

WESTERN Recorder

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Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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OPEN HEART

Ky. Baptist school student returns to China with belief 'that the Lord is real'

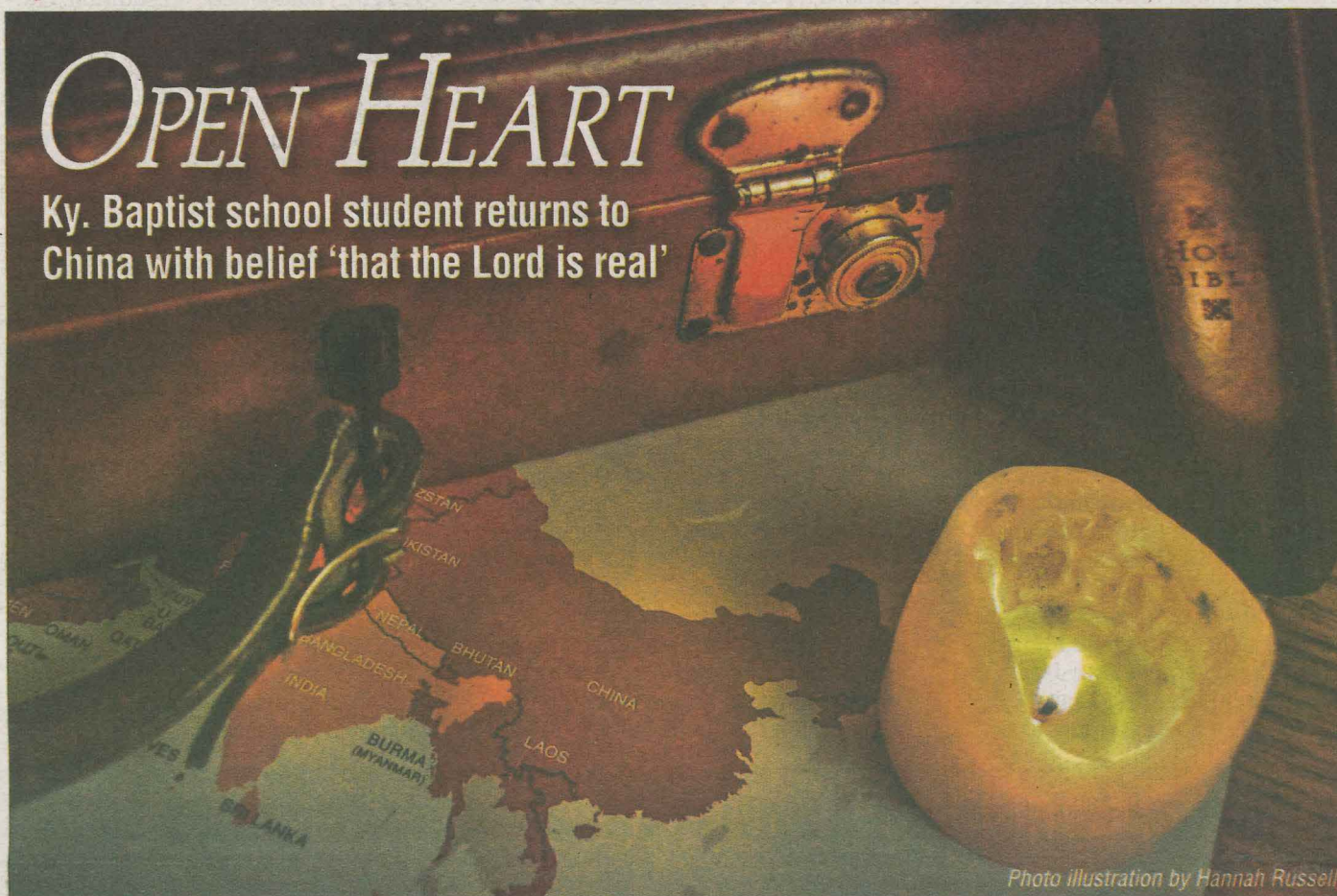


Photo illustration by Hannah Russell

By David Roach

When Chinese parents send their child to an American university, they expect her to return home with a degree and the opportunity to begin a career. But one student from central China returned home with much more.

After attending a Baptist university, Wenny* brought home a transformed life just over a year ago—sharing a message about Jesus that transformed her parents as well.

Having committed her life to Christ as a student at the University of the Cumberlands in Williamsburg, Wenny returned to her hometown of Wuhan in late 2011 and found a Christian church to attend. An opportunity to share her testimony during a worship service arose, and she invited her parents. When the pastor called people to commit their lives to Jesus, Wenny's parents responded.

"They accepted Christ, and I was so surprised," Wenny told Baptist Press, "because I thought it would take a lot of time—two or more years—for them to accept Christ.

"But it happened on that day."

Dean Whitaker, Cumberlands' director of campus ministries and Baptist Collegiate Ministry, said it's just one example of the worldwide impact of BCM.

"The world literally comes to our doorsteps through our campuses every semester," Whitaker told BP in an email. "... When we reach one international student with the gospel and discipleship, we become missionaries throughout the world through them. Wenny is a beautiful example of God's sovereign hand drawing people into relationship with Him to advance His Kingdom to the ends of the earth."

In August 2008 when Wenny began her college studies in America, she seemed an unlikely candidate to embrace Christianity—much less take it back to China. An atheist, she "thought Jesus was a western Buddha or a character from a story, like Cinderella or Snow White." She also "thought the people who believed in gods were absurd."

But God was at work. When Wenny decided to study in America, her second cousin who lived in Canada helped find

□ See Former atheist ... Page 2

SBC Exec. Comm. OKs requests with international impact

Nashville, Tenn.—The Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee approved two SBC entities' requests regarding work in China and Canada.

Committee members Feb. 19 unanimously approved a request by LifeWay Christian Resources to form LifeWay Global, a for-profit subsidiary that will make Bibles, Bible study and training materials available in China.

Although China will be the only country initially impacted, the request allows LifeWay Global to provide materials to other countries. The for-profit status is necessary because China is reluctant to grant registration to international nonprofits, Executive Committee members were told. The goal is for LifeWay Global to be self-funding.

Executive Committee members also unanimously approved a request by the North American Mission Board to form NAMB Canada, a nonprofit corporation that will make it easier for NAMB to expand its church planting work in Canada. Currently, NAMB must direct its Canadian ministry efforts through the Canadian National Baptist Convention. Forming the nonprofit will allow NAMB to hire employees directly, rent office space and purchase property as needed.

Jerry Taillon, the Canadian convention's ministry leader, expressed support for the proposal. The corporation will be funded solely by NAMB and will have five board members—three Canadian citizens and two U.S. citizens. Canadian law requires that nonprofits be governed by a board whose majority is comprised of Canadian citizens.

During subcommittee discussion of the proposal, NAMB President Kevin Ezell said the mission board has a good working relationship with the Canadian convention, but NAMB's increased focus on reaching Canada means more church plants and more personnel, which would create an increasing administrative workload for the CNBC. The formation of NAMB Canada would remove that problem, Ezell said.

GuideStone ministry assignment

Executive Committee members approved a recommendation from GuideStone Financial Resources that would allow it to offer its investment and insurance products and services to like-minded individuals. Under the proposal, to be placed before messengers at the

□ See SBC Exec. Committee ... Page 3

Changing the Channel

Taking new look at young adult ministry

By Ken Walker

Alexandria—By calling its own "campus pastor," Main Street Baptist Church in Alexandria is taking a fresh look at young adult ministry—discipling and commissioning young Christians to serve as missionaries on their school and college campuses.

"The only way for us to know what's going on at the university is for us to be there," senior pastor Bob Franklin said, using nearby Northern Kentucky University as an example.

Noting that a campus pastor puts a new spin on the traditional youth pastor position, Franklin said, "We can then help (young people) be ready to move into this reality" no matter what type of school they attend.

The transition by Main Street Baptist is an example of what will be discussed at "Changing the Channel," the Kentucky Baptist Convention's young adult ministry conference April 12-14 at Cedarmore Camp & Conference Center in Bagdad.

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Teacher's bequest to Kentucky WMU to make far-reaching impact

By Todd Deaton

Louisville—The Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union recently received a large legacy gift from the estate of a retired schoolteacher that will be used to benefit Kentucky Baptist ministries and missions work across the commonwealth, as well as WMU work in seven other states.

As a beneficiary in the will of Mabel Brigance Grinstead, a retired teacher from Western Junior High School and member of Bethany Baptist Church, both in Louisville, Kentucky WMU has received \$137,625, Joy Bolton, executive director of Kentucky WMU told the Western Recorder.

"We are excited to share the news of Mrs. Grinstead's bequest to Kentucky WMU," Bolton said. "We believe that her desire to support missions education through WMU will be honored through the use of these funds."

Grinstead, a teacher for more than 40 years, specified in her will that 10 percent of the value of her estate would be given to the Lord's work. A third of the tithe of her estate was to be given to her church, and two-thirds was designated

to Kentucky WMU, in memory of Jennie Graham Bright, its corresponding secretary from 1924-33.

Though the connection between Grinstead and Bright is not specifically known, Bright was serving as the Young Peoples leader of Kentucky WMU when she was selected as corresponding secretary in 1925, Bolton said.

Grinstead died in December 2010 at the age of 98, and Kentucky WMU leaders first became aware of the gift in mid-2012

when it became necessary to provide court documentation confirming that Kentucky WMU was her intended recipient. An error in the exact name of Kentucky

Woman's Missionary Union in the will made it necessary to show the history of Kentucky WMU and its connection with Bright, Bolton said.

The finance committee of Kentucky WMU, expressing a desire to share this blessing and honor Grinstead's legacy, recommended dividing the gift among three causes:

■ \$50,000 will be given to Crossings Ministries to help with rebuilding cabins at Cedar Crest. Because Grinstead had a concern for children and Kentucky WMU has been holding camps at Cedar

Crest for many years, a portion will be used in the construction of the first of four cabins, each of which will sleep 44 persons.

■ Another \$50,000 will be given to the Kentucky WMU Heritage Fund, an endowment that provides annual distributions for the work of Kentucky WMU. Among the many ministries funded are associational WMU leadership training, resources for new WMU organizations, and other means to promote missions education and involvement.

■ The remaining balance of \$37,625 will enable seven smaller state WMU organizations reach the \$10,000 level in their "Touch Tomorrow Today" endowment campaigns with the national WMU Foundation. Kentucky WMU will match gifts to the TTT endowments of these states, up to the amount needed to reach a \$10,000 threshold required to begin receiving distributions. A total of \$18,900, if matched, has been set aside for the WMU of California, Canada, District of Columbia, Indiana, New York, Utah/Idaho and Wyoming. The unused portion will be placed in the Kentucky's TTT endowment.

"'Touch Tomorrow Today' was selected not only as a way to share the blessing of the estate gift with seven other state WMUs that need help in reaching the distribution threshold, but also in

supporting the work of national WMU," Bolton said. When state TTT distributions occur, half goes to state WMU, and the other half goes to national WMU, she explained.

"Sharing the blessing of this gift with other state WMUs is our way of 'tithing' this gift," Bolton said. "In addition, children attending camps and retreats held at Cedar Crest will be blessed for years to come through the renovation of the facilities there."

"We hope that others will follow the example of Mrs. Grinstead, choosing to tithe their estates to the Lord's work, and that her gift will inspire others to name Kentucky WMU in their wills," Bolton added.

"The Kentucky Baptist Foundation exists to encourage, educate and enable Kentucky Baptists to do just that," noted Barry Allen, president of the Foundation, which manages the Kentucky WMU Heritage Fund.

"I believe the biblical mandate for every adult disciple of Jesus Christ, regardless of our financial stations in life, is to include a provision in our estate plans to make an impact for the cause of Christ through our churches and other Great Commission ministries," Allen added. "It's a matter of obedience to our Lord as Kingdom-minded stewards of what He has entrusted to us." (WR)



Churches rally after North Livingston Baptist leveled by tornado

By Robin Cornetel Bass



Total loss North Livingston Baptist Church, in Hampton, was destroyed by a tornado Jan. 12. (Photo provided by Danny Starrick)

Hampton—Eighteen western Kentucky churches rallied to show support for tornado-ravaged North Livingston Baptist Church in Hampton and collected \$6,700 during a chili supper benefit last weekend.

North Livingston Pastor Danny Starrick described the daylong event as a "sweet time of fellowship."

The Hampton church lost its steeple and suffered damage to its educational building during a Jan. 12 storm that skipped across Livingston County and ripped the steeple from a nearby Methodist church.

"There wasn't a shingle missing" from adjacent homes, Starrick said.

Typically on Saturdays, Starrick said, custodian and church member Amelia Ramage would have been cleaning the building for Sunday worship while her

son played basketball in the church. But a weather alert text prompted Ramage to wait out the storm at home—a decision that likely saved her life, Starrick noted.

Since the tornado, North Livingston Baptist has been meeting at the county's elementary school for worship services and through it all Starrick said the congregation has never lost their enthusiasm.

"The Lord has really blessed us through this," Starrick said. "We are going to get to build now and we know we are going to be bigger and better when this is done."

The church was in the beginning stages of a five-year building project brought on by growth.

"It was just as if God said, 'I don't want you to wait five years for a rebuild when it's needed now.' We are convinced if God can take walls down, He can build them up," Starrick said. (WR)

Former atheist

Continued from page 1

a university and make all the necessary arrangements for her to attend. However, the cousin went into a coma from brain cancer before Wenny arrived to see her in person. She never revived and soon died.

Amid her grief, Wenny learned that her cousin was a Christian and that her university was a Christian school. Wenny still wonders whether her cousin's help was an intentional act of Christian witness.

"After I had been there for one month, I realized that almost everybody tried to tell me about Jesus and wanted to take me to church," Wenny recounted. "I had a thought that all Americans are Christians. And then my friend told me that our college is a Christian school.

"... I was surprised because I never thought about going to a religious school. But the people at the school were

very kind, so I was OK with the Christian part."

A conversation with chapel speaker Ray Sydnor, a former NFL player turned evangelist, was a key moment in Wenny's spiritual journey. In response to her claim that the Bible was not true, Sydnor presented historical evidence to substantiate Scripture. In response to her claim that the world came into existence by chance, he pointed to the apparent design in the universe.

"Ray's words moved me, and I started to think that the Lord may be real," Wenny said.

Caring believers continued to share Jesus with Wenny until the cumulative effect helped bring her to salvation while attending church in April 2009.

"When people were singing worship songs, I suddenly believed in God," Wenny said. "So I prayed. When my eyes were closed, I felt that it became bright in front of me. I opened my eyes and saw sunshine. The light went through the window and shined on me.

"I don't know how to explain how it happened; my heart was suddenly open and I believed. Later when people asked me how I believed in God, I said God found me. He built a temple in my heart and lived there."

Soon Wenny was baptized at Main Street Baptist Church in Williamsburg and began to grow in her faith, learning to trust God as He provided for her needs time and again.

When she didn't have a place to live during the summer, a professor asked her to house sit while he went on vacation. When she lacked money for tuition, she saw God's provision of a job. And when she graduated from UC in 2010, a stranger was stirred to let Wenny live in her house in Nashville, Tenn.

"After I lived with her for two months," Wenny said of her hostess, "she told me that the first time she met me she had a strong feeling that the Lord wanted her to help me."

Wenny stayed in Nashville for 10 months, gaining confidence and

maturity in her faith through the ministry of a local church, before returning to China on the last day of 2011 with a desire to help her friends and family find Jesus.

Her parents' commitment to Christ seems genuine and enduring, Wenny said, because they continued to attend church in China even after she returned to America this winter to pursue a master of business administration degree at Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas.

As for the future, Wenny is not sure of her plans but wants to "serve people," perhaps as a missionary. Taking the gospel back to China was a blessing even when people didn't accept the message, she said.

"I had some chances to talk with them, but they didn't accept," she said. "But anyway they listened ... which is still better than nothing." (BP)

"Wenny is a nickname used by her American friends. Her full name has been withheld for security reasons. David Roach is a writer in Shelbyville.

Page: 1% Challenge a surprising success

By Erin Roach

Nashville, Tenn.—The 1% Challenge for increased Cooperative Program giving has been a surprising success, Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, said Feb. 18.

Page had asked the convention's 45,000 churches to consider a 1 percent-of-budget increase in Cooperative Program giving, which would add \$100 million to the funding stream for Southern Baptist missions and ministries.

"The 1% Challenge began almost two years ago and has received a great deal of positive attention. Honestly, more than I thought it would," Page told EC members. "I thought ... it might have some traction until we got a more comprehensive strategy in place."

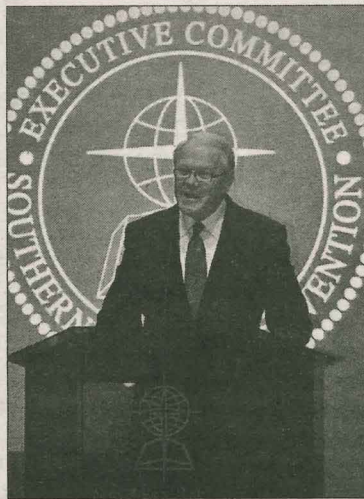
But the challenge has caught on, Page said, and at least 15 percent of Southern Baptist churches either have adopted the challenge or are seriously considering it.

Great Commission Advance

In his report to trustees, Page previewed a sweeping initiative still in the planning stages: Great Commission Advance.

Great Commission Advance, Page said, is an aggressive global vision—reaching the world for Christ—based on a strong home base, fueled by the CP. The initiative will start in 2014 and go through 2020, Page said, and it will begin with a massive emphasis on stewardship.

Among the goals of Great Commission Advance are 7,000 international missionaries, 10,000 new churches in North America in the next 10 years and reduced seminary education costs for students. State conventions can add their own specific goals, Page said.



BETTER THAN BEFORE "We have an opportunity to do some things together better than we've ever done before," said Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, in his address to the SBC Executive Committee.

Ethnic relations

Page said an area he has worked hard on during the past year is ethnic relationships. Through the Hispanic Advisory Council and the African American Advisory Council, Page said, he has been working with ethnic brothers and sisters in Christ to encourage deeper involvement in the convention than ever before. Soon Page expects to announce the members of an Asian Advisory Council.

"Of our 45,000 churches, almost one in four is ethnic in some fashion—almost 10,000," Page noted.

Page said he will be working with David Dockery, president of Union University, on an Educational Summit where representatives from colleges, universities and seminaries will work specifically on "making education more accessible to our ethnic brothers and sisters."

Calvinism

Another area of concern

during the past year, Page said, has been working toward unity on Calvinism. The advisory council he formed expects to deliver a report to the convention at the annual meeting in Houston, he said.

"While I'm a non-Calvinist, I'm not an anti-Calvinist," Page said. "Again, friends, if there was ever a day and time when we all need to be at the table together so that we can work together in missions and evangelism, it's today..."

"We've got a long way to go, but we're going to come to a new day of saying, 'We respect each other and we are going to work together to win this world for Christ,'" Page said.

Prayer concerns

Page mentioned two particular issues that call for increased prayer in the coming days: the anticipated U.S. Supreme Court decision on gay marriage and the Boy Scouts of America's vote on whether to allow homosexual troop leaders and members.

The Supreme Court's decision, Page said, could "affect our entire culture." He added, "We need to pray." Regarding the Boy Scouts, "God's people spoke up and spoke up loudly," he said. "Continue to do that, please."

At the close of the 2011-12 fiscal year, Page reported, revenues exceeded the Executive Committee budget by more than \$384,000, expenses were under budget by \$336,000, and an undesignated reserve fund reached more than \$5 million.

"Financially, the Executive Committee is in a very positive state of rebound, and we praise God for that," Page said. "I told you before that we will always be fiscally careful. I am frugal in my own personal life and I believe it is God's money and we must be good stewards. We have worked hard to do this." (BP)

Exec. Committee adopts resolution criticizing Scouts

By Michael Foust

Nashville, Tenn.—The Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee has unanimously passed a resolution criticizing Boy Scouts leadership for trying to change the stance on homosexuality; urging Scouts' voting members to uphold the current policy.

The resolution also commends the Southern Baptists' Royal Ambassadors program "irrespective" of what the Scouts decide.

The Boy Scouts executive board appeared poised in early February to lift its prohibition on gay Scout leaders and members, and replace it with a "local option" allowing each sponsoring organization to decide. But facing pressure from its base, the board opted to put the matter before its 1,400 voting members at the national convention in May.

"We applaud the many Scouts, Scout families, Scouting leaders, host church leaders, and other interested individuals for raising their voices with courage by contacting the national leadership and national board of the Boy Scouts of America," the resolution states. "... (W)e call on and urge the representatives of the approximately 1,400 voting members of the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America courageously to stand strong on their moral convictions and vote to reject the proposed resolution from the national Scouting leaders, retaining the current policy of moral rectitude that has marked the Boy Scouts of America for more than one hundred years."

The resolution is critical of Boy Scouts leadership, noting Executive Committee President Frank Page learned during a conference call with Boy Scouts leadership that they "had been working behind the scenes for many months to reverse this policy" while "keeping the more conservative majority of the scouting family in the dark concerning their initiative." That, the resolution states, amounted to "breaking trust with the very Scout Oath and Law they pledge to uphold."

Lifting the policy, the resolution says, would "increase legal exposure" for any "chartered or sponsoring organization" which decides to uphold the biblical view of sexuality. Further, if the Boy Scouts change their policy, it would place them "at odds with a consistent biblical worldview on matters of human sexuality, making it an organization that would no longer complement, but rather contradict, belief in God and His moral precepts that serve as the basis for our Christian faith."

The resolution also calls on "business and corporate leaders who believe in the values of sexual purity, human morality, and biblical righteousness to render financial support for the Boy Scouts of America."

"Irrespective of the decision of the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America, we continue to lift up and commend Royal Ambassadors as a Christian values-based organization that, for 105 years, has taught Christian values to boys in Southern Baptist churches, educating at least two million boys in biblical missionary principles and winning tens of thousands to faith in Christ through chapter meetings, Royal Ambassador camps, and other Royal Ambassador activities," it says. (BP)

SBC Exec. Committee

Continued from page 1

SBC annual meeting in June, GuideStone would create two new affiliate companies that would be controlled by and answer to GuideStone's trustees, much as its current affiliates do.

The Dallas-based board, which provides retirement, insurance, property and casualty and investment opportunities to Southern Baptist churches, affiliated ministries and their employees, has served approved like-minded evangelical churches and organizations for nearly a decade. GuideStone also sponsors Mission:Dignity, a ministry that provides financial assistance for retired Southern Baptist ministers and their widows who need financial assistance.

Under the proposed expansion, GuideStone would begin making its mutual funds available to Southern Baptist church members and other eligible evangelicals in 2014. It also is studying

potential insurance products and services. During the presentation before the Executive Committee, GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins said the initiative is "the capstone of GuideStone 100, our long-range strategic plan, for which we have been praying and working toward for several years."

Hawkins stated GuideStone is committed "to further enhance the financial security of the SBC pastor at the crossroads by producing additional economies of scale and helping to undergird the coming needs of our Mission:Dignity program fueled by a massive Baby Boomer generation who is retiring within the next 15 years. ... We are only requesting the opportunity to serve a larger audience because we firmly believe it will enhance our ability to serve our Southern Baptist pastors in a more cost-effective manner for the long term."

D.C. convention

In another matter, the Executive Committee voted to consider a recommend-

ation at its June meeting that the combination of the District of Columbia, Maryland and Delaware be designated a "defined territory" for the purpose of determining eligibility for representation on SBC committees and entity boards. Only a limited number of churches in the District of Columbia contribute to SBC causes, resulting in SBC committee and board members from the District routinely coming from a small set of churches. According to background material given to the EC members, this creates "an impression that runs counter to the goal of broadening inclusion and board and committee involvement as widely as possible among Southern Baptists."

"It is not the trustees themselves which are in any way the subject of stated concerns, but the fact that the criteria presents a very limited set of churches from which to select qualified trustees" creates an anomaly in the trustee selection process, the background material stated.

According to SBC Bylaw 30, the number of cooperating Baptists in a defined territory must meet certain thresholds before Baptists in that territory qualify for representation on SBC boards and committees. By combining the District of Columbia with Maryland and Delaware as a "defined territory," the number of churches from which qualified SBC committee and board members can be selected becomes a larger set, helping meet the goal of broader inclusion.

The SBC will continue to relate directly to the D.C. Baptist Convention as a cooperating state convention, as it does seven other state and regional conventions in areas of the country that currently do not qualify for representation on SBC boards and committees.

The recommendation would require a change in SBC bylaws and approval by SBC messengers. The Executive Committee directed EC staff to "engage in further study of this plan and to receive and evaluate any input regarding this plan" prior to its June meeting in Houston. (BP)

A clearer picture

When Michelle and I were expecting our first child, we were greatly anticipating the ultrasound that would allow us to see our baby in the womb and

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

even know if we would have a boy or a girl. I vividly recall watching the black and white images on the screen. And I recall the exciting news that I would have a son. But more than these impactful moments, I will never forget the strange expression that came over the face of the ultrasound technician as she suddenly stood and announced she needed to step out of the room.

We waited and tried not to panic. A doctor soon entered the room, picked up the ultrasound wand, and began to examine the images. The news was grim. Our son, we were told, had a condition known as a "common atrium." Heart surgery would be mandatory at birth, if not before. We were numb.

An appointment at a children's hospital in two weeks for another procedure, an echocardiogram ultrasound, would give the doctors a clearer picture of the heart. We were told to not to worry and sent home to wait. Our prayer life immediately shifted into the highest gear and we comforted one another with the hope that only people of faith can understand.

The second ultrasound finally came. The physician this time was a jolly, white-bearded man who could have played Santa Claus in any movie. After only minutes of examining the screen, he delivered one of the best gifts we have ever received. He was unable to explain why the first ultrasound caused concern. "There. Count the chambers: one, two, three, four. No problems with this boy's heart!" God had heard our prayers.

From my first glance at the ultrasound screen, I never questioned whether what I was seeing was a person. What I was seeing was more than a person. He was my son.

Every day in the United States, abortion doctors perform procedures to end unwanted pregnancies. More accurately, they murder sons and daughters of women who are trying to convince themselves that what grows inside them is not yet a child.

I believe one glance at an ultrasound screen could save the lives of many of those children. Most abortion doctors are already using the ultrasound as a part of the procedure. Measures now active in the Kentucky legislature would require doctors to show mothers the image of their unborn children before the abortion is performed. Is it too much to ask a doctor to explain the procedure and show the mother her child?

Please call the legislative hotline at (800) 372-7181 and encourage your representatives to pass the ultrasound bill. Lives depend on it.

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Kentucky Baptists, farewell and thank you

Editor's note: With this issue, the *Western Recorder* bids farewell to Drew Nichter, who has served as our news director since May 2007. He assumed his new post as editor of the *Oldham Era* newspaper in La Grange Feb. 26. During his years on the *Western Recorder's* staff, Nichter performed a variety of editorial duties, including copy editing, reporting and page design, and he helped bridge a transition between editors. We are grateful to Nichter for his exceptional, dedicated service to Kentucky Baptists during these past five years, and we wish him well in his new role of service to the citizens of Oldham County. In recognition of his outstanding work, we yield this week's column to a guest editorial by Nichter.

Not long after I began my tenure as news director for the *Western Recorder*, my wife and I joined a group of other believers stepping out on faith to plant a church in Oldham County. Those early core-group meetings moved from the lead pastor's basement to an office conference room and eventually, as we launched the new congregation, to a movie theater.

But it was one Sunday-morning gathering in that board room that always stuck with me and helped me understand God's purpose for me at the *Kentucky Baptist* newspaper.

First let me say, I never intended to hold any such position with a ministry, much less one with a state Baptist convention newspaper. For years, I had received the *Western Recorder* at home through a church newsletter subscription—and, I'm sure like many of you, I only paid attention to the church news on the back page.

To put it bluntly, I believe the term "God thing" is over-used and often trivialized. I'm not one to use it flippantly. If Christ is the Lord of your life, every decision or seemingly life-altering move you make is orchestrated by Him. "God things" are not individual moments where God stepped in and redirected you to where He wanted you; God's leading is a continuous, unending action. But looking back, it's clear God directed me—in a very circuitous way, it seemed to me at times—right to the position I've held for nearly six years now. It was, for all intents and purposes, a "God thing."

But less than one year after joining the *Western Recorder*, I found myself in a very difficult and unanticipated career situation. The editor who hired me and whom I expected to mentor me in the ways of denominational journalism, Trennis Henderson, was called to a career change of his own and moved on to Ouachita Baptist University in Arkansas. Nearly all aspects of the *Western Recorder's* weekly production dropped squarely into my lap.

Now, don't get me wrong, we did—and still do—have a talented staff who all pulled together to make sure the *Western Recorder* never missed a beat in the absence of an editor. But I really felt the weight of responsibility; that of sharing Kentucky and Southern Baptists' stories of ministry and

missions with those in the Bluegrass.

There were many weekends in those following weeks I pulled double-digit-hour shifts on weekends just to ensure we even had a newspaper to send to your mailbox. Honestly, it was a gut-wrenching stretch that left me questioning God's motives.

But then came a Sunday-morning lesson about Nehemiah and his efforts to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah 6 recalls this endeavor and the persistent "invitations" from his enemies to "come and let us meet together ..." (verse 2). Knowing of their ulterior motives to harm him and prevent the wall from being completed, Nehemiah replies in verse 3, "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?" When further summonses from his enemies come, Nehemiah says of his fellow wall builders, "Their hands will drop from the work, and it will not be done." He then calls out to the Lord: "But now, O God, strengthen my hands."

As He has done so often in my life, God had me right where He wanted me. Those were the words I needed to hear. Satan, in the form of doubt, had overwhelmed me to the point of questioning my ability to do my job in the absence of an editor. The weekly production of the newspaper was my wall to build, and that doubt was sending me persistent messages trying to shift my focus from what God

had called me to do. Nehemiah's story gave me the resolve I needed to persevere.

Now, I believe God is calling me back to the secular world as editor of the *Oldham Era*, the newspaper I grew up reading—mostly looking for my name in the little league baseball and football box scores each week. I have the incredible opportunity to lead a news organization with a long and successful history into a "new era" (sorry, I couldn't resist).

Since I've announced my departure, I've received many kind words about the job I've done at the *Western Recorder* and encouragement about my new role. One of the comments that stands out is that I was always fair in my reporting and tried to get the story right. Outside of being a husband, father and believer, there is nothing I take more seriously than being a journalist. So, for me, there is no higher praise than those words when it comes to my profession. If that's how I am remembered here, I am incredibly pleased.

As I move on, I would ask for your prayers; pray that I would continue to be fair in my reporting and get the story right more often than not. Also, pray that when others read what I write, they would see the influence of Christ in my written words, and that I would take a stand for Him when it is necessary to do so.

Thank you, Kentucky Baptists, for giving me the opportunity to tell your stories for the past five-plus years. God bless you all.

Guest Editorial



Drew Nichter

Pray anyway!

By Joe McKeever

When you don't know how to pray, pray anyway. *Ignorance is no excuse.*

When you don't feel like praying, pray anyway. *Depression is no excuse.*

When you can't the energy to pray, pray anyway. *Boredom is no excuse.*

When you see no need to pray, pray anyway. *Blindness is no excuse.*

When you feel you'll never be able to read your Bible the way you once did, pray anyway. *Laziness is no excuse.*

When you think it's overrated and it never did you much good, pray anyway. *Immaturity is no excuse.*

When you're too tired, pray anyway. *Fatigue is no excuse.*

When you're embarrassed to be back before God confessing the same sins, pray anyway. *Shame is no excuse.*

When you've been unfaithful and

you feel that burden of guilt, pray anyway. *Sin is no excuse.*

When the enemy keeps telling you there is no God, pray anyway. *Unbelief is no excuse.*

There is no time and there are no circumstances in which prayer is not necessary, not helpful, and not the right thing to do. Let us pray. (BP)

Joe McKeever is a Baptist Press cartoonist and columnist, a former longtime pastor and former director of missions for the New Orleans Baptist Association.

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Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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Ready, set, wait! Trusting God in your waiting season

By Katie McCoy

When I was about 8 years old, my family had a bunch of people over for a pool party. I was ready to jump in until my parents told me that since I'd just gotten over being sick, I'd have to sit this party out.

I was disappointed, to say the least. To my 8-year-old social life, this was devastating. All the people were there, the pool was right there—all I had to do was jump in! I was supremely bummed.

But later, as I was sulking on the porch, my parents surprised me with the reason for the restriction: In just a few days I'd be getting on a plane and traveling 3,000 miles to see my favorite childhood friends. My little heart was elated. All of sudden I didn't feel so left out. Another sniffing nose or ear ache would have made for a rather miserable trip. Then I realized that what seemed like a joy-stealing restriction was actually a preparation.

While the days of pool parties may have passed, there are still times when it seems like I'm sitting on the sidelines, waiting for some divine revelation to make sense of all the "whys." Maybe you've been there too, asking God: Where do I go from here? What's the next step? Is this ever going to change?

Sometimes we feel stuck waiting for the answer. Or, perhaps we've convinced ourselves that we have the answer, but God doesn't seem to be on the same page. The solution is seemingly right there—you could just jump in! But, for whatever reason, you've been given what seems like a joy-stealing restriction and you're left wondering if God really is the caring Father He says He is.

Learning to wait on the Lord seems to be an unavoidable aspect of the Christian walk. Miles Stanford said, "God does not hurry in His development of our Christian life. He is working from and for eternity! So many feel they are not making progress unless they are swiftly and constantly forging ahead" (Principles of Spiritual Growth). If the pace of our lives is in His hands, then even our seasons of silence are for a purpose that goes way beyond our current circumstance.

In fact, one biblical woman shows us how we wait for God is just as important as what we're waiting for Him to do. Hannah wanted just one thing from the Lord—a son. After enduring years of being reproached in her society, ridiculed by the child-bearing second wife, and perhaps feeling forgotten by God, she pleaded with the Lord (1 Samuel 1:11). She prayed, wept and poured out her soul. Then, without any guarantee that the Lord would even fulfill her longing, Hannah got up and "her face was no longer sad." She trusted the heart of God

even before she knew His answer. She surrendered to whatever He had in store.

But what's even more striking was her focus. In the deepest cry of her heart, her focus was still not on her own happiness. She had already determined that, should God give her the one blessing she wanted, she wouldn't hold onto it for herself. Hannah vowed that if the Lord gave her a son, she would give that son back to the Lord, dedicating him to His service.

We can learn from this woman in waiting. Hannah surrendered to trusting the will and timing of God, even if it meant giving back the very blessing she'd hoped for all these years. God did give Hannah a son, and Hannah gave her son back to God (1 Samuel 1:28). It was only when she determined to give God glory in whatever He chose to give her that she was finally blessed with it.

It's true—we don't have any guarantee that our request will be answered. It's easy to hear Hannah's story and think "OK, great! All I have to do is want God's will above all else and then He will have to say yes!" Our hearts could be entirely surrendered and yielded, and in the wisdom of God, our circumstances may stay the same.

But Hannah's story teaches us when we pursue God for who He is more than for what He can do, our waiting seasons don't have to be miserable. When we rest in the truth that the same God who ordered our steps (Psalm 37:23) is our loving Father who wants only our good, and gives only good things to His children (Matthew 7:11), then our seasons of waiting can become times of expectant hope. What may seem like a setback or a delay is actually His perfecting preparation.

When our hearts are more intent on displaying the reality of God than obtaining His blessings—when we let go of those hopes we cling to so tightly and surrender to His perfect will—perhaps then we come to a place where He can act for and through us.

God has promised He is good to those who wait for Him (Psalm 27:14), and if you're called to His purpose, He will work things together for your good (Romans 8:28).

He has only good in mind for you! Even more, the Lord has already promised that He will fulfill His purpose for you (Psalm 138:8) and that none of those who wait for the Lord will be ashamed (Psalm 25:3). Will you trust His kind intentions for you, even when it feels like you've been forgotten? Will you wait for Him to act when it seems like you'll never see the results?

Will you wait on the Lord in your waiting season?

Katie McCoy is the editor of *BiblicalWoman.com* and is pursuing a Ph.D. in systematic theology at Southwestern Seminary.

First Person



Katie McCoy

Is managing money harder now?

By Jeremy White

When I have spoken to groups, I have often asked people this question, "Do you think it harder to manage your money and possessions now or 50 years ago?" Most tend to agree that it is harder now.

I'm especially interested in those people who are old enough to remember the "old days," and what their opinion is. Even older, more experienced people will agree that it's harder now.

By various economic measures our affluence has increased over the last 50 years. If we are wealthier as a nation, then the natural follow-up question is, "Why is it harder?" Perhaps the answer lies in various combinations of the following factors, many of which build off of one another:

So many goods, so many temptations. The vast selection at a superstore or on the Internet causes more financial temptations. In the past, the few items at one general store in town helped reduce people's wants.

Advertising. This generation is the first to be bargained by so much advertising their entire lives. From Internet pop-up ads to radio and TV to cereal boxes, marketers encourage us to part with some money.

Credit, credit everywhere. Bankers tended in the past to be cautious before lending money. Now, the average family receives one "pre-approved" offer per week.

More challenging investment environment. The very low interest rates and the volatile stock market make it more difficult to earn a decent return.

Secular humanism of society. As God has become less relevant to many in our country, they put their trust in materialism.

Keeping up with the Joneses. If things mean more to a society that places less value on spiritual things, then naturally people strive for "more meaning" or to win the money game over their peers.

The toll of taxes. Sales taxes, income taxes, payroll taxes, gasoline taxes, and property taxes increase the financial burden of Americans.

Wealth, leisure and more expensive toys. When the whole family spent most of its time working on the farm to survive, they did not have the time for the bigger toys—boats, swimming pools, golf outings—to amuse themselves.

Jeremy White is a certified public accountant with BlytheWhite in Paducah.

Everyone can learn how to pray in 'second' language of Scripture

By Art Toalston

To speak and pray in a "second" language, you don't need Rosetta Stone.

Everyone has an opportunity to think, speak and pray in God's language: Scripture, the foundational language of the universe.

Scripture carries God's revelation and message to mankind, setting forth His forgiveness and grace among those who turn to Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Then, through the Holy Spirit, Scripture has the power to extend deeply into our souls, into the parts of our earthly existence from which all language and human behavior arise. All other languages are but conduits for Scripture, the heart language of God.

Every word in the Bible, in one way or another, is part of the sustenance that God can supply for an adventurous yet tender faith that can be wondrously wholesome and fulfilling, stretching forward from this point in your life throughout eternity.

Consider, for starters, the following passages from Scripture as prayers. Or select some from your own reading of the Bible. Pick one and patiently begin to memorize it, ponder it, absorb it into your soul. Quote it (as best you can)

First Person



Art Toalston

whenever it comes to mind, especially when you and God come together in prayer. After a couple of weeks or longer, pick another in response to the Holy Spirit's leading. Then another and another in the weeks and months ahead. Whenever they fade from memory, venture back to review, which often leads to a new level of precious rejuvenation.

Consider:

■ **Romans 10:9:** "... if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." If, by the Holy Spirit's stirring, Jesus becomes the heart cry of your soul, move forward by surrendering your life to Him. Usually, "surrender" is a term of defeat but, with God, it is a term of victory over the confines of earth.

■ **Galatians 5:22-23:** "... the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." More than a series of words, this is an important picture of a person who yearns to reflect the qualities that God imparts through the Holy Spirit. Both you and God will take pleasure as these godly traits become increasingly evident in your life—evident to you as well as to others.

■ **James 3:17:** "... the wisdom that comes from above is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere." At first glance, this may seem like a perplexing description of wisdom. And perhaps so, because it originates with God, not human philosophy. So try this: The next time you face a significant decision, repeat this verse to yourself several times. Quite possibly, you will begin to gain insight into ways that your decision can be made with godly wisdom.

■ **Matthew 4:4:** "... Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." In the

same way that we cannot see the air that we breathe nor the molecules of nourishment in what we eat and drink, the individual words of Scripture are vast in number, yet they form the framework for God's counsel regarding every facet of life. Regularly examine your heart to make sure you haven't lost sight of any element of God's redemption or any nuance in His call to godly, compassionate living amid the emptiness and tumult in our communities and throughout the world.

■ **Psalm 46:10:** "Be still, and know that I am God ..." While there are many dimensions of knowing God, this verse reflects the fact that God speaks through silence in ways that, beyond our earthly understanding, give greater depth to our efforts to pray, to absorb the riches of Scripture, and to live out our faith by word and deed. Amid the chores, challenges and opportunities that tend to occupy our lives, there are some things we can only know when we are silent with God. (BP)

Art Toalston is editor of Baptist Press.

Tebow cancels appearance at First Baptist Church of Dallas

By Tim Ellsworth

Dallas—After recent criticism, New York Jets quarterback Tim Tebow has canceled a scheduled appearance at First Baptist Church in Dallas.

Tebow announced the cancellation in a series of tweets Feb. 21.

"While I was looking forward to sharing a message of hope and Christ's unconditional love with the faithful members of the historic First Baptist Church of Dallas in April, due to new information that has been brought to my attention, I have decided to cancel my upcoming appearance," Tebow wrote. "I will continue to use the platform God has blessed me with to bring Faith, Hope and Love to all those needing a brighter day. Thank you for all of your love and support. God Bless!"

Dallas First issued a statement in response to Tebow's cancellation:

"... (D)ue to new information that has been brought to my attention, I have decided to cancel my upcoming appearance."



Tim Tebow

"The leaders and congregation of First Baptist Church Dallas are disappointed that New York Jets' Quarterback Tim Tebow has announced he will no longer speak at First Baptist Church Dallas on April 28, 2013, as part of the month-long celebration events surrounding the grand opening of our new \$130 million, state-of-the-art campus on Easter Sunday," the statement read.

According to the statement, Tebow

called Robert Jeffress, pastor of First Baptist, Dallas, on Wednesday evening, "saying that for personal and professional reasons he needed to avoid controversy at this time, but would like to come to First Baptist, Dallas, to speak at a future date."

First Baptist's statement continued: "We are saddened that Mr. Tebow felt pressure to back out of his long-planned commitment from numerous New York and national sports and news media who grossly misrepresented past comments made by our pastor, Dr. Robert Jeffress, specifically related to issues of homosexuality and AIDS, as well as Judaism.

"As a Christian pastor, Dr. Jeffress takes a biblical approach to moral and social issues, closely following his duty to preach 'the whole counsel of God,' and not just address issues that are politically correct. First Baptist is a church built on the truth of Scripture, even though at

times that approach can be perceived as controversial or counter to the prevailing winds of culture. The reason for the recent media firestorm is not because the Word of God has changed, but because society has changed.

"More important, contrary to editorializing in the media, Dr. Jeffress shares a message of hope, not hate; salvation, not judgment; and a gospel of God's love, grace and new beginnings available to all."

Tebow had been criticized by several liberal publications for scheduling the April 28 talk at the church.

Tebow declined to specify on Twitter what "new information" had caused him to cancel his appearance.

Denny Burk, associate professor of biblical studies at Boyce College in Louisville, commented on his blog that Tebow was "probably just trying to not get entangled in a culture war." (BP)

Young adults

Continued from page 1

Usually aimed at Kentucky Baptist Campus Ministry staff and leaders, this year marks the first time the conference has been promoted heavily to young adult and collegiate ministers across the commonwealth.

"In the past, our emphasis has been on the core leadership of Baptist collegiate ministry," said Brian Combs, KBC's interim collegiate evangelism strategist. "Now we're trying to reach out beyond BCM and bring in more church-based ministries."

The early-bird registration deadline is March 1. The \$75 per person fee includes meals and lodging. After March 1, the fee increases to \$95, with a deadline of April 1.

Registration can be completed online at www.kybaptist.org/channel or through the network of Baptist ministers currently serving on 20 Kentucky college and university campuses.

Unreached on college campuses

Keynote speakers will be Ron Edmondson, senior pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington; and Brian Frye, collegiate evangelism strategist for the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio.

The conference also will feature breakout sessions on leadership essentials and engaging young adults in seven key areas: arts and entertainment, business, church, education, government, media and the social sector.

"Brian (Frye) will talk about the strategic importance of the university campus," said Combs, pointing out that nearly 6,000 international students enrolled at Kentucky colleges last year. That number represents an increase of more than 13 percent from 2011.

"There are opportunities for our churches to take the gospel to unreached people groups right here, right now in Kentucky," he continued.

"Sharing Christ with college students from other countries, discipling them and then helping them prepare to return to their home countries as missionaries costs much less in Cooperative Program dollars than training people to serve through the International Mission Board. It's a way to add to the work of our IMB."

A sense of connection

Not only has there been an explosion of international students in recent years, other cultural shifts are affecting outreach efforts, Combs said.

No longer can churches rely on traditional Bible education programs and time-honored methods to reach young adults, he said.

Churches that are effective at reaching young adults emphasize building relationships. When college students sense a connection with a congregation, they will drive 30 to 60 minutes to be part of it, Combs said.

"This can be a person or a couple who visits (a college) campus, shares Facebook messages or takes the student to lunch," said Combs, who served for 11 years as Baptist campus minister for Northern Kentucky University in Highland Heights.

"It's a discipling relationship. We need to develop connections that go beyond Sunday morning," he added.

This emphasis on one-on-one relationships is good news for Kentucky Baptists who attend churches with small staffs, Combs continued. An estimated 1,300

KBC congregations have an average weekly attendance of fewer than 100 people. Hundreds more churches have a weekly attendance of fewer than 300.

"No matter what size a congregation, people can meet and support young adults and help them reach others for Christ," Combs said.

He said young adults often react negatively to the impression that churches only care about them when they need Sunday school or nursery workers.

"Where young adults get excited is when the church sends them to their campus and says, 'We're sending you as a light in a dark place,'" Combs said. "When we do, we will support them as we do international missionaries. We will pray for them and support them."

Training the faithful

This kind of missionary outlook is what inspired Main Street to hire a campus pastor to their young adults. The new staff member is expected to begin serving in early May.

Some may see the "campus pastor" step as ground-breaking, but Franklin said it represents a return to the past.

Before the Industrial Revolution, young men and women were typically trained in job skills and faith by older adults, he said. However, with the onset of factories, life-long learning was reduced to specialized tasks that could be acquired in a matter of days.

The pastor said churches imitated this mindset, trying to teach young people Christianity through educational programs. However, with up to 80 percent of modern teens raised in church later walking away, it is obvious that system has failed, Franklin said.

He hopes to explore this idea further at Changing the Channel, which Franklin said can help churches interact more effectively with the unchurched and unbelievers.

"We can't sit behind the walls of our buildings and expect this culture to know we exist," Franklin said. "We have got to be out there engaging them. This (conference) can help us be strategic with our resources." (KBC)

For more on Changing the Channel, visit www.kybaptist.org/channel, e-mail collegiate@kybaptist.org or call (502) 489-3573 or 1-866-489-3573 (toll-free in Kentucky).

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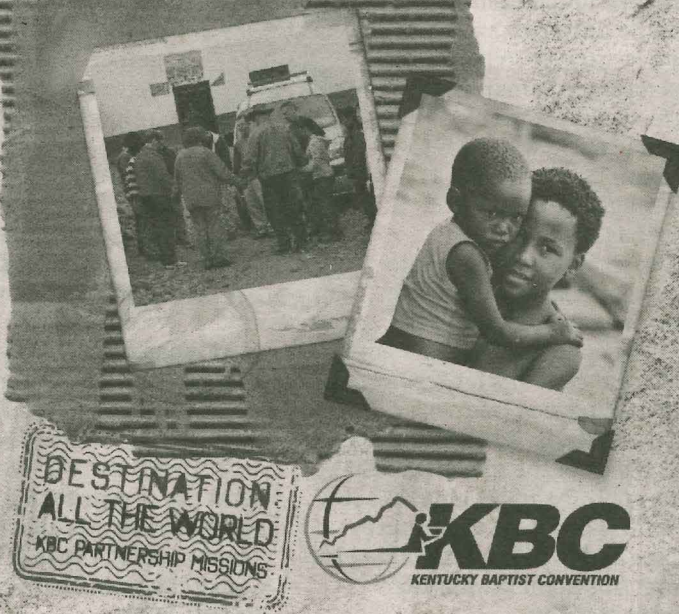
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NATIONAL NOTES

Dallas professor, Hendricks, dies

Author and longtime Dallas Theological Seminary professor Howard Hendricks passed away Feb. 20 at the age of 88. Hendricks served on the DTS faculty for 60 years and was founder and chairman of the seminary's Center for Christian Leadership. He authored or co-authored 16 books and taught more than 10,000 students. He even was chaplain of the Dallas Cowboys football team from 1976-1984. Hendricks preached on the campuses of Southern Baptist seminaries and at the 2003 SBC Pastors Conference. Many of his students went on to become even more well-known than he was. Among them: Tony Evans, David Jeremiah, Robert Jeffress, Erwin Lutzer and Chuck Swindoll.

Building sale called off

Plans to sell the Tennessee Baptist Convention building and surrounding property in Brentwood, Tenn., have failed, the convention's executive director said. The convention's Executive Board was notified Feb. 14 that Franklin Land Associates declined to close, Randy Davis said. The next day, Davis learned that the expected buyer had withdrawn a request for a zoning change regarding the property. Earlier in February, a group called Preserve Brentwood launched an effort opposing construction of a 900,000 square-foot development on the Baptist Center site. The Executive Board had voted last May to accept a \$9 million offer from Franklin Land Associates. The Executive Board has been headquartered on the property since 1969.

Gay marriage bills advance

Less than two months into the new year, legislative bodies in two states have passed bills that would legalize gay marriage, while a civil unions bill has made progress in a

third state. The Illinois Senate passed a bill Feb. 14 that would legalize gay marriage, three weeks after the Rhode Island House approved a gay marriage bill. The Colorado Senate passed a civil unions bill Feb. 11. Each bill still must pass the other chamber in each state, but significantly, the Democratic governors of each state support the respective bills. Democrats control the legislatures in all three states. The news wasn't all bad for traditionalists, though. In Hawaii, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee said in mid-February he would not schedule a hearing on a gay marriage bill, a move that apparently kills the bill for this session.

'Morning-after' pill usage up

Almost 1 in 9 young women who are sexually active have used the morning-after pill after sex, nearly three times the rate that used it 11 years ago, according to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study released Feb. 14. The study, which evaluated women between 15 and 44, found that 5.8 million women—11 percent—used the morning-after pill between 2006 and 2010, compared to 4 percent in 2002. For women between 20 and 24, the rate was even higher: 1 in 4 women who had ever had sex used the drug at some point. The increased use of the drug stems in part from easier access and media coverage of efforts to lift the age limit for over-the-counter sales. Under President Obama's health care reform, employers will be required to cover birth control, including morning-after pills, which likely will increase their use. Supporters of morning-after pills claim they are merely contraceptive drugs that delay or prevent ovulation, so the egg is never fertilized. But pro-lifers note that a second mechanism of the pill prevents a fertilized egg from implanting, which makes it an abortifacient drug.

ERLC joins more briefs siding against the abortion mandate

By Tom Strode

Washington—The Southern Baptist Convention's ethics entity has told two more federal appeals courts the Obama administration's abortion/contraception mandate violates religious liberty.

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission signed friend-of-the-court briefs filed Feb. 19 with both the Sixth and 10th Circuit Courts of Appeals in supporting lawsuits against the mandate, which requires employers to pay for coverage of drugs defined by the Food and Drug Administration as contraceptives, even if they can cause abortions. The ERLC has now endorsed five briefs defending entities challenging the requirement at the appeals court level.

The administration proposed a change Feb. 1 supposedly designed to satisfy the concerns of faith organizations, but religious freedom advocates said objecting employers—other than churches and church ministries—still would be unwilling participants in underwriting both contraceptive and abortion-causing pills. Under the revision, dissenting employers would have to be affiliated with an insurance plan connected to coverage of such pills and may end up absorbing increased costs for the drugs if the insurance companies pay for them and consequently increase rates.

Religious institutions and business owners with conscience objections to paying for the drugs have challenged the mandate in more than 40 lawsuits against the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which issued the rule. So far, owners of for-profit companies that have challenged the rule have won injunctions blocking enforcement of the mandate 11 of 14 times.

The latest ERLC-endorsed briefs—written by the Christian Legal Society—are in support of two for-profits that have not gained injunctive relief—Hobby Lobby in the 10th Circuit and Autocam Corp. in the Sixth. The ERLC also has signed on to CLS-authored briefs regarding the mandate in these circuits: D.C. (Wheaton

College v. Sebelius); Seventh (Korte v. HHS) and Eighth (O'Brien v. HHS).

In the latest briefs, the ERLC and other organizations join CLS in saying the mandate's "current definition of 'religious liberty' is grossly inadequate to protect meaningful religious liberty." HHS chose to go with a narrower definition of "religious employer" than a definition under federal law.

"The proposed rule would continue to violate the (First Amendment clauses protecting religious free exercise and barring government establishment of religion) because the government would continue to squeeze religious institutions into an impoverished, one-size-fits-all misconception of 'religious employer,'" the brief said.

The HHS mandate "departs from the (United States') bipartisan tradition of respect for religious liberty, especially its deep-rooted protection of religious conscience rights in the context of participation in, or funding of, abortion," according to the brief.

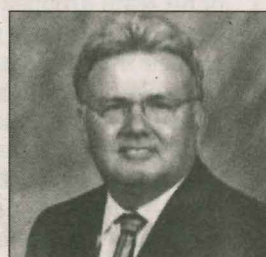
"At the end of the day, this case is not about which religious viewpoints regarding contraceptives or abortion are theologically correct—a question, of course, beyond the competency of the courts—but whether America will remain a pluralistic society that sustains a robust religious liberty for Americans of all faiths."

Federal judges ruled the HHS mandate does not substantially burden the religious liberty of Hobby Lobby and Autocam—or their owners.

Hobby Lobby—founded by evangelical Christian David Green, who remains its chief executive officer—opposes providing insurance for abortion-causing drugs and has said it will not obey the mandate. The 525-store chain based in Oklahoma City ultimately could face government fines up to \$1.3 million a day.

Autocam—a Michigan-based auto parts firm owned by John Kennedy, a Roman Catholic—opposes the contraceptive mandate as well as the requirement to cover abortion-causing drugs.

Others signing on to the latest CLS briefs were the National Association of Evangelicals, Prison Fellowship, Association of Gospel Rescue Missions, Association of Christian Schools International and Institutional Religious Freedom Alliance. (BP)

26th Annual Western Kentucky Evangelism Conference**March 4, 2013****Three Sessions – 9:00 am – 1:30 pm – 6:00 pm****Hosted by Southside Baptist Church – 205 Nichols Street – Princeton, KY****Provided as a Ministry of the Caldwell/Lyon Baptist Association****Dr. Adam Greenway****Dr. Sam Wolfe****Dr. Ronnie Stinson****Dr. Larry Robertson**

You are invited to the Western Kentucky Evangelism Conference in Princeton, KY, to be challenged, blessed, and uplifted by the preaching of these godly servants of the Lord, and the music of a great singer and worship leader, **Bro. Bill Allen**. This is a conference you won't want to miss. **This year we will not be able to provide lunch for you**, but we will have information about local restaurants available and plenty of time in the schedule for your lunch and dinner. For assistance or further details, please contact us at 270-365-9919, email us at clbaptist@bellsouth.net, or visit www.clbaptists.org. Hear the Childress Family at www.childressfamily.com

Paynter to lead CBF

Lay denominational worker Suzii Paynter of Austin, Texas, was elected Feb. 21 as the third executive coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

The CBF Coordinating Council unanimously elected Paynter, whose nomination was announced Jan. 17 after a year-long search, during a meeting at First Baptist Church in Decatur, Ga.

She currently works as director of both the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission and Advocacy Care Center of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. A mother of two, Paynter is married to the pastor of First Baptist Church of Austin, where she is a Bible teacher and deacon. She succeeds Daniel Vestal, who retired last year as head of the 1,800-church Fellowship. (ABP)

48 dozen roses

Valentine's Day turns into a week of magic and joy for students

I'm sorry you weren't able to be on campus to celebrate the week of Valentine's Day. We had a very special time as Greg Farmer, a gospel illusionist from Somerset, presented us with a 60-minute program of mind-boggling illusions and a presentation of God's plan of salvation.

He twice pulled a white dove out of seemingly nowhere, and then turned the two white doves into a single, large white rabbit. The students were not the only ones who were amazed.

More significantly, after the "magic" and gospel presentation, at least 18 students indicated on a response card they had prayed to receive Christ for the first time. Another 14 indicated they were interested in knowing more about how to become a Christian. We've joyfully begun the follow-up and ask you to join us in prayer as that process continues.

The next morning we began a series of six chapel services with David Brown from Center Grove Baptist Church in Rock Springs, Ga. Brown spoke to the student body about relationships (especially dating relationships) and sexual purity. In clear, student-savvy, Bible-based terms, he taught the difference between infatuation and love, challenged students to take a strong personal stance for sexual abstinence before marriage, and encouraged them to look to the Lord while navigating the dangerous waters of adolescent romance.

When I announced our chapel service on Valentine's Day would be Brown's last service with us, there was an audible groan of sadness in the room. Afterwards, students and faculty

agreed with me: We hope the Lord grants us another opportunity to have him minister the Word to us.

It's almost impossible to talk about celebrating Valentine's Day without including the sharing of gifts between special friends, and OBI is no exception.

Our student council arranged for the students and ministry team members to purchase red, white or yellow long-stemmed roses at a very reasonable price. They delivered the roses to the designated recipients during the last two periods of school.

They bought, processed and delivered 48 dozen roses. (Before you reach for your calculator, that's a total of 576 roses!) It was

a big project—every girl got at least one rose—and required organization and hard work. Our FFA chapter also helped distribute at least 50 hug-a-grams of candy. There was a lot of joy that day.

The joy continued two nights later when the student council, assisted by our food service team, planned and hosted our Valentine's banquet. The room was packed with almost every boarding student present alongside many adults. Together, everyone enjoyed the special menu, complete with cake and ice cream for dessert.

Later, the ever-popular OBI version of "The Almost Newlywed Game" was held. Three volunteer student couples and three ministry team couples competed to show which couple knew each other the best. It was a fun ending to a fun evening at the end of a very special week. God is so very good to us.

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

This is Oneida



Paul Davidson

Return to Clear Creek

Child of former student 'called' to Bible college

Gabriella Kahkola is continuing a trend that we are starting to see quite frequently around our campus the last few years. As a child of a Clear Creek student, Gabriella has returned as a student herself.

"My dad was called to Clear Creek as a student when I was 12 years old," Gabriella said. "He graduated when I was 16. When I felt God calling me to missions, Clear Creek was on my heart from my time here as a child of a student. Now I have followed God's call to Clear Creek, and I am back as a student now."

"It has been an interesting transition," Gabriella said. "I do know some of the people here from when I was a student's child and now I'm a student myself."

"I am one of the youngest students here, but I love it. I am enjoying living in the dorms with the other single female students. It has also been a very interesting transition because at the same time I moved to campus, my father, Shane, and my mom, Lynn, also moved to campus to serve on the staff

at Clear Creek. My father is the director of computer services, and my mom works in the library."

"I have always felt called to serve," she continued. "As I was trying to figure out how I was going to serve and

answer God's call to ministry, I felt like missions was always there. God confirmed that call on my life I knew that missions was where I needed to focus. I am thankful for a place like Clear Creek where I can study missions and evangelism under some great professors who have actually been missionaries.

"I am also thankful for the many opportunities to participate in mission trips as a student here," she said. "I have already been on a mission trip stateside and an international trip. I am looking forward to many more while I am here."

Pray for Gabriella as she seeks God's leadership as to where God would have her to serve as a missionary once her studies are completed.

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

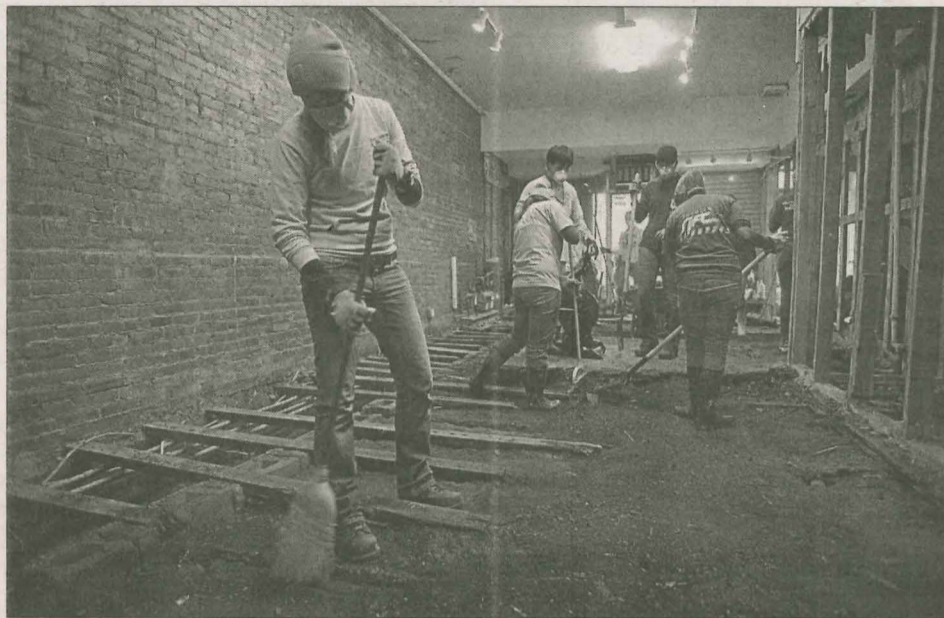
Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

'Second wave'

Collegians return to help Sandy victims



WINTER BREAK—Reaching the end of another clean-out job in Staten Island, Lauren Campbell sweeps away the last remnants of debris in a home flooded by Hurricane Sandy's storm surge. Campbell, a Winthrop University student, joined more than 500 other college students during winter break to assist survivors. (Photo by John Swain)

By Joe Conway

Staten Island, N.Y.—Southern Baptist Disaster Relief leaders hope to experience repeat success with a second wave of college students responding to needs of Hurricane Sandy survivors. SBDR preparations are underway for the first student contingent to arrive March 1 who will skip the beach for their spring breaks and work alongside experienced Baptist volunteers.

"The people of Staten Island have come to trust Southern Baptists because of their attitude and the work that the students have done," said Bruce Poss, SBDR training and preparation coordinator who will lead field operations for the effort.

In total, 511 students from 38 campuses across 16 states traveled to New York for part of their Christmas breaks to serve survivors of the storm, assisting 156 homeowners on Staten Island. About 13 students from the University and Kentucky and three from the University of the Columbians are planning to participate, according to Brian Combs, interim collegiate evangelism strategist for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, but there could be more Kentucky students joining them.

Students like Adam Durpere, a student from Liberty University, and some of his team dropped by a mobile clinic in New York to receive tetanus shots prior to their first work assignments in December. The interaction with clinic nurses surprised him.

"One nurse seemed to light up after we mentioned Southern Baptists," Durpere recounted. "She said, 'Yes, we've seen the trucks driving around here. Thank you so much for helping the people here!' As we were leaving, all of the nurses wished us well and thanked us, and the one who had recalled the trucks looked at us all and said, 'God bless you all.'"

When word circulated that the students were returning, at least one request for assistance became specific.

"A volunteer was calling homeowners on our list of families that still needed assistance," Poss said. "When the

homeowner heard the name Southern Baptists they asked if this was the same group of students with the SBDR-wrapped trucks and trailers. When our volunteer told her yes, the homeowner said, 'Yes, please send them.'"

More than 300 students and their leaders already have registered to serve in New York over spring break. The collegiate effort will run through April 15. Students will work mud-out and cleanup jobs primarily.

The tent city hosted at Zion Lutheran Church on Staten Island will serve as lodging again. Transportation to and from the site is the responsibility of volunteers. There is a \$15 per-person registration fee that covers accident insurance, a T-shirt and a Sandy Recovery badge. An additional \$15 per night covers food and lodging.

Students and student leaders interested in information about serving may visit www.namb.net/dr. A training video, highly recommended for participants, is available at the site. (BP)

Joe Conway writes for the North American Mission Board.



SERVING OTHERS—Jordan Niemeyer, an Anderson University student, pushes water from a Staten Island home during a mud-out job following flooding from Hurricane Sandy. Spring break is expected to bring another group of students to serve. (Photo by John Swain)

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45				46	47					48		
49				50						51		

Bible Crosswords

By Evelyn Boyington

Across

- 1 Collected prose or poetry of a particular time per. (abbr.)
- 4 TV newsman Seavreid
- 8 Egg ___ soup, Chinese classic
- 12 Epoch
- 13 Beginning of refreshing brand name that "spells" summer to kids
- 14 Land measure
- 15 Ancient musical instrument, mentioned in Isaiah 5:12
- 17 "The Lord God will come with a strong hand, and his ___ shall rule" (Isaiah 40:10)
- 19 Where Sherman marched (abbr.)
- 20 "There is a ___ here, which hath five barley loaves" (John 6:9)
- 21 El ___
- 22 Deface
- 23 "Children, ___ your parents in the Lord" (Eph. 6:1)
- 25 Sports venue
- 26 Prohibits
- 27 "Cast the ___ on the right side of the ship" (John 21:6)
- 28 Total
- 29 ___ Auerbach, famed NBA coach
- 30 Masculine nickname
- 31 "Praise him with the ___ and dance" (Psalm 150:4)
- 33 Continent (abbr.)
- 35 "Take, ___: this is my body" (1 Cor. 11:24)
- 36 Fare poorly
- 37 Possessed
- 38 "I will sing a new ___ unto thee, O God" (Ps. 144:9)
- 40 Popular street name
- 41 "All things were ___ by him" (John 1:3)
- 42 "I am too ___ to have an husband" (Ruth 1:12)
- 43 "The word ___ God" (John 1:1)
- 44 Chum
- 45 Atlantic state (abbr.)
- 46 Broadcast
- 47 "One jot or one ___ shall in no wise pass from the law" (Matthew 5:18)
- 50 At any time
- 52 "For ___ Christ pleased not himself" (Rom. 15:3)
- 54 Corn serving
- 55 "We shall all stand before the judgment ___ of Christ" (Romans 14:10)
- 56 Feast fashionably
- 57 Hair to ___ for (salon slogan)

Down

- 1 Tennis call
- 2 Gershwin
- 3 Pill, perhaps
- 4 Got by, barely, with "out"
- 5 Go bad
- 6 Vowel duo
- 7 ___ check

- 8 Hoover, for one
- 9 Cola brand name
- 10 Liver or lung, for example
- 11 Bosc and Anjou
- 16 Oz scarecrow Bolger
- 18 Byway (abbr.)
- 21 "They lifted up their voice with the trumpets and ___" (2 Chronicles 5:13)
- 22 Insane
- 23 United
- 24 "Rise, take up thy ___, and walk" (John 5:8)
- 25 Adhesive
- 26 ___ canto, singing style
- 28 Make a lap
- 29 Kin (abbr.)
- 31 Game where someone is "it"
- 32 "Over the ___" (goal of hoopsters)
- 33 "When ye fast, be not ... of a ___ countenance" (Matt. 6:16)
- 34 Fruit drink
- 35 "The ___ of all things is at hand" (1 Peter 4:7)
- 37 Brought to a stop
- 38 "There was a certain beggar named Lazarus ... full of ___" (Luke 16:20)
- 39 Item found in groves
- 40 Dog-___ (like the pages of a book)
- 41 Tatami, commonly
- 43 Midwest state (abbr.)
- 44 Yearn for
- 46 "___ thou the Christ?" (Luke 22:67)
- 47 Perfect score, to some
- 48 "I will both ___ me down in peace, and sleep" (Ps. 4:8)
- 49 Poetic contraction
- 51 Apiece (abbr.)
- 53 Caribbean island group (abbr.)

Last puzzle's solution

1	W	A	S	T		5	W	A	D	S		9	A	R	E		11
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Battle of hearts

Retreats help strengthen hearts engaged in spiritual battles

The battle for the human heart. This is perhaps a strange way to open, but it is the very essence of missions and ministry. Recently our staff has been focusing on Ephesians 6:10-20. The passage confirms who our battle is against, as well as the resources we have to wage this war. Like the understood reality, if we pray for patience, God seems to give us situations that force us to have patience. Every time I focus on a certain passage, life circumstances seem to mirror the truth in that passage.

This time is no different. We are waging war each and every day—not against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces. Battles we are unable to fight by human means we must fight with spiritual weapons: namely, those described in the passage in Ephesians.

What this means to me is, I must see through spiritual eyes and not earthly eyes. This is very difficult as all things in this world are meant to entice us to seek after worldly stuff. A nicer car, better house, the countless

things we have in our homes, and the constant barrage of commercials on TV seek to plant seeds of discontentment, training us to believe our happiness depends on the next thing.

Crossings Ministries



David Melber

There are times I find myself wanting to seek refuge in locations away from such distractions. I find myself longing to be at a place like Cedarmore or Jonathan Creek. Let me say this is not a commercial telling you to book a retreat; it is simply an encouragement for you to seek solitude from time to time to refocus your eyes and heart to spiritual things and away from earthy distractions.

I realize our hectic schedules seem to remove all time, but if we think about the reality we face, I contend we cannot afford to forego time to retreat and refocus. Like it or not, we are in the battle and we do not have the ability to remove ourselves. The only way we can withstand is to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

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

Be a voice

Outside help is vital when families fall apart

In a perfect world, children would never be abused or neglected because they would be protected by the love and care of family. We don't live in a perfect world.

In fact, we live in a world where families are increasingly dysfunctional and so many of our homes are rife with poverty, violence, anger and substance abuse. When the family falls apart, help from the outside is vital. Sometimes that comes from a neighbor, the local church or social services. Since 1869, Sunrise Children's Services has been a vital help to the children across Kentucky who have suffered from abuse and neglect, but we can't do it alone.

Our children need the law on their sides, and over the course of 200-plus years Kentucky lawmakers have passed numerous bills aimed at protecting children from abuse and neglect. But more can be done.

Few years pass in Frankfort where there are no bills aimed at protecting children from violence, sexual predators, negligence and other forms of maltreatment. As citizens of this great commonwealth, it is our responsibility to

voice our concerns about these issues to our elected representatives who author, propose and pass laws to protect our children.

Many of the victims of child abuse and neglect cry out but are never heard. We must be their voice and we must

Sunrise Children's Services



Bill Smithwick

make their case for their right to live a life free from violence, injuries and fear.

The Kentucky State Legislature is in the middle of their 2013 session, which will wrap up in late March. I urge you to keep abreast of proposed legislation that will strengthen the protection of our children and better serve those who are suffering as victims.

We do not live in a perfect world, but we can work hard to correct many of our imperfections by speaking out, supporting efforts to keep our children safe and working hard to come to the aid of those already hurting.

Sunrise Children's Services has been helping hurting children since 1869 because of the support of people like you. Continue to partner with us in our effort to make life better for all Kentucky's children.

Bill Smithwick is president of Sunrise Children's Services. Contact Sunrise at (502) 538-1000 or www.Sunrise.org

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March

- 1-2 Creative Ministries Festival, Cedarmore Camp & Conference Center, Bagdad.
- 2 Vacation Bible School Clinic, Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah.
- 7 Kentucky Baptist Men's Chorale and Wind Orchestra Concert, Scottsville Baptist Church.
- 8-9 Disaster Relief Chaplaincy Training—Region 5, First Baptist Church, Walton.
- 9 Disaster Relief Training—Region 5, First Baptist Church, Walton.
- 9 Seminary for a Day, First Baptist Church, Mount Washington.
- 9 Vacation Bible School Clinic, Union Baptist Church.
- 14 Seminary for a Day, Mid-Continent University, Mayfield.
- 16 RAMCON 2013, Elkton Baptist Church.
- 16 Vacation Bible School Clinic, First Baptist Church, Richmond.

CU hosts children's literature conference March 16

Campbellsville—Campbellsville University's School of Education will host the second annual Beulah Campbell Children's Literature Conference, Saturday, March 16 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The conference, which is sponsored by U.S. Bank, brings children's authors, teachers, librarians and other educators together to share children's literature and ways of using literature in the classroom.

Featured authors include: Tim Callahan, author of the "Kentucky Summer Series" set in Morgan County; Leigh Anne Florence of Shepherdsville, author of "Woody Series;" and Heather Henson of Danville, award-winning author of picture books and novels for teens.

Henson will give the keynote address on "Reading and Writing for Life," how the stories her mother read to her as a child helped shape who and what she became today: a published writer of books for young readers.

Callahan will speak at the luncheon on "Getting Kids Excited to Read—Is it Possible for Some Kids?" detailing the importance of kids developing a love of books and reading at an early age, including techniques for learning to love reading.

Beulah Campbell, for whom the conference is named, will be honored at the luncheon for her life's work in the field of children's literature and for her generous donation of children's books and original children's illustrations from her vast collection to CU's School of Education.

Florence, Henson and Callahan will participate in an author "meet and greet" at 2 p.m., in the Winters Dining Hall lobby. (CU/WR)

Exploring communities within

Louisville—Teaching Christians how to look for communities within their communities in order to share the gospel with everyone is the focus of two free workshops coming to Madisonville and Farmington.

The affinity evangelism workshops are sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention and 13 local Baptist associations in West Kentucky.

Chuck McAlister, leader of the KBC Evangelism & Church Planting Team, is the guest speaker.

The training on March 23 at Grapevine Baptist Church in Madisonville and April 6 at Farmington Baptist Church in Graves County will help participants identify "enthusiast" groups in their communities, such as motorcycles, classic cars, quilting/scrapbooking, cooking, fishing, hunting and horses.

Additional communities include: college students/faculty/staff, people from different cultures and language groups, military, deaf/hearing impaired, and employees of a major local industry.

The workshops begin at 10 a.m., and lunch is provided. Grapevine Baptist Church is located at 85 Sandcut Rd., Madisonville. Farmington Baptist Church is located at 293 Hawshaw St. in Farmington.

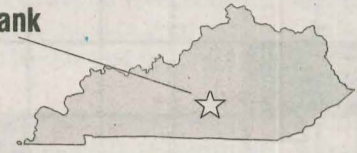
For more, visit www.kybaptist.org/get2know. (KBC)

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

Spotlight on ...

Eubank



Eubank Church will hold "Training for Parents" March 1, 6 p.m., featuring **Shane Garrison**, assistant professor of educational ministries at Campbellsville University. Topics include: "The Culture of Today's Children" and "Disciplining Your Kid's Head, Heart and Hands." **Shelby Reynolds** is pastor.

encouraged to wear pajamas. **Tom Curry** is pastor.

■ **PADUCAH**—Immanuel Church will hold a concert March 3, 3:30 p.m., featuring **Malissa Heath**, church organist. For more information call (270) 443-5306. **James Broome** is pastor.

■ **PRINCETON**—Eddy Creek Church will hold homecoming services to celebrate its 170th anniversary March 3, 10 a.m. with **Ken Cummins** as guest speaker. A meal and concert, featuring **The Hamptons**, will follow morning worship service. **Leslie Joyce** is pastor.

■ **WICKLIFFE**—First Church will host a "Couples Enrichment Dinner" March 1. **William Releford** is pastor.

■ **BIMBLE**—Springfield Church recently called **Mike Helton** as pastor. He was formerly pastor of Northside Church in Barbourville.

■ **CADIZ**—Cadiz Church will host Family Night March 1, 6 p.m., with games and activities. **Kyle Noffsinger** is pastor.

■ **CAMPBELLVILLE**—Saloma Church will hold a combined worship service with Pleasant Union Church in Campbellsville March 3, 11 a.m.; with Pleasant Union Pastor **Michael Caldwell** as guest speaker. A potluck meal will follow the service. **John Chowning** is pastor.

■ **ELKHORN CITY**—Elkhorn City Church recently called **Jason Johnson** as pastor. He was formerly associate pastor of Rose Hill Church in Ashland.

■ **GRAY**—Indian Creek Church recently called **Mike Burns** as pastor.

■ **HODGENVILLE**—First Church will host "Route 66 North American Missions Night" March 3, 6 p.m.; featuring **Richard and Debbie Olp**, Mission Service Corps missionaries at Western Kentucky State Correctional Complex, as guest speakers. **Paul Richey** is pastor.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Cornerstone Church recently called **Brian Burkhead** as pastor, formerly pastor of West Corbin Church in Corbin.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Deer Park Church will host Highlands Community Ministries Lenten lunch Feb. 28. **David Platt** is pastor.

Parkland Church will hold "Preschool Story Time" March 1, 6 p.m., with food, activities and stories. Children are

Kentucky Baptist Chorales in concert March 7

Scottsville—The Kentucky Baptist Men's and Women's Chorales and Wind Orchestra will be in concert March 7 at Scottsville Baptist Church.

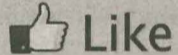
The free event begins at 7 p.m., CDT. The church is located at 301 E. Main St.

These groups are comprised of Kentucky Baptists from all aspects of music

ministry, from ministers and worship leaders to choir and praise team members. They represent churches from across the commonwealth.

The women's chorale also performs April 14 at Central Baptist Church in Paris, at 6 p.m. The church is located at 829 High St., Paris.

Join the conversation with fellow Kentucky Baptists.



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Associational Newsletter Plan
John Ryder, DOM

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SEEKING: A full-time minister of worship and students or a part-time minister of worship. Candidate should have a bachelor's degree or be working toward one. Send resumé to First Baptist Church of Mason, 735 Reading Road, Mason, OH 45040, Attn: Personnel Committee, or send via email to pastorbill@fbcmason.com.

SEEKING: Calvary Baptist Church, 111 N. McWhorter Street, London, Ky., is seeking a part-time minister of youth. For more information, call (606) 864-7071; Pastor Harlan Avera.

SEEKING: Deer Park Baptist Church in the urban area of Louisville, Ky., is seeking a full-time minister of church growth. This position requires a seminary master's degree, related experience, the administrative and computer skills necessary to perform essential tasks and duties. This position requires excellent leadership, communication and interpersonal skills, as well as the ability to work with a diverse population. This person will work alongside the pastor to oversee the life, direction and growth of the church. Please submit resumé to dpcpersonnel@aol.com.

SEEKING: Part-time music minister needed in Bagdad, Ky.; musician & leader for contemporary & traditional worship music; will oversee church music activities; piano/choral skills & worship leader experience a plus. Send resumé to veronicab22@shelbywireless.net.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church, Fulton, Ky., seeks God's man to serve as full-time pastor. Send testimony, resumé and sense of calling to milton@deanfs.com.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Eddyville, Ky., is seeking a part-time minister of children. Applicant must have experience working with children and parents. Send resumé to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 599, Eddyville, KY 42038, or email to eddyfirst@bellsouth.net.

SEEKING: Congregation seeking a pastor for a full-time position; strong in church planning; mission minded; evangelistic; community oriented. Located in Paris, Ky. For more information, visit www.cbcparis.org. Please email resumé to searchcbc@bellsouth.net or mail to Pastor Search, 107 Greystone Court, Paris, KY 40361.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music and worship for Yellow Creek Baptist

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SEEKING: First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 321, West Liberty, Ky. 41472, is seeking a full-time or bivocational pastor. Send resumé to address above.

Don Rutledge · 1931-2013

Photographer brought mission stories to life

By Erich Bridges

Midlothian, Va.—Renowned photographer Don Rutledge, who told the story of missions through his camera lens for several generations of Southern Baptists, died at his home near Richmond, Va., Feb. 19. He was 82 and had been in declining health.

Traveling throughout the United States and to more than 140 countries over 40-plus years, Rutledge captured quiet moments of humanity and mission ministry in hundreds of classic photographs taken for the Home (now North American) Mission Board and later for the Foreign (now International) Mission Board. His images helped millions to understand, pray for and participate in missions.

"I love photojournalism and enjoy using it as a worldwide Christian ministry," Rutledge once wrote. "It forces me to see, to look beyond what the average person observes, to search where few people care even to look, to glance over and beyond my backyard fence.... It helps me translate the national and international ministries into human terms by telling the story through people rather than through statistics."

Born on a farm in Depression-era Tennessee, Rutledge originally intended to be a pastor. He tried preaching for a time after studying theology in college and seminary. But he discovered an old box camera that belonged to his uncle—and the call to photograph the world and the people in it proved far stronger.

Black Star, 'Black Like Me'

Rutledge began to shoot photo stories as a freelancer and obsessively studied the work of great photographers. Some of his self-assigned stories in the 1950s and early '60s required considerable physical courage, including coverage of the violence surrounding the growing civil rights movement in the South. Still a raw rookie, he heard about New York-based Black Star, then the nation's top photojournalism agency.

He eventually joined Black Star as a staff photographer—a job offered to only a handful of America's top shooters—and covered stories for the next 10 years in numerous countries for magazines such as LIFE, LOOK and Paris Match. He would disappear for months at a time into Latin America and other regions, armed with hundreds of rolls of film and a list of story assignments.

Rutledge's reputation quickly grew—and he became internationally known when he shot the pictures for "Black Like Me," John Howard Griffin's 1961 book about his harsh experiences of racism in the last days of the segregation-era South, when Griffin darkened his skin to appear black. In his racial disguise, Griffin traveled through Louisiana and Mississippi in 1959 with Rutledge at his side.

"Black Like Me," a modern classic, sold more than 10 million copies, becoming one of the most powerful and influential chronicles of the struggle for change during the civil rights era.

Back to his roots

At the height of his potential as a globe-trotting photographer, Rutledge left Black Star in 1966 to shoot pictures for the then-Home Mission Board in Atlanta. Several photographer colleagues told him he was crazy, but they didn't understand his deepest motivations. He'd been searching for creative ways to communicate the gospel since his youth in Tennessee.

After sharing a photographs and story of an inner-city mission in Chattanooga, Walker Knight, then editor of Home Missions magazine, took a chance and offered the photo professional a job.

"Don accepted the position and, in the process, changed the denomination's concept of the power of photography. The publication I edited felt the readership quiver from his first cover, and (photographer) disciples flocked to be taught by his gracious skill," Knight said.

Over the next decade and more, Rutledge traveled to all 50 states, capturing the compassion of missionaries and the needs of the people they served in the pages of Home Missions magazine and several full-length books.

"They were doing real gutsy kinds of things," Rutledge said of home missionaries. "They had people in New York

doing ministries right in the middle of the drug culture ... I felt that the camera at this point could become a means of communicating something that people needed to know about.... They were doing things out of their Christian faith and their love of people."

To the world

In 1980, Rutledge joined the then-Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., as a special assignment photographer, continuing his photographic ministry worldwide for another 15 years, primarily for The Commission magazine. His photo coverages launched the "golden age" of that magazine, which regularly competed with the likes of TIME and National Geographic for top national photo awards.

"The coming of Don Rutledge to the Foreign Mission Board was a key step in development of The Commission magazine," said now-retired editor Leland Webb, who spearheaded the magazine's emergence as a journalistic force to be reckoned with. "Though soft-spoken, Don was strongly determined to get the right photos. ... He was passionate about his photography, which he properly understood as his designated Christian ministry."

Rutledge managed both to blend into the background and to make friends with everyone in sight—all the while quietly searching out the story. Writers who worked with him on stories would look at his pictures later and discover he had seen important things that had escaped their notice—a look, a sigh, an emotion. He called them "windows on the soul" of his subjects.

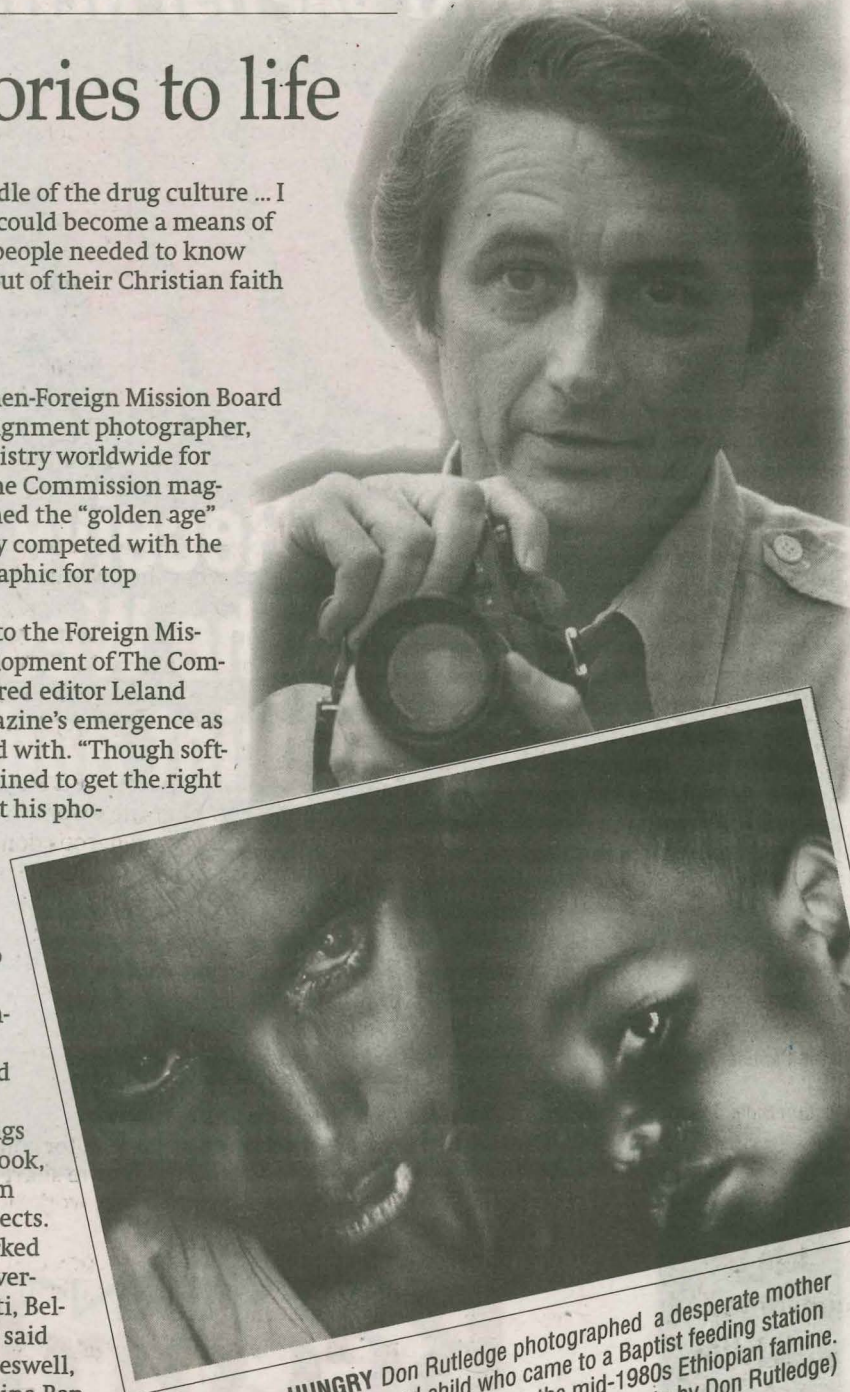
"Between 1980 and 1989, I worked with Don on some memorable coverages: Japan, Brazil, Australia, Haiti, Belgium, Russia, Canada, Barbados," said former IMB writer/editor Mike Creswell, who now works with North Carolina Baptists. "When your writing was going to be arranged around Don's photos, you were assured of greater readership. He raised the photography bar high indeed for the two Southern Baptist mission boards. ... It is absolutely true that he revolutionized photography for the boards: equipment, philosophy, presentation. He took it from dry documenting to an art form."

Rutledge formally retired from IMB in 1996 but continued doing freelance assignments in the United States and overseas until he suffered a debilitating stroke in 2001.

He received more than 300 awards for his work and inspired hundreds of young photographers, writers and mission communicators—many of whom he mentored personally—to follow in his footsteps. The photographers he has influenced are legion.

"Don understood (that) the relationship of people to each other in the photo is the real power of the storytelling image," said photographer Stanley Leary. "Don understood that God gave His life for a relationship with each one of us. Nothing was more important than to establish and grow relationships. All of Don's work was to show the power of God's love. You either see the celebration of God's love or you feel the sadness of someone who isn't letting God into their life."

"Don helped me to realize how I could fulfill my call to ministry with the camera," Leary said. "Don was a pastor who realized the camera was a pulpit and the congregation wasn't limited by the walls of a church.... I can never thank Don enough for helping me to see the world through God's eyes." (IMB/BP)



HUNGRY Don Rutledge photographed a desperate mother and child who came to a Baptist feeding station during the mid-1980s Ethiopian famine. (IMB photo by Don Rutledge)



BLACK LIKE ME Rutledge shot the pictures for Black Like Me, John Howard Griffin's 1961 book about his experiences of racism in the last days of the Jim Crow-era South, when Griffin, a white journalist, darkened his skin to appear black. Here, Griffin uses a "colored entrance," a common sight in the segregated South. (Photo by Don Rutledge)

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'Engage' opens doors to global gospel impact

By Kristie Randolph

Cave City—In a time of global unrest and turmoil, laughter and friendship between hundreds of international students from different countries might seem impossible. Yet for the past 57 years, that is what has taken place at the Cave City Convention Center during the Engage International Student Conference, hosted by the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Baptist Collegiate Ministry.

More than 400 students from 35 countries attended this year's event, held earlier this month. While Engage primarily is a cultural conference for Kentucky's international students, it also is a strategic piece of BCM's efforts to reach international students for Christ alongside local churches.

"As campus ministers who take American students abroad to share the gospel, we've realized they are here at our door," said Cindy Pelphrey, campus minister for Owensboro area schools and the event's coordinator. "We're trying to engage them while they are here. The world is becoming very small."

Event coordinators seek ways to share the gospel and plant seeds for ongoing conversations, she said.

Three years ago, Pelphrey befriended Chinese student Sunny Lu. As a college freshman, Lu was eager to attend the event. Now a graduating senior at Kentucky Wesleyan College, Lu just attended her final conference, and credits the event for many positive memories, experiences and friends.

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A student pins a small Germany flag over his home country on a world map. This year more than 400 students representing 35 countries attended the Engage International Student Conference sponsored by Baptist Collegiate Ministry of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union. (KBC photo)

IMB gathers to inaugurate Elliff as its new president

By Don Graham

Richmond, Va.—Eight months after unanimously electing Tom Elliff as "God's man" to lead Southern Baptists' global missions efforts, International Mission Board trustees officially inaugurated him as the mission board's 11th leader.

Meeting Nov. 14-15, trustees dedicated an evening to inaugurating Elliff during a special service in Richmond, Va.

Southern Baptist Convention President Bryant Wright, a guest speaker at the inauguration, compared Elliff to Barnabas in Acts 11:24—a "good man" of great faith, filled with the Holy Spirit.

"There are 3,800 unengaged, unreached people groups (in the world), and God has put on Tom's heart that we challenge the churches of our convention to go out there and reach all 3,800. ... Now that is great faith," Bryant said. "We know beyond doubt that God has role." Wright told Elliff at the 2011 South

□ See Elliff inauguration

INAUGURATED Former International Mission Board president Jerry R. Cressor as denominational leaders lay hands on Tom and Jeanne Elliff Nov. 14 as the newest president of the IMB.

Southern Baptists called to Jan. pres

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