

WESTERN Recorder

April 9, 2013

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 187, Issue 14

Elkhorn servant named Ky. Baptist Missionary of Year

By Whitney Jones

Lexington—For the Kentucky Baptist Missionary of the Year, missions encompasses more than sharing the gospel verbally. Sandra Williams meets the most



Sandra Williams

basic needs of people who are hurting deeply while making sincere relationships with them—all in the name of Jesus Christ.

Williams is the woman behind many of Elkhorn Baptist Association's most visible min-

istries. She has served as director of church and community ministries since 1995 for the Lexington-area association that includes more than 80 churches and 14 new missions.

For the needy in Lexington and the surrounding areas, Williams and her volunteers serve hot meals for the hungry every week, help teach struggling children how to read, provide tax assistance, sack lunches and many other services.

A North American Mission Board missionary, Williams said she thinks the best way to convey God's love to others is to serve them at all times.

"It's just not coming in and saying

□ See Sandra Williams ... Page 3

Birthplace of cooperation

99-year-old recalls the 1925 creation of the Cooperative Program

Memphis, Tenn.—M.O. Owens Jr. was still in knickers on May 13, 1925, the day his parents took him to a pivotal session of the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting. That was the day the Cooperative Program was born.

Now 99, Owens recalls the vote that ushered in the CP as a system of financial support for the missions and ministries of Southern Baptists within state conventions and throughout the nation and world.

"I was there but I was only 11," Owens said. "I remember very vividly how excited my dad was, how delighted he was, and I do remember so well he was concerned about enlisting the other pastors," Owens said of his

father, the late Milum Oswell Owens Sr., who was pastor of two South Carolina Baptist churches at the time.

"The two churches together, as I remember, said they would pay him

□ See Birth of CP ... Page 6

Cooperative Program Sunday April 14



CP "was recognized by the churches as a divinely-oriented concept."

M.O. Owens, Jr.



The Memphis and Shelby County Auditorium was the site of the 1925 Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting, where the Cooperative Program was approved by 5,600 messengers.



BASEBALL CHAPEL Alex Ennes, who serves as chaplain for Major League baseball's Cleveland Indians, is a North American Mission Board church planter in Cleveland.

By Tobin Perry

Cleveland—It's easy to look at professional athletes and just see the money, fame and life in the fast lane. But after a year of serving with Baseball Chapel in Cleveland, Southern Baptist church planter Alex Ennes sees something else: real people who need to hear about Jesus.

"Everyone wants a little piece of them—their team, management, their coaches, fans," Ennes said. "You have to position yourself as the one person who doesn't want anything from them."

Ennes, who in January began the process of planting a Southern Baptist church in Cleveland, was selected prior to the 2012 season by Baseball Chapel to serve the Cleveland Indians. Baseball Chapel is a 40-year-old ministry recognized by Major League Baseball and Minor League Baseball to serve the spiri-

tual needs of each team.

Ennes leads a chapel service every week during the season when the team is in town. He also makes himself available for prayer and the spiritual needs players encounter. His wife Shari leads a Bible study for players' wives and girlfriends.

Because the chapel services come on game day, Ennes has to remain flexible on his chapel messages. Usually, he gets 10 to 15 minutes for a message.

"Sometimes the message will be a very clear gospel presentation," Ennes said. "You are trying to let those who don't know the gospel understand it. Other times, as you get to know their lives, you try to help them see what the Bible has to say about some of the issues they are dealing with—as if I were preaching at my church, just much more condensed."

□ See Church planting ... Page 7

Former Southern president, Duke McCall, dies

Louisville—Duke McCall, a Southern Baptist statesman and former president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, died April 2 near his home in Delray Beach, Fla., from congestive heart failure and respiratory distress. He was 98.

McCall, whose contributions to the Southern Baptist Convention cover nearly 70 years, shaped both Southern Seminary and the denomination in ways that continue to define them today. When he became the seventh

□ See Duke McCall ... Page 2



Duke McCall

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Survey: Doctrine remains a struggle in churches

Nashville, Tenn.—While many Christians have a grasp of important doctrinal positions, some church-goers struggle with basic truths about salvation, the Bible and the nature of God.

A LifeWay Research study on "Doctrinal Positions," released April 5, shows 81 percent of churchgoers agree, in regard to salvation, that "When you die, you will go to heaven because you have confessed your sins and accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior."

Yet 26 percent of churchgoers concurrently believe that "If a person is sincerely seeking God, he/she can obtain eternal life through religions other than Christianity," while 57 percent disagree.

"Consumers in America are accustomed to having endless combinations of choices for every want in life," said Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research. "Biblical truth is radical because it teaches eternal life is a relationship with God through Jesus Christ alone."

Other responses regarding beliefs about life after death include:

- "When you die, you will go to heaven because you have tried your best to be a good person and live a good life" (selected by 7 percent of churchgoers).

- "You have no way of knowing what will happen when you die" (5 percent of churchgoers).

- "When you die, you will go to heaven because God loves everyone and we will all be in heaven with Him" (4 percent).

- "When you die, you will go to heaven because you have read the Bible, been involved in church, and tried to live as God wants you to live" (2 percent).

- "There is no life after death" (1 percent).

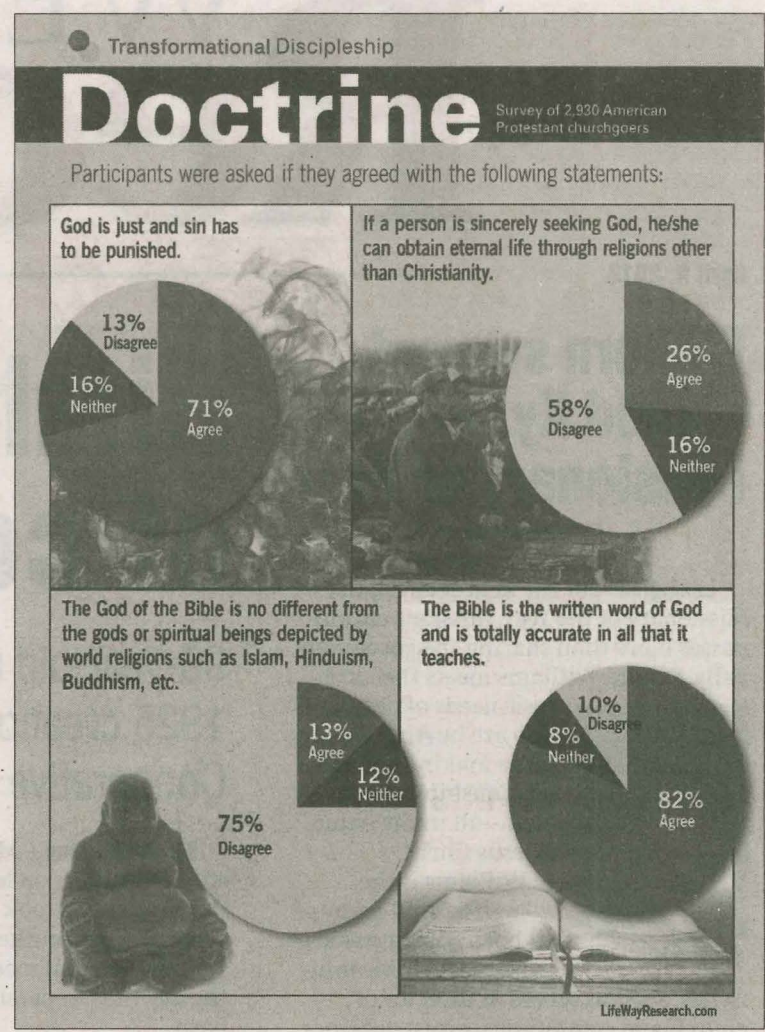
The survey also reveals that churchgoers strongly hold to the accuracy of the Scriptures, with 82 percent agreeing that "The Bible is the written word of God and is totally accurate in all that it teaches." Ten percent disagree and 8 percent neither agree nor disagree.

While the majority of churchgoers (75 percent) strongly regard the God of the Bible as not the same god worshipped in other world religions, 13 percent say the God of the Bible is no different from the gods or spiritual beings depicted by world religions such as Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. Another 12 percent neither agree nor disagree with the uniqueness of the God of the Bible.

"If churches stopped to assess their congregation on these biblical truths, many would be surprised to find out how many are struggling with basic doctrinal issues," Stetzer said.

"Every church has a different mix of mature disciples and spiritual infants who still need a diet of the basic gospel message," he noted. "A discipleship process must help every person take the next step in his or her spiritual journey. Too many churchgoers are stuck on square one."

This survey of 2,930 adults was conducted Oct. 2011. (BP)



Duke McCall

Continued from page 1

president of the seminary in 1951 at the age of 36, he already owned a record of denominational leadership.

He served as president of three different Southern Baptist entities: New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (1943-1946), the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention (1946-1951) and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (1951-1982). He invested in denominational leadership as a very young man and was only 28 when elected president of the New Orleans Seminary (then Baptist Bible Institute).

By the time he retired in 1982, he had become the longest-serving president in the history of Southern Seminary.

'Giant' among Baptists

"A giant has fallen in Israel. The death of Dr. Duke McCall reminds us of the lengthened shadow one man can cast over a great denomination," said Albert Mohler Jr., the current president of Southern Seminary. "Dr. McCall was a giant among Southern Baptists. He belongs to that great generation of Southern Baptist leaders who shaped the convention as the 20th century brought new opportunities and new challenges. He, along with Drs. W.A. Criswell and Herschel H. Hobbs, brought the Southern Baptist Convention into the modern age.

"He was Southern Baptist to the core, and he entered denominational leadership at an incredibly young age. ... His leadership at Southern Seminary represented an entire epoch in this institution's history. He was president during some of the most tumultuous years of the 20th century, and he guided the seminary through years marked by both peace and controversy," Mohler said.

"I was able to develop a deep and very personal friendship with Dr. McCall, and for that I am so very thankful," he said.



Duke McCall was the longest serving president at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He died April 2 at age 98.

'Influential leader'

Chuck Kelly, the current president of New Orleans Seminary, said, "Dr. Duke McCall was one of the most influential leaders in SBC history. He made an indelible impact in New Orleans, presiding over our transition from Baptist Bible Institute to New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. His influence throughout the SBC was profound. ... The story of the modern Southern Baptist Convention cannot be told without including the story of Duke McCall. New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary will always be in his debt."

Thom Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources and former dean of Southern Seminary's Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth, said, "Dr. McCall's impact on and love for Southern Baptists and Baptists around the world is unmistakable. He gave the most productive years of his life and ministry to this denomination, and in his later years

provided a historical perspective to the present generation and assisted in healing denominational wounds."

Seminary supporter

McCall was president of Southern Seminary for three decades, a period that stretched from the civil rights movement to the beginning of the conservative resurgence in the SBC.

McCall stood firm for the civil rights of African Americans, and it was during his tenure at the seminary that Martin Luther King Jr. spoke in chapel and in class in 1961.

He also led the seminary in growth, both in enrollment and in its endowment.

During the SBC conservative resurgence, McCall sided with the moderates, and at the SBC annual meeting in 1982 he lost to Jimmy Draper in a runoff for president. Draper's election was the fourth year in the line of conservative presidents.

Despite his theological differences with conservatives, McCall continued to state his love for Southern Seminary, even in his final years.

"We do not always agree with each other on everything," he said in 2009 at the seminary's 150th celebration service, "but what I call upon us to recognize is that the hand of God is upon this institution and those with responsibility for her and that we acknowledge that and say, 'We will continue our own convictions as they diverge from one another. But we will stand together in one common commitment in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.'"

McCall was born in Meridian, Miss., in September 1914, and he grew up with his four siblings in Memphis, Tenn. Following high school, McCall entered Furman University in

Greenville, S.C. There, McCall met Marguerite Mullinnix. The couple married shortly after McCall graduated from the university as valedictorian in 1935. The McCalls raised four sons.

He enrolled at Southern Seminary, earning a master of theology degree in 1938 and a doctor of philosophy degree in Old Testament studies in 1942 from Southern Seminary. Through most of his student years he pastored churches, including the prestigious Broadway Baptist Church in Louisville.

In 1943, the trustees of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, at that time still called the Baptist Bible Institute of New Orleans, elected McCall, despite his youth, because he had earned a reputation for powerful preaching, evangelistic zeal and bold leadership.

As president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and as president of the Executive Committee, McCall exercised visionary leadership and attracted the support of leaders throughout the denomination.

Longest serving SBTS president

In 1951, the trustees of Southern Seminary brought McCall back to his alma mater. McCall accepted and became the longest serving president in the institution's history.

On the 60th anniversary of McCall's election, the seminary honored him at an event on Sept. 6, 2011. Earlier that same year, in April, the McCall Family Foundation established the Duke K. McCall Chair of Christian Leadership and the McCall Leadership Lectures series at Southern Seminary. The inaugural lecture in that series came at the anniversary

celebration.

"When a giant of this stature falls, we realize just how few men of his stature are," Mohler said. (BP)

"The death of Dr. Duke McCall reminds us of the lengthened shadow one man can cast over a great denomination."

Albert Mohler

Campbellsville's former dean of academic affairs dies at 81

By Joan McKinney

Campbellsville, Ky.—Robert Clark, described as one of the “best of Baptist higher educators and leaders,” died Friday, April 5, at his home in Campbellsville. He was 81.

Clark served 32 years at Campbellsville University, most of those as academic vice president, until his retirement in 1998.

Known for his integrity and his gentlemanly manner, Clark “touched the lives of thousands of people during his abundant life of Christian servant leadership,” said Michael Carter, president of Campbellsville.

“Dr. Clark was a very fine professor



Robert Clark

and historian, and his many years of church leadership as a senior pastor and other ministry roles were exemplary. Dr. Clark continued serving even in retirement as director of missions for Taylor County Baptist Association,” Carter added.

Clark began his work at Campbellsville as an associate professor of social sciences in 1966. He became vice president for academic affairs and dean, as well as professor of social science, in 1976 and served until his retirement.

Frank Cheatham, a professor of math, succeeded Clark in the role as vice president for academic affairs.

“He has been a mentor to me both as a faculty member and in this role as vice president for academic affairs,” Cheatham said of Clark. “The best word I can use to describe Robert is ‘integrity.’”

Robert Doty, professor emeritus in

English, said Clark “was a champion of students.”

Doty said Clark was “very modest and humble ... He was a selfless being.”

Clark loved history and did graduate work in history with his Ed.D. in higher education administration from George Peabody College of Vanderbilt University.

A native of Shelbyville, Ky., he graduated from Shelbyville High School, Georgetown College, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Middle Tennessee State University. He did graduate work in Tulane University.

He was a member of the Filson Club of Louisville, the Kentucky Historical Society and the Taylor County Historical Society, where he was a charter member and served as president and director.

He was a contributor to the historical writings of Campbellsville University, especially during the university's

Centennial Celebration in 2006. He had belonged to the Southern Historical Association, Society, the Southern Baptist Historical Society, the Kentucky Historical Society and Kentucky Baptist Historical Society.

On May 5, 2007, he was awarded the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award at Campbellsville University's commencement.

Clark was a long-time member of Campbellsville Baptist Church.

Clark is survived by his wife, Lillian Bruner Clark, who has served for many years on the Taylor County School Board. She is also a retired high school counselor and English teacher and has taught English at Campbellsville University.

He is also survived by four children, 12 grandchildren, 24 great-grandchildren; and one sister. (CU)

Sandra Williams

Continued from page 1

‘Jesus loves you’ and then walking away from it,” she said. “You’re there to walk with them and to cry with them and to laugh with them and to be with them.”

Kentucky Baptists will presented Williams the missionary of the year award Friday, April 5 at the Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union Annual Meeting and 125th Anniversary Celebration in Hopkinsville.

“In the Bible, it says for us to do two things: to love God and to love our neighbor,” Williams said. “And I think as we’re loving our neighbor and building our relationships with them, they learn more about His love for them.”

‘Vital’ work

Eric Allen is leader of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Missions Mobilization Team. His group gathers the nominations for missionary of the year.

He said Williams' work is vital because she reaches people who are too often ignored by the rest of society.

Lexington alone has about 1,400 homeless according to the last census.



HONORING SERVICE Sandra Williams (center), instructs Elkhorn Baptist Association volunteers to serve homeless guests during a “Souperbowl Party” held at Calvary Baptist Church in downtown Lexington. Williams is the 2012 Kentucky Baptist Missionary of the Year.

“She works with all of the churches in the Elkhorn Baptist Association to help them (minister) to those who are in very marginalized places in the society,” Allen said.

He commended Williams' out-of-the-box thinking when it comes to serving her community.

As the bitter winter outside brought families and friends together to watch the Super Bowl this year, Williams saw the nationwide event as a way to witness to the homeless.

Allen said, for Williams, the football game was about much more than entertainment.

“These are people who generally live on the streets,” he said. But through Elkhorn's Souperbowl Party, held at Calvary Baptist Church in Lexington, “they come together, get to watch the (game) and share snacks just like you and I might do with our friends.”

And, they hear the gospel.

Feeding the hungry

Much of Williams' work involves first filling hungry bellies. Elkhorn Baptist Association Director of Missions Don Reed said every week volunteers serve several hot meals and pack hundreds of sack lunches for the people in their community.

Many of those meals are served in Irish-town, a poverty-stricken area in the shadow of Rupp Arena, where the association has established a ministry center.

They also address other types of hunger there. Volunteer tutors teach children and

adults how to read. Other Elkhorn Baptists lead Bible studies and worship services.

Spiritual growth, often takes time, though.

Williams recalled a woman who became a regular at one of their hot meal ministries. At the time, the homeless woman was living by the downtown library.

At first, Williams said, the woman was hostile to anything related to the gospel, but after months of friendship and sincere service from Elkhorn Baptists, the person being served actually began serving others.

After about six months of working alongside the volunteers packing sack lunches, the woman softened to the message being lived out around her, and she accepted Christ.

“It was exciting just to see that growth and to see how that change took place in her. And how as we built relationships with her that her whole attitude and feelings changed,” Williams said. “She had been willing to listen and then took a step.”

Role model

In the past five years of Williams' service, 18 people have made professions of faith and 15 have been baptized as result of the ministries she coordinates. She has also become a mentor to the believers working alongside her.

Rachel Riquelme was a summer missionary and intern for Elkhorn Association from 2005 to 2007, and now works as family and children's minister at High Street Baptist Church in Somerset.

Riquelme said her time working with Williams demonstrated the important place women can have in ministry. Riquelme said the experience encouraged her to continue following that path.

“The first year I worked with her, I was fighting the call to ministry,” Riquelme said. “Working side by side with her and seeing how she was a woman doing ministry and learning from her just showed me that, yeah, this is what God wants me to do.”

Prior to her appointment with Elkhorn Association, Williams was a teacher, music minister and then director of church development for Western Connecticut Baptist Association. (KBC)



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The meaning of 'and'

Editor's note: This week's column is by KBC President Dan Summerlin, pastor of Lone Oak First Baptist Church in Paducah.

There is a major difference between the words "and" and "or." For example, if you see an advertisement for eggs and ham, you know you will receive both; however, if the advertisement said eggs or ham, then you realize you need to make a choice. The simple change of the conjunction makes a huge difference in how we respond to the statement. Rarely do we find people making a mistake between the meanings of these two conjunctions.

Yet, surprisingly many Christians seem confused by the conjunction in the Great Commission. Jesus said, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8 ESV). Notice He used the conjunction "and" not "or." Notice the difference? If He had used the word "or," then we would have choice of where to take the gospel, but using the word "and," we know we must take it to the entire world.

But how can the local church undertake this daunting task? The great news for Southern Baptists is we have the mechanism to achieve this command through cooperating with one another. Obviously I am speaking of the Cooperative Program. Since 1925 Southern Baptist churches of all sizes have cooperated with one another by pooling their money to send out missionaries throughout the world. This simple plan enables all churches to have a major part in the Great Commission.

I have been blessed to travel to Central America, South America, Africa and Asia for mission projects and each time I go I talk with our SBC missionaries. Speaking with them is a constant reminder to me of the importance of giving through the CP and the need to send even more missionaries. Seeing their obstacles and opportunities, I am also compelled to pray for more churches to take seriously the Great Commission and their particular role in fulfilling it.

Currently Southern Baptists have many missionaries ready to go to the fields, but the funds are not available. That is an indictment to all of us. How can we say we believe in the Great Commission and not give more in sending missionaries? How can we say we believe in the Great Commission and not pray for God to call our own children and grandchildren to the mission field?

As I travel the state, I am excited to witness the passion Kentucky Baptists have to fulfill the Great Commission. We get it. This command is not to choose between local, state, national or international missions but to partner together to present the gospel to all.

Thank you, Kentucky Baptists, for your commitment and dedication to our Lord's command.

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.



Paul Chitwood

McCall: A leader, an encourager, a friend

By Jason Allen

In the pantheon of Southern Baptist greats, Duke Kimbrough McCall's place is secure. He was a once-in-a-generation figure; a man Solomonic in judgment and Mosaic in leadership. When he spoke, his words were full of wit and wisdom, power and grace. By birth and by nature, he was a Southern gentleman; a patrician, in every good sense of the word. Yet for me, Duke McCall was all of these things, but he was much more—he was a cherished friend.

McCall benefited from a kind providence that evidenced itself in a thousand signs of giftedness. As the psalmist would say, the lines fell on him in pleasant places (Psalm 16:6). The sheer length and consequence of his life brought McCall a certain aura, even mystique, which is rarely witnessed among men.

To know Duke McCall was to know a leader. The noted historian Rufus Fears argued there is a distinction to be made between a politician and a statesman: a politician has a political antenna; a statesman, a moral compass. Few men possess either. Duke McCall possessed both.

For McCall, leadership came as natural as life itself. His rise through the denominational ranks was meteoric, almost assuredly mythological if it were not true. While still in his mid-30s, he had served as pastor of Louisville's most prominent Baptist church, Broadway Baptist; been elected president of what would come to be known as New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary; served a stint as chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee; and had assumed the presidency of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, where his administration would span four decades. The capstone of McCall's public ministry came as president of the Baptist World Alliance in the 1980s. It is no overstatement to say that Duke McCall managed to have his hand on the tiller of Baptist affairs for a half-century or more.

McCall proved to lead even into the final season of his life. Even at his most advanced age, he continued to drive his own car, teach a Bible study through the book of Romans, coordinate social outings, maintain correspondence, and engage intellectually in political, cultural, denominational and religious affairs. In fact, his home office looked like a veritable nerve center of Baptist life, with magazines, state papers, books and letters all within arm's reach.

My last visit with Duke McCall occurred in a Palm Beach, Fla., hospital just days before his passing. Though infirmed, he was never more himself. Intellectually engaging, walking the room, directing seating arrangements, self-diagnosing his

ailment, inquiring about Midwestern and Southern Seminaries, incisively assessing the Southern Baptist Convention, and prognosticating about its future.

While in the hospital room with McCall, I had a thought I've had a hundred times—I wish I had known Duke McCall in his prime. In many ways, however, to know Duke McCall in his 10th decade was to know him in his prime—still assessing, counseling, encouraging. Still deliberating. Still leading.

Before Duke McCall went to his eternal home, he returned to his institutional and denominational home. He died enjoying a close relationship with Southern Seminary, as a man held in highest esteem by President Albert Mohler, Jr., and Southern Seminary's faculty and administration. To be sure, theological distance made his relationship with Southern Seminary and the Southern Baptist Convention at times an uneasy one, but the relationship did not lack mutual affection or appreciation.

Though he did not always agree with Southern Seminary's current theological convictions, he was always proud of his alma mater. He admired the burgeoning enrollment, beautifully maintained campus, expansive denominational footprint, and the convictional leadership of Mohler.

During my last conversation with Duke McCall, he expressed his determination to attend my upcoming inauguration as president of Midwestern Seminary, and I expressed my desire to have him participate in some way in the inaugural events. McCall's death ensures his absence, but, in a very real way, his life ensures his presence. His presence will indeed be felt. He will be there in the campus of a seminary he helped conceptualize and found. He will be there in the denominational superstructure he envisioned and shaped. He will be there in the lives and ministries of the countless individuals who studied at Southern Seminary during his presidency or since.

Duke McCall often joked about having missed many appropriate exit ramps to heaven. Nothing could be further from the truth. In his 99th year, for Duke McCall death came late, but in a very real sense it came too soon. Most men quit living long before they die. McCall always seemed too busy living—and leading—to entertain dying.

On Tuesday, April 2, 2013, Duke K. McCall went to his eternal reward. Indeed, the Southern Baptist Convention lost a statesman. Southern Seminary lost a patriarch. I lost a friend. Jason Allen is president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo. He formerly was vice president for institutional advancement at Southern Seminary.

Guest Viewpoint



Jason Allen

Use scripture as a visual focus in your church

By Diana Davis

It's the first thing you see as you drive into the church parking lot. It's a focal point as you enter the lobby. You may discover it near the water fountain, the clock or the exit. What a concept: placing God's word in plain sight!

Here are some simple ways to intentionally use Scripture to enhance your church's décor:

- Beautiful framed Scripture art can adorn hallways and other common areas. You'll find many at your Christian bookstore.

- Add an appropriate Scripture on a metal nameplate for each sculpture or

piece of art in the church. For example, use the words of Psalm 113:3 for a sunset landscape.

- If you have spectacular Scripture banners in storage, consider hanging one high on a large foyer wall.

- Matted acrylic frames can be hung low in a children's area for interchanging kids' original Scripture art.

- Youth could paint an artsy rendition of their theme Scripture on a focal wall of their classroom.

- Purchase or make vinyl or stenciled lettering of a Scripture. Large or small, these can make an enormous impact.

Carefully select an appropriate Scripture verse for each venue. For example, a

framed Scripture could hang over a water fountain, reading, "Whoever drinks of the water I give him will never thirst (John 4:14)." Another church stenciled "Go and make disciples ... (Matthew 28:19)" above the main exit doors.

The Bible challenges us in Deuteronomy 6:6 to "tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates."

Try it! You never know who might be reading.

Diana Davis is author of "Fresh Ideas" and "Deacon Wives." She is the wife of North American Mission Board's vice president for the south region, Steve Davis.

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Praying for a spiritual harvest through Pentecost

By Claude King

In 1995, a Texas pastor called and asked me to pray for his church and give some counsel. The pastor believed the church had experienced a revival—not a series of services, but a return to right relationships with God and one another. The church had two concerns: first, they wanted to become more of a people of prayer; second, they wanted to be part of a spiritual harvest.

Easter to Pentecost: 50 days of praying

This Texas congregation began 50 days of prayer starting Easter Sunday and continuing through Pentecost Sunday. Families were given a 50-day calendar with a Scripture for each day. They were asked to gather as a family to read and discuss a Scripture each day, decide what they needed to do to apply the truths to their lives, and pray. With a focus on reaching lost people, they began making lists of people in their circles who were not Christians. Families faithfully lifted these names to the Lord in prayer.

The church also held a six-week study of prayer in Sunday School classes from sixth grade through senior adults. They used a workbook now titled "Growing Disciples: Pray in Faith." Participants were learning to pray during the week, and then they conducted prayer meetings in their classes to practice what they were learning. One lesson each week

helped them pray together more effectively.

During the worship services, they collected prayer request cards. A team of intercessors prayed during the services for the spiritual needs of the people present.

Following the model for "Pentecostal Prayer Meetings" described by Andrew Murray in "The Prayer Life," the church conducted 10 days of corporate prayer meetings on the days leading up to Pentecost. One night they commissioned a mission team for Russia. Another night they invited the other Baptists in their small county to join them for prayer. They invited other denominations to join them one night in praying for their town. Other corporate prayer experiences included cottage prayer meetings, prayerwalking around town, prayer-driving in the county, and other kinds of corporate prayer.

I had the privilege of joining this church for their celebration of Pentecost, including wonderful testimonies and a Baptist feast. They even received a special "first fruits" offering to provide ministry to needy people outside of the church membership. I was amazed at the quality of corporate prayer I observed.

People were expecting a huge response at invitation time, but only one young boy made a public profession of faith. Their enthusiasm for a spiritual harvest seemed to burst. Only one other "first fruit" of spiritual harvest happened that afternoon as a woman from the community came to seek counsel from the pastor. She had seen the service on the local cable channel. She wanted to know God the way people described their experiences in their testimonies that morning. I returned home a bit discouraged.

An abundant spiritual harvest

Three months later, I received a follow-up report from the pastor that reignited my heart. Their mission team to Russia led more than 400 people to the Lord. Additionally, although the church had been involved in prison ministry for many years, that summer they saw nearly 300 prisoners accept Christ. And in their small community, 25 of the lost people for whom they had prayed between Easter and Pentecost professed their faith in Jesus Christ. Many members said, "Pastor, we can't go back to the old way of doing things."

I recently told that story to a pastor in Alabama who has been leading his church to return to the Lord. Starting Easter Sunday they are starting their own 50 days of praying up to Pentecost.* He has called and is planning for 10 days of corporate prayer meetings. Then they plan to hold two evangelistic services beginning Pentecost Sunday.

Jesus instructed His disciples, "Open your eyes and look at the fields, for they are ready for harvest" (John 4:35). The early church experienced a great spiritual harvest on the day of Pentecost. But, like the church in Texas, the Jerusalem harvest was preceded by a period of intense personal and corporate prayer. (BP)

Claude King is discipleship and church health specialist at LifeWay Christian Resources. He is coauthor of "Experiencing God, Fresh Encounter, The Mind of Christ, Pray in Faith," and other resources.

FIRST PERSON

Where's your treasure?

By Don Spencer

Jesus tells of a rich man who used all his resources on himself. He planned to tear down his barns and build bigger ones, so he could store more for himself and take life easy. The Scripture says this man is shortsighted. God said to him, "Tonight you will die. You have made your money, now who will get it" (Luke 12:20).

As is generally true for all of us, his handling of possessions was an outward visible indicator of an inner spiritual condition. He was rich toward himself, but not toward God. No matter how wealthy one is in the things of this world, those material possessions are worthless in eternity. Jesus says, "Do not store up treasures on earth." Is that because accumulated wealth is bad? No! It is because it will not last. Any accumulations of wealth must keep that truth in perspective.

Proverbs 23:5 says, "Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle." Randy Alcorn, in his book, "The Treasure Principle," uses a beautiful analogy: "The next time you buy a prized possession, imagine it spouting wings and flying off. Sooner or later it will disappear."

Accumulated wealth will always leave us—either during life or at death. There are no exceptions. Does this mean wealth is itself bad? Absolutely not. The problem is our approach to it and use of it. When we store wealth just for the sake of accumulating wealth, we are being shortsighted. When it is used to serve God and others, then we are building heavenly treasures. This includes taking care of the needs of one's family, as we are admonished to do in 1 Timothy. This must be done with forethought to the future. At the same time, we must remember that it is only the heavenly treasures that last forever. We need to make sure we are investing in something that has lasting value.

John Bunyon in "Pilgrim's Progress" echoed this biblical principle: "Whatever good thing you do for Him, if done according to his Word, is laid up for you in treasure in chests and coffers, to be brought out to be rewarded both before men and angels, to your eternal comfort."

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

Beliefs about marriage

By Scott Wigginton

Q: Are there some beliefs about marriage that Christian couples should not embrace?



A: A number of years ago my brother Steve was trimming bushes and stripping vines and weeds that had grown up on his back fence. Working in the heat of the summer, he took off his shirt and before long was scooping up big piles to carry to his truck, not realizing until later that much of what he was dealing with was poison ivy. Sometimes we do not recognize the consequences of that which we embrace until much later.

There are a number of myths about marriage that do not square with truth. Scripture reminds us to take captive every thought to the obedience of Christ (II Cor. 10:5). Romans 12:2 reminds us that we are to be about the renewal of the mind so that we do not conform to this world's ways of thinking and behaving.

Following are some marriage myths that can poison a marriage. Each is followed by an essential truth.

My happiness depends on the person I marry.

Truth: Each person is responsible to God for our happiness and our holiness.

Personality flaws like insensitivity or insecurity are the underlying causes of marital distress.

Truth: The underlying cause of marital distress is typically the sinful ways we respond to irritating behaviors.

My similarity to my spouse is what makes my marriage succeed.

Truth: Much of marital satisfaction depends on how I handle the ways my spouse is different from me.

If my marriage is hard, I must have married the wrong person.

Truth: All marriages are hard at times.

Conflict in a marriage is destined to destroy the relationship.

Truth: Conflict can be constructive if the couple learns to handle anger wisely.

My spouse should meet all my needs for intimacy.

Truth: Husbands need other male friends and wives need other female friends to help meet their needs for intimacy and closeness.

Christian couples do well to remember that marriage is a remarkable gift from God that is ultimately more about holiness than happiness. When we learn to love unselfishly, we grow up into mature men and women who show the world something of the love that Christ the Bridegroom has for his beloved Bride the church.

Scott Wigginton is associate professor of pastoral ministries and counseling at Campbellsville University and minister of counseling at Campbellsville Baptist Church.

Poll: Americans consider the Bible sacred, but 'don't read it'

By Caleb Bell

More than half of Americans think the Bible has too little influence on a culture they see in moral decline, yet only one in five Americans read the Bible on a regular basis, according to a new survey.

More than three-quarters of Americans (77 percent) think the nation's morality is headed downhill, according to a survey from American Bible Society.

The survey showed the Bible is still firmly rooted in American soil: 88 percent of respondents said they own a Bible, 80 percent

think the Bible is sacred, 61 percent wish they read the Bible more, and the average household has 4.4 Bibles.

Almost a third of respondents said moral decline was a result of people not reading the Bible, while 29 percent cited the "negative influence of America" and one in four cited corporate corruption.

Doug Birdsall, president of American Bible Society, said there is a reason why the Bible isn't connecting with people.

"I see the problem as analogous to obesity in America. We have an awful lot of people who realize they're overweight, but they don't

follow a diet," Birdsall said. "People realize the Bible has values that would help us in our spiritual health, but they just don't read it."

If they do read it, the majority (57 percent) only read their Bibles four times a year or less. Only 26 percent of Americans said they read their Bible on a regular basis (four or more times a week).

Younger people also seem to be moving away from the Bible. Fifty-seven percent of those ages 18-28 read their Bibles less than three times a year, if at all.

American Bible Society commissioned this study. For more, go to www.Barna.org. (RNS)

Moore, on C-SPAN, talks culture & Kingdom

By Dwayne Hastings

Washington—In his first television appearance since being named president-elect of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, Russell Moore was forthright in his positions but stressed the importance of Christians being Kingdom-minded in approaching issues.

Moore was featured in a live segment of C-SPAN's "Washington Journal."

Moore, dean of the school of theology and senior vice president for academic administration at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, emphasized the importance of Christian believers recognizing they are facing "ultimately an optimistic scenario, not a pessimistic scenario."

"The situations we face are very important and in many cases dire and the consequences are crucial, but if we really believe what Jesus has said ... then we don't come to this as losers, as people who are frantic, as people who are outraged," Moore said. "We come to this with a kind of quiet confidence."

"We must not be a people who are terrified, but who are confident in the sovereignty of God and the power of the gospel," he continued.

When Libby Casey, host of the April 5 C-SPAN program, asked Moore what side of the culture war he was on, Moore said

he preferred not to think in terms of a fight. "I don't think we are at war with one another in this country," he said. "I think we have very deep disagreements on issues that matter."

Yet he indicated it was possible and beneficial for people with divergent perspectives to "come together with civility and in conversation."

Moore said evangelicals must recognize they are not speaking as a majority. "We're not standing and saying everything we are concerned about is by necessity what the entire country agrees with us about."

"In many issues we are going to have to have a prophetic voice to a culture that largely disagrees with us," he continued, noting that has been the position of evangelical Christians and Baptists as far back as the nation's founding.

"Baptist preachers were the ones agitating for a 1st Amendment, for instance, for the protection of the freedom of conscience and religious liberty when that didn't seem to be a priority for many people," he said.

Casey asked about the role religion should play in crafting legislation.

"Religion deals with ultimate matters," Moore responded, explaining faith impacts "what we value and how we see the world."

He said people of faith must be

involved in public policy matters: "As citizens of this republic we have a responsibility to care for the good of our neighbor and to maintain the common good of the nation."

He noted the conversation is harmed when people of faith are not involved in the process. "After all," Moore said, "religion teaches us and shows us that the state isn't ultimate and the culture isn't ultimate, there are ultimate priorities beyond these things."

When people of various faiths come together, Moore said, "We are speaking to one another not in order to in any way oppress one another but in order to persuade one another that there are things we ought to agree on because they are for the sake of the common good."

The C-SPAN host noted the shift in public opinion for same-sex marriage.

"We ought not to base radical changes in public policy on the basis of something as ephemeral as this cultural moment," Moore responded. "When you have something as important as marriage, historically and culturally, we ought to protect that and conserve that."

Moore said he hopes the Supreme Court is prudent in its deliberations and



TALKING HEADS Russell Moore was interviewed in a live segment of C-SPAN's "Washington Journal" by host Libby Casey. (BP)

doesn't usurp the democratic process in its ruling on the Defense of Marriage Act.

Saying while he appreciated the debate over the definition of marriage, Moore said, "I believe the state doesn't define marriage. The state merely recognizes something that already exists."

Casey asked for his opinion on the immigration issue.

"We need to recognize those who immigrated to this country are persons created in the image of God and they bear dignity and ought to be loved and respected," he said.

Moore indicated his pleasure with the "growing consensus" on the issue, noting few people consider it reasonable or just to attempt to deport those who are in the U.S. without proper documentation.

"The question is how do we justly, fairly and humanely help these individuals become contributing members of society," Moore said. (ERLC/BP)

Birth of CP

Continued from page 1

\$2,000 a year, but it wasn't guaranteed."

The Owens family drove more than 700 miles across dirt roads to get from their home in South Carolina to the convention hall in Memphis, where the five-day event was held. They stayed with relatives when possible to save money.

"It took us four days, because the front wheels of the Plymouth were not aligned properly," Owens recalled. "Somewhere between Birmingham and Memphis the tires were worn out and Dad had to buy new ones."

Owens' father paid for two tires and an alignment, about \$100, the equivalent of nearly \$1,000 today.

It was hot that day, Owens said of the first day of meetings. Other reports cite that the air inside the convention hall was "oppressively muggy" with about 5,600 people in their Sunday best.

'Beautiful arrangement'

Messengers heartily approved the report (known as the Future Program Commission) with the following recommendation: "That from the adoption of this report by the Convention our cooperative work be known as 'The Cooperative Program of Southern Baptists.'"

The fundraising strategy was created with a dozen working principles, including that the Cooperative Program would be an equal partnership between state conventions and the SBC and that "money given by the churches was to be evenly divided between the state convention and SBC."

"The agencies and institutions were not happy with the new plan at first, but in only a few years they realized how fortunate they were in the benefits of the plan," Owens said. "They no longer had to go begging. ... It was only a few years until it was recognized by the churches as a divinely-oriented concept."

"It is a beautiful arrangement," he said. "The churches are not plagued by appeals for money. ... Each agency and

institution can feel fairly secure in anticipating its designated share."

'Great advantages'

The CP has enabled the SBC to develop a well-organized worldwide missions thrust that reaches into more than 160 nations, with missionaries trained by six of the "largest and most effective seminaries in the world," Owens said. "Each state has had the privilege of using its share of CP funds for colleges, children's homes, hospitals, homes for the aging, or whatever its apparent needs might be."

The CP method of pooling mission dollars for maximum effectiveness "is not perfect, but its advantages are great," Owens said. "There are biblical reasons why it is good, and there are compelling

logistical reasons why it works so well.

"Through the Cooperative Program, we Southern Baptists are supporting thousands of missionaries here in America and all around the world," Owens continued. "In 2011 ... they planted more churches and baptized more people than all the 45,000-plus Southern Baptist churches here in the USA."

Owens also became a pastor, serving churches in South Carolina, Florida and Georgia before starting Parkwood Baptist Church in Gastonia, N.C., in 1963.

In the years after the vote to establish the CP, Owens Sr. went on to serve as pastor of First Baptist Church of Taylors, S.C., where he was followed some decades later by Frank Page, president of the SBC Executive Committee. (BP)

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J.H. Spencer Historical Society Spring Meeting

Saturday, April 13, 10 a.m.
Bethel Baptist Church, Fairview, Ky.

Dean Anderson

"Valuing Our Baptist Identity"

Ron Noffsinger

"James Lamb, Missionary Extraordinaire
in Western Kentucky"

Everyone is invited to attend.

North Korean Christians seek prayer amid threats

Santa Ana, Calif.—Christians in North Korea have asked for prayer as their country's leaders have heightened threats of war against South Korea and the United States, according to an April 4 Open Doors report.

North Korea, having launched a long-range rocket in December followed by an underground nuclear test in February, escalated its rhetoric April 4 by warning nuclear strikes against the United States.

U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said the Pentagon is taking threats seriously, sending ballistic missile defenses to Guam, a Western Pacific territory that is home to U.S. naval and air bases.

Open Doors, citing reports from underground Christians in North Korea who described a war-like atmosphere in the country, said that prayer for the already-persecuted believers in the communist nation is more important



CLEAR DANGER North Korea has stepped up threats since a long-range rocket launch.

than ever.

The people of North Korea fear war and its consequences, Open Doors said, with many people in a hurry to purchase emergency food supplies and daily goods. The prices of such goods, including food, are skyrocketing, a North

Korean Christian said.

Amid the turmoil, North Korean Christians expressed gratitude for fellow believers around the world "for their continuous love and support," Open Doors said.

Jerry Dykstra, spokesperson for Open Doors, called for increased prayers for North Korean believers in these days.

"Beneath the surface of the all the rhetoric of war and the possible launch of nuclear missiles are the suffering and persecution of the estimated 200,000 to 400,000 Christians," he said.

"Also, an estimated 60,000 to 80,000 Christians are in harsh political prison camps," Dykstra said.

"Pray for Christians who are put in even more danger due to war preparations," he said. "Pray that no matter what happens Christians will remain strong in their faith." (BP)



NEW FRIENDS Shari Ennes (left), wife of church planter Alex Ennes, ministers to Cleveland Indian player's wives, like Meryl Masterson, wife of Justin Masterson.

Church planter

Continued from page 1

As an experienced church planter, Ennes understands what it's like to get to know his ministry context and to attempt to communicate the gospel within that context.

"You've got to learn how you are going to meet people," Ennes said. "What do you say and what don't you say. In the professional sports world, there's a way to talk to people and a way not to. Just like in church planting, you've got to get to know your community."

Since the players' wives and girlfriends stay behind when the players go out of town, Ennes believes his wife's ministry has even more potential than his own. He said Shari has built strong relationships with several of the women simply by being present and listening when needed. Players' wives often come to a new city leaving friends behind.

"Friends outside of baseball don't really understand why we have to move three times a year," said Meryl Masterson wife of the Indians' Justin Masterson. "It's hard to find friends who are truly going to be there for you ... to have one friend you know will be praying for you."

Masterson said Shari has been an important mentor for many of the other wives and girlfriends.

As Ennes starts up a new congregation, Gateway Church River in Cleveland's Rocky River area, he believes his work as a chaplain may provide some additional credibility in the community.

"It's a great conversation starter. Many people in Cleveland don't know what to do with a church planter," Ennes said. "But give them something they can identify with—like the Indians—it makes them feel like you're part of the community." (NAMB/BP)

Answers

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NEWS BRIEFS

Resolutions Committee named

SBC President Fred Luter has named the members of the Committee on Resolutions for the June 11-12 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Houston.

Luter, pastor of the Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, named Steve Lemke of Louisiana as committee chairman. Lemke is provost at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in New Orleans, where he also serves as professor of philosophy and ethics. Lemke is a member of First Baptist Church of New Orleans.

Among the other committee members is Richard Gaines, senior pastor of Consolidated Baptist Church in Lexington, Ky.

Proposed resolutions may be submitted as early as April 15 but no later than 15 days prior to the SBC annual meeting.

GuideStone earns Lipper award

For the second year in a row, GuideStone Financial Resources has been recognized in the Lipper Fund Awards, with the MyDestination 2025 Fund being named Best Fund Over Three Years among Mixed-Asset Target 2025 Funds.

The MyDestination 2025 Fund was ranked No. 1 among 92 similar funds for its performance over the three years ending Nov. 30, 2012.

Schaeffer dies at 98

Edith Schaeffer, who along with her late husband the theologian and apologist Francis Schaeffer founded L'Abri Fellowship, died March 30 at her home in Switzerland. She was 98.

Born to missionary parents in China, Edith Schaeffer later joined her husband as a missionary to Switzerland. The author of 17 books on family and spirituality, Schaeffer was known for her hospitality, deciding with her husband to open their home in Switzerland in 1955 as a place where people might find answers and practical demonstrations of Christian care. L'Abri, the evangelical ministry that emerged, has since expanded to seven countries.

Liberty lifts campus gun ban

Trustees of Liberty University have changed the Christian school's weapons policy to allow students, faculty, staff and visitors with concealed-carry permits to bring weapons into all campus facilities except for dormitories. The policy change went into effect March 22, after trustees reportedly voted unanimously to loosen a previous policy where guns were allowed on campus but not inside buildings.

"I think it's a positive thing for security that there's at least a chance that somebody responsible will be carrying a firearm when something like (the Virginia Tech massacre) happens," Liberty University Chancellor Jerry Falwell Jr. told the Lynchburg News & Advance.

Measures of success

OBI finds many expelled students plead to return to the school

How does a ministry like OBI evaluate itself? What yardsticks are appropriate when we combine the education for time with the education for eternity, when we not only minister to students in the classroom but also in the cafeteria, the dormitory, the farm, the grill, and the gymnasium?

We do look at our financial situation on a weekly, monthly and annual basis. We monitor our standardized test scores, with the aim for our students' scores to be at or above the state and national averages. We observe how our students fare on advanced placement exams. We keep track of how our students progress academically from their arrival until they climb onto the honor roll with a 2.8 GPA and scale further heights.

We take notice as our students compete with those from other Kentucky schools in the arts, academics and agriculture. We watch how our students' attitudes and actions mature as they stay with us and how they behave themselves when they are off campus, either representing the school or just living on their own. We pay attention to the spiritual decisions that are made, the commitments to Christ, the individual discipleship, and the student testimonies shared about how Christ has changed their lives.

There is one additional means of self-evaluation which we use and it may surprise you. We take stock of the fact that many of the students whom we have to expel ask to come back almost immediately after the compulsory minimum of

two academic quarters spent in another school.

One parent recently wrote: "Landon wishes to return to Oneida to complete his high school education in the 2013-2014 school year. He said the educational system in Oneida is better than in the city. ... He has nothing against the school and believes he will follow the rules of the school. He believes the school has given him a strong moral and educational foundation so far, and he is proud of OBI. He is also sorry for what happened that led to his suspension for the balance of the school year 2012-2013. He is ready to do his best to be a good example and truly represent the values of OBI."

In his postscript, the father added, "I know that OBI is a very good school for my son. Three of my other children passed thru the OBI program and I am very proud of their moral values and educational performance."

Similar letters are not uncommon. When we get such communications from families whose students we have had to expel, it tells us that in the minds of the students and their families we have made a noticeable, positive difference in the lives of the students. They have understood that we have not expelled in hatred or anger, but purely as an emphatic means of attempting to communicate to the student one more time that certain attitudes and behaviors have serious negative consequences and need to be abandoned.

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

Making connections

Clear Creek provides pool for local cardboard boat competition

The faculty, staff and students at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College are always on the lookout for new ways to reach out to our community and the world. We recently rediscovered an oft-proven truth: It is easier to reach out to your community if you have an indoor pool on campus.

We have grown accustomed to seeing water aerobics groups from the surrounding area meet throughout the week at our pool for fellowship and exercise. But recently we were asked by the community to use our pool in a very unique way that provided Clear Creek with a way to connect with some of our area high schools and local college. We also had the opportunity to learn some things from the world of engineering.

Students from Bell County High School, Middlesboro High School, and Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College—campuses located within just a few miles from the Clear Creek campus—were invited to the Clear Creek Family Life Center to showcase their "Project Lead the Way" experiments.

The project involved making boats out of cardboard, duct tape and deck sealant. The students designed their boats using 3D computer software then tested them in the pool. Each group had an individual inside the boat attempt-

ing to paddle across the pool and back. It was a big undertaking as the students had to calculate volume, displacement of water and water levels when constructing their boats.

For the high school students, the partnership with Clear Creek meant they could have a great deal of fun competing with one another while attempting to earn college credit in the rigorous class. For students of Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College, it was an opportunity to show younger students that engineering could not only be engaging, but was also something they are capable of learning.

For Clear Creek, it was another chance to say to their community, "We are here, we care, and we want to serve you."

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

Hobby Lobby gets boost in battle against federal abortion mandate

By Michael Foust

Denver—Hobby Lobby's legal battle against the abortion/contraceptive mandate received a boost March 29 when the full 10th Circuit Court of Appeals agreed to hear the company's case. Such "en banc" hearings are relatively rare.

In November a federal judge ruled that Hobby Lobby must cover the drugs in its employee health insurance plans, and in December a three-judge panel of the 10th Circuit refused to step in and prevent Hobby Lobby from being impacted by the mandate.

Under the federal government's mandate, businesses must cover contraceptives and abortion-causing drugs as part of their health insurance plans.

The 10th Circuit said it will expedite oral arguments and will set a date soon.

Hobby Lobby, an arts and crafts store, is owned by a Christian family who said the mandate violates their beliefs and their constitutionally protected freedoms. The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty is representing Hobby Lobby.

Hobby Lobby is self-insured and could face millions in fines if a court does not intervene. In January Hobby Lobby announced it had found a way to avoid for "several months" being penalized by the government. The announcement said the company had "discovered a way to shift the plan year for its employee health insurance, thus postponing the effective date of the mandate for several months."

Hobby Lobby is the largest and highest-profile company to file suit against the mandate. While its losses have captured national attention, other smaller businesses located in other circuit courts

have been winning. Among the winners in court is Tyndale Publishers, which prints Bibles and Christian books.

With more than 500 stores in 41 states, Hobby Lobby's owners have made their faith a central part of their business. Their stores play Christian instrumental music and are closed on Sundays. Hobby Lobby contributes to Christian organizations and runs full-page ads in newspapers during the Easter and Christmas seasons with gospel-centered messages.

"These abortion-causing drugs go against our faith, and our family is now being forced to choose between following the laws of the land that we love or maintaining the religious beliefs that have made our business successful," David Green, Hobby Lobby's founder and CEO, said in September. "... We simply cannot abandon our religious beliefs to comply with this mandate."

Green said religious liberty is at stake. "Hobby Lobby has always been a tool for the Lord's work," he said. "... For me and my family, charity equals ministry, which equals the gospel of Jesus Christ. ... But now our faith is being challenged by the federal government."

The mandate was announced by the Department of Health and Human Services in August 2011 as part of the health care law championed by President Obama. Although the Supreme Court upheld the health care law in June of 2012, the justices' ruling did not deal with the religious liberty issues surrounding the abortion/contraceptive mandate. That means the nation's highest court could yet strike down what has been for religious groups the most controversial part of the law. (BP)

Southern Baptist files mandate lawsuit No. 50

Largo, Fla.—A Southern Baptist business owner has filed suit against the Obama administration's abortion/contraceptive mandate, bringing the number of lawsuits against the controversial policy to 50.

The Thomas More Law Center filed the suit March 12 on behalf of Thomas Beckwith, the CEO of Beckwith Electric Co. in Largo, Fla.

The mandate was issued by the Department of Health and Human Services in August 2011 and went into effect in 2012. It requires businesses to pay for employee insurance plans that cover contraceptives and abortion-causing drugs.

Beckwith, a member of First Baptist Church of Indian Rocks in Largo, Fla., rejects the notion his business must pay for drugs that are "capable of destroying a human life even after implantation on the uterine wall," the complaint reads. The complaint quotes extensively the positions of the Southern Baptist Convention on life and religious liberty and also quotes the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission and its president, Richard Land.

If Beckwith's company, which has 168 employees, does not comply with the mandate, it could face fines of more than \$6 million per year, according to a press release. (BP)

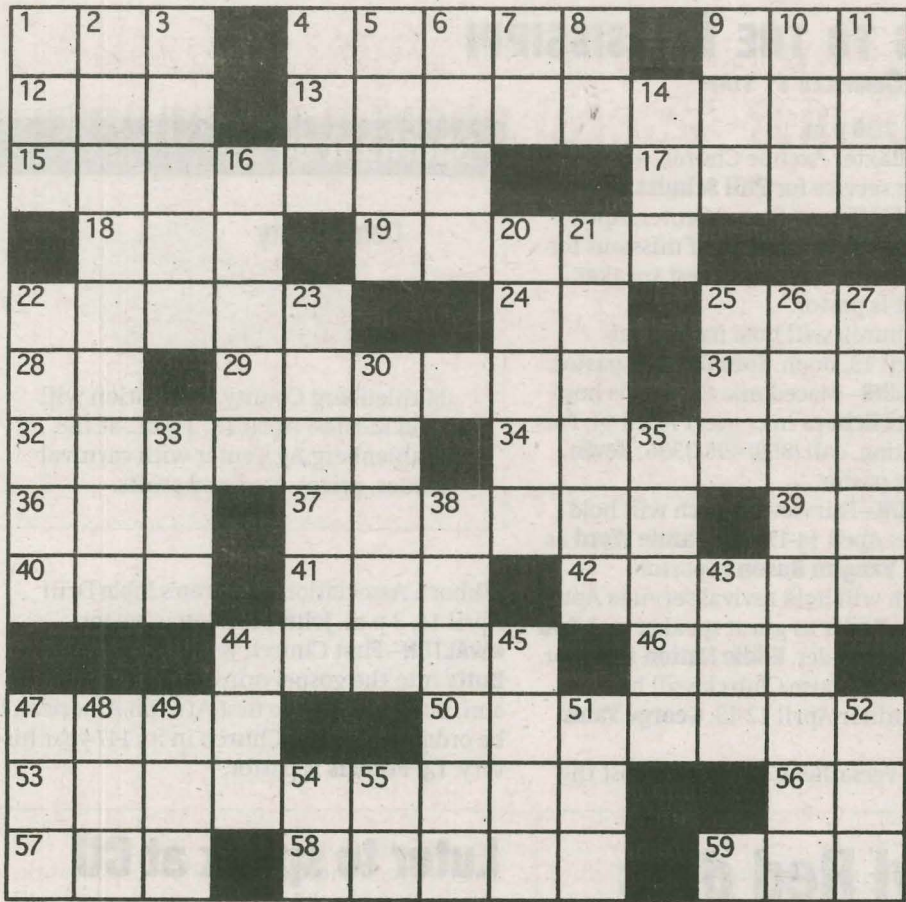
N.D. governor signs laws banning abortion

Bismark, N.D.—North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple, a Republican, signed into law March 26 three bills restricting abortion, including two that establish new pro-life milestones: The earliest state abortion ban, one based on an unborn child's heartbeat, which could be as soon as six weeks into gestation; and the first state law to prohibit abortion on the basis of a genetic irregularity in the unborn baby.

In addition, the N.D. House of Representatives approved March 22 a personhood amendment, making the state legislature the first in the country to pass such a measure, which would protect life at every stage of development, including in the womb. The Senate already had endorsed the proposal. The amendment will go to the state's voters without approval by the governor to decide whether it will be added to the state constitution.

The "genetic abnormality" ban also includes a provision prohibiting abortions performed on the basis of the unborn baby's sex.

The third abortion restriction signed by Dalrymple requires an abortion doctor to be licensed by the state and have admitting, as well as staff privileges at a local hospital. (BP)



#156

Bible Crosswords

By Evelyn Boyington

Across

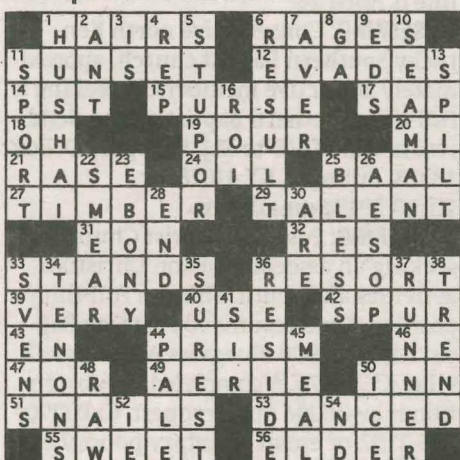
- 1 "___ no man any thing, but to love one another" (Romans 13:8)
- 4 "His enemy came and sowed tares among the ___" (Matthew 13:25)
- 9 Greek letter
- 12 Benign skin tumor
- 13 "Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to ___" (James 4:9)
- 15 United ___
- 17 "Woe to them that are at ___ in Zion" (Amos 6:1)
- 18 Actor Buttons
- 19 "Ye shall no more give the people ___ to make brick" (Exodus 5:7)
- 22 Lets go
- 24 Article
- 25 Explorer Johnson
- 28 Preposition
- 29 Warns, ominously
- 31 Exclamations of disappointment
- 32 "Another angel came ... having a golden ___" (Revelation 8:3)
- 34 Rouses, sometimes repeatedly
- 36 Entertaining troops is org.'s forte
- 37 One or the other
- 39 Half an em
- 40 Compass pt.
- 41 By means of
- 42 Acclaimed TV miniseries
- 44 Religion that has a claim in Jerusalem
- 46 Tribe of Israel
- 47 My Name Is ___ (W. Saroyan novel)
- 50 "He shall give thee the ___ of thine heart" (Psalm 37:4)
- 53 Those who trust in the Lord find this (Proverbs 16:20)
- 56 Continent (abbr.)
- 57 One that builds hills
- 58 "Shall I go and call to thee a ___ of the Hebrew women?" (Exodus 2:7)
- 59 Within (prefix)

Down

- 1 "His ___ received him not" (John 1:11)
- 2 "Much study is a ___ of the flesh" (Ecclesiastes 12:12)
- 3 "___ into his gates with thanks-giving" (Psalm 100:4)
- 4 Reporter's question
- 5 Brooding bunch
- 6 ___ of Eden (J. Steinbeck novel)
- 7 Madison, for one (abbr.)

- 8 Note on the diatonic scale
- 9 Orange pekoe, for one
- 10 "With the jaw of an ___ ... have I slain a thousand men" (Judges 15:16)
- 11 "He shall be a vessel ... meet for the master's ___" (2 Timothy 2:21)
- 14 "What thing is this? what ___ doctrine is this?" (Mark 1:27)
- 16 Creative impulses
- 20 Where Saul abode: in Gibeah under a tree in ___ (1 Samuel 22:6)
- 21 Solution
- 22 Zero in on
- 23 Gets some shut-eye
- 25 "An angel of the Lord ... sat under an ___" (Judges 6:11)
- 26 "This roll ... was in my mouth as honey for ___" (Ezekiel 3:3)
- 27 Organizations (abbr.)
- 30 Israeli politician Sharon
- 33 Not "in a little while"
- 35 Son of Gad (Genesis 46:16)
- 38 ___ Vic's (former restaurant chain)
- 43 Rower
- 44 Mischievous one
- 45 Army repast
- 47 Exclamation of discovery
- 48 Bled, as madras might
- 49 Likely to
- 51 Compass pt.
- 52 ___ Paulo
- 54 Preposition
- 55 Greek letter

Last puzzle's solution #155



Movements That Change the World: Five Keys to Spreading the Gospel

Author: Steve Addison
 Publisher: InterVarsity Press
 List Price: \$15.00
 ★★★★★

Reviewed by Chris Platt

Aaron Harvie, the new church planting strategist for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, has discovered a valuable tool for congregations that are hoping to become a multiplying church. At the recent RISK conference in Elizabethtown, he identified Steve Addison's book, "Movements That Change the World," as the resource. The author champions the idea that "movements change people, and changed people change the world." Addison's view of movements is shaped by Jesus and "His missionary band" of disciples as well as the missionary church He founded. Acts 17:6 captures the essence of the early church movement: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here." Four hundred years later, Patrick of Ireland responded to God's call and it sparked a vibrant movement among the Irish. His efforts led to monasteries that functioned as "sending centers,"

propelling gospel carriers into western and northern Europe. Impressed by Patrick's legacy, Addison dissects this moment in history as he describes the characteristics of a missionary movement: white-hot faith; commitment to a cause; contagious relationships; rapid mobilization; and adaptive methods.

While each chapter is worthy of the reader's attention, the 13 pages dedicated to contagious relationships may provide the greatest benefit. Addison poses the question: How did Christianity spread so rapidly between A.D.



30-A.D. 300, from 120 men and women to 6 million people? The exponential growth came through networks of relationships. Addison observes that it was not professionals who initiated the movement: "Ordinary people, on fire with the love of Christ and empowered by

the Holy Spirit, simply told their families, friends and casual acquaintances what God had done for them."

"Movements That Change the World" comes complete with a nine-session study guide. The author insists that the reader recruit a partner as lessons learned are put into practice. Luke and Acts serve as the Scriptural foundation for the principles that Addison promotes.

Chris Platt is missions and ministry pastor at Crestwood Baptist Church

Help set captives

The harvest is great in Haiti and the laborers are a devoted few

Recently, I traveled to Haiti for meetings in regard to future ministry initiatives and goals. The trip was packed with what seemed like countless hours of discussions about how to minister in this small, but very complicated country.

For more than two years, we have been working in Haiti alongside of some of the most committed Christ-like servants I have ever met. Each time I am in Haiti, their missionary lifestyle and servant attitudes are of great encouragement and are quite convicting to me. The continual battle our brothers and sisters face in Haiti is overwhelming to consider. While small in size and population, the magnitude of the stronghold of sin creates barriers that have held a country captive for decades.

Many mission agencies consider Haiti to be evangelized. While a great number of Haitians know the name of Christ, they also continue to live believing a person can claim Christ as Lord and continue practicing Voodoo. Obviously, this pattern does not demon-

strate true conversion.

I am thankful for the countless people who have committed their lives to reach the people of Haiti with the gospel. I am also thankful God has opened the door for Crossings to participate in His work there. Each time I visit, I am reminded that it will be a work that is never done until the return of Jesus. This fact can be discouraging by human measures, but if we see through God's eyes, we are encouraged to wade in, take root, and labor with our Haitian brothers until the Lord returns.

Crossings Ministries



David Melber

We continue to be in need of laborers. The Bible says in Luke 10:2, "Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest." That is our prayer.

I am thankful for those He has already sent, they labor tirelessly in Haiti. The needs continue, pray with us for God to raise up and send more laborers to see the Haitian captives set free.

For more information on how to be involved in seeing the gospel proclaimed, contact our office at (502) 491-7000.

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

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MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF



April

- 12 Disaster Relief training, First Baptist Church, Monticello.
- 12 Team Leader Training for International Missions, KBC, Louisville.
- 12 Changing the Channel, Cedarmore, Bagdad.
- 13 Seminary for a Day, Greenwood Baptist Church, Bowling Green.
- 22 Senior Living Celebration, Red House Baptist Church, Richmond.

■ **BREMEN**—Bethlehem Church will host revival services April 14, 11 a.m., and April 15-17, 7 p.m. **Leroy Reardon** is pastor.

■ **CADIZ**—Liberty Point Church will host Little River Associational Children's Bible Drill April 14, 2 p.m.

Rocky Ridge Church will hold a revival service April 16, 7 p.m. with **Mark Thweatt** as guest speaker. **Robert McIntosh** is pastor.

■ **DRY RIDGE**—Sherman Church will host Crittenden Association revival services April 14-17, 6:30 p.m. with different guest speakers each night. **Josh Hildebrand** is pastor.

■ **EDDYVILLE**—First Church is hosting Lyon County Christian Men's Fellowship breakfast April 13, 8 a.m. **Timothy Perdue** is pastor.

■ **ELIZABETHTOWN**—Severns Valley Church will host the Youth and High School Bible Drill and Speaker's Tournament April 13, 8 a.m. For more information, call **Robby Adkins** at (502) 750-1301. **Bill Langley** is pastor.

Severns Valley Church will host the 2013 Severns Valley Associational Children's Bible

Drill, April 11, 7:30 p.m.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Baxter Avenue Church will host an installation service for **Phil Schultz**, executive director of Jefferson Street Center, April 14, 3 p.m. **Wesley Pitts**, director of missions for Long Run Association, will be guest speaker. **Ben Lairamore** is pastor.

Parkland Church will hold its Annual Spring Tea April 13, noon. **Tom Curry** is pastor.

■ **MOUNT STERLING**—Macedonia Church is hosting **True Gospel Echoes** in concert April 14. For more information, call (859) 498-3336. **Kevin Strausbaugh** is pastor.

■ **MOUNT VERNON**—Fairview Church will hold revival services April 14-17 with **Jamie Ward** as guest speaker. **Vaughn Rason** is pastor.

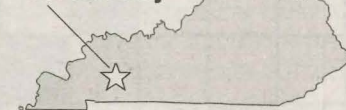
First Church will hold revival services April 14-17 with **Kyle Rader** as guest speaker and **Ron Green** as worship leader. **Eddie Nation** is pastor.

■ **RICHMOND**—Red House Church will hold a marriage seminar April 12-13. **George Yates** is pastor.

■ **VERSAILLES**—Versailles Church will host the

Spotlight on ...

Central City



Muhlenberg County Association will hold Kidsfest April 13, 2 p.m., at the Muhlenberg Ag Center with carnival games, prizes, food and crafts.

Elkhorn Association Children's Bible Drill April 14, 3 p.m. **John Brandon** is pastor.

■ **WALTON**—First Church will ordain **Jimmy Butts** into the gospel ministry April 14, 10:45 a.m. Butts will be the first African-American to be ordained at First Church in its 147-year history. **T.J. Francis** is pastor.

Baptist composer, hymn writer Buryl Red dies

Nashville, Tenn.—Prolific Baptist composer and hymn writer Buryl Red died April 1 at the age of 76.

Red was the founding musical director and conductor of The CenturyMen, a men's choir made up of Baptist church music directors from around the world.

When The CenturyMen's recording "Beautiful Star—A Celebration of Christmas" was nominated for a Grammy in 2000, Red said, "We see our work as a way to communicate the message of Christ with the secular world. I feel like our music can communicate beyond the musical language of the church."

In addition to his work with The CenturyMen, Red is perhaps best remembered as composer of "Celebrate Life," a musical created with lyricist Ragan Courtney, considered a landmark in church music. Released in 1972, Celebrate Life is still in print, sold by LifeWay Worship.

LifeWay worship director Mike



Buryl Red

Harland remembered Red in a blog post April 2.

"I'll never forget the first time I saw an accompaniment track—it was in my church—Tate Street Baptist Church in Corinth, Miss. It was on a 'reel to reel' deck, and with it we sang Buryl's classic collection 'The Old Songs'—a groundbreaking idea. Imagine modern, rhythmic versions of old hymns for a new generation—just who did that first? Not

Chris Tomlin—no, it was Buryl Red."

Harland also credited Red with introducing Baptists to the style of modern worship music that came out of the Jesus Movement in the 1960s and 70s.

"(Red) loved virtually every style of music," Harland wrote. "As long as the presentations of it reached a level of excellence befitting the glorious Savior we love."

The song "In Remembrance" from Celebrate Life has become a standard and is included in the latest edition

of the Baptist Hymnal. Red conducted a choral performance of the song at the hymnal's dedication ceremony in 2008, calling it "a highlight of his career," Harland recounted.

Red's output includes more than 2,500 published works; production of more than 4,000 recordings; the musical supervision, composition and arranging for several hundred shows, documentaries and musical specials for network and cable television; and the writing and editing of more than 50 music textbooks, according to information from a working program for an upcoming concert in Red's honor.

A native of Little Rock, Ark., Red graduated from the music schools of Baylor University and Yale University. In the early 60s, he served as music minister of Manhattan Baptist Church, the first Southern Baptist Church in New York City.

Red died in New York City, after a long battle with cancer. He is survived by his wife, Virginia and son, Eric. A funeral was held April 9. (BP)

Luter to speak at CU

Campbellsville—Fred Luter Jr., president of the Southern Baptist Convention, will be speaking at Campbellsville University's chapel service on Wednesday, April 10, in the Ransdell Chapel.

"We are very thankful to be hosting Fred Luter at Campbellsville University," said John Chowning, vice president for church and external relations and executive assistant to the president.

"While this is not his first visit to Campbellsville, we are pleased that he is taking time to be here during his time as president of the Southern Baptist Convention," he said.

"He has a powerful Christian witness and strong record of leadership. His life story and pastoral ministry at Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans are compelling and motivational for all of us," Chowning said.

Luter made history when he was elected convention president, becoming the first African-American to be elected to the office.

Chapels are open to the public, televised live on WLCU (Comcast Cable channel 10), and streamed live on the Internet at www.campbellsville.edu/live-streaming. (CU)



Fred Luter

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR RENT: Get-away condo in Myrtle Beach, S.C. Beautiful, two bedrooms, two bathrooms, sofa bed. Go to www.MBVacationCondo.com, or call (803) 566-0214.

FOR RENT: Two condos for rent in Destin, Fla. Check our website HarmonyVentures.net for more information, (423) 309-4422.

SEEKING: Bagdad Baptist Church in Shelby County is seeking a part-time youth minister. Please send your resumé to Bagdad Baptist Church (Youth Minister Search Committee), Bagdad, KY 40003, or kwiley83@att.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: Trinity Baptist Church, Lexington, Ky., is currently accepting resúmes for an interim youth minister. The qualified candidate will have a minimum of 5 years youth ministry experience. The strong candidate will possess a passion for Christ and a calling to work with youth. The interim will be considered for the permanent position. Resúmes should be mailed to Trinity Baptist Church, ATTN: Personnel Committee, 1675 Strader Drive, Lexington, KY 40505, or emailed to gmcclellan@yourtrinity.com.

SEEKING: Cedar Creek Baptist Church is seeking a full time youth pastor to lead a growing ministry. Minimum of college degree and experience preferred. Send resúmes to CCBC Youth Search Committee, 7709 Bardstown Road, Louisville, KY 40291, or CedarCreekBC@gmail.com. Deadline for submission, April 28.

SEEKING: Pleasant Grove Baptist Church is Shepherdsville, Ky., is accepting resúmes for the following position: Part-time young adult minister (targeting college and career ages). Send resúmes to youngadultmin@pgbc.net. Deadline is April 26.

SEEKING: Conservative north Kentucky Southern Baptist church, approximately 200 active members, is seeking a full-time Southern Baptist pastor. Send resumé and DVD to M.J. Schopp, P.O. Box 18378, Erlanger, KY 41018, or 1tim3.2013@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Post Oak Baptist Church is seeking an associate pastor, Christian activities and youth. This is a full time position. Send resumé to Post Oak Baptist Church, 900 Bluegrass Ave., Russellville, KY 42276. A complete job subscription is available upon request. Call (270) 726-2157, or email secretary pobc@bellsouth.net.

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SEEKING: DeHaven Baptist Church in La Grange, Ky., is seeking a full-time pastor. Interested applicants are invited to submit resúmes either by email to: dehavensearch@gmail.com, or by regular mail to: Pastor Search Committee, c/o David Fendley, 3100 Rock Creek Dr., Louisville, KY 40207.

Born for this

Autistic child becomes IMB missionary to Japan

By Maria Elena Baseler

Asunción, Paraguay—Eighteen years ago, Steven Kunkel was diagnosed with autism, a developmental disorder causing problems in behavior, communication and social interaction. At age 5, Steven couldn't speak. Today, at 23, he speaks four languages—English, Spanish, Portuguese and Japanese. And he's learning five more—Arabic, Farsi, Hebrew, Mandarin Chinese and Tagalog.

Symptoms of autism

From the beginning, doctors said Steven was high functioning. Even so, he displayed all 14 of the most common symptoms of autism.

Steven couldn't tolerate change, for example. He didn't like to hug. He preferred being alone. He avoided eye contact, echoed others' words and laughed at inappropriate times. He also had a habit of spinning himself.

Today, as a missionary in Japan, Steven has only one of the 14 symptoms—inappropriate laughter—and it's hardly noticeable. He taught himself how to manage it through Internet research.

Steven spent years struggling to overcome most of the other symptoms, and God used many people in that process. Steven's parents created a structured and loving family environment, guiding him through the challenges of autism. His two older siblings, Julia and John Glenn, encouraged him with their love. Many believers prayed. Professionals like speech therapists and physicians provided specialized help.

Strengthened by God and his support team, Steven himself did years of hard work for healing.

"Sometimes it was like I was climbing a mountain, facing a lot of difficulties," he said. "Whenever I felt a difficulty or a weakness come, I fell down. But I managed to get up and keep walking."

And through God's power, Steven has climbed to some amazing heights.

'Seeing through God's eyes'

One of these was Steve's commissioning as a missionary to Japan.

"I've felt today that so many questions about Steven's autism have been answered," Steven's mom, Iracema, said, "like a veil is being lifted from my eyes and I'm seeing things through God's eyes. I'm thinking, 'for this day you were born, Steven.'"

Holding his well-marked Japanese Bible, Steven sat with head bowed as fellow believers surrounded him inside the Japanese-Paraguayan house church. The circle included church members, visitors and Japanese children Steven had taught at the church. Steven's parents—International Mission Board missionaries in Asunción—stood behind him.

The group laid hands on Steven as

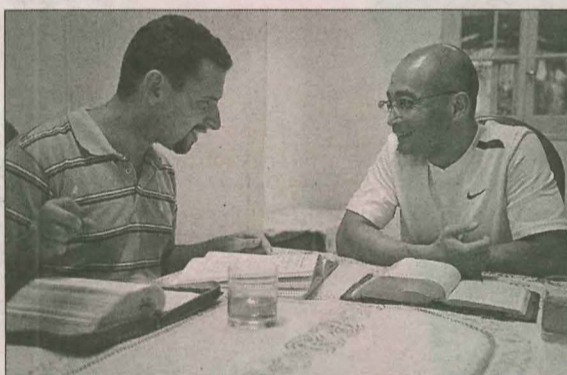


JOYFUL TEARS After being commissioned as a missionary to Japan, Steven Kunkel shed tears of joy last year as he received a hug from Mari Nowada, who along with her husband Koki mentored Steven in Japanese language, culture and ministry in preparation for his work in Japan. (Photos by Rebecca Springer/IMB)

pastor Koki Nowada, his Japanese mentor, led in prayer. Nowada prayed for God's anointing on Steven.

It's a powerful moment for worshippers. Steven's dad, Tim, sobbed with joy.

He remembers the day doctors diagnosed Steven with autism, not long after the Kunkels moved to Uruguay as new missionaries.



MENTOR Koki Nowada (right), pastor of a Japanese-Paraguayan house church in Asunción, Paraguay, leads a mentoring session in Japanese for Steven Kunkel.

"It was like one child died and another child was born," Tim recalled. "But God, in His permissive will, allowed this to happen. And God, in His sovereignty, had a plan."

The Kunkels saw God's plan unfold as they continued serving in Uruguay. Because few services for autistic children were available there, Iracema studied special education so she could teach Steven herself. In the process, she discovered a gift for working with autistic children. She began sharing that expertise with parents of other autistic children in Uruguay. In turn, God used those connections to open doors for the Kunkels to witness for Christ.

"I'm realizing now that a lot of what God has had us doing on the mission field—first in Uruguay and then after we moved to Paraguay—hasn't been so much about us as missionaries," Iracema said. "It was about Steven. It was like God was using us to help put all the pieces of the

puzzle in place for Steven, so this autistic child could grow up to be a missionary for God's glory."

One important puzzle piece fell into place when Steven accepted Christ at age 8. Later at 15, he became interested in Japan. While visiting some friends in Uruguay's countryside, Steven fell asleep under a tree. He dreamed a Japanese girl told him she wanted him to learn her language and culture. When Steven woke up, he had a strong desire to learn Japanese and travel to Japan.

"Now, I think it was kind of like the dream Paul had when the Macedonian called him to come over and help," Steven said.

Moving to Paraguay

When Steven was 16, IMB officials asked the Kunkels to consider transferring from Uruguay to Paraguay. By then, the Kunkels' two older children had left home for college.

As the family prayed about the decision, Tim took a trip to Paraguay. There he noticed many Asian immigrants; one named Lily Maeda de Martinez waited on him in a store. Tim learned she was Japanese, born in Paraguay to Japanese immigrants. He told her about Steven and asked her to write him a letter in Japanese. Lily agreed.

When Tim returned home with the letter, "Steven was so excited," Tim remembered. "That sealed it for him on going to Paraguay."

With plans in place to move to Paraguay, the Kunkels left Uruguay for state-side assignment. In the U.S., Steven made some Japanese-American friends and learned more Japanese. He also rededicated his life to Christ at South Ridge Baptist Church in Jefferson City, Mo. It was then God's call to Japan became clear.

Preparing for Japan

But Steven needed Paraguay to get ready to go. And there God had people in place to help with that preparation.

Two of them: Japanese pastor Koki Nowada and his Japanese-Paraguayan wife Mari. They mentored Steven in Japanese language, culture and ministry for nearly seven years while he served in their congregation.

"We're just a small house church, but we are a missionary church," Koki Nowada said. "For the Japanese children, seeing Steven go to Japan as a missionary has been a wonderful opportunity to learn the cost of discipleship."

During Steven's commissioning service, visiting preacher Jonathan Yao reminded those children—and their parents—that God wants to use them, too.

"If you say, 'Lord, here I am,' God will use you," said Yao, a Chinese-Filipino pastor and a family friend. "Don't limit what God can do."

God used Yao to open the door for Steven to serve in

Japan, Tim noted.

"The missing piece in this whole puzzle was how Steven was going to get there," Tim said. "That was a piece I just couldn't figure out."

In 2011 God provided that piece when Yao took Steven on a survey trip to Japan. Yao knew no Japanese pastors, but before the trip he made a connection with a Filipino congregation in the small city of Shiojiri, Japan. He and Steven visited the church.

Steven made a strong impression on the congregation, who'd been praying for more workers. To help them expand their outreach to the Japanese, the church needed a Japanese translator, someone to teach Japanese to Filipino church members and a worker to teach English to Japanese children.

The congregation also needed help in music and outreach to Brazilian immigrants.

As church leaders got to know Steven, they realized his skills matched everything in their prayers—all in one person.

"Steven is a miracle, a grace from God," the pastor told Yao. "Where God's grace is, His favor is."

The congregation then invited Steven to "come over and help them." He said "yes."

That was seven years after Steven dreamed about Japan as a teenager in Uruguay.

"Since that dream, there have been lots of struggles and tests. But my faith has stayed strong," Steven says.

"Today, I'm sure Japan is the land God has been preparing me for." (IMB/BP)

Editor's Note: Autism Awareness Month began April 2 with the United Nations World Autism Awareness Day. Autism is a general term used to describe a group of complex developmental brain disorders—called autism spectrum disorders (ASD)—caused by a combination of genes and environmental influences. In the United States, one in 88 children—and one in 54 boys—are affected by some form of autism.



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