worship leader. Responsibilities include planning and directing the music portions of the Sunday morning and evening services; working with children, youth and adults for a well-balanced music department, including instrumentalists, choirs, teams and individuals, while embracing all music styles. Please refer all inquiries to worshipsearch@mbcmurray.org.

SEEKING: New Bethel Baptist of Hardinsburg, Ky., is searching for an interim worship leader to lead adult choir and Sunday worship. If interested send an email to newbethelbaptist@gmail.com.

To place an advertisement:

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



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

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: Southern Heights Baptist Church, a member of Elkhorn Baptist Association, is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumé to Southern Heights Baptist Church, Attn: Pastor selection committee, 3408 Clays Mill Road, Lexington, KY 40503.

SEEKING: Full-time senior pastor: Beech Haven Baptist Church of Athens, Ga., is seeking an ordained Baptist pastor. If you meet the criteria stated at www.beechhaven.org/srpastor and wish to apply, send a resumé and cover letter by Jan. 11, 2013, describing why you want to be considered as a candidate to bhbcpsc@gmail.com.

Zig Ziglar, 86, 'America's motivator,' conveyed hope & joy

By Jerry Pierce

Plano, Texas—For the past seven years, Jay Hellwig would accompany Zig Ziglar to business meetings and speaking engagements worldwide, often sharing platforms with world leaders in business, politics and entertainment. Sometimes, he would sit across from Ziglar at his kitchen table as he finished up his Bible reading or his daily newspaper.

Hellwig would be the one to insist that they hurry along at airports as Ziglar engaged strangers wanting their books signed or a nugget of advice from a man widely known as "America's motivator."

But as Ziglar's personal assistant, what sticks with Hellwig above all is Ziglar's practice of reserving meal appointments very selectively. Ziglar could have his pick of interesting and entertaining people for breakfast, lunch or dinner.

Those sought-after appointments, however, were held for people who didn't have a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, Hellwig said.

Ziglar, known worldwide for his folksy and often anecdotal motivational talks on success through serving others, died Nov. 28 in Plano, Texas, of complications from pneumonia at age 86.

His pastor, Jack Graham, said Ziglar saw himself foremost as a "minister of encouragement."

"He was a dispenser of hope and joy and a whole lot of love," said Graham, pastor of the Dallas-area Prestonwood Baptist Church, during a news conference hours after Ziglar's death.

Ziglar's deep, soothing Mississippi drawl and speeches and books, often sprinkled with mentions of his Christian faith, endeared him to millions. Ziglar was arguably the best-known motivational speaker of his day, having conducted hundreds of corporate seminars and giving motivational speeches to hundreds of thousands of people over a 42-year speaking career.

A longtime Southern Baptist, Ziglar served as first vice president of the



REMEMBERED Zig Ziglar's friendly smile and attentive eyes were a regular part of Sunday mornings at the Dallas-area Prestonwood Baptist Church. Ziglar, known as "America's motivator," died Nov. 28 at age 86. (Southern Baptist Texan photo)

Southern Baptist Convention in 1984-85 during Atlanta pastor Charles Stanley's tenure as president.

His 30-plus books include bestsellers "See You at The Top!" and "Confessions of a Happy Christian." Another book, "Confessions of a Grieving Christian" followed the death of daughter Suzan Ziglar Witmeyer from pulmonary fibrosis in 1995.

Ziglar taught an "Encouragers" Bible study class for 18 years on Sunday mornings at Prestonwood Baptist until several years ago, Graham said.

"His ability to communicate and motivate came from deep within," Graham said of Ziglar. "He had an incredible faith, and what motivated the 'motivator' was his personal faith in Christ."

Recalling the 'zigisms'

Graham said one of his favorite "Zigisms"—those wise turns-of-phrases for which Ziglar was known—went something like: "You can get everything you want in life as long as you are willing to help others get what they want in life."

"So many of the principles and

teachings that Zig gave were right out of the Bible, and he would tell you that," Graham said, noting that Ziglar rarely missed church despite a demanding travel schedule. The last year, Ziglar's declining health caused him and his wife, Jean, to watch church services online.

Graham said Ziglar's definition of success included a high ethical and moral code and "a greater picture of using what you have—your success—to encourage or bless others" and to honor God.

Ziglar often talked about "stinkin' thinkin'," expressing a firm belief that attitude deeply affects all areas of life.

"We all need a daily checkup from the neck up to avoid stinkin' thinkin' which ultimately leads to hardening of the attitudes," Ziglar is cited as saying in a collection of his quotations provided by his company.

Among an array of his observations: "Many marriages would be better if the husband and wife clearly understood that they're on the same side"—and "Kids go where there is excitement. They stay

where there is love."

And this quote appears in a memorial entry on Ziglar's Facebook page: "Among the things you can give and still keep are your word, a smile and a grateful heart."

Ziglar's conversion in 1972 by the testimony of "Sister Jessie," an African American woman who visited the Ziglar family over the 4th of July weekend that year, heightened his appreciation for people from all walks of life, Hellwig said, noting the wall of appreciation in Ziglar's office commemorating the influence of 27 people whom Ziglar considered his major influences. Sister Jessie shares that wall with a diverse group of men and women, Hellwig said.

Hellwig said Ziglar's affection for his wife Jean—whom he often called "the redhead" and frequently referred to in his speeches—was evident to all who knew the couple.

Donald Wildmon, founder of the Mississippi-based American Family Association, who worked with Ziglar in the 1980s to get pornography removed from the shelves of the 7-11 convenience store chain, said that while Ziglar was a "giant in the business community," he also was a "wonderful Christian gentleman who served God in many ways" and "believed in our cause of returning decency and morality to the public square."

Ziglar was "an amazing, amazing man whose legacy will live on" through his family and his church, Graham told reporters.

The 10th of 12 children, Ziglar was born in Coffee County, Ala., as Hilary Hinton Ziglar, but the nickname "Zig" stuck as he grew up in Yazoo City, Miss. Ziglar was a World War II Navy veteran and attended Milsaps College in Jackson, Miss., and the University of South Carolina before beginning his career as a salesman and later as a public speaker.

In addition to his wife Jean, he is survived by three children, seven grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren and one great-great grandchild.

Ziglar's funeral was held Dec. 1 at Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas. (Southern Baptist Texan/BP)

Refugee family praises God amid hardships

Mobile, Ala.—Abid Hussain was once a Hindu and a millionaire, living in a 19-bedroom house. Then he was a persecuted Christian living with his family in an attic storeroom on a concrete floor.

Now Hussain is a refugee living in a rough neighborhood in Mobile, Ala., struggling to find work and afraid for his family to go out at night. But he and his family say God has a plan for them.

"They are nervous about their life here, and they are still struggling a lot," said Buddy Brents, a North American Mission Board church planter. "But (Hussain) often says, 'God has brought me here, and I'm going to trust Him.'"

When Hussain's family was granted refugee status in May, a three-bedroom home was provided for them for free for five months, Brents said. It took Hussain almost all of that time to find a job.

The former millionaire is working the evening shift at a gas station, and the family now is paying its own bills.

"It's been a real struggle for him, because he's a highly educated man with a degree in the medical field," Brents said. "He's tried to get jobs anywhere."

But employers say Hussain's English isn't good enough yet. "He's doing this job now just as a test job—the gas station is giving him a shot at being a clerk, and it's only part time with no benefits," Brents said. "But his attitude is so good."

And God's been providing for the family's needs, Brents said.

"They are just so happy, and they feel like the people have been so nice to them," said David Johnson, a Southern Baptist representative who met Hussain when he was still in Asia. "Baptists are really good at that, ... in reaching out and taking care of people who need it."

But Hussain's family is just one of many, many refugee families who need this kind of help, Johnson said. "They're just a drop in the bucket—there are so many like them." (The Alabama Baptist/BP)



GRATEFUL TO GOD Abid and Shabnam Hussain (left) share a meal with David and Claudia Johnson. The Hussains are a refugee family living in a rough Mobile, Ala., neighborhood. Abid is struggling to find work and is afraid for his family to go out at night. But he and his family say God has a plan for them. The Johnsons, who serve in Thailand, are Southern Baptist representatives on stateside assignment in Birmingham, Ala. (Photo by Lyle Ratliff/The Alabama Baptist)



O B E D I E N T

HIS HEART / HIS HANDS / HIS VOICE

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For more information about the offering and the Week of Prayer go to imb.org

*Week of Prayer for
International Missions
December 2-9, 2012
Lottie Moon Christmas Offering
National Goal: \$175 million*

A PERSONAL WORD

What does it look like to be obedient to God?

By Joy Bolton

Obedient. What does that word mean to you? What verse comes to mind? For me the verse is Philippians 2:8, which tells us that Jesus "became obedient to death, even death on a cross!"

The Season of Prayer for International Missions draws upon this word, lifting out the word "be" and calling us to "Be His Hands, His Heart, His Voice." As we focus on praying for missions around the world and giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, I am reminded that international missions is both there and here. Usually we say "here and there" but I have reversed the order of this familiar phrase on purpose. International missions is first of all there—other places around the world where missionaries are obedient to follow God's calling. We support them as they go there—wherever "there" is in the world—as we pray and give. The 2012 "Obedient" prayer guide is a great place to start!

Another great resource is the missionary prayer calendar found in Missions Mosaic.



Joy Bolton

The abbreviations in the prayer calendar remind us that our missionaries now focus on people groups wherever they may be found. The reality of this struck me a few years ago when I received a Christmas card from a Kentucky friend who married a Japanese man and told about taking their children to visit Japanese cousins in Brazil. People groups are about the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the people, not their geographic location.

International missions is also here. From high school and college students who have come to this country to attend school, to families who have come here for employment and/or to make this country their new home, international missions is here.

A few weeks ago, I attended a picnic for first year international students at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Also invited were three high school students who are international exchange students. I talked at length with the sponsor of two of the girls. She told me that God had spoken to her about the need to reach out to internationals. She said, "I

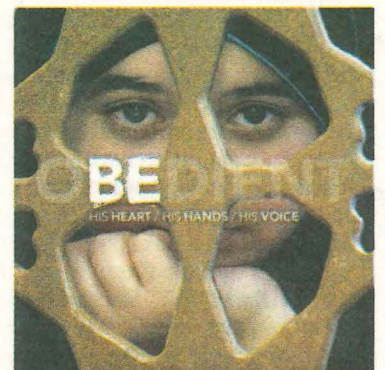
could spend the money it takes to host these students and go on a two-week mission trip overseas, but for the same money, I get them for nine months."

Students who have stayed with this family were not Christians when they arrived, but in the course of being with the family, attending youth activities at the church, and meeting Christian students, they have all come to faith in Christ. Many continue to stay in touch and the ministry of this family touches the world. They were obedient to God's call to international missions here.

Likewise Baptist Campus Ministries across Kentucky work with international students on our college and university campuses. Through weekly Bible studies, English classes, and many other events, we are doing international missions here. Engage, our international student conference held each November, is one way that we use the Eliza Broadus Offering to do international missions here in Kentucky.

Obedient. A word that carries so much meaning. May it be said of us: "They were obedient to God's call—there and here."

Joy Bolton is the executive director of Ky. WMU.



**Be His Heart
His Hands
His Voice**

*Week of Prayer for
International Missions
December 2-9, 2012*

Lottie Moon Christmas
Offering
Goal: \$175 million

Kentucky churches gave
\$5,040,378.41
during 2011-12

Let's give generously again this year!

The Story Lives On Celebrate Connect Commit

Friday/Saturday, April 5-6, 2013
First Baptist Church, Hopkinsville

Theme Interpretations by
Rosalie Hunt, Recording Secretary,
National WMU; Retired Missionary;
Author of "Bless God and Take Courage"

**If you are over age 50,
invite someone under 50!**
Make it possible for someone who has not
experienced our Annual Meeting to come.
Help the story live on for someone else!

Registration information
and a complete schedule
will be available in January.

2013 Kentucky WMU Missions Celebration & Annual Meeting

2013 Highlights:

- New schedule with more missionary conferences as well as other conference options
- Connecting Your Story – WMU Time Line
- WMU 125th Birthday Celebration / Heritage Fund Banquet on Friday evening
- Tours of local ministries
- GA Birthday Celebration on Saturday
- Disaster Relief Units on display
- Disaster Relief Lunch on Saturday
- Baptist Nursing Fellowship Meeting
- Missionary Parents Fellowship

WMU DIRECTORS

'Simple' advice for leaders

By Wanda Walker

What a short year.

The number of days did not change; however it seemed to move faster than before. So many things to do and sometimes with the shortness of time we forget to follow some of the most courteous actions.

Having the opportunity to meet many people across our state, there are three reoccurring things I hear from people other than WMU Directors. They state they do not feel included in the loop. They feel overlooked and unheard.

I would like to suggest two things to be mindful of as we are leaders of the WMU leadership team. It may seem simple, but humor me.

Respect

A leader needs to show respect to team members. Respect indicates you appreciate the leadership role they have on the team. A team leader must show respect to her team. Respect means not talking in a condescending manner or in an authoritarian tone. It means including the entire team. Simple? Maybe not. Below is from a teaching guide for middle school children on respect:

- Value other people's opinions.
- Be considerate of people's likes and dislikes.
- Don't mock or tease people.
- Don't talk about people behind their backs.
- Be sensitive to other people's feelings.
- Don't pressure someone to do something he or she doesn't want to do.

Open Communication

Thoreau said "It takes two to speak the truth; one to speak and another to hear." Communication is a powerful tool to a team working well together. Here are some characteristics of open communication:

- Communication is a two-way process
- Communication happens between two or more persons
- Communication involves an exchange of ideas, feelings, information, thoughts and knowledge
- Communication involves a mutual understanding between everyone
- Communication can be verbal or non verbal.
- Verbal communication can be oral or written

Nonverbal communication includes body language; para language; space and time language; and sign language (team members should not be fearful of speaking an opinion for fear of retribution and yes, this has been known to happen.)

Maybe not so simple.

ADULTS

Re-energizing mission-minded women of all generations

By Wanda Walker

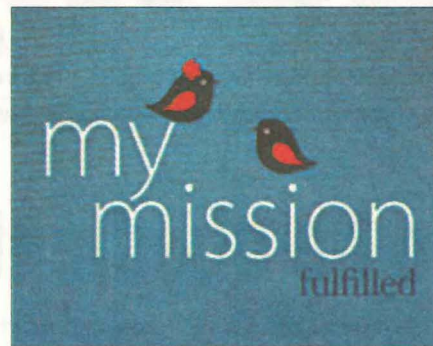
It's 2:40 AM. The ticking clock is the only thing you hear. You can't sleep.

For weeks, even months, and maybe longer, you have struggled with the fact that the Women on Mission at your church has declined.

What went wrong? What can we do to reach a new generation? Will it die all together? How do I connect with them?

These words have become all too familiar in the adult women's world. If you have experienced this, I will guarantee, you are not alone. There has been a decline in adult missions education over the past few years.

The good news is Woman's



Missionary Union has an exciting alternative to reach the upcoming generation. I encourage you to take time to learn about and experience the new organization for younger women called myMISSION.

myMISSION is for young wom-

en that are 18-35 years of age, but it is not exclusive. This web-based approach directs a young woman to fulfill her mission as a follower of Christ. The site (www.mymissionfulfilled.com) explores the lives of people who are experiencing missional living. Monthly updates include: Bible studies, prayer resources, mission stories, social justice articles, media reviews, relationships, and much more!

The following are a few testimonials about myMISSION:

—myGod is amazing. Our first night of the study we had over 20 women. Word is spreading and each week we increase in number. God is doing amazing things. We are seeing beyond ourselves and it

is making a difference."

—"I like that I am not tied to a meeting. This meets my needs and the needs of my friends. We don't even have to attend the same church to belong to something bigger than ourselves."

Don't spend your nights sleepless. Share with your young women in the church about this new way for young adult women to learn about missions alongside those who share the same life experiences, whether the girl next door, young professional, mom or college girl. It's catching on in our state and across the nation.

Contact the Kentucky WMU office for more information or go to www.mymissionfulfilled.com.

And get a good night's rest.

RAs/CHALLENGERS

RAMCON arrival date 2013

By Jonathan Auten

ROYAL AMBASSADORS

In farming communities across our state, winter is the time for staying warm, repairing equipment and making plans for coming season. Which fields will be used and which ones will lie fallow? How will the crops be rotated among the fields and will a new crop be introduced to the farm with the hopes of a future harvest?

In the world of Royal Ambassadors, plans are in the works this winter for a new state-wide event that I hope will bear much fruit among Kentucky RAs. I am pleased to announce to you that on March 16, the Kentucky WMU will be sponsoring a state-wide missions congress for RAs, called the Kentucky Royal Ambassador Missions Congress or, as I like to call it, RAMCON2013.

This event will feature inspiring missions speakers, RA Racers (all open races, no qualifying necessary), a new event called the Missions Fitness Challenge, and the opportunity to participate in a missions project. RA Leader Allen Walker and the good people of Elkton Baptist Church have agreed to partner with the Kentucky WMU in hosting this new event.

I am excited about this event and look forward to the possibilities of how God will challenge and grow RAs of all ages as they gather from around the state to pray for, learn about and do missions together.

Please mark your calendars, watch the mail and website (www.kywmu.org/royalambassadors) for more info, and make your plans now to bring your RAs to this great new event.

What about the regional congresses that have been held in the past? That is a good question.

In the past, there have been many great congresses held at the regional level where the lives of boys have been changed by the power of Christ. And while I would love to see congresses continue at this level, the past year has shown me that we do not have the resources or structural support to maintain congresses at the regional level. Because of this, I will not be recruiting coordinators and RAMCON for the spring of 2013.

Instead, I will be encouraging and working with any association that would like to hold a congress for their member churches. At our website www.kywmu.org/royalambassadors, I will try to keep an up-to-date list of all the associational RA congresses.

On a different note, please see Stacy Nall's article (page 3) to learn about the International Missions Study and Children's Ministry Day. These are two great opportunities for engaging Royal Ambassadors in missions learning and action. I would also encourage you to take a look at the ad in this publication for Missions Adventure Camp. RAs, GAs, and CiAs had a blast at MAC last year and we are looking forward to more fun and missions activities this coming summer. Won't you join us?

CHALLENGERS

The teen boys are not forgotten in all of this planning for spring and summer RA events. 4:GO, which was reintroduced last spring, will return again on April 12-13 at First Baptist Church in Hodgenville.

The event will be more closely coordinated with Exalt for teen girls and include joint worship, mission project opportunities, and breakout learning sessions that are gender specific. The theme, based upon Galations 1:10, will be "Bond Servant".

Please see Maryann Lee's article (at right) and the website (www.kywmu.org/youth) for relevant info.



STUDENTS

Make plans for Exalt, 4:GO

By Maryann Lee

Over the past two years WMU has been making many changes. Those changes have involved RA's and Challengers coming to be a part of the WMU family. These two age level groups for boys provide ways to teach boys how to live a missions lifestyle as GA's and Acteens have done for many years.

Kentucky WMU desires to keep up with all of these changes. For years Exalt has been an event for teenage girls that has blended missions and growing girls in their walk with Christ. Now that we have Challengers for teenage boys, we desire to teach them these same values.

Last year, Kentucky WMU brought back an event for boys called 4:GO that was held in conjunction with Exalt. This year these two events will be combined. Exalt and 4:GO will take place together April 12-13, at Hodgenville First Baptist Church. There will be joint worship sessions for teenage guys and girls Friday night and Saturday, but the breakout sessions will be centered on the needs of guys and girls individually.

On Saturday morning there will be missions opportunities in the community and on site at the church. We at Kentucky WMU are excited about this event and looking forward to what God is going to do in the lives of teenage guys and girls as a result.

Another change that adding Challengers to Kentucky WMU has brought about is the need to gain the input of teenage guys as we plan and execute these events. The Kentucky Acteens Advisory Panel has been in place for many years and it has been an excellent way for leaders to gain input from teen girls as well as providing them with leadership opportunities.

The New Kentucky Teen Advisory Panel will function much the same way as the Acteens Panel, with Panelists helping to plan and execute Exalt and 4:GO and members will represent Acteens, Youth on Mission and Challengers throughout the state. Members of any of these groups are eligible to apply.

More information concerning this new Teen Panel and an application is available on our website: kywmu.org/teenpanel.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns about these changes, please do not hesitate to contact the Kentucky WMU office. We would love to hear from you!



President's perspective: *Telling your story of His love*

For the next two years, National WMU has chosen the theme: "The Story Lives On." We will be hearing lots of stories of how Jesus is still changing lives through His followers who are sharing His story so that The Story Lives On. Here is one of those stories.



Linda Cooper

Once upon a time, there was a little girl born into a family of four girls: Brenda Mae, Linda Fay, Loretta Gay and Leslie Kay—she was the second born. All of their lives, the story of Jesus was shared with them through Sunday School, VBS and it was lived out before them by their parents and grandparents. Since the girls were raised in a Christian home it was not "if we're going to church," but "yes, we'll be there." So, at the age of 12, she was saved during a revival meeting in her home church. After that transformation, she was eager for everyone to come to Christ...to tell her story of faith in Jesus.

She played the piano and all four girls sang as: The Carter Sisters. They traveled

to many churches to sing during the fifth Sunday night singings and at association meetings, too...sharing the story of Jesus through song.

She grew up, attended WKU where she majored in Dental Hygiene. Dental Hygiene was a very competitive field and she would have to be accepted into the program from over 200 applicants...for only 18 spots. She prayed that if that's where God wanted her to be, He would have to open the door.

The Lord did open that door and she became a Registered Dental Hygienist and everyone in her class knew of her faith in Christ. She was even elected President both years.

When she graduated, it was time to search for a job. At that time, there was only 1 dentist in the Bowling Green area that was hiring—she needed God again to open or close the door, for she was to be married that summer to the first Baptist boy she had ever dated and they planned to make their home in Bowling Green.

God opened that door and she got the job. She would be working with a Christian couple. They would all see the practice as a mission field where she is free to share His story with her patients. She began to see God's calling to mission work.

In the early years of their marriage, she and her husband discussed the possibility of serving as international missionaries but never received that clear call from the Lord. Her mother-in-law invited her to her Baptist Women's meeting. Soon thereafter, Baptist Young Women was developed and she was hooked.

She began to see God's clear calling to mission work—through WMU. She told His story as she served in leadership positions from churchwide to the association by: praying for missions, engaging in mission action and witnessing, learning about missions, developing spiritually toward a missions lifestyle, participating in the work of the church and the denomination.

When she was asked to serve as the association BYW director by the previous director, Doris Mullendore, who was serving as the associational WMU director, she was not too sure about her. Time went on and they became good friends. When Doris was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, she was asked to fill Doris' shoes as the Warren Association WMU director. She also served two terms on the KY WMU Ex. Bd. and now serves as President of KY WMU sharing His story literally all around the world.

I think Doris would be happy for me for

this is my story of coming to faith in Jesus and a little bit of how I share His story in my daily walk.

What about you? What is your story? You, too, have a story; a story that began when you accepted God's grace and forgiveness when you asked Him into your heart to be your Lord and Savior.

We have to keep the story living, not only through our words but also through the lives we lead. It is our responsibility to be like John and Peter in Acts. "We cannot keep quiet. We must speak about what we have seen and heard." Acts 4:20.

Take a moment to write your story sharing how His story through your life, lives on. I believe that WMU offers you a chance to be a part of lives being changed eternally—by sharing His story. Make it your passion. What you are doing really does matter. Know that I am praying for you. Praying for blessings on you this year as you live out the story, His story and your WMU story as you share it with those whom God puts in your path.

Linda Cooper is president of Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union.

PRESCHOOL & CHILDREN

Kids on mission all winter long

By Stacy Nail

Wondering how you can keep the excitement about missions education going through the winter months? Try these ideas for your preschoolers and children!

The International Mission Study in December focuses on Beijing. Preschoolers and children will meet a girl named Jeannie who shows God's love at her Chinese school. They will also learn about Jeannie's parents' ministry to children of migrant workers. This study corresponds with the December units for Mission Friends, Girls in Action, Children in Action and Royal Ambassadors. Teaching guides for preschoolers and children are available from Woman's Missionary Union and the International Mission Board.

Focus on WMU, February 11-16, is a wonderful opportunity to spotlight the importance of Mission Friends, Girls in Action, Children in Action, and Royal Ambassadors! On February 16, children and adults across America will be participating in Children's Ministry Day.

The theme for 2013 is Helping Hands. The possibilities are endless with this theme!



- Deliver can goods to a pantry and offer to help stock the shelves.
- Make fleece blankets for a shelter and deliver them in person.
- Brave the winter weather and offer to do yard work for seniors.
- Plan a birthday party or Bible club for kids in an apartment complex. (Check with the manager first, of course.)

Kentucky WMU would like to know your plans for Children's Ministry Day. You can post your plans on the Kentucky WMU Facebook page.

Find our link at www.kywmu.org. Visit www.childrensmiissions.com to learn more about Children's Ministry Day and the resources available.

Mission Friends Leaders will find all kinds of ministry projects appropriate for preschoolers in "Big Enough to Help Others," published by national WMU. (www.wmystore.com)

Mission Friends can assemble coffee mixes for single parents in your church. As preschoolers experience the winter weather, lead them to sponsor a mitten drive for the needy.

Mission Friends are not too young to pray. Prayerwalk your church together. Pray for the pastor and staff, the leaders, and the people who come to church.

Sometimes the winter weather forces churches to cancel their activities. Plan ahead to enable your children to continue missions learning. WMU Individual Achievement Plans are designed for children to complete on their own if they like. Look through your GA Journey Leader Guide, Special Assignments Guide (CIA) or Camp Craft (RA) to find activities that boys and girls can accomplish at home. Send home instructions for activities before the weather gets bad and help prevent those winter blues while continuing to learn about missions!

Mission Adventure Camp

at Cedar Crest in Bagdad, Kentucky

Sponsored by Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union

Visit our website kywmu.org/camp for more information and to register

Mission Adventure Camp for Girls and Boys

Weeklong \$195 Per person
Girls and Boys Grades 3-6
and Chaperones
 June 10-14 June 17-21
 June 24-28

Mother/Daughter and
Father/Son Overnights
\$50 Per person
Grades 1-3
 June 14-15 June 21-22

Overnights at the Creek

Jonathan Creek in Hardin, KY

\$50 Per person

- GA Overnight—girls grades 4-6 and their leaders
- Mother/Daughter Overnight—girls grades 1-3 and moms
- Acteens Splash—teenage girls and their leaders

Kentucky Notes

KENTUCKY WMU HERITAGE FUND

July 1 – September 30, 2012

Thanks to all current and past donors for your support of Kentucky WMU through the Heritage Fund. The following gifts were received during the third quarter of 2012.

In Honor of:
Yaesook, Soonsil,
& Sook Jae – Korea WMU
Amber Trantham

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Boone's Creek Assoc. WMU
Ruth Hinkle
Susan Bryant
Maribeth Hambrick

Other Gifts
Kentucky WMU Staff
Central Baptist Church – Life Changers Group
Burgin Baptist Church



HERITAGE FUND AT WORK

During the 2011-12 year, Kentucky WMU received a distribution from the Heritage Fund of \$11,792.03 to support our work. Under the guidance of the Development Committee these funds were used for: Associational WMU Leader Training, Ethnic/Language WMU, materials for new WMU organizations, resources to promote WMU growth, the EBO at Work column monthly in the Western Recorder, Exalt and 4GO (For Guys Only) mis-

sions events for teenagers, and Camp Courage for Royal Ambassadors.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to our Kentucky WMU endowment. While principal is never used, the growth of the Heritage Fund provides an annual distribution to Kentucky WMU which is used to enhance missions education and leader development.



KY WMU CALENDAR

DECEMBER

2-9
Season of Prayer for International Missions & Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

FEBRUARY

11-17
Focus on WMU
16
Children's Ministry Day

MARCH

3-10
Week of Prayer for North American Missions/Annie Armstrong Easter Offering
16
RAMCON, Elkton Baptist Church, Elkton

APRIL

5-6
Kentucky WMU Annual Meeting, First Baptist Church, Hopkinsville
12-13
Exalt/4:GO, Hodgenville First Baptist Church, Hodgenville
19-20
Women on Mission Regional Retreat, Laurel Lake Baptist Camp, Corbin
26-27
Women on Mission Regional Retreat, Camp Schafer, Hawesville

SCHOLARSHIPS

Kentucky WMU has a variety of scholarships available for Acteens as well as those preparing for full time Christian ministry, both in college and seminary. For a complete list of scholarships, qualifications, applications and addi-

tional resources please check the Kentucky WMU website, www.ky-wmu.org/scholarships or contact Maryann Lee at 502-489-3534. The scholarship application deadline is February 15.

Exalt 4:GO

Bondservant

April 12-13, 2013
First Baptist Church
Hodgenville, KY
\$25 per person

New This Year!
Exalt and 4:GO will be together
providing worship and
hands on missions opportunities for
teenage girls and girls.

Visit kywmu.org/youth
for more information and to register.

FamilyFEST

Kentucky

Henderson and Paducah

July 13-18, 2013

To register, go to www.wmu.com and click on "Ministries."

Being a Grape in a
World of Raisins

April 19-20
Laurel Lake Baptist Camp
Corbin, KY

April 26-27
Camp Schafer
Hawesville, KY

www.kywmu.org/beingagrape