

WESTERN Recorder

June 25, 2013

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 187, Issue 25

Teddy Bear power



Advance Baptist harnesses kindness to help Sunrise kids

By John Shindlebower

Baskett—Never underestimate the power a small Teddy Bear can give to a sad, hurt and lonely child in need. Pastor Bob Whitter has witnessed the comfort and security a stuffed animal can bring to a young person many times, and a desire to help Kentucky's children in need prompted him to lead his church and others in a drive that recently collected more than 600 Teddy Bears for Sunrise Children's Services.

Whitter is pastor of the small but compassionate congregation of Advance Baptist Church in Baskett, located a few miles east of Henderson. The concern he has for children extends well beyond the Teddy Bear drive, as he and his wife, Ronda, have served as foster parents for several years. In fact, he first started handing out Teddy Bears to state social workers to give to children years ago and remembers the reactions.

"When a kid comes into foster care or is removed from their home, they often arrive with nothing of their own. We just wanted to give to kids who had nothing," said Whitter.

The Teddy Bears aren't just for little children; even teenagers benefit from them. Whitter said some of the older

□ See *Teddy Bears* ... Page 2

Churches urged to prepare for marriage issues

By Tom Strode

Houston—Pastors and churches need to be prepared to address same-sex marriage in biblically faithful, Christ-like ways, new ethics entity head Russell Moore and other panelists said at a discussion preceding the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, moderated the "Marriage on the Line" breakfast panel June 11. The panelists addressed the issue during the same

month the U.S. Supreme Court is expected to release decisions in two cases related to same-sex marriage. The event also came in a year when the number of states legalizing homosexual marriage has reached 12, plus the District of Columbia.

Paige Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, said Baptists and other evangelical churches are not ready—"tragically so," he said—for a legal redefinition of marriage or what appears to be the growing cultural acceptance of same-sex marriage.

(Need) "congregations that hold one another accountable for marriages that actually reflect the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Russell Moore

Churches must teach Christians "to be kind and gentle and generous" and to understand there is no "Christian America," if there ever was one, Patterson told

□ See *Marriage issues* ... Page 3

CROSSINGS CAMPS

Jonathan Creek and Cedarmore camps alive with students, gospel message



Youth camps at Jonathan Creek and Cedarmore are underway as Crossings Ministries seeks to provide students with the message of the gospel through Christ-centered worship and small groups—while enjoying warm summer days filled with water sports, climbing, zip lines and more. To catch a glimpse of what is going on in the lives of students this summer, see editorial and page 6 for more photos. (Photo by Todd Deaton)

Poll: Americans still see religion's importance in culture

By Beth Byrd

Washington—Despite a common belief that culture is rejecting faith-based ideas, a majority of Americans say society would improve with a stronger religious presence, according to new Gallup polling.

According to the study, 77 percent of the 1,535 adults surveyed said religious influence is disappearing in American culture; 20 percent disagreed. Factors weighed in the survey included participants' church attendance, ideology and

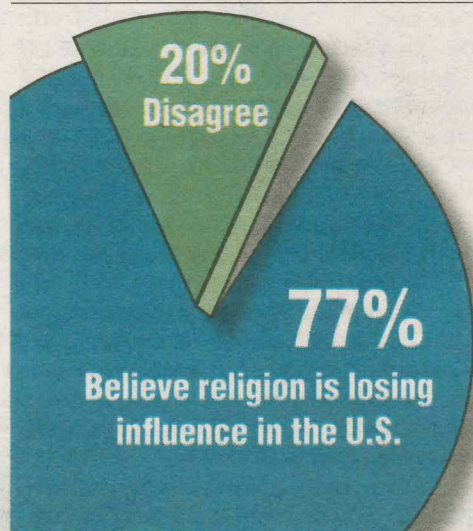
political party identification. Gallup participants also felt that a greater religious presence would benefit the nation.

The poll showed that church attendees and those who said religion held personal significance are more likely to believe that religion could improve culture. Similarly, more than half of participants who rarely (if ever) attended church—and a third of Americans who claimed that religion held no personal importance—also believed that society would improve with a stronger religious presence.

"Americans observe that religion is in decline, and they think we'd be better off with more religion—but their observation and aspirations don't match," said Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research.

"Religion is losing its influence as nominal Christianity is collapsing. So, less people claim religious affiliation, and religion has less influence, even though the number of devout believers has remained pretty steady over the last few decades.

Stetzer said devout belief correlates with caring about society. (BP)



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'God gets the glory'

By Robin Cornet Bass

Eubank—Pastor Terry Holt is not one to turn down a free gift, especially when it can be used to further God's kingdom. So when a church in South Carolina asked last year if he wanted their old baptistery, Holt gladly accepted. There was only one catch. It was too large to fit in Polly Ann Baptist Church's sanctuary.

"God kept telling me all along He wanted to do something big at Polly Ann," said Holt.

Since being called as pastor of the church in January 2012, big things have been happening. Attendance and offerings are on the rise. During his first year, more than 20 people accepted Christ. And a new van ministry—thanks to the donation of a passenger vehicle—began yielding fruit as parents in the community started sending their children to Sunday School.

Last week, however, Holt said a God-sent miracle happened at the Eubank church when nearly 140 laborers with Baptist Church Builders of Texas arrived to construct a 3,200 square foot addition—more than doubling Polly Ann's current facilities.

In seven days, the building ministry pieced together the multi-purpose wing from the subfloor up and finished out the week with insulation and drywall. The addition consists of a kitchen, two bathrooms and a large open room with the baptistery as its focal point.

"We are joyfully in shock," Holt said about how quickly their prayers were answered. "God wants His people to believe in miracles."

Holt said his congregation's journey of faith began last fall when God began



Volunteers with Baptist Church Builders of Texas doubled the size of Polly Ann Baptist Church in Eubank in only seven days. (Photos provided by PABC)

laying on people's hearts that Polly Ann needed a larger building to accommodate their growth. But the pastor cautioned members and said, much like the baptistery and van, if God wanted the church to expand, He could do it without the church taking out a conventional loan.

In what Holt describes as an answer to prayer, the church received an anonymous \$21,000 check one Sunday morning in February with a note that said, "Building Fund Offering." Then another check came, and another, until the building fund had grown to \$51,000.

"We didn't sell a cupcake or hand out pledge cards. I didn't ask them for money. I told them I don't want your money," Holt said, and instead encouraged church members to wait on God.

Polly Ann Baptist's wait turned out to be a short one. Three weeks ago, the church learned that the Baptist Church Builders of Texas had selected Eubank as their summer missions destination after arrangements with another church were unexpectedly cancelled.

Skilled laborers from not only Texas, but also Missouri, Arkansas, New Mexico, Illinois and even eastern Kentucky converged on the small town of Eubank bringing their own food, tools and paying for hotels in the area. During Sunday morning worship at the worksite June 16, the volunteer workers gave \$35,000 in offerings to Polly Ann Baptist's building effort.

"These are not normal people," Holt said, "They are people of faith who

exhibit the most pure form of God's love, by literally being His hands and feet."

And their influence has reached beyond church property, Holt noted, as workers have been witnessing and ministering among Eubank's 300 residents.

Holt said the experience for him has been like witnessing first hand the parting of the Red Sea.

"It's seeing God's glory on earth," Holt said, "God sent the Texans. God sent the money. So God gets the glory." (WR)



God wants to "do something big" in Eubank, said Terry Holt, pastor of Polly Ann Baptist Church.



Pastor Bob Whitter, center, of Advance Baptist Church in Baskett, Ky., led the effort to collect more than 600 Teddy Bears for the children of Sunrise Children's Services. Almost all of the bears were new, but church secretary Kathy Joyce, right, and church member Susan Carter freshened them up before delivering them to Sunrise's Owensboro office recently.

Teddy Bears

Continued from page 1

kids may not act overly excited at first, but in time they come to appreciate the Teddy Bears, which can serve as a true comfort for them.

"I remember one little girl talking about her Teddy Bear. She said, 'A Teddy

Bear is great because it dries my tears,'" said Whitter. Other times, a child who has been hurt, abused or neglected, may simply hold the bear up to their face to muffle the screams of frustration or the sobs of depression.

Whitter and his wife have adopted five of the foster children in their care, and plan to adopt two siblings of one of the girls they've adopted. He fully

understands the mission of Sunrise Children's Services, which since 1869, has offered love, support and security for Kentucky's hurting children.

An Ohio native who has been preaching at Advance Baptist Church for three years, Whitter said he'd heard of Sunrise previously but became more aware of their presence across Kentucky when Phil Justice, Sunrise's advancement director for Western Kentucky, spoke during a meeting of the Green River Baptist Association. Not long after that contact, Whitter met some girls from Sunrise at a rest area as they were traveling to an outing. He spoke with them and decided then that his church would find a way to help the children of Sunrise.

So he launched the campaign at his church in December of last year, solicited the help from other churches in the association, and the bears began piling up in the church office. On Sundays, the children at Advance Baptist would pray for the bears, and for the children they would come in contact with. Most of the bears were brand new, but after piling up for a few weeks and months, church secretary Kathy Joyner and church member Susan Carter made sure to freshen each one up before they were delivered to Sunrise's Owensboro office just after Mothers' Day.

Whitter said he wants the Teddy Bear drive to be an annual event for the church, as he hopes to donate at least 100 new bears to Sunrise annually to give to children as they arrive.

"We want the bear to be one of the first things they get because they just need something they can call their own," he said.

In addition, Whitter said Sunrise is going to be a dedicated mission for the church with members hopefully seeking out ways to volunteer at Sunrise's Dixon Center in nearby Webster County.

Kenny Williams, Sunrise's vice president of Community-based Services, said the church's donation of Teddy Bears will definitely help change children's lives.

"The Teddy Bear is the universal symbol of unconditional love, comfort and security to children and when you share those gifts to a child or teen in horrific situations, then you are sharing Christ in a very real way."

More than just stuffed animals, Williams said the bears can bring healing to the body, mind and spirit and suggested that for many young people, a Teddy Bear is the last toy they ever part with because they see it as a faithful friend.

"I look at this gift to Sunrise through our partners at Advance Baptist and all I can say is thank you."

Korean missions leader receives WMU award

Ky WMU leaders describe Lee as an 'inspiring' leader

By Laura Wilson

Houston—National WMU and WMU Foundation presented Sook Jae Lee of Seoul, Korea, with the Dellanna West O'Brien Award for Women's Leadership Development June 10 at the WMU Missions Celebration in Houston, Texas.

"Sook Jae is an outstanding leader in South Korea and literally around the world," said Linda Cooper, president of Kentucky WMU. "She is most definitely inspiring other women as she leads by example."

Lee became a Christian at a GA camp when she was 16. God called her to be a nurse as well as a missionary. Lee became a registered nurse, taught at Wallace Memorial Baptist Hospital in Pusan, Korea, and served the rural people for 17 years as a nurse practitioner and midwife.

In 1979, Lee attended an international community health seminar in Sri Lanka, where she witnessed the spiritual and physical poverty of the people. She then served as a medical missionary to South-east Asia.

Through her service during this time, a church was built and many people were saved. Lee also was invited to become the executive director of Korea Baptist WMU. After two years of prayer, she accepted the position.

Through Lee's leadership, KBWMU entered into several partnerships with state WMUs in the U.S., including Kentucky WMU from 2006 to 2010. It was through this partnership that Joy Bolton, executive director of Kentucky WMU, had the opportunity to witness Lee's leadership among KBWMU leaders and nominated her for this award.

"Sook Jae's leadership and influence

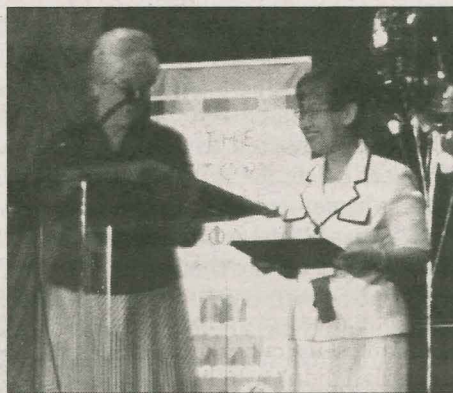


Soon Shil Beck, executive director of the Korean Women's Missionary Union, congratulates WMU on its 125 anniversary during the annual meeting June 9 in Houston. (Photo by Thomas Graham)

were evident," Bolton said. "She had a vision for the future and as a part of our partnership. Sook Jae encouraged one of her associates, Soon Shil Beck, to attend Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. I was particularly impressed with Sook Jae's investment in Soon Shil to prepare her to become the next executive director of KBWMU and make for a smooth transition in leadership."

Upon Beck's return to Korea, she was named associate executive director and then elected co-executive director of KBWMU in 2011. Lee will retire from KBWMU and Beck will assume the full role when Lee completes her 2009-2013 term as president of the Asia Baptist Women's Union

Established in 1999, the Dellanna West O'Brien Leadership Award for Women's Leadership Development was created by WMU and the WMU Foundation to honor O'Brien, who served as executive



Sook Jae Lee (right) of Seoul, Korea, receives the Dellanna West O'Brien Award for Women's Leadership Development. (Photo by Joy Bolton)

director and treasurer of national WMU from 1989 to 1999. It is awarded to a Baptist woman who has proven the ability to foster Christian leadership in women and demonstrated excellence in missions education. (WMU)

Marriage

Continued from page 1
the audience of about 300 at the ERLC-sponsored discussion.

"We are now living in a foreign environment, and so we have to adjust to that. We have to be a minority opinion that is a solid biblical opinion," while "at the same time we respond to people in a Christ-like way," Patterson said.

J.D. Greear, senior pastor of The Summit Church in the Raleigh-Durham, N.C., area, said there is a danger of Christians either under-reacting or over-reacting.

Some Christians, especially younger ones, say, "We just need to kind of recognize that (homosexuals) should have equality even if we don't agree with it," Greear said of those who under-react.

Government's recognition and promotion of marriage "has been a great blessing to our society. And so to simply watch that go, I think, is going to have devastating consequences," Greear said.

A "sense of love of neighbor" provides motivation for Christians to defend the biblical definition of marriage if they "really believe that the state doesn't define marriage," Moore said.

"(W)e would say the state can't redefine (marriage), and if it tries to, what

we're going to end up with is a sense of something that is morally wrong but something that is deeply disappointing for the people who want it," Moore said.

At the opposite end of those who under-react, Greear said, are some Christians who "tend to over-react as if this one thing signals the end."

The church has a "unique opportunity" as the "world around us is collapsing" in many ways, Patterson said. "We just have to be sure that we speak about sinfulness and rebellion against God in ways that make it clear that we're not angry at the people involved."

Moore asked David Platt, pastor of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, Ala., how he would respond to a married, same-sex couple with an adopted child who told him they believe the gospel and want to know what it means for them to follow Jesus.

A shepherding process would ensue that would include the call for repentance by the couple, Platt said.

Regarding marriage, "(W)hat we are saying is, 'Biblically, no matter what the government says, this is not marriage,'" Platt said. "How can we work toward either a picture of singleness that is glorifying to God or a picture of marriage that is glorifying to God? And neither one of

those are in this circumstance."

Repentance, Platt said, would mean the two people would need to acknowledge "what we have said is marriage is not marriage."

"(W)hat we have to say is, 'Take up your cross and follow Me,'" Moore said, "which means that you have to acknowledge part of what it means to repent of sin is to acknowledge what God as Creator has created me to be, which this is not it. This is not the picture of the gospel, which means that we have to separate and we have to start living out a life under the discipleship and accountability of the local congregation and to acknowledge that this is going to be difficult."

Churches also must restore a culture of biblical marriage, panelists said.

Bible teacher and women's ministry leader Susie Hawkins said Christians have lost "the whole big picture of the beauty of the institution of marriage and what it brings to a culture and a church." Years ago, marriage was understood "as a covenant of the community and of the church body to promote" that marriage and home, she said.

Moore said churches need to establish "congregations that hold one another accountable for marriages that actually reflect the gospel of Jesus Christ." (BP)

Ex-gay group Exodus International closes, president apologizes

Irvine, Calif.—Exodus International, a group that bills itself as "the oldest and largest Christian ministry dealing with faith and homosexuality," announced June 19 that it's shutting its doors.

Randy Thomas, executive vice president of Exodus International, said that the group will be going forward under a new name, but will no longer aim to help people change from homosexual to heterosexual attractions.

The announcement came just after Exodus president Alan Chambers released a statement apologizing to the gay community for many actions, including the organization's promotion of efforts to change a person's sexual orientation.

Exodus functioned as a support group for men and women who were struggling with their sexual orientation, and early on embraced the idea that gays and lesbians could become straight through prayer and counseling.

But the belief in "reparative therapy was one of the things that led to the downfall of this organization," Chambers said in an interview, noting that Exodus in recent years redirected its focus to helping men and women work through their sexual identity.

Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said the folding of Exodus International "doesn't mean the folding of an evangelical sexual ethic, though it does mean a move away from a therapeutic model of sexual sanctification."

"Evangelical Christianity increasingly addresses sexual issues more in line with the older Christian tradition of sin and temptation and triumph than with the language of therapy," Moore said.

Jesus never promises any Christian freedom from temptation, Moore said, but He does promise the power of the Spirit to fight against the pull to temptation, whatever the temptation may be.

Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said it became clear last year—when Chambers suggested that people can persist in homosexual behavior and still receive the salvation that Jesus offers—that Chambers and Exodus International were rethinking their understanding of a Christian approach to homosexuality.

Moore said the Christian church has always maintained that sexual expression is directed only toward the one-flesh union of male and female in marriage.

"Anything else is to be turned away from, regardless of how difficult that is. The church has also maintained that all are fallen people who can be forgiven by the blood of Christ and who can receive power to walk according to the Spirit, not according to the flesh," Moore said. "We shouldn't be offering cures or quick fixes, but gospel."

Compiled from reports by Religion News Service and Baptist Press.

Calvinism Report

I was privileged to receive an advance copy of the Calvinism Advisory Group Report that recently became public. The advisory group was assembled by the president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, Frank Page, PhD. Page refers to himself as the

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention but defines his title as the "Chief Encouraging Officer."

In a marvelous display of leadership, Page requested advice to the SBC from a group of distinguished Southern Baptist leaders who fall on differing sides of the Arminian/Calvinism debate in SBC life. Page himself has gone on record as embracing only one or two of the traditional five points of Calvinism but, in his role as Executive Committee President, sees the need for unity within the diversity of opinions on this issue.

After reading through the report, I offered this response to Page: "I enthusiastically affirm the spirit, content, and conclusions of the report. Furthermore, I fully commit myself to living according to the wise counsel contained therein and pray that every Southern Baptist will do the same. My gratitude to you for this undertaking and to the members of the advisory group is rivaled only by my tremendous gratitude for the findings of the committee. Needless to say, I am greatly encouraged! Might God grant unity and Great Commission faithfulness and effectiveness to Southern Baptists!"

Those who have followed our work in Kentucky know we have been committed to maintaining a "Big Tent" approach to denominational life. With regard to Calvinism, we hosted Frank Page, David Dockery, Hershael York, and Steve Lemke in a conference several months ago. The conference was well-received and, according to Page, served as a model for how Southern Baptists should proactively seek to engage these and similar issues. You can view audio/video from the conference at <http://www.kybaptist.org/calvinism>.

My prayer is that these efforts on the state and national levels will help the tone and end results of our conversations and debates on matters of theology to be "clarity, charity, and unity."

While I rejoice to be living in a day when Southern Baptists take theology seriously, I know the most urgent need of our world is still for the gospel of Jesus Christ. I believe our theological discussions are honoring to our Lord to the degree that they ignite within us a greater zeal for evangelism and a greater commitment to cooperation for the sake of accomplishing the Great Commission. For, as those who have been called to take the gospel to the ends of the earth, we know "It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns" (Matt 24:46).

On that day, might the Lord of the harvest find Kentucky Baptists faithful workers in his harvest!

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Crossings camps: Fantastic fun with a message

It has been many years since I've been to camp. And, unless I miss my guess, it's the same for you. Recently, I visited both our Crossings camps—Jonathan Creek and Cedarmore—and was absolutely amazed at the ministry I saw happening there. One thing is for sure: camping isn't what it used to be (see photo spread on page 6).

Zip lines over land and water, high climbing walls, ropes courses, bazooka ball guns, kayaks, tubing behind pontoon boats, water slides and "blob" inflatables, volleyball and basketball courts and much more. Activities abound! From the moment you set foot on the grounds, the place is abuzz with excitement. The atmosphere is electric, ecstatic, energizing. Forty years melt away like wax on a sizzling tin roof. You are young again—at heart!

"I love camp!" says Crossings President David Melber, his eyes twinkling like Santa's in the summertime. "Even more, I love what happens at camp!"

That's certainly understandable. The 90-plus college students who serve at camp have a slogan: "Love God; Love others; Be a servant." It shows. Everywhere! The staff loves youth, and youth love them. But there's more to Crossings. Surrounded by all the fun, there's a serious side: They long to see youth decide to make "the Crossing"—from spiritual death into abundant life. Last year, more than 700 youth made the crossing. About 200 already have decided to make the trek in the first few weeks of this season. That's something to celebrate! With a record 11,500 youth expected this summer—split roughly evenly between the two venues—it has all the makings of an incredible camp season.

Focusing on the theme "Exchanged," youth are preparing for life with truths from 2 Corinthians 5. At Jonathan Creek, John Nix, a church planter in Memphis, Tenn., led a morning Bible study, urging youth to carve out "TAWG" (Time Alone With God) daily so they are able to "give an answer to the hope that you have" to friends and family. That afternoon, two girls from Bearden, Tenn., were baptized in the lake. Later, at Cedarmore, camp pastor Jeff Heine of Birmingham also led youth to exchange "my sin for His righteousness," "my works for His grace," and "my selfishness for His servanthood."



After Thought

By Todd Deaton

Youth at both camps encounter the "Beyond Effect," fostering a passion for missions service both in their communities and around the world. Through a Skype link, Kyle Jett, a program coordinator at Jonathan Creek from Lone Oak First Baptist Church in Paducah, interviewed fellow Crossings staffer Quinton Matthews, from Ormsby Heights Baptist Church in Louisville, who is spending three weeks in Haiti. Quinton and other Crossings staffers are helping build a camp there and training its staff. We met three Haitian campers, and Quinton told of 14 professions of faith made in Haiti that week.

During our visit at Cedarmore, staff members wore neon green T-shirts announcing "Haiti Day." Campers were served three Haitian meals, and some even went without shoes to experience what everyday life is like for some Haitians. During evening worship, a missions offering was collected for the Haiti camp. This summer, campers are expected to give more than \$200,000, and about 350 youth from several churches will go on missions trips to Haiti. An emphasis on missions is nothing new for Crossings. Since 2001, participants have supported projects in Trinidad, Moldova, the Ukraine and Zambia.

The growth of our Crossings camps is remarkable. In Jonathan Creek's parking lot, I saw church buses from Elizabethtown, Mayfield and Paducah, as well as from Georgia, Illinois, Tennessee, Alabama and Louisiana. At Cedarmore, the story was much the same. Sixteen church groups—one with more than 120—were there. By summer's end, campers from 20 states are anticipated. Worship centers built only five or six years ago must be enlarged to accommodate 700 to 800 youth weekly and dining facilities—already serving meals in shifts—need expanding. Some older dorms and cabins already have been replaced, and at Cedarmore, Melber took us to where three lodges are envisioned opening next season. They can't be built quick enough! It's a great problem to have, and he's amazed at what God has done.

As we departed, Melber nodded, "I love to be here more each year." It's easy to see why! And, the best part is knowing that—through the Cooperative Program—we all, as Kentucky Baptists, have a part in what God is doing in the lives of youth. Take a visit soon. Better yet, take your youth!

Decline mirrors nation's

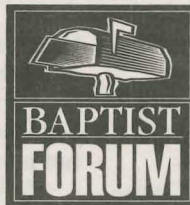
SBC membership increased by 76 percent from 1960 to 2007. That figure stands at 66 percent today. Meanwhile, the population has increased by 72 percent since 1960. This means that the SBC is joining mainline denominations in a downward trend in the face of increased population.

Unlike the SBC, the mainliners have been stymied by liberalism and political correctness. Even though the SBC has held comparatively steady despite intense criticism of alleged fundamentalism, it will suffer as the nation becomes more hedonistic and secular.

The Boy Scouts approving homosexuality for members is only the beginning of the end for Scouts and Baptist churches should take a stand on the subject amidst the inevitable condemnation

from every direction. Jesus himself condemned this perversion when he referenced Sodom in Matthew 11. It is characterized as ruinous. In this country now, it is glorified as normal.

Jim Clark
Lexington



Don't drop Scouts

Baptist churches are kicking out Boy Scout programs. In case you did not know:

- The three fingers raised by scouts when saying the Scout Oath or Promise and Scout Law represents, in order, Duty to God, Country and Self.

- One non-BSA recognition available to be earned is the Religious Emblem sponsored by P.R.A.Y.

As a scouter for almost 30 years, I have organized four Scout units in churches. I know that non-church families join their sponsoring unit's

churches because they were exposed to the church by their son's Scout involvement. Before your church drops Scouting, I hope its membership realizes it is:

- Losing an environment that could benefit the homosexual scout.
- Missing the opportunity to bring in unchurched families.

Any religious organization that drops a Scout unit is giving in to secularists and atheists because these units who are kicked out must either close or find another sponsor, such as a school. Please do not drop Scouts from your church; reconsider your decision if you have already done so.

Don Helton
Pewee Valley

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Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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

For general information or to give news tips, call (502) 489-3535; or email: news@westernrecorder.org.

POSTMASTER: Send address corrections to: Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253.

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Summer's here! Are you ready?

By Joe Ball

Summertime is the time I always looked forward to because it is prime time to build relationships with students. As I think about this summer, I wonder about some of the activities that we, as churches, are doing and what we are doing to protect our ministries and ourselves.

First, the disclaimer: I am not a lawyer, nor do I profess to be able to offer any legal advice. With that said, let's look at two areas where we can protect the students in our ministry, the church we serve, and our own families.

Adults

Two-deep leadership. While this practice is required for all Boy Scout units, it is sound advice for youth ministries as well. Never should an adult find himself or herself as the only adult in the group. Whether it is transporting students home at night or leading the Wednesday night youth meeting, no one should ever be the only adult with a student or a group of students. I don't know how many nights our daughter, Karen, would ride all over Christian County with me, as I would take students home on the church van after an event. It just avoids any appearance of impropriety.

The Scouts even go as far as stating adults and students cannot sleep in the same room or tent, and they must have separate shower facilities. This is something we need to look at as well. It is hard when we want adults to chaperone students 24/7, but distance in beds and privacy when changing clothes and showering can be accommodated with very little effort on our part. This may mean that we need to postpone or cancel events when there aren't enough chaperones.

Background checks. Each adult that works, volunteers, or has contact with students in your ministry needs to have a criminal background check done. It is mandatory at every school. A system of screening all workers lets parents know that you are serious about the safety of their children, and it also keeps those that would want to do harm to our students from preying

on those God has entrusted to us. Churches tend to be easy targets for sexual predators because we are always looking for people to help in our ministries.

It is also a good idea to have a mandatory waiting period in place before we allow anyone to work with our students. Six to nine months is usually an adequate amount of time. This applies to students that just graduated and want to return to help and parents of students. Again, it says we are serious about the safety of the students in our care.

Youth Ministry Corner



Joe Ball

Transportation

Drivers. It is advisable to check driving records on all adults who will be transporting students. Legally, you are liable for anybody that transports students. It is not a good idea for students to transport other students. Do you want to be liable for the antics of a 17 year old in a car? Also, do you want a parent with several tickets or a DUIs transporting students? It behooves us to use due diligence.

Vans and buses. Several issues arise that need our attention. Is the maintenance up-to-date? Do we have maintenance records to back that up? Have drivers been screened and are they trained to drive the vehicle? Do they have experience pulling a trailer? Do we have a written and enforced policy of the number of passengers in a vehicle and safe speeds while driving? Do we have a written policy on what to do if the bus/van has a flat tire or breaks down? Have the vehicles been inspected and are the appropriate safety triangles, flairs and a working fire extinguisher on board? Do we have a seatbelt policy and is it enforced?

One last thing: Be sure you check with your insurance carrier to make sure you are covered for the activities you are doing. Ask specifically about events like whitewater rafting, rappelling, construction projects and other high-risk activities. You may need to get specific riders to your policies to cover these activities, and the time to find out if you need a rider is before you need one.

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

Maximize charitable giving

By Laurie Valentine

Maximize your giving impact by:

■ Determining if the causes you want to support are qualified charities—The IRS website (irs.gov/charities/index.html) can tell you if they are "qualified" 501(c)(3) organizations (*Churches are qualified charities that do not register with the IRS.*)

■ Determining if the charity will be a good steward of your gift—Talk to the organization's leadership; check out website databases that report on the activities and finances of charities, such as give.org, guidestar.org, and charitynavigator.org.

Maximize your tax savings by:

■ Giving appreciated assets (stocks, bonds, mutual fund shares, or real estate) rather than cash—The after-tax cost of your charitable gift will be lower than the same size cash gift when you consider both the income tax savings and the capital gains savings you may realize from using the appreciated asset to make your gift.

■ Selling depreciated long-term capital gain assets and giving the cash sale proceeds—You'll get a charitable income tax deduction if you itemize and a deduction for the capital loss.

■ Establishing a Donor Advised Fund—DAF's allow you to make your gift in a year when the deduction can save taxes, but defer the decision about what charities will benefit from your gift until later years.

Maximize your income by:

■ Setting up a "life income" gift such as a charitable gift annuity or charitable remainder trust—Life income gifts provide an opportunity to set up an irrevocable future gift for charity with the potential to increase current cash flow to you and/or others for life or a term of years. Not only may your cash flow increase, you'll have tax savings from the deduction of the value of the charity's interest in the year you set up the life income gift, if you itemize deductions.

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation.

What should we learn from these studies? Print still preferable

By Bob Terry

The conclusions of two studies done by professors at Georgetown University in Washington were not what people expected.

Because of the impact of the Internet and various other new electronic media, there was great hope that the church would be able to connect with many who are not frequently in the pews. But studies done in 2011 and 2012 by the Center for Applied Research at Georgetown found only a handful of people follow their local church or their denomination or even religion/spirituality via digital communications.

"Putting something on the Internet is a dramatically different delivery system with an entirely different numbers game," the 2012 report stated. "No one will see it unless they search for it or are directed there by a site or social network they already use. When it comes to building new media—getting online and posting content—there is far from any guarantee that people will show up and see it."

Both studies dealt specifically with Roman Catholics in the United States. The findings provide information that Christians of every denomination should consider.

Not digital alone

Only 9 percent of respondents reported visiting their local church website as often as once a month. The percentage who said they regularly used their local church website was 4 percent. Those who followed blogs dealing with Roman Catholics, the Christian faith or with spirituality made up 5 percent of respondents.

By contrast, five times as many participants said they read a religious or spiritual newspaper or magazine in print during the last three months as reported reading similar material online (18 percent for print and 3

percent for digital). Seven times as many said they read a religious or spiritual book in print in the last three months than read similar material in digital format (14 percent for print and 2 percent for digital).

VIEWPOINT

Thirty-nine percent of church members reported reading their diocesan newspaper in the last three months. Only 1 percent reported reading the paper in digital format only. While 14 percent said they visited at least one Roman Catholic-related website in the last three months.

To the surprise of many, Millennials (those born in 1982 or later) did not express overwhelming preferences for online content. About a third of the responders indicated a preference for online content (32 percent) while another third preferred reading print (33 percent). The other 35 percent expressed no preference.

Millennials certainly use the Internet and digital media more than other generations. That generation averages more than three and a half hours a day online. Baby Boomers devote about two-thirds that amount of time to online activity. But Millennials do not seem to use the media in relationship to religion and faith.

Sixty-seven percent of Millennials said they had not accessed anything related to their church, religion or spirituality in the past three months.

General interest in church news seems to be waning, the study found. During 2012, Internet searches containing the word "Catholic" were down 37 percent from January 2004, the study reported.

Matthew Schiller, business manager for Catholic New York, connected the decline to the digital revolution. He said, "Basically the study found that when the church converted its distribution of news from print to

online, there was a direct correlation with less giving, less volunteers and fewer (people) in the seats."

Before the digital revolution the church could put a copy of its church bulletin or the denominational newspaper in a person's hand or mailbox. Because of its direct connection to the reader through his or her church, a church bulletin or denominational newspaper has a high chance of being read, studies found.

Digital alone not effective

The two Georgetown University studies clearly show that relying on online communications as the primary strategy for enlisting and involving church members in church and denominational activities is failing. Equally frustrating is counting on a website or blog to reach new people or to educate already reached people.

Websites, blogs, Facebook, tweets, digital editions—all are important but it is a mistake to place high expectations that any single one or all together will solve the church's communication challenges.

Churches would do well to take note of what businesses have already learned. Single media contact is not an effective communications strategy. Using a multichannel strategy gets the best results. Several studies document that

print media continues to outperform electronic communications.

But when the two mediums are combined, the results outpace what either can do alone. At the very least, we should learn from these studies that the church has to use all the tools available so "that by all means we may win some" (1 Cor. 9:22).

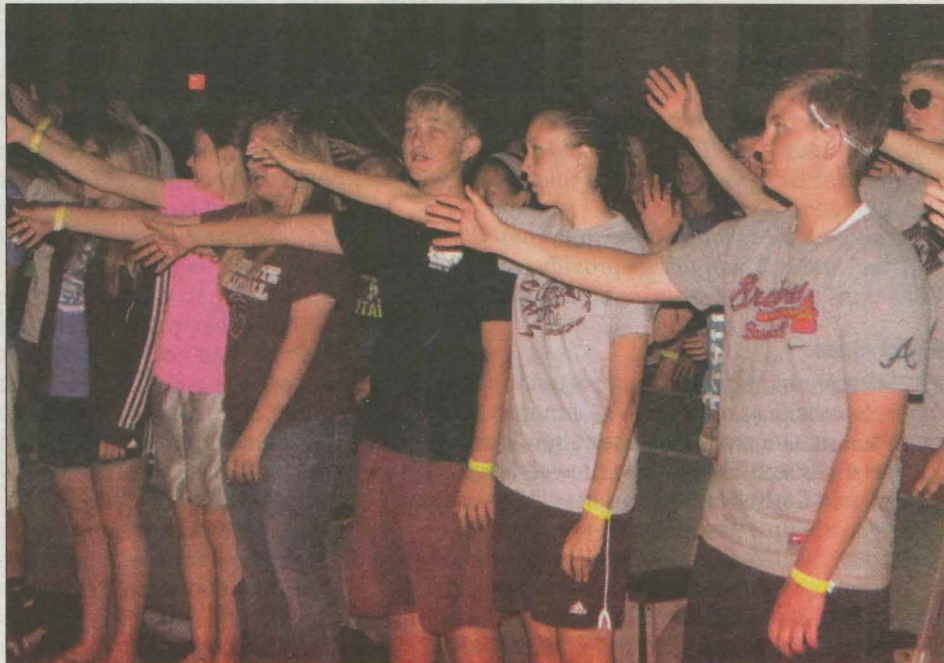
Bob Terry is editor of *The Alabama Baptist*.

"(W)hen church converted ... news ... to online, there was a direct correlation with less giving, less volunteers and fewer (people) in the seats."

Serious message

SURROUNDED BY TONS OF FUN

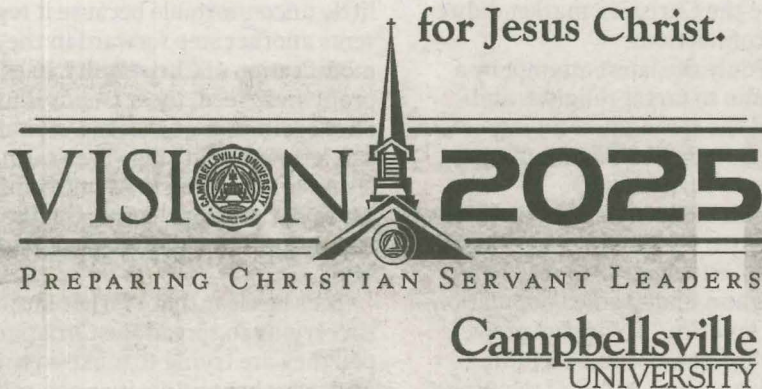
The Western Recorder spent some time at Jonathan Creek and Cedarmore camps recently as Crossings began its summer season of sharing the gospel and ministering to students.



CU welcomes Summer Campers!



Our guiding blueprint continues to place the university's primary emphasis on preparing the next generation of Christian servant leaders for Jesus Christ.



As CU heads into a hectic summer season with students on missions in the region, the nation and around the world and with young campers coming to campus for summer experiences, faculty, staff and coaches stay focused on encouraging and enabling our students to give of themselves in service to others and remain strongly committed to

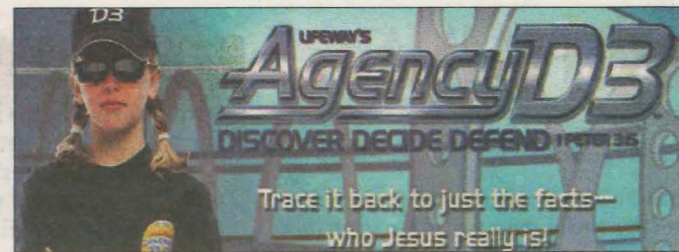
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VBS 2014 Discover. Decide. Defend.



By Polly House

Nashville, Tenn.—Kids will become special agents during LifeWay's Vacation Bible School 2014 as they collect and log evidence about Jesus for "Agency D3" and its mission to "Discover. Decide. Defend."

Jerry Wooley, LifeWay's VBS specialist, said VBS participants, as part of the investigative "Agency D3," will "discover if Jesus is really who He claims to be and if the Bible is true."

"We have put together one of the most fun, investigative and high-tech VBS themes ever," Wooley said.

"This is the first VBS we've had with an apologetics theme," he added. "Kids not only need to know the Bible is true and that Jesus is God's one and only Son, but they need to know how to defend what they believe when someone asks them why they believe it."

Beginning Oct. 1, LifeWay will offer a Jump-start Kit for pastors and VBS directors that will include materials to help with VBS planning, enlistment, publicity and decorations.

LifeWay will host seven preview events to get churches and VBS leaders ready for VBS: Ridgecrest (N.C.) Conference Center, Jan. 10-11; Fort Worth, Texas, Jan. 17-18; LifeWay home office in Nashville (three events) Jan. 30-31, Jan. 31-Feb. 1 and Feb. 1; and Kissimmee, Fla., (two events), Feb. 7-8 and Feb. 8.

Conferences will be offered for Spanish VBS at the Fort Worth event.

New this year is the option to do a one-day VBS training experience, providing five full breakout options, labs and lunch.

Information about early bird and group registration discounts can be found at LifeWay.com/VBS. (BP)

12 resolutions offered SBC mental health motion has pastor's passion

Houston—Messengers offered 12 motions during the Southern Baptist Convention's June 11-12 annual meeting in Houston, the fewest in recent years.

Only one of the 12 sparked discussion, a motion that brought an impassioned plea from its presenter, Ronnie Floyd, senior pastor and messenger from Cross Church in northwest Arkansas.

In a motion on mental health, Floyd called on SBC entities to work cooperatively to create and identify resources available to individuals and churches that minister to those who suffer from mental health challenges.

He cited statistics that 58 million Americans and 450 million persons worldwide suffer from mental disorders and 1 million die from suicide annually.

"It's time for the SBC to be on the front lines of mental health challenges," Floyd said.

The motion was referred to the SBC Executive Committee and all SBC entities for study, with their reports to provided to messengers at the 2014 annual meeting in Baltimore.

Other resolutions referred to the Executive Committee for study to be reported back to the SBC in 2014 were:

- that the Executive Committee publish a theological position paper on Southern Baptists' use of gender-neutral Bibles, reconsidering the three SBC resolutions opposing the use of such translations, and consult the "scholarly work found in the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood article, 'An Evaluation of Gender Language in the 2011 Edition of the NIV Bible,'" offered by Tim Overton, Halteman Village Baptist Church, Muncie, Ind.

- that a special task force be appointed to explore youth programs to teach leadership skills and moral standards once offered by the Boy Scouts of America submitted by Harold Phillips, messenger from Pleasant View Baptist Church in Port Deposit, Md.

- that the SBC withdraw fellowship

from Lake Shore Baptist Church in Waco, Texas, due to their support of the "abortion provider Planned Parenthood," as indicated on their website, submitted by Steven Ball, messenger and pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Childress, Texas.

- that the SBC reevaluate Article III of the Constitution, particularly subpoints 1 and 2 to update minimal standards used to define participating churches and messengers, offered by John Mark Yeats, pastor of Normandale Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas. Yeats noted that the base gift of \$250 required to send each additional messenger to the SBC has not changed since 1888, "a sacrificial amount then, but a token amount today."

One motion, referred to the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, asked that individuals speaking in an official Southern Baptist capacity refrain from stating a "supposed unified" or official position of Southern Baptist on immigration amnesty or pathway to citizenship. The motion was offered by Channing Kilgore, messenger from South Whitwell Baptist Church in Whitwell, Tenn.

A motion by Paul Cunningham, a messenger from Northwest Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, asked that reserved seating at the front of the auditorium be open to all messengers and not reserved for groups other than the handicapped. The Committee on Order of Business reported that the motion will be implemented.

Another motion that a list of all convention elected trustees (including the name, church, state and term) be made available through the Southern Baptist Convention's website, (www.sbc.net), submitted by Jay Adkins, a messenger from First Baptist Church in Westwego, La., was ruled as an internal matter and referred to the Executive Committee.

Four motions were ruled out of order by President Fred Luter acting on the recommendation of the Committee on Order of Business. (BP)

'Let God lead'

Graduate offers words of hope and wisdom to fellow students

Editor's note: Oneida Baptist Institute's column this week is part two of a column that appeared June 18 and includes excerpts from graduate Rebekah Roughton's salutatory address.

"I pray that we will all cast away broken hands of hate, pain, selfishness, pride and envy, and allow God to mold them into hands of love, kindness, encouragement, humility and peace. Only God can do that; He is the potter and we are the clay.

"One of my favorite quotes is, 'Have thine own way, Lord, have thine own way. Thou art the potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me after Thy will, while I am waiting, yielded and still.'

"Congratulations seniors. We have made it this far. Now it is time to spread our wings and fly, but make sure it is where God would have you to go. God has brought us this far, now let Him choose our next course to take.

"He is always there to direct us if we only listen to Him. We need to give Him our whole selves if we wish to get anywhere. We need to surrender fully to Him.

"My feet and hands were wild and excited and did some crazy things and God may use that in my future. He has brought me so far and has blessed me in many ways. I do not know what He has in store for me, but I do know that He will tell me in His perfect time, for to everything there is a season. He will lead each step I take. Even if I make a

wrong turn, I know He will help me turn around and get back on His path.

"My wish for every one of you graduates is that you will personally find Christ and follow His footsteps. Allow Him to use your hands and your feet. He knows what is best and all His ways are perfect, so there is no one better to trust and have faith in.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says, 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your

ways, acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths.' It is true that 'all things work together for the good of those who love God and have been called according to His purpose.'

"You are being called right now; listen to your calling and let God lead. He is saying, 'I know the plans that I have for you. Plans to prosper, not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.' All we have to do is come and let Him use what is already His. We all have wonderful and unique gifts and talents that He can use for His glory, if only we choose to allow Him to.

"That is my prayer for my class, that you follow Him with all your heart. Hopefully at our reunion, you can tell me all about what God is doing in your lives because you allowed Him to move through your hands and your feet."

Rebekah closed her "Oneida Experience" essay with these words: "I am ready to finally touch the sky of independence while being dependent on God."

Oneida Baptist Institute, Box 67, Oneida, KY 40972; www.oneida.school.org.



A servant's heart

Volunteer groups serve on Clear Creek campus

Our students spend a lot of time in the classroom, and that is an important part of their educational journey as they begin to follow God's call on their lives.

But as important as the classroom experience is for our students, there are other valuable teaching moments that our students also get to experience at Clear Creek.

We not only teach our students that they are to display a servant's heart as they serve the Lord, we also provide opportunities to show them what that looks like.

Each summer, we have many individuals who come to our campus who are participating with a volunteer work group. These groups provide a very valuable service to Clear Creek. There are many needs on our campus that are met each year through these groups.

We have housing units where graduates have moved out of that need painting and minor repair needs. With more than 700 acres of campus, we also have many landscaping needs that need attention during the summer. Additionally, we have some major building projects that require the attention of

skilled labor from time to time. We even have ditches that need to be dug to replace old water lines that run throughout our campus. With all of these needs during any given summer, the Lord provides many individuals

who come to our campus to give of their time to meet each of these needs. All of the labor from these volunteer groups is donated time that these individuals give of themselves just to serve. Many of them even provide the supplies for the projects.

The great teaching moment that comes from these times is the fact that many of our students get to work alongside

these individuals during the summer as they come to our campus. Throughout the course of their time with us, they get to spend some quality time with our students and in turn, the students get to see the servant's heart in action from these wonderful individuals.

We praise the Lord for all our volunteer work groups and the servant's heart they display to our campus family.

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

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

Superman spirituality: Is Hollywood manipulating Christians?

By Jonathan Merritt

A father figure from another world sends his only begotten son to Earth who, at 33 years old, must sacrifice himself to save the human race. Is this the narrative of Jesus and the Christian gospel? No. It's the storyline from this week's blockbuster, "Man of Steel."

The Superman reboot is filled with messianic parallels—from the caped hero stretching out his arms as he falls to earth only to rise again to a scene where Clark Kent ponders whether to accept his destiny while he sits in a church in front of a stained-glass image of Jesus—and it turns out these similarities weren't coincidental. Screenwriter David Goyer told the Los Angeles Times that he was thinking about the Bible when he wrote it, and Warner Brothers, the studio behind the film that grossed more than \$125 million this weekend, hired faith-based public relations firm Grace Hill Media to make sure the Christian market didn't miss the connections.

This is only the latest attempt by a major studio to target religious audiences, and the trend raises an important question: Is Hollywood manipulating Christians to turn a buck?

Grace Hill Media describes themselves as "the industry leader in church-based promotion" established "to reach an enormous and underserved population—religious America." Their past projects are a motley crew of films including "National Treasure," "Lord of the Rings," "Ratatouille," "Cinderella Man," "Elf" and "Walk the Line."

For "Man of Steel," Grace Hill orchestrated a full-scale campaign that provided pastors with movie clips, sermon outlines, and a nine-page briefing titled, "Jesus: The Original Superhero" for download on a flashy Superman ministry resource site. They hired theologian and Pepperdine University professor Craig Detwiler to prepare the materials. He produced similar briefings for "The Blind Side" in 2009 and "The Book of Eli" in 2010.

Marketing firms like Grace Hill began popping up several years ago when Hollywood noticed the desire among

religious Americans for content that aligned with their worldviews. Mel Gibson was able to rake in more than \$370 million with "Passion of the Christ", for example, and the "Chronicles of Narnia" trilogy pulled in more than \$500 million. More recently, we might look to History Channel's epic miniseries "The Bible", which attracted more than 10 million viewers weekly.

"There's been more openness to it in terms of understanding the need to serve an underserved audience out there, specifically the faith-based audience," says Devon Franklin, vice president of production for Columbia Pictures, a division of Sony Entertainment. "Hollywood has been more willing to develop film projects to tap into that market."

On the one hand, there is much to applaud in Hollywood's effort to explore religious themes through film and television. Too much of it is merely mindless entertainment without any redemptive elements to speak of. The more art produced that expresses the good, true and beautiful, the better.

And yet, the whole ordeal makes me a little uncomfortable because it represents another step forward in the commodification of Christianity. In a land of profit and greed, these trends illustrate once again that unchecked capitalism can leverage anything—even faith, even Jesus—to turn a buck. As one comic blogger said, the effort "comes off like a money grab." It's hard to disagree with him.

Let's be clear that Warner Brothers isn't trying to spread the Christian gospel; they are trying to make a profit. And, whether we like it or not, religion in America can be a lucrative business. In this case, generating profit means transforming pastors into marketers, hocking movie tickets from their pulpits. If the real test of morality is not just the nature of a behavior, but how that behavior shapes us as human beings, then this trend fails that test.

So let's rejoice at Hollywood's efforts to produce art that resonates with religious moviegoers, but let's also be as "wise as serpents" in how we partake. If Christians allow themselves to be manipulated by movie marketers, they may unwittingly participate in making faith a means to an end rather than an end in itself. (RNS)

Britain's Girl Guides drop oath to God

Canterbury, England—For more than 100 years, Britain's Girl Guides took an oath to "love God and serve the King/Queen."

But on June 19 the movement announced it would scrap its oath to God in an attempt to broaden its appeal and attract children from secular, nonbelieving families.

The controversy is seen by some as the biggest in the Girl Guides' history.

Beginning in September, all new members who make the promise to be good and useful citizens will pledge an oath to "be true to myself and develop my beliefs" and "to serve my Queen (Elizabeth II) and my country."

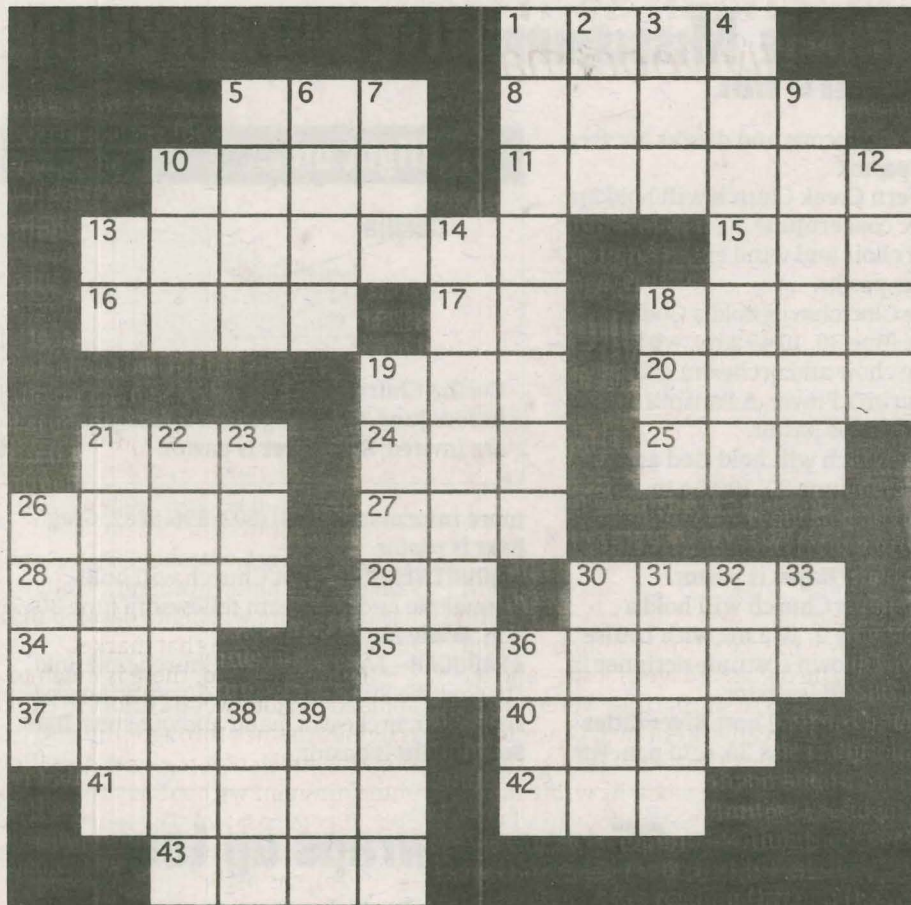
Andrea Minichiello Williams, CEO of Christian Concern, said the decision to remove God from the oath was wrong.

"These values have their roots in a Christian outlook," she said. "Taking 'God' out of the promise denies the history and foundations of the movement without offering anything in its place, with the result that the organization will lose its distinctive ethos and end up meaning nothing."

But Chief Guide Gill Slocombe said the new promise was decided after a consultation involving nearly 44,000 people.

She explained that the reference to God sometimes "discouraged some girls and volunteers from joining," and the new wording would help the organization "reach out to girls and women who might not have considered guiding before, so that even more girls can benefit from everything guiding can offer." (RNS)





#165

Bible Crosswords

By Evelyn Boyington

Across

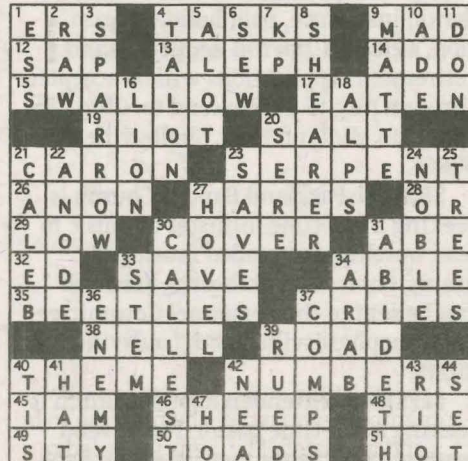
- 1 "They came to the threshing-floor of _____, which is beyond Jordan" (Genesis 50:10)
- 5 Highway (abbr.)
- 8 Bargain events
- 10 _____ apple (candy flavor)
- 11 "After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had _____" (1 Corinthians 11:25)
- 13 Beyond compare
- 15 Paddle
- 16 Momentous sign
- 17 _____-Eglaim, near the Salt Sea (Ezekiel 47)
- 18 Wight, for one
- 19 King _____ (J. Clavell novell)
- 20 Went golfing
- 21 "The Lord is good to _____" (Psalm 145:9)
- 24 Compass dir.
- 25 Like some numbers
- 26 _____ bargain
- 27 "These shall ye not eat of them that chew the _____" (Leviticus 11:4)
- 28 Minor prophet
- 29 Conjunction
- 30 "For we are saved by _____" (Romans 8:24)
- 34 "He it is, to whom I shall give a _____, when I have dipped it" (John 13:26)
- 35 "They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall _____" (Mark 16:18)
- 37 Entrapped
- 40 "So be it"
- 41 "When he had made a scourge ... he _____ them all out of the temple" (John 2:15)
- 42 David _____-Gurion
- 43 Action

Down

- 1 Was in agreement
- 2 Greek letter
- 3 Mount Blanc is one
- 4 "He (Nebuchadnezzar) was _____ from his kingly throne" (Daniel 5:20)
- 5 Stronger than string
- 6 "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, _____ to him the other" (Matthew 5:39)
- 7 Poetic before

- 9 "Ye were _____ with that holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13)
- 10 "How precious also are thy thoughts ... how great is the _____ of them" (Psalm 139:17)
- 12 _____ Scott, subject of landmark legal case
- 13 Hence
- 14 Dry or liquid
- 18 Judge Lance
- 19 Taped
- 21 "I see a rod of an _____ tree" (Jeremiah 1:11)
- 22 "The _____ shall lie down with the kid" (Isaiah 11:6)
- 23 _____ Cruces, NM
- 26 Bridge response
- 30 "Whilst we are at _____ in the body, we are absent from the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:6)
- 31 "God so clothe the grass ... which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the _____" (Matthew 6:30)
- 32 "I will not with ink and _____ write unto thee" (3 John 13)
- 33 Hesitation sound
- 36 NYC sight
- 38 "Let her be as the loving hind and the pleasant _____" (Proverbs 5:19)
- 39 First female

Last puzzle's solution #164



Like a family reunion

Summer camp ministry grows with each passing year

Each year when camp begins I wonder in my mind how the summer will be. I also think to myself what my thoughts will be toward camp.

I am in my 14th year of this ministry and one might think this may be getting old. Well, I can say emphatically, I love to be here more each year.

Growing up, I did not attend camp nor did our family have the normal "family reunions" like many do. We are now well into camp and I am blessed to get to spend at least one day each week at both Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek and now this year at the respective location for Kentucky Changers.

All this to say that each visit at camp is like a family reunion as I see ministry friends and partners—some of which have been coming to camp as many as 12 years. Words simply cannot describe the blessing to have such brothers and sisters and to hear updates from how God is working in their ministry.

As our numbers continue to grow, I must confess remembering all the names is becoming difficult, but the faces are easily recognizable.

As I write this article, we currently have more people participating today in camp programs than we had in total attendance the entire summer the first year Crossings started. It is just honestly unbelievable how God has expanded this ministry and I consider myself blessed to witness what He is doing.

Crossings Ministries



David Melber

Beyond all the growth, the most significant change is the number of students God is calling to Himself for salvation and for commitments to full time ministry.

When people ask me to describe what camp ministry is like I am quick to talk about the fact that camp is only a vehicle we use. Our ministry is to proclaim the gospel—pure and simple. We just happen to do that at an event called camp.

We are most blessed as a ministry to serve churches from all over the United States. Thanks for allowing us to be a part of your family and we look forward to seeing you at the next week of camp family reunion.

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

An investment in lives

Children's Offering goal: Raise \$300,000 by August

Today, more than 600 Kentucky children will have three good meals, a warm bed to sleep in, and the love and support of adults who care for them thanks in large part to the continued support of Kentucky's Baptist churches.

Each year, Baptist churches around the state take up the Children's Offering in support of Sunrise Children's Services, an agency that has been caring for Kentucky's abused and neglected children since 1869. Typically this offering is conducted around Thanksgiving, but many churches collect it at various times throughout the year.

This year, the Children's Offering has been substantially lower than in recent years, and Sunrise is hoping to collect an additional \$300,000 between now and August to ensure the quality care and services we provide to the children can continue.

The generosity of each church is more than just a gift. It is an investment in the children's lives. These funds not only assist in meeting practical needs such as food, clothing and

shelter, but also help provide the adequate health care, counseling services and educational needs the children require in order to recover from past trauma and family crisis.

With your help, we are blessed to provide children with opportunities many of them have never had. Trips to ball games and amusement parks, outings to museums and zoos and other cultural activities are essential in allowing the kids to experience as normal a childhood as possible. We've had children tell us that their first time ever in a restaurant was on a Sunrise outing.

The Children's Offering allows us to give children a new chance and new opportunities in life that they may otherwise never receive. If your church would like more information about how to participate in the Children's Offering, or to order offering envelopes or other promotional materials, simply contact Carmen Gibson at (800) 456-1386, or email her at cgibson@sunrise.org

Sunrise Children's Services



Bill Smithwick

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

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**CALENDAR
OF EVENTS**
June

- 27 Foundation Board of Directors Meeting, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville.
- 29 Ky. Baptist Nursing Fellowship Summer Meeting, Elizabethtown.

July

- 12 GA Overnight, Jonathan Creek, Hardin.
- 12 Mother/Daughter Overnight, Jonathan Creek, Hardin.
- 12 Acteens Splash, Jonathan Creek, Hardin.
- 13 FamilyFEST, Henderson and Paducah.
- 25 Basic Training for Church Planters, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville.
- 27 Excel, First Baptist Church, Central City, and First Baptist Church, Shelbyville.

August

- 2 Courage Camp, Laurel Lake Baptist Camp, Corbin.
- 15 Administrative Committee, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville.
- 17 Super Saturday, Highview Baptist Church—Fegenbush Campus, Louisville.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

■ **CADIZ**—Cadiz Church's library will hold a summer reading program for children in pre-school through 6th grade. The program will end with a "Build Your Own Sundae" July 28. **Kyle Noffsinger** is pastor.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Campbellsville Church will host the Campbellsville-Taylor County Annual Gospel Sing June 30, 6:30 p.m. For information, **Ted Taylor** is pastor.

■ **DAYTON**—East Dayton Church will host 5th Sunday Singing with the **UBC Singers**, June 30, 6 p.m. For more information, call (859) 431-5624. **Russell Rand** is pastor.

■ **DRY RIDGE**—Dry Ridge Church will install Mark Payton as pastor June 30, 8:30 a.m. **Lincoln Bingham** will be guest speaker.

■ **ELIZABETHTOWN**—Severns Valley Church will hold WinShape Camp July 1-5, for children in kindergarten through 6th grade. **Bill Langley** is pastor.

■ **FRANKFORT**—Crestwood Church will hold Friday movie night with "Unconditional" June 28,

7 p.m. Admission, popcorn and drinks are free. **Michael Hail** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Fern Creek Church will hold an annual patriotic concert June 30, 12:15 p.m., led by the adult choir and wind ensemble.

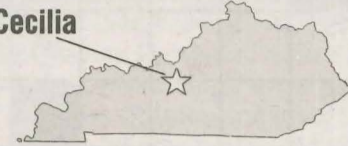
Linda Popham is pastor.

Hurstbourne Church will hold a God and Country service June 30, 10:45 a.m., with presentation by the choir and orchestra called "America! A Pilgrim's Prayer, A Patriot's Dream." **Mike O'Neal** is pastor.

Maple Grove Church will hold God and Country Celebration June 30, 10:45 a.m., to honor and commemorate the independence of the United States. A potluck dinner will follow the service. **Raymond Hayes** is pastor.

Melbourne Heights Church will hold a senior adult event July 2, 10 a.m., with Louise Cecil, a nationally-known costume designer in Louisville. **Adam Schell** is pastor.

St. Matthews Church will host **River Cities Concert Band** in concert June 30, 6:30 p.m. For

Spotlight on ...**Cecilia**

Cecilia Church will honor hometown heroes June 30. Emergency service providers are invited. **Eric Oliver** is pastor.

more information, call (502) 896-8882. **Greg Barr** is pastor.

■ **MOUNT VERNON**—First Church will hold annual pie and ice cream fellowship June 30, 7 p.m. **Eddie Nation** is pastor.

■ **PADUCAH**—Lone Oak First Church will hold "In God We Still Trust" June 30 with the worship choir, orchestra, band and quartets. **Dan Summerlin** is pastor.

All-State Choir and Orchestra celebrates 25 years, wraps up tour

The All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra celebrates 25 years of music ministry this summer. More than 70 youth from churches across the state gave a mini-concert at the Kentucky Baptist Convention building in Louisville as part of a six-stop tour last week that included performances in Campbellsville, Louisville, Lawrenceburg, Elizabethtown and Bowling Green. Mickey and Sue Ballard, of Central Baptist Church in Paris, are co-conductors of the choir. (Photos by Todd Deaton and Brenda Smith)

CLASSIFIED ADS

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

SEEKING: Safe Harbor Baptist Church in Georgetown, Ky., is seeking a part-time minister of music and a youth minister. Call (502) 570-5851, or send a resumé to 519 Gano Avenue, Georgetown, KY 40324, or email safeharborpastor@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Part-time worship leader (16-20 hours/week), Buckner Baptist, Oldham County, Ky. Above average pay for above average minister. Worship band and choir leadership, keyboard skill preferred. Email resumé (including references) with cover letter to bucknerbaptistchurch@insightbb.com.

SEEKING: Beacon Hill Baptist Church, Somerset, Ky., is prayerfully seeking a full-time pastor. Please send resumé to

the Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 3205, W. Somerset, KY 42564. For more information see our website at www.beaconhillbaptist.com. Deadline July 15, 2013.

SEEKING: Green Acres Baptist Church in Louisville is seeking a part-time director of student ministries. Primary focus toward middle school and elementary aged children. Submit resumé to greenacresbaptist@bellsouth.net or 5189 Poplar Level Road, Louisville, KY 40219, to the attention of Personnel Team.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church, Martin, Tenn., is seeking a full-time minister of youth. Must have a master's degree from a Southern Baptist seminary and at least 3-5 years of youth ministry experience. Please email resumé to youthsearch@fbcmartin.org.

SEEKING: Financial administrative assistant for First Baptist Church, Shelbyville. Self-motivated, multitasking individual with a high level of confidentiality is being sought to maintain accounts relating to contributions, donations and bank reconciliations. Duties also include procurement, expense reporting, payroll and general office

functions. Microsoft Office and Automated Church System software experience desired. Education: Accounting degree preferred. Experience: Accounting, bookkeeping experience required. Salary: Competitive. Benefits: Medical, dental insurance, paid holidays, vacation, sick days, payroll deduction and retirement. Applications will be accepted through July 15. Please send to: Chip Gibson, 1516 Midland Trail, Shelbyville, KY 40065.

SEEKING: Parkland Baptist Church is seeking a full-time minister of music to lead worship, age/graded music programs, choirs and orchestra. Resumé can be sent to the Personnel Committee, 7206 Shepherdsville Road, Louisville, KY 40219.

SEEKING: Crittenden Baptist Church is seeking a full-time pastor. Please send resumé, cover letter to: Crittenden Baptist Church Pulpit Team, P.O. Box 582, Crittenden, KY 41030. Please submit between July 1-31.

SEEKING: Brownsville Missionary Baptist Church is seeking a youth education director. This is a part time position. If you love the Lord and have a desire to

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invest yourself in the lives of youth and children, send a resumé or contact Bro. Calvin Bond at 522 N. Main Street, Brownsville, KY 42210. (270) 597-7525 calbond@windstream.net.

SEEKING: The Elkhorn Baptist Association, based in the greater Lexington area, is actively seeking an executive director that will cast a vision to help member churches carry out the Great Commission and build the kingdom of God. This is an opportunity to redefine and re-energize an association that has many resources and is primed to make a kingdom impact. Send resumé to ebaexecdirsearch@yahoo.com by Aug. 1.

Suicide & God's love

Frank Page shares 'A Father's Lessons' in new book about daughter's suicide

By Diana Chandler

Nashville—"I love you, Daddy." "I'm so proud of you." "Thank you for being there for me no matter what." Surreptitiously handwritten expressions, seemingly from the grave.

Melissa Page Strange had written the sentiments on yellow sticky notes to her father, Frank Page, hiding each separately in boxes of books she helped him pack during a move. He would discover them more than a year later while settling in his Nashville office as president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, months after Melissa had committed suicide at age 32.

"Oh, how I missed my little Melissa in that moment," Page writes in "Melissa, A Father's Lessons from a Daughter's Suicide," released June 1. "I lost it. Dropping into my chair, my shoulders heaving, I flicked my eyeglasses onto the bare desk-top and wept as quietly as I could, spurred on by a kaleidoscope of emotions. Sadness? Oh my, yes. Familiar waves of sadness.

"And yet somehow the stream of steady tears running down my face contained a distinguishable note of sweetness along with its bitter sting and taste."

Family 'filled with love'

Such tragedies were not supposed to happen, at least not in families filled with the love Page and his wife Dayle hold for their three daughters, and the love the couple modeled as he served as senior pastor at congregations God placed in his care.

But the love that Page remembers so many showed for Melissa was not enough to deliver her from the inexplicable darkness that led her to take her own life one

day after Thanksgiving in 2009.

The book arrives as the Christian community is becoming more aware of mental illness within the body of Christ, the same year Saddleback Church pastor Rick Warren lost his son, Matthew, to suicide at age 27 after a lengthy battle with mental illness. "Melissa" is a release from B&H Publishing Group of LifeWay Christian Resources.

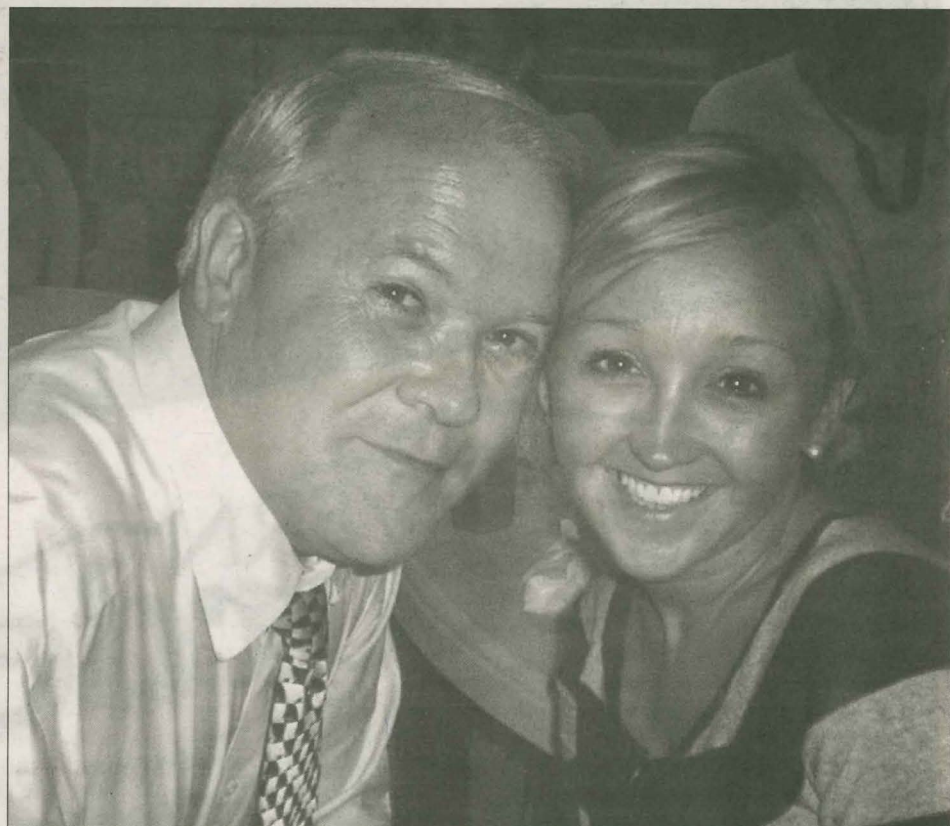
In "Melissa," Page shares his story of love interspersed with Scripture, biblical wisdom and advice for families dealing with suicide and potential victims contemplating the act. He approaches the subject from spiritual, physical and medical perspectives, closing each chapter with letters intended to minister to and dissuade those considering ending their own lives.

"I began the book thinking that it would be cathartic for my heart as I dealt with the grief of the situation," Page said. "Fortunately, not long after beginning the process, I began to pray that God would use this project in two very important ways.

"First of all, I began to pray that somehow it might be used to help people who are going through this situation with family, friends and church members. Also, I began to pray that it might be of help to those who were considering suicide. I want it to point to hope in Christ."

A resource for pastors

The book deals with such difficult questions as whether suicide automatically draws eternal damnation, refuting it, and the subject of spiritual warfare, recognizing it and offering steps to victory. Healing and hope are key subjects, grounded in God's love and eternal salvation.



Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee President Frank Page is shown with his eldest daughter Melissa. Page wrote the book, "Melissa, A Father's Lessons from a Daughter's Suicide," as a ministry to families who have suffered a suicide and to individuals who might be considering taking their own lives and the pastors who serve them.

"I hope that the readers will grasp the realness of the story, the admission that no one is perfect as well as the correct theology that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ," Page said. "I also want it to be a resource for pastors who are attempting to find ways to help those in their circle of influence who are going through this or who are working with those who are considering this."

What Page doesn't attempt to do is answer why suicide occurs, a facet of the book former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, now a Fox News host, points out in his forward.

"In all his years of exemplary leadership in local churches and in the nation's largest evangelical denomination, he has never so effectively ministered as he

does in his straightforward telling of Melissa's story," Huckabee wrote of Page. "Thankfully, he doesn't try to provide sure-fire answers for all the 'why' questions, and exhibits the wisdom and maturity to recognize that even if an infinite God were to reveal them, our finite minds couldn't receive them."

The book includes affirmations from several of Page's friends in Southern Baptist life, including GuideStone Financial Resources President O.S. Hawkins.

"He writes to us out of a heart of love not only for Melissa but for us," Hawkins wrote, "... and for anyone anywhere who may be contemplating crashing the gates of heaven on their own initiative. Hope and healing come with every passing page. Read it and reap!" (BP)

Can grief be a mental illness?

With new diagnostic changes, it might be

St. Louis—In a move that could add to the tension between religion and science, the American Psychiatric Association recently changed a controversial diagnosis regarding how grief relates to mental health.

Psychiatry historically has refrained from calling normal grief a mental disorder. According to Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (fourth edition 1994), the guideline has been that when symptoms—sadness, distress, insomnia, trouble concentrating, lack of appetite—begin within two months of a loved one's death, but do not persist beyond those two months, psychiatrists should not diagnose "major depressive disorder." In earlier decades, psychiatrists waited a year before such a diagnosis.

A revision in the book's fifth edition narrows that window to two weeks. So a person who has five of nine symptoms that define depression—regardless of the

reason behind those symptoms—could be diagnosed as mentally ill.

That change could give psychiatrists earlier access to grieving patients, critics say, heightening a perception that medical responses to grief are encroaching on turf traditionally held by faith.

'Medicalizing grief'

Normal bereavement and major depression share many of the same symptoms. And because of those similarities, psychiatrists have historically carved out what is known as a "bereavement exclusion." Its purpose was to reduce the likelihood that normal grief would be diagnosed as clinical depression.

But critics say the greater danger is missing the signs of mental illness simply because a person is experiencing grief. Such grief, they say, may even trigger a major depressive disorder bringing more symptoms—a preoccupation with worthlessness, or thoughts of suicide.

Removing the exclusion, some argue, will allow psychiatrists to cast a wider net by more quickly diagnosing mental illness and offering treatment.

But critics have charged the APA with "medicalizing grief" by bypassing traditional methods of healing that come from friends, family or theology.

'A boon to the pharmaceutical industry'

Writing in the New England Journal of Medicine last May, Richard Friedman, a professor of psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical College, said the change would "erroneously label healthy people with a psychiatric diagnosis."

Joanne Cacciatore, founder of the Center for Loss and Trauma in Phoenix said such labels have lasting effects.

"Once you say someone has a mental illness and bill their insurance company, that's on their record," she said. "They could be denied a job, lose custody of children or be denied insurance."

Last May, in a concession to such arguments, the APA panel said that a footnote would be added in the new DSM, a reminder that sadness and other mild depressive symptoms are not necessarily indicators of major depression.

But that hasn't silenced broader concerns over labels and medication.

In December, Allen Frances, a professor emeritus of psychiatry at Duke University and a high-profile critic of the revision, wrote in Psychology Today that

the APA will be "substituting pills and superficial medical rituals for the deep consolations of family, friends, religion and the resiliency that comes with time and the acceptance of the limitations of life."

That concern was shared by Friedman, who wrote that the change would "no doubt be a boon to the pharmaceutical industry, because it will encourage unnecessary treatment with antidepressants and antipsychotics."

The APA asked those revising the DSM to provide financial disclosures of any grant money, consultation fees and stock ownership that could be perceived as a conflict of interest.

In an analysis of the disclosures, it was discovered that 67 percent of panelists who eliminated the bereavement exclusion had ties to pharmaceutical companies that make the drugs used to treat mood disorders.

The APA did not respond to a request for an interview.

Cacciatore said those suffering from traumatic grief heal more quickly through human contact, often with a nod to the divine. Psychiatrists, she said, "can't do someone's grieving for them. Nothing can comfort someone ... like another human being." (RNS)

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