

WESTERN Recorder

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Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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Redefining marriage

Supreme Court hands victory to gay rights activists



Hundreds of same-sex marriage supporters await the Supreme Court decisions at a rally in front of the court building, which is undergoing repair. (Photo by Tom Strode)

By Tom Strode

Washington—The U.S. Supreme Court has delivered a historic ruling in favor of same-sex marriage, but it stopped short of redefining marriage nationwide.

In one of two rulings regarding gay marriage, the high court struck down a federal law defining marriage as only between a man and a woman June 26.

In a breakthrough for homosexual couples, the court said in a 5-4 decision the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) violated "equal protection" under the

Constitution by refusing to recognize gay marriages. The opinion means same-sex couples will have access to employee, Social Security, tax and other benefits previously limited to heterosexual couples.

In the other case about gay marriage, the justices appeared to provide a limited victory for same-sex marriage advocates. The court's 5-4 ruling on a procedural question apparently will have the effect of allowing to stand a federal judge's invalidation of a California amendment that limited marriage to

heterosexual couples.

In its opinions, however, the Supreme Court did not legalize same-sex marriage throughout the country or rule that states cannot limit marriage to a man and a woman.

Southern Baptist leaders expressed remorse at the high court's opinions, especially in the DOMA case.

Ethicist Russell Moore described the DOMA ruling as "far-reaching, with massive implications for family life and religious liberty."

□ See DOMA ... Page 6

Firsthand look at Africa inspires Luter to missions challenge



SBC President Fred Luter (left) and a national believer walk through an island village on Lake Victoria in Uganda. (Photo by Joseph Rose.)

By Rolan Martin

Uganda—The sun hung low on the horizon as the boat slowly chugged to the banks of the remote Buziri Island in Uganda's Lake Victoria.

Weary from a six-hour boat ride, a team of six pastors, including SBC President Fred Luter, and a handful of International Mission Board personnel, looked with anticipation to the nearing shore.

The sturdy wooden fishing boat had looked comfortable enough at the beginning of the journey at a muddy river's edge after an hour-long bus ride from the town of Jinga. But the boat packed with supplies became more confining to its passengers the longer the journey

stretched across the water.

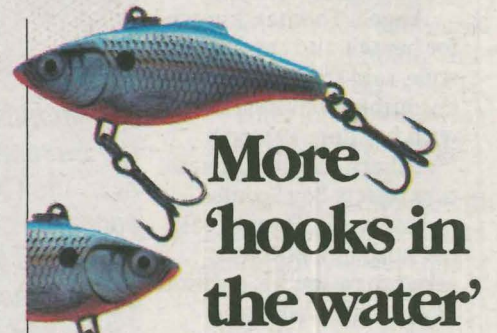
The supplies, boat and its motor were provided through Southern Baptists' gifts to the Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, which also supports missionaries' presence and ministry projects overseas.

For Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, the impact of being in such a remote location was immediate.

"It's just hard for me to believe in the day and time that we're living in, people are living in such conditions," he said of the isolated island without electricity.

"And, to get off the boat and to walk

□ See Luter in Africa... Page 3



More 'hooks in the water'

One military church plant supports another

By David Roach

Oak Grove—Two church plants launched Easter Sunday in Oak Grove, each aimed at reaching military families from nearby Fort Campbell Army post. But rather than competing for members, the congregations have forged a unique partnership with one voting to send a percentage of its undesignated receipts to the other monthly.

In June, Faith Family Ministries began sending 1 percent of its undesignated receipts to The Church at Oak Grove. For the month that translated into \$73 to help reach military families for Christ.

Both affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention, Faith Family Ministries and The Church at Oak Grove say the vast number of lost people around Fort Campbell demands as many healthy, evangelistic churches as possible. The post employs about 30,000 soldiers with tens of thousands of dependents.

Competition not fulfilling

"I've come to realize that (competition) is not fulfilling," Faith Family Ministries pastor Dan Hunt said. "Not only is it not fulfilling to me personally, that's not fulfilling the Great Commission. We're not here to build our church. We're here to build the kingdom. And the only way we can do that is to work together."

Hunt, a veteran Southern Baptist pastor, got the idea for Faith Family Ministries last summer when Christian County Baptist Association Director of Missions Bobby Melton approached him about planting a church focused on Army families.

□ See Church plants ... Page 2



Photo by Constantin Gluhat

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Western Recorder 7-2-2013

Wife's column puts minister's job at risk

By Savannah Oglesby

Madisonville—When a humor columnist for The (Madisonville) Messenger submitted a story this month, she never dreamed that it would jeopardize her husband's job.

Angela Thomas, known by readers for her wit and candid for her wit and candid to encourage conversation with her June 19 story, "Southern Baptist Convention rejects Boy Scouts."

Last week, Thomas said her husband, Bill, was asked to resign his position as associate pastor and minister of music at First Baptist Church in Madisonville, which is a member of both the Southern Baptist Convention and the Kentucky Baptist Convention. The church is affiliated

with Little Bethel Baptist Association.

"He was asked to tender his resignation, but he has not," Angela Thomas said June 19. "As it stands now, he was given a letter requesting that he resign. He has submitted back a letter requesting more dialogue with the personnel committee. We haven't heard an official response back."

After numerous attempts by The Messenger and the Western Recorder, Joe Leonard, pastor of First Baptist Church, could not be reached for comment.

The column in question outlined Angela Thomas' opinion on the official response of the Southern Baptist Convention to the Scouts changing their national policy to allow homosexual members, except in leadership roles. The organization voted to voice opposition to the Boy Scouts of America decision to admit gay members at its annual convention in Houston.

She implied that the SBC was too quick to condemn other groups and public figures who did not meld to the ideology set forth by the convention.

"Some might assume that because the Boy Scouts have addressed the

issue, it must mean that Scout packs are filled with 10-year-old boys insisting on wearing their Scout caps at a rakish tilt and over accessorizing their uniforms ..." she wrote in the column. "... Sexuality doesn't come up and isn't relative to typical Scouting activities but now, thanks to Southern Baptists,

the parents of little innocents everywhere are having to have The Talk. The Boy Scouts of America has been forced to confront this issue and cannot hide behind the freedom granted to religious organizations like the Southern Baptist Convention to condemn certain behaviors they deem unacceptable and excluded people based on their interpretation of the Bible."

"The Boy Scouts ... cannot hide behind the freedom granted to ... the (SBC) to condemn certain behaviors they deem unacceptable ... based on their interpretation of the Bible."

Angela Thomas

In addition to Scouts, Thomas listed, "the Democratic Party, Disney, the TeleTubbies, and any Baptists that aren't Southern" as other groups rejected by the SBC.

"Southern Baptists have little by little abandoned public schools and civic organizations," she wrote. "They are too sanctimonious to participate in Easter Egg Hunts and trick-or-treating. Santa and the Easter bunny are simply the devil in disguise and cable television and the Internet are his evil minions." At one point, the column referred to "Shiite Baptists."

Thomas said her husband knew about the column, read it and gave his approval. She said a celebration of her husband's 10 years of service at the church was scheduled for July 7, but the event has been canceled. (The Messenger/KPNS)

Update: At press time, the Western Recorder received the following statement from First Baptist Church of Madisonville: "We have accepted the resignation of Dr. Bill Thomas and we wish him the best in his endeavors. We will keep him and his family in our prayers."

Loving people key to growth

By Whitney Jones

Hickman—Charles Southerland didn't go to seminary and the members of his Hickman church live in the rural, far western Kentucky, yet the pastor has managed to more than quadruple the size of Sassafras Ridge Baptist Church—all by knocking on doors and making hospital and nursing home visits.

The Union City, Tenn., man accepted Christ at age 35, and as result felt the call to ministry. That's when he learned to read so he could dig deep into the Bible. Now at 73, Southerland prays for God to reveal the week's message to him as he reads, and he gives every sermon without any personal notes to follow.

"You are talking to a man that's never wrote a letter, never wrote a check," he said.

Southerland was one of 16 children and only went to school through the fourth grade because he helped his family by working. But his lack of education did not stop God from using him later in his life.

Southerland became pastor at Sassafras Ridge more than 10 months ago, when the average Sunday attendance was 15. Now around 55 people go to Sunday School and about 70 attend the morning service.

Before going to Sassafras Ridge, Southerland was pastor at David's Chapel Baptist Church, also in Hickman. In his eight years there, the congregation grew from nine to around 90.

Todd Gray, western Kentucky's consultant for the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Church Consulting and Revitalization Team, said Southerland is an example of how to overcome common struggles many pastors face.

"All the same problems are in Hickman," Gray said. "Poverty is bad. People are bad. Culture is bad. The facilities are bad. The people are not committed. All those things are the same."

"But Charles is doing what he can do."



Charles Southerland

He's not waiting on someone else to do something so that he can have success. He's going to go ahead today and do what he can do to make a difference. I think that's probably the key."

Southerland's advice to fellow pastors is to get out and visit people who are hurting in the neighborhood. Southerland's passion for loving others is clear from the miles he puts on his car visiting people all over western Kentucky and northwest Tennessee, and the frequency he is in his church office.

"If we will do what God says, and we will do our job and get out and show people we love them and minister to them, God will bless that church. People are going to go where they get ministered to," he said.

Southerland drives 20 minutes to his church on Sundays and Wednesdays, and some church members come from as far away as Martin, Tenn. The pastor's key to growing a church is to make as many visits as possible.

"I spend mighty little time in the office," Southerland said. "I spend all my time outside, knocking on doors and (going to) hospitals."

Lamar Starnes of Hickman has attended both of Southerland's churches and goes visiting with him every Saturday.

"He loves people," Starnes said. "I don't care who they are or where they're from, or anything. He just loves them to death. And they get that from him when we first go into a house that we haven't been in. You can see the love that he has for people."

Anytime Southerland hears about someone who is sick or in the hospital, he makes going to see them a priority.

"It doesn't have to be a church member. I'll visit just about everybody," he said. "It just makes a difference, and that's the way it should be. If somebody's hurting, if you love people you need to try to help them if you can."

While the miles he drives and the hours he spends might seem like a burden, Southerland sees it as his duty and a blessing that also glorifies God. And he doesn't plan on stopping anytime soon. (WR)

Church plants

Continued from page 1

After intense prayer, Hunt agreed to become a church planter and Faith Family Ministries held monthly preview services beginning in December. The church meets every Sunday in a prominent Oak Grove building named Valor Hall and has anywhere between 40 and 90 in worship.

Church at Oak Grove Pastor Carlo Gentleman, a cardiovascular ICU nurse at Vanderbilt University Hospital in Nashville, Tenn., started his church because of a deep burden for lost souls that kept him awake at night and made him want to do more for Christ than participate in short-term missions projects and be an active Southern Baptist layman.

When Gentleman learned of the need for church plants in Oak Grove, he jumped at the opportunity, meeting in his home with a group of 15 people



Pat Towery invites a visitor to attend worship during Oak Grove's Spring Into Summer Festival Memorial Day weekend. (Photo provided by FFM)

beginning in October leading up to the Easter launch. The church averages 15 in worship and meets in a rented metal building.

Both congregations forward 6 percent of their undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program to support missions and ministries around the world. They also give to the Christian County Baptist Association as well as Oak Grove Church Planting Fellowship, a local ministry that supports Southern Baptist

church plants. Both congregations receive support from the North American Mission Board administered through KBC.

Faith Family Ministries' gifts to The Church at Oak Grove are in addition to its other missions giving.

Overwhelmed by support

"We're overwhelmed by the support, Gentleman said. "They're starting off, too. That they would think about us in that way and feel a call to do that—we're just overjoyed and thankful."

With a rigorous secular work schedule in addition to his pastoral duties, Gentleman said the support of a sister congregation lends encouragement as well as financial help. He works three 12-hour shifts in Nashville each week—nearly a one and a half-hour drive each way—then devotes his off days to pastoral care, witnessing and sermon preparation.

"I may go to bed tired," Gentleman said, "but I am so excited and so overjoyed to tell people about the gospel of

Jesus Christ."

Todd Gray, KBC western regional consultant and former pastor of First Baptist Church in Oak Grove, commended the two churches for eschewing competition. But he said two church plants only scratch the surface of lostness in Christian County, estimating that 95 percent of the 10,000 people in Oak Grove are lost.

"These are young military families in their 20s and 30s," Gray said. "All of them have loads of children. And it's just a wide open area for the gospel. There need to be more hooks in the water for trying to reach people for Christ."

As for the two pastors, they hope God multiplies their efforts beyond their church walls and even beyond Fort Campbell as the soldiers they win to Jesus are reassigned across the globe.

"If you can disciple these military families and show them the love of Christ, they can become missionaries themselves for the gospel," Gentleman said. (WR)

Sharing practical skills with the gospel in Zimbabwe

By John Shindlebower

Whether short term or long term, mission trips are designed to change lives, save lives and save souls. For nearly a dozen people returning recently from a 12-day trip to Zimbabwe, the trip included all of the above.

Calvin McFarland of Monticello was a team leader for the trip, his second mission visit to Zimbabwe as part of a disaster relief and community development partnership between the Kentucky Baptist Convention and Baptist Global Response. The group concentrated their work in a very remote area of the impoverished nation and once on the ground, focused on three areas of labor.

There was a construction group who helped make needed repairs in and around the local hospital. McFarland helped lead this group in repairing the towers that supported the hospital's water tanks. They also made repairs to medical equipment, installed lighting and made some other electrical and structural upgrades and improvements.

The nursing group was headed by Deby Coffey. They worked mostly in the maternity ward, where they provided new mothers with supplies and taught classes in CPR and other medical training. In addition, the team prayed with new and expectant mothers as they arrived. Sadly, the infant mortality rate in that region is extremely high, with roughly one in every four babies being stillborn or dying shortly after birth. McFarland said in that culture, the mothers who lose a child simply return to their village, and there is a large cemetery near the hospital reserved for the tiny bodies of these babies.

"Our hearts cried with joy as



Deby Coffey (second from right) teaches infant CPR while in Zimbabwe hospital. Coffey was part of a mission team affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention and Baptist Global Response. (Photos provided by Coy Webb)

many babies were brought into this world daily, and with sorrow as death took many lives out as well," he said.

A third team consisted of dental professionals who taught dental hygiene in schools, handed out 1,200 toothbrushes and tubes of toothpaste, and also delivered the gospel message inside the classrooms.

The group represented three congregations, including First Baptist Church of Monticello, Oak Grove Baptist Church, also in Monticello, and First Baptist Church of Grove City, Ohio. McFarland said some of the team members have been on numerous mission trips before, but for others it was their first trip. For all, the experience was life-changing.

"God used this team to share the gospel with over 1,400 men, women and children and this was an awesome time," said



Members from First Baptist Church of Monticello, Oak Grove Baptist Church, also in Monticello, and First Baptist Church of Grove City, Ohio, recently returned from missions work in Zimbabwe.

McFarland, who got to share the experience with his teenage daughter, Katie, who was on her first overseas mission trip. The group got to witness more than 30 professions of faith during their stay.

The needs in Zimbabwe are great, not only spiritually, but physically as well. One of the members of the mission team works for a chicken producer and met with local leaders about a potential chicken-raising project in that community. The meeting went well and both agreed to pursue a plan that would also include a "one egg per day" component to help supply local children with a daily source of nutrition.

As the group wrapped up their work, they had planned to work with the hospital to conduct a disaster drill to help the medical professionals there deal with any emergency situations that might arise. That day, a real-life emergency occurred a few miles away as an overloaded van blew a tire and flipped. Of the 19 passengers aboard, 17

were thrown from the vehicle and four died at the scene. The rest were transported to the hospital where the mission team was working, and the training, experience and helping hands God had brought to Zimbabwe helped save lives.

"It was just a horrible accident," said McFarland. He said the hospital staff there worked well with what they had. Finding medically-trained people to come assist was not a big issue, but he said the hospital was short on the needed supplies to handle such a large-scale emergency. He said one local doctor had to pay for the diesel fuel for one ambulance.

Short-term mission trips can result in life-long decisions that are life-changing, life-saving and soul-saving. McFarland said most who return from such an experience benefit just as much spiritually as those they were sent to help, and he and the others are looking forward to another opportunity to minister to the people in Zimbabwe. (WR)

Luter in Africa

Continued from page 1
among the people—how receptive they were to us.

"That says a lot about the missionaries who are here ... the relationships that they have made," he continued. "It was a very humbling time to walk around that village."

Luter joined a diverse team of pastors visiting Uganda and the Horn of Africa. The team met with a handful of local believers and church leaders on the island to worship and pray together. Then, Daniel Park of New Song Korean Church in Carrollton, Texas, led a session of Training for Trainers (T4T), a church planting course on how to disciple new believers to reach and train others.

During the 10-day journey, the challenges of reaching people groups with the gospel in the Horn of Africa became a reality to the pastors. Sometimes the complications were as basic as travel difficulties in accessing remote areas. After waiting more than five hours for a connecting flight into one of the most unreached parts of the Horn of Africa, the flight was canceled.

But pastors used that time to share their love for Jesus with several Chinese business professionals, a Korean woman and a local man also waiting for flights.

"We soon realized," Lentine said, "that what we thought was a delay in our schedule was actually a God-ordained event because God had a schedule of His own."

After experiencing sleepless nights in the African heat, canceled flights, exhausting boat rides and many hours of travel on bumpy roads, Luter told the pastors, "There just needs to be more of a commitment from myself as a local pastor, from my church as a local church but also from members of our convention that we really need to do all that we can to dig deeper to support the IMB." (BP)



U.S. pastors and missionaries take a boat ride in Uganda. (Photo by Joseph Rose)



"God used this team to share the gospel with over 1,400 men, women and children," said Team Leader Calvin McFarland of a recent trip to Zimbabwe.

Bible's clear teaching

"Jesus answered, 'Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?"' (Matthew 19:4-5)

Together
We are the KBC

Paul Chitwood

Thus, for the Christian, marriage is defined.

Note that our Lord defines marriage in response to a question about divorce. Admittedly, as broken and sinful human beings, many have failed to honor our Lord's instruction regarding the permanency of the marriage covenant.

Nevertheless, Jesus' definition of marriage as being between a man and a woman is hardly open for debate.

On June 26, 2013, we witnessed a further progression from our Lord's definition of marriage as the United States Supreme Court did its part to push open the door of gay marriage. As a civil matter, is that progress to be celebrated, lamented or simply ignored by Christ followers?

Advocates of gay marriage appeal to the American ideals of equal rights and equal protection. Emotional arguments call on us to respect the fact that two people who love each other, regardless of gender, deserve to be together. Sounds reasonable enough. Where is the scandal?

To me, the scandal of gay marriage and of homosexuality in general seem evident enough from the natural order. The special revelation of God's word confirms what we observe in the natural order. For example, in addition to Jesus' definition of marriage in Matthew 19, strong language in Old Testament passages, like Leviticus 18:22, is echoed in the New Testament by Paul when he states that homosexuals are committing "indecent acts" and will receive "the due penalty for their perversion" (Romans 1:27).

As our culture continues to embrace and even celebrate homosexuality, we must communicate clearly the teaching of Scripture. Sexual temptation is no respecter of persons. It will come, in its various forms, to those inside the Lord's church as readily as to those outside of the church. We must not allow Christ followers to be vulnerable to the sin of homosexuality as an "unknown sin."

Does Scripture's strong and straightforward language mean that the sin of homosexuality is any worse than heterosexual sins? No. And, when it comes to sexual sin, as we apply the high standards of God's perfect and righteous judgment, most all of us are found guilty.

But, thanks be to God, the gospel of Jesus Christ is a balm of healing and salvation to ALL who have sinned and fallen short. Might we, with a renewed sense of urgency, obey his admonition to "go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled" (Luke 14:23).

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

How should same-sex marriage change our witness?

The Supreme Court has now ruled on two monumental marriage cases, and the legal and cultural landscape has changed in this country.

The court voted to strike down the Defense of Marriage Act and remand the decision of the Ninth Circuit in the Proposition 8 case, holding that California's Proposition 8 defenders didn't have standing. The Defense of Marriage Act decision, meanwhile, used rather sweeping language about equal protection and human dignity as they apply to the recognition of same-sex unions.

But what has changed for us, for our churches, and our witness to the gospel?

In one sense, nothing. Jesus of Nazareth is still alive. He is calling the cosmos toward His Kingdom, and He will ultimately be Lord indeed. Regardless of what happens with marriage, the gospel doesn't need "family values" to flourish. In fact, it often thrives when it is in sharp contrast to the cultures around it. That's why it rocketed out of the first century from places such as Ephesus and Philippi and Corinth and Rome, which were hardly Mayberry.

In another sense, though, the marginalization of conjugal marriage in American culture has profound implications for our gospel witness.

First of all, marriage isn't incidental to gospel preaching. There's a reason why persons don't split apart like amoebas. We were all conceived in the union between a man and a woman. Beyond the natural reality, the gospel tells us there's a cosmic mystery (Ephesians 5:32).

God designed the one-flesh union of marriage as an embedded icon of the union between Christ and His church. Marriage and sexuality, among the most powerful pulls in human existence, are designed to train humanity to recognize, in the fullness of time, what it means for Jesus to be one with His church, as a head with a body.

Same-sex marriage is on the march, even apart from these decisions, and is headed to your community, regardless of whether you are sitting where I am right now, on Capitol Hill, or in a rural hamlet in southwest Georgia or eastern Idaho. This is an opportunity for gospel witness.

For a long time in American culture, we've acted as though we could assume marriage. Even people from what were once called "broken homes" could watch stable marriages on television or movies. Boys and girls mostly assumed they had a wedding in their futures. As marriage

"(W)e must repent of our pathetic marriage cultures within the church. For too long, we've refused to discipline a divorce culture that has ravaged our cultures. ... (W)e have the opportunity to take marriage ... seriously."

is redefined, these assumptions will change. Let's not wring our hands about that.

This gives Christian churches the opportunity to do what Jesus called us to do with our marriages in the first place: to serve as a light in a dark place. Permanent, stable marriages with families with both a mother and a father may well make us seem freakish in 21st-century culture. But is there anything more "freakish"

than a crucified cosmic ruler? Is there anything more "freakish" than a gospel that can forgive rebels like us and make us sons and daughters? Let's embrace the freakishness, and crucify our illusions of a moral majority.

That means that we must repent of our pathetic marriage cultures within the church. For too long, we've refused to discipline a divorce culture that has ravaged our

cultures. For too long, we've quieted our voices on the biblical witness of the distinctive missions of fathers and mothers in favor of generic messages on "parenting."

For too long, we've acted as though the officers of Christ's church were justices of the peace, marrying people who have no accountability to the church, and in many cases were forbidden by Scripture to marry. Just because we don't have two brides or two grooms in front of us, that doesn't mean we've been holding to biblical marriage.

The dangerous winds of religious liberty suppression means that our nominal Bible-Belt-marrying parson ways are over. Good riddance. This means we have the opportunity, by God's grace, to take marriage as seriously as the gospel does, in a way that prompts the culture around us to ask why.

The increased attention to the question of marriage also gives us the opportunity to love our gay and lesbian neighbors as Jesus does. Some will capitulate on a Christian sexual ethic. There are always

those professional "dissidents" who make a living espousing mainline Protestant shibboleths to an evangelical market. But the church will stand, and that means the gospel

which Jesus has handed down through the millennia. As we stand with conviction, we don't look at our gay and lesbian neighbors as our enemies. They are not.

The gay and lesbian people in your community aren't part of some global "Gay Agenda" conspiracy. They aren't supervillains in some cartoon. They are, like all of us, seeking a way that seems right to them.

If we believe marriage is as resilient as Jesus says it is (Mark 10:6-9), it cannot be eradicated by a vote of justices or a vote of a state legislature. Some will be disappointed by what they thought would answer their quest for meaning. Will our churches be ready to answer?

This also means we must change the way we preach. Those with same-sex attractions, who follow Christ, will be walking away from what their families and friends want for them: wedding cake and married life and the American Dream. Following Jesus will mean taking up a cross and following a hard narrow way. It always does.

If we're going to preach that sort of gospel, we must make it clear that this cross-bearing self-denial isn't just for homosexually-tempted Christians. It is for all of us, because that's what the gospel is. If your church has been preaching the American Dream, with eternal life at the end and Jesus as the means you use to get all that, you don't have a gospel that can reach your gay and lesbian neighbors—or anyone else for that matter.

Same-sex marriage is headed for your community. This is no time for fear or outrage or politicizing. It's a time for forgiven sinners, like us, to do what the people of Christ have always done. It's time for us to point beyond our family values and our culture wars to the cross of Christ as we say: "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world."

And that's good news.

Russell Moore is president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

Guest
Viewpoint

Russell Moore

Following Jesus means ... following a hard narrow way. ... (W)e must make it clear ... cross-bearing self-denial isn't just for homosexually-tempted Christians. It is for all of us ... that's the gospel."

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Response to DOMA decision mixed

By Jonathan Merritt

"DOMA is dead."

Such were the chants heard outside the United States Supreme Court when it was announced that the highest judicial body in the nation voted 5-4 to strike down the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA).

Of course, not every American is roundly rejoicing. Responses from the Christian community, which has become more divided over the issue in recent years, are mixed. Conservative Christians seem mostly despondent while (social) progressives are mostly celebrating. Below are reactions from across the political spectrum:

Russell Moore, president of Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission:

"This isn't a matter of mere procedure federalism. The opinion grounds the unconstitutionality of DOMA in far-reaching categories of equal protection and human dignity. This moment offers opportunity for the church though. The gospel doesn't need family values to flourish. The gospel advances best when it is in clear contrast to the culture around it. We may be in a time machine back to the Book of Acts culturally. Let's be ready to get back to the Book of Acts spiritually too."

See Viewpoint, page 4, for more comments by Moore.

David Gushee, director of the Center for Theology and Public Life at Mercer University:

"US constitutional principles such as equal protection, in tandem with the fading plausibility of a traditional Christian understanding of marriage in secularizing North America, made today's Supreme Court decisions inevitable. They also likely mean that a majority of US states will recognize gay marriages within ten or fifteen years. Christians can respond to this by howling in outrage, which some are already doing. Or they can decide to accept a clearer distinction between moral and legal norms and between church and state. They can consider whether to engage the contemporary conversation about how Christian principles of love and justice relate to sexual ethics and sexual minorities. And I hope Christians will realize the grave damage that their anti-gay activism has done to Christian witness in contemporary culture. Perhaps it is better to be known for what we are for rather than who we are against."



David Gushee

Eric Teetsel, director of the Manhattan Declaration:

"Today the Supreme Court ruled wrongly on both Windsor and Perry, but the decisions are not as bad as they might have been. The Court decided not to affirm same-sex marriage as a fundamental right, and left it to the states to determine the definition of marriage. The debate will continue at the local level, where already over 30 states have defined marriage as one woman and one man and a dozen have enacted same-sex marriage."



Eric Teetsel

Matthew Paul Turner, blogger and author of "Churched: One Kids Journey Toward God Despite a Holy Mess:"

"I'm thrilled by the Supreme Court's decision to strike down DOMA. It's a good and necessary step toward ensuring that our brothers and sisters in the LGBTQ communities enjoy equality under the laws of our country. And though I celebrate today's news, I'm also very aware that this is just one step—a big step, no doubt—but just one step on a much longer journey toward equal rights within marriage. But I also know that, for a variety of reasons, religious and otherwise, many people are not celebrating today's decision. So my prayer and hope is that God will grant all of us—regardless of which side we fall on—much grace for the journey before us, that we will learn to navigate future discussions about marriage equality with civility, respect,



Matthew Turner

and humility. But most of all, may we pursue showing one another the same love that Christ shows to each of us. Because true equality is not defined by laws, it's defined by the decisions and choices that each of us make. May God help us choose our next steps well."

Albert Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and author of "Culture Shift: The Battle for the Moral Heart of America":

"Today's decisions are history-changing, but the DOMA decision is far more important than the decision in Proposition 8. Justice Kennedy's majority opinion is, in its logic, a sweeping decision that makes the full legalization of same-sex marriage nationwide almost an inevitability. The Court's decision in DOMA basically invites a future challenge to any state law that prohibits legal same-sex marriage. The Christian Church does not ask any human court what marriage is, and our main concern here should be the devastating social and personal costs of further undermining marriage. The great moral divide in this country over same-sex marriage, over marriage itself, and over sexual morality in general, is fully evident in these decisions and in the public's response to them. Today, the Court took us to the precipice of same-sex marriage nationwide. For that reason alone, this day will be long remembered."



Albert Mohler

Rachel Held Evans, blogger and author of "A Year of Biblical Womanhood:"

"For too long, LGBT people have been treated as second class citizens, both in the U.S., and even more tragically, in the Church. I'm happy for my LGBT friends and neighbors who see this as an affirmation of their equality as American citizens and dignity as human beings. Individual churches can still decide for themselves whether to marry gay couples, so this is not an infringement on civil liberties, but rather an extension of them. As sincere people of faith continue to disagree about how to respond to homosexuality, may we look to Jesus as our guide and be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry."



Rachel Evans

Jim Daly, president of Focus on the Family:

"The critical role of man-woman marriage is not diminished by these rulings today. The essential need for children to have both a married mother and father is not lessened by the opinions."



Jim Daly

Justin Lee, president of the Gay Christian Network and author of "Torn: Rescuing the Gospel from the Gays-vs-Christians Debate:"

"Our work at the Gay Christian Network includes both those who support same-sex marriage and those who oppose it. It's important for both sides to remember that, as C.S. Lewis once pointed out, marriage in the eyes of God isn't always the same as marriage in the eyes of the state. I'd also caution Christians to focus more on people than on politics, and to consider the impact their words today may have on LGBT people who already think Christians hate them. This is an opportunity to show the love and grace of Christ in the midst of disagreement."



Justin Lee

Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research and contributing editor for Christianity Today:

"The typical Christian response has been to post on blogs, write articles, and send tweets to shout about our opinion and speak out against those who differ. That's already happening. But, instead, I think we need to hold to what we believe and, without hiding our beliefs, we need to look for opportunities to have

Six truths about investing

By Don Spencer

What is an investment? It is when you put your money to work for you. Savings accounts and CDs are generally safer, however their return is usually less.



An investment will have increased risk and volatility, but will generally provide increased earnings. You need both savings and investments.

Most investments fluctuate in value.

Fear and greed often determine short-term values of stocks. This has been very evident in the recent stock market volatility. An important point to remember about the investment world: fear inevitably returns to greed and greed inevitably returns to fear. Don't be overly concerned about short-term ups and downs. Invest for the long term.

Use time, not timing.

Even the experts rarely time the market correctly. Just as they agree on the direction of the market, it often moves the opposite way. Those trying to time the market often do the wrong thing at the wrong time. However, those who keep time on their side by investing for the long term, generally profit. Be patient. Do not over-react.

Bank CDs and savings accounts will not make you rich.

It happens too often. A person puts their money in CDs or savings accounts to reduce risk. After taxes and inflation, they end up with a dollar amount that is lower in real buying power. For the long-term, it is generally better to invest for growth to offset the effects of taxes and inflation.

Your "portfolio" is more important than any single investment.

No one can expect every investment to grow dramatically. But, you expect reasonable growth from a total mix of investments (portfolio).

It pays to diversify.

"Don't put all your eggs in one basket." Use a mix of investments with differing levels of risk. This reduces the volatility of one's total portfolio. People often know this reality but ignore it. Staying diversified softens negative impact.

Christians should invest their money.

Many of Jesus' parables deal with stewardship. Appropriate investing is part of a Christian's total stewardship (Matt. 25:14-30).

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

conversations, build relationships, and demonstrate grace. Regardless of the ruling from the Supreme Court, our churches have the same mission they did last week—to show and share the love of Christ."

Many, like me, who've watched the public opinion polls in recent years predicted this day would come. Even among Christians, change has been afoot. According to Public Religion Research Institute, 51 percent of white evangelical Protestants under the age of 35 support allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry, compared to 43 percent who are opposed. Three-quarters of Catholics under the age of 35 support same-sex marriage, compared to only 20 percent who are opposed.

"The Supreme Court decision today reflected the strong shifts we have seen in public opinion toward increased support for same-sex marriage, especially over the last decade," Robert Jones told me. "What stands out most to me, since it is likely a window into the future of these debates, is the support among younger religious Americans for allowing gay and lesbian couples to marry legally, even among groups that have historically been the most opposed."

For better or worse, the death of DOMA is only the beginning. (RNS)

Jonathan Merritt is a faith and culture writer for Religion News Service.



Ed Stetzer

Pew: Media's gay marriage support evident

By Erin Roach

Washington—The mainstream media's focus on support of same-sex marriage outnumbered news stories opposing it by roughly 5-to-1, according to a new Pew Research study showing the influence such coverage could have on the American public.

Nearly half of the stories studied in the two months marked by Supreme Court deliberations on the subject, mid-March through mid-May, focused on support of gay marriage and only 9 percent focused on opposition.

Pew said in its study, released June 17, 44 percent of the news stories included an even mix of support and opposition or were objective. Pew defined support or opposition by mandating that statements expressing that position had to outnumber the opposite view by at least 2-to-1.

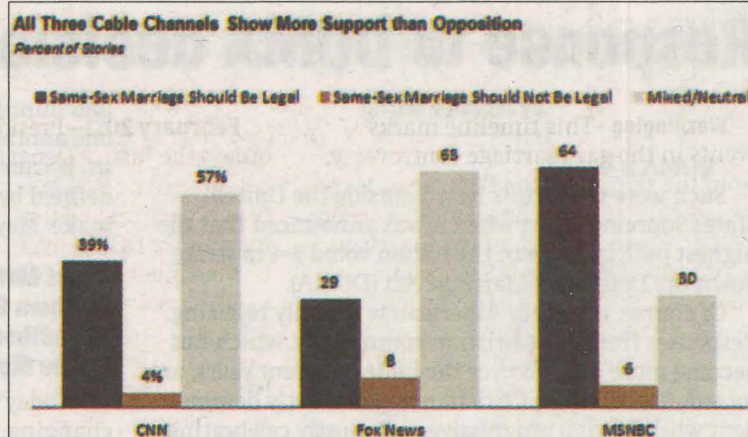
All three of the major cable networks, Pew said, had more stories with significantly more supportive statements than opposing, including Fox News.

Same-sex marriage supporters in the news coverage had a more consistent message than those arguing against it, Pew found, with supporters focusing

on gay marriage as an issue of equality in nearly half of the news stories studied.

Opponents argued that same-sex marriage would hurt society and traditional marriage, but Pew said that argument only appeared in 18 percent of the stories and other arguments included the idea that homosexuality is immoral (10 percent).

Amy Mitchell, acting director of Pew's Project for Excellence in Journalism, said the study shows how same-sex marriage supporters had a clear message and succeeded in getting that message across in all sectors of



mainstream media.

"In addition," Mitchell said, "many of the events during the period studied, such as announcements by politicians and state legislation, reflect

movement toward same-sex marriage."

To read Pew's study on the mainstream media and gay marriage, visit www.journalism.org/node/33731. (BP)

DOMA

Continued from page 1

"The grounding of this decision in equal protection and human dignity means this is not simply a procedural matter; this is a new legal matter," said Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

Appearing on CNN, Albert Mohler Jr. said many dates in American history stand out as red letter days and "this is one of those days."

"I think even as there are many people celebrating this, we recognize this is a major cultural divide over something as basic as marriage," said Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. "It is, I think, something that will be very, very devastating for our country over the long term because what it means is the inevitable marginalization of marriage and the subversion of the most essential institution for human existence."

'Second-class marriages'

In the DOMA ruling, the Supreme Court affirmed lower court decisions that struck down only Section 3 of the law passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton in 1996. Section 3 defines marriage as a heterosexual union for purposes of such matters as federal benefits and bars the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriages.

DOMA "violates basic due process and equal protection principles" applied to the federal government, Associate Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote in the majority opinion.

"The avowed purpose and practical effect of (DOMA) are to impose a disadvantage, a separate status, and so a stigma, upon all who enter into same-sex marriages made lawful by the

unquestioned authority of the States," Kennedy wrote.

No states had legalized same-sex marriage when DOMA was enacted in 1996, but 12 states and the District of Columbia now have done so.

DOMA's purpose is to treat gay marriages recognized by states as "second-class marriages for purposes of federal law," Kennedy said.

The law is unconstitutional because "no legitimate purpose overcomes the purpose and effect to disparage and to injure those whom the State, by its marriage laws, sought to protect in personhood and dignity," he wrote.

Joining Kennedy in the majority were the four associate justices considered the most liberal on the court: Ruth Bader Ginsburg; Stephen Breyer; Sonia Sotomayor; and Elena Kagan.

In his dissent, Associate Justice Antonin Scalia said he is certain the majority's accusations that Congress and Clinton acted maliciously toward same-sex couples are false. "To hurl such accusations so casually demeans this institution," he said.

"(T)o defend traditional marriage is not to condemn, demean, or humiliate those who would prefer other arrangements, any more than to defend the Constitution of the United States is to condemn, demean, or humiliate other constitutions," Scalia wrote.

Chief Justice John Roberts and Associate Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito also dissented.

Proposition 8

In its other same-sex marriage decision, the high court did not rule on the constitutionality of a California amendment known as Proposition 8. Instead, it ruled Prop 8's supporters—who appeared a lower court ruling after the appeal and attorney general refused to do so—did not have standing, or the legal right,

to make such an appeal. The justices sent the case back to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco and ordered it to dismiss the appeal.

In the majority opinion, Roberts said the Supreme Court declined to break precedent in the case. "We have never before upheld the standing of a private party to defend the constitutionality of a state statute when state officials have chosen not to," he wrote.

The ruling made for an unusual mixture of conservative and liberal justices on each side. Joining Roberts in the majority were Scalia, Ginsburg, Breyer and Kagan. Dissenting were Kennedy, Thomas, Alito and Sotomayor.

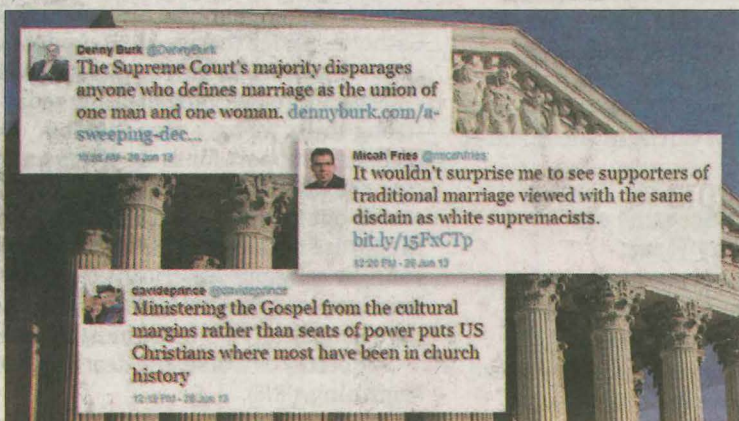
The high court's action left a federal judge's opinion striking down Prop 8 in effect.

California voters approved Proposition 8 as an amendment to the state constitution in 2008 after the state Supreme Court had legalized gay marriage earlier in the year. The Ninth Circuit, however, affirmed a federal judge's decision striking down the amendment.

Defenders of the biblical, traditional definition of marriage expressed some relief that the Supreme Court limited the reach of its decisions.

The justices "could have gone much further and struck down the marriage amendments which are in 30 states," said Family Research Council President Tony Perkins. "They did not do that. This only applies to California, and how it's going to be implemented we don't yet know as we are still combing through the opinion." (BP)

Social media, particularly Twitter, was a preferred format for Southern Baptist leaders and others to express their reactions in the hours that followed the landmark Supreme Court decisions on gay marriage. (Photo illustration by Baptist Press)



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SEND NORTH AMERICA

Timeline of events: *Gay marriage in the United States*

Washington—This timeline marks events in the gay marriage controversy, from the signing of the Defense of Marriage Act in 1996 to the historic decisions by the Supreme Court on gay marriage.

June 26, 2013—The U.S. Supreme Court strikes down DOMA Section 3, requiring the federal government to recognize gay marriages on state level. Court also rules Prop 8 supporters lacked standing in court. The latter ruling means gay marriage is not legalized nationwide but that it might become legal in California.

May 2013—In a quick succession of votes, legislatures in Rhode Island, Delaware and Minnesota pass gay marriage bills which are signed by their respective governors, bringing to 12 the number of states to redefine marriage.

November 2012—Gay marriage supporters record a historic victory when voters in Maine, Maryland and Washington approve the legalization of gay marriage. It is the first time voters in any state OK the redefinition of marriage.

May 2012—President Obama becomes the first sitting president publicly to support gay marriage, sparking a tidal wave of Democrats in the House and Senate to follow his lead over the next year.

May 2012—North Carolina voters approve a constitutional amendment defining marriage as between a man and a woman. It is the 30th state to pass such an amendment.

June 2011—New York's legislature passes a gay marriage bill, which the governor signs.

February 2011—President Obama orders the Justice Department to stop defending the DOMA in court, switching from a neutral position to actively working to have DOMA overturned.

November 2009—Maine voters, by 53-47 percent margin, overturn a gay marriage law that had been signed by the governor in May 2009. Three years later, Maine voters change their minds (see November 2012).

June 2009—New Hampshire's legislature approves a gay marriage bill, which the governor signs.

April 2009—Vermont legislature overrides governor's veto, making it the fourth state to legalize gay marriage—and the first to do so through the legislative process.

April 2009—Iowa Supreme Court orders gay marriage legalized. Iowa becomes the first state outside the Northeast, as well as the first in the heartland, with such a law.

November 2008—California voters approve Proposition 8, a constitutional amendment defining marriage as between one man and one woman. It passes by 52-48 percent margin and reverses state Supreme Court ruling that had legalized gay marriage.

Fall 2008—Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama says he believes marriage is a "union between a man and a woman." At the same time, he says he opposes the Defense of Marriage Act and California Proposition 8. Critics call his position contradictory.

October 2008—Connecticut Supreme

Court legalizes gay marriage.

May 2008—California Supreme Court, in 4-3 ruling, orders state to legalize gay marriage, saying marriage must be "available both to opposite-sex and same-sex couples." Ruling overturns law that 61 percent of voters had approved. Six months later, voters overturn the court's ruling (see November 2008 entry).

September 2007—Maryland's highest court, in 4-3 decision, refuses to legalize gay marriage, saying the state has a "legitimate governmental interest" in "fostering procreation" by limiting marriage to one man and one woman.

November 2006—Seven states, including left-leaning Wisconsin, pass constitutional amendments defining marriage as between one man, one woman, bringing to 27 the number of states with such an amendment.

October 2006—New Jersey Supreme Court, in 4-3 ruling, refuses to legalize gay marriage but orders the legislature to amend state law to give homosexual couples the legal benefits of marriage. Legislature subsequently legalizes same-sex civil unions.

July 2006—Washington state Supreme Court, in 5-4 ruling, refuses to legalize gay marriage, saying that "limiting marriage to opposite-sex couples furthers procreation, essential to the survival of the human race."

July 2006—New York state's highest court, in 4-2 decision, refuses to legalize gay marriage, saying that "intuition and experience suggest that a child benefits from having before his or her eyes, every

day, living models of what both a man and a woman are like."

November 2004—Voters in eleven states on Election Day pass constitutional amendments defining marriage as between one man and one woman. Left-leaning states Michigan and Oregon are among the group.

May 2004—Massachusetts court ruling takes effect, making it the first state in nation to legalize gay marriage.

February 2004—President Bush publicly embraces a federal marriage amendment defining marriage as between a man and a woman, saying, "The amendment process has addressed many serious matters of national concern. And the preservation of marriage rises to this level of national importance." The amendment fails to get the required two-thirds support in the House and Senate for it to be sent to the states.

November 2003—Massachusetts' high court, in 4-3 decision, rules that the state's traditional marriage laws violate the state's constitution and that gay marriage must be legalized. Court stays its opinion 180 days.

November 1998—Voters in Alaska and Hawaii overwhelmingly approve state constitutional amendments, ending threats from respective states courts to legalize gay marriage.

September 1996—President Clinton signs the Defense of Marriage Act, which defines in federal law marriage as between a man and a woman. It also gives states the option of not recognizing gay marriage from other states. (BP)

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Class of 2013

Senior class president thanks God, parents, teachers and staff

Editor's note: This week's Oneida Baptist Institute column is from an address made by Beimnet Kebede, senior class president, at Meet the Class of 2013.

"It's finally here, the day we have all been waiting and working hard for. Who knew we all would end up here in the middle of nowhere, in a place called Oneida.

"The class of 2013 is one of a kind. It is diverse in nationality, personality, beliefs and even friendships, but at the end of the day we all stand together as one, hold hands and pray to the Creator who has kept us together and who has also blessed us in great measures.

"Some of us just met this year and some of us have known each other for the past seven years. We have made so many memories together. There was that soccer game when our seniors cheered on the team while it was pouring outside. Singing along to songs in circles at the cookouts. Laughing at each other's screams on roller coaster rides. Running in circles holding each other trying to play a game because Mr. Self wanted to do something traditional. Stressing out about our scrapbooks.

"We are going to miss Robert's cricket noise in awkward situations. And we'll miss Kyle saying 'Sauce!' in middle school. We won't forget Brandon's 'You are a bum!' And all of us know it's Lydia when you hear a big 'Endae!' in the crowd.

"Oneida will always be a part of us. We'll miss the packed dining hall on chicken wing night, Mrs. Belcher's

amazing glazed doughnuts, and who could forget Mr. Bishop's five-minute-long applause, which were hilarious. Finally, the KBC mandatory fun trip, which actually turned out to be fun. We went as a class and came back as a family.

"We have grown and matured together. We've laughed. We've cried. We've lost people, but now we've come to this point in our lives where we go our separate ways and take these precious memories with us.

"Parents and guardians, we are glad you came to celebrate with us today. We thank you for all of your hard work to make our dreams a possibility. Teachers, houseparents, faculty and staff, thank you for making our futures brighter and guiding us in the way you know best. On behalf of the entire class, I would like to thank our class sponsors, Mrs. Stockton and Mr. Self. You both are a wonderful blessing to us, I know we have not been the greatest or the easiest class to work with, but thank you for all of your effort to make our year unforgettable. You are greatly appreciated.

"My fellow classmates, it has been a great pleasure getting to know each of you. Each of you are amazing; you have a great potential to go out into the world and make something of yourselves. Congratulations to you all, I love you very much and I thank God that He has kept us together this far. This is our class. This is the class of 2013."



Like no other place

Student describes peace, blessings in following God's will

Brady Kottell just finished his first year at Clear Creek. It wasn't long ago that he didn't think there was any way he would ever end up in southeastern Kentucky.

"God blessed me with a wonderful Christian family who always had me in church," Brady said. "One day my mother led me to the Lord in our backyard as I was asking her questions and we were talking about how to be saved.

"As I grew through my teenage years and into high school I began to grow away from the Lord," Brady said. "After I graduated from high school and went to college I was on my own for the very first time of my life. I knew from the time I started my first semester in college that my relationship with the Lord was not where it needed to be. I knew there were some changes that I needed to make in my life.

"I was invited to a youth revival during this time and I rededicated my life to Christ," Brady recalled. "I was sitting in class one day and God began to speak to me about surrendering my life to

Him for ministry. I knew He had been dealing with me for some time and I surrendered to Him right there in the classroom that day. I told Him I wanted to serve Him in whatever way He wanted me to.

"I knew I needed to look for a place where God would have me prepare for the ministry," Brady continued. "My grandfather graduated from Clear Creek and he mentioned that I should look into going there. I told myself there was no way I would come to southeastern Kentucky to school, but I did tell my grandfather I would at least check it out.

"When I drove onto campus, I experienced a presence here like I had never experienced," Brady said. "There was a peace that God gave me when I came here. He told me this is where I needed to be and He would take care of me.

"God has really blessed me since I came to Clear Creek. God has shown me that He will provide in all things."

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

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

Baptists, Catholics join to fight abortion mandate, write Congress

By Tom Strode

Washington—The United States' two largest religious denominations have joined forces in an effort to protect freedom of conscience as full enforcement of the Obama administration's abortion/contraception mandate nears.

The leading religious freedom spokesmen for Southern Baptists and American Roman Catholics—Russell Moore and William Lori, respectively—urged Congress in a letter June 21 to pass legislation designed to bolster conscience protections in health care.

The letter from Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, and Lori, archbishop of Baltimore and chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' ad hoc committee for religious liberty, went to all members of the Senate and House of Representatives.

The proposal for which they sought support—the Health Care Conscience Rights Act, H.R. 940 in the House and S. 1204 in the Senate—addresses health care generally, but Moore and Lori cited the abortion/contraception mandate as the most immediate challenge to religious freedom in that arena.

While acknowledging Southern Baptists and Roman Catholics differ theologically, Moore and Lori said in their letter they are united in believing legislative action is needed to protect freedom

of conscience.

"(M)any people are being forced—and many others will soon be forced—to either follow what the government compels or suffer" for their beliefs, they wrote. Southern Baptists and Catholics both "value God's gift of procreation," Moore and Lori told senators and representatives, and they also agree regarding the mandate:

■ "(I)t is wrong to promote drugs and devices that destroy a newly conceived human life at any stage....

■ "(U)nmarried minors must not be subject to government-mandated 'counseling' on sex and birth control without their parents' knowledge or over their objections....

■ "(T)he religious beliefs of our faith communities and others must not be suppressed or ignored by a government supposedly committed to protect the religious freedom of all."

They also cited the need to protect the conscience rights of medical workers, who increasingly face pressure to assist in "the destruction of innocent life."

Regarding the letter, Moore said, "We will not stand by as deeply held beliefs are being trampled by the federal government."

While the USCCB opposes coverage of all contraceptives, the ERLC's objection is to contraceptives that can cause abortions. (BP)

GuideStone: Church Health Plan Act needed

By Roy Hayhurst

Dallas—Pastors, ministers and employees of churches and church-related organizations were disregarded and put at a disadvantage when the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was enacted in 2010, according to GuideStone, which provides health care coverage to more than 1 million people.

Beginning in 2014, premium tax credits will be made available to eligible individuals who purchase their health coverage from commercial health care exchanges, but those credits will not be available to pastors and others who get their health care coverage from church health plans.

The Church Health Plan Act, S.B. 1164, introduced in the Senate, will provide fairness for church health plans that cover ministers and others serving churches and ministry organizations. GuideStone said it supports the efforts of the bill's sponsors, Sen. Mark Pryor, D-Ark., and Sen. Christopher Coons, D-Del., and urges both Democratic and Republican senators alike to ensure its passage.

The bill does not add to the cost of health care reform's overall tab. It simply ensures that a benefit promised to millions of Americans is available to pastors and other church staff members. GuideStone believes pastors should not have to choose between tax credits available to other Americans and proven health care plans designed with the unique needs of ministers and church employees.

GuideStone is encouraging pastors and other concerned individuals to contact their senators and urge them to join as co-sponsors and work together for the

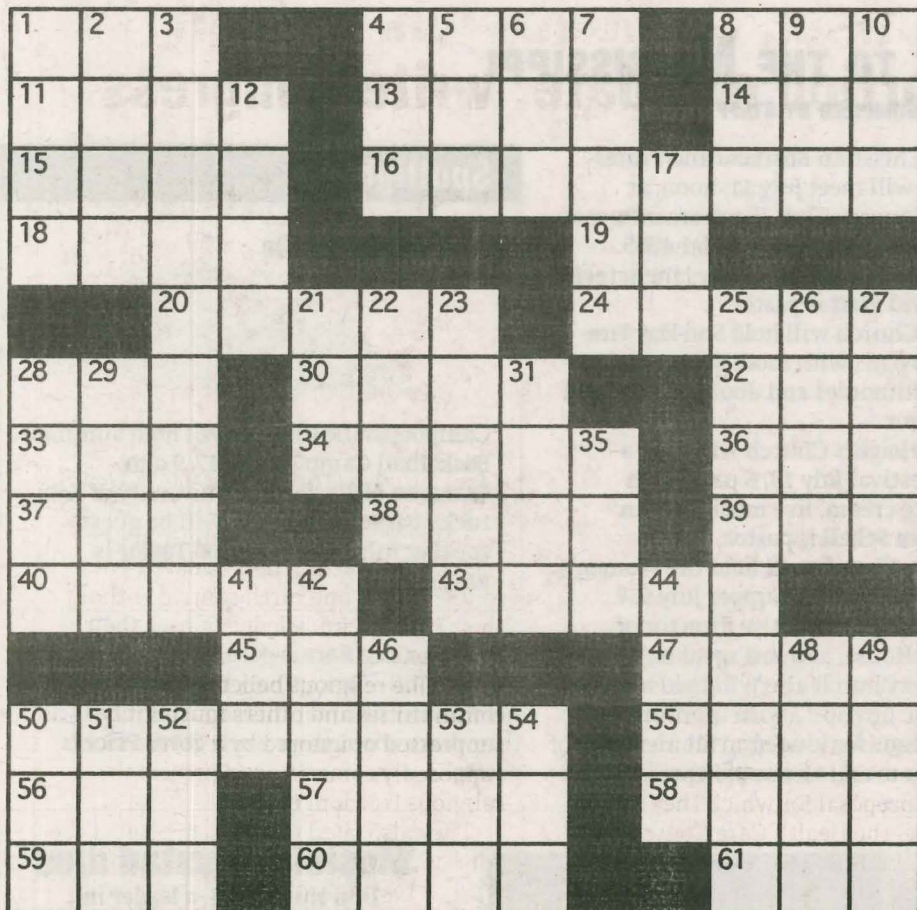
sake of pastors and others in ministry.

"For many months GuideStone has been advocating on multiple avenues related to health care reform, and we continue to do so," said O.S. Hawkins, president of GuideStone. "Now, Congress stands poised to provide fair treatment for church health care plans. If Congress fails to act, they will be disadvantaging church plans as compared to commercial, secular plans."

While repealing the health care reform law remains a goal for many, the Church Health Plan Act will help level the playing field immediately, while repeal efforts continue over the coming years, GuideStone said.

"This is a matter that deserves prompt attention," Hawkins said. "Failure by Congress to act is an unthinkable affront to the vital and historic role of church health plans and, as a practical matter, places a disproportionate financial burden on many pastors and others in ministry who have relatively low household incomes. This is wholly unwarranted. Church health plans have been consistently competitive with private insurers and have existed in their current form for years and years. They have met the needs of their constituents in a manner that reflects their core convictions."

If Congress chooses not to act, church health plans will find themselves in an unfair position within the health care marketplace. GuideStone said it is diligently preparing for the full effect of the implementation of health care reform in 2014. However, GuideStone said, failure to pass the Church Health Plan Act will likely make church health plans unable to compete in the future. (BP)



#166

Bible Crosswords

By Evelyn Boyington

Across

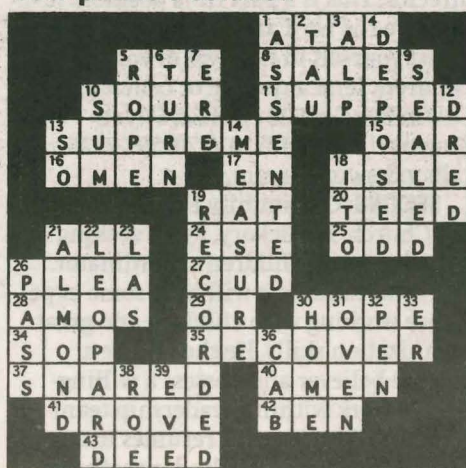
- 1 "Will a man ____ God?" (Malachi 3:8)
- 4 Moon or mast
- 8 German physicist
- 11 Son of Seth (Genesis 4:26)
- 13 Bread spread
- 14 Dramatic feathery wrap
- 15 Israel seaport
- 16 "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth ____" (Isaiah 57:15)
- 18 Time on the religious calendar
- 19 Note on the diatonic scale
- 20 Playwright's direction
- 24 "Is Israel a servant? is he a homeborn ____?" (Jeremiah 2:14)
- 28 Measure of journey
- 30 Small space
- 32 Jellylike substance
- 33 Son of Abijam; king of Judah
- 34 "And supper being ____, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot" (John 13:2)
- 36 "Above the ____" (goal of b'ball players)
- 37 Yes, in Yokohama
- 38 Saline drop
- 39 Golfer Ernie
- 40 Like some egg yolks
- 43 ____ scheme
- 45 Many-tome resource (abbr.)
- 47 Ancient Hebrew dry measure
- 50 "Minister the same one to another, as good ____" (1 Peter 4:10)
- 55 Tractor-trailer, to many (colloq.)
- 56 Person who has to do with (suffix)
- 57 Protest, with "against"
- 58 Cut off
- 59 "He that hath a bountiful ____ shall be blessed" (Proverbs 22:9)
- 60 Hold ____
- 61 Three, in Turin

- 10 Feminine name
- 12 Complete collections
- 17 Nothing
- 21 "He casteth forth his ____ like morsels" (Psalm 147:17)
- 22 Impression
- 23 Pliny the ____ (Roman writer)
- 25 "And what ____ hath the temple of God with idols?" (2 Corinthians 6:16)
- 26 "And, behold, the ____ of the temple was rent in twain" (Matthew 27:51)
- 27 Shade trees
- 28 Wizard of Oz actor
- 29 "Jacob have I loved, but ____ have I hated" (Romans 9:13)
- 31 "Tender-eyed" woman of the Old Testament
- 35 Parched
- 41 Partner of then
- 42 "The ____ of the wicked shall be shortened" (Proverbs 10:27)
- 44 Playwright Hart
- 46 "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me ____ him" (John 6:44)
- 48 Arab chieftain
- 49 "The harvest of the earth is ____" (Revelation 14:15)
- 50 "O taste and ____ that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8)
- 51 Mystery writer Josephine
- 52 Poetic before
- 53 Throughout; across (prefix)
- 54 Wily; conniving

Down

- 1 Camino ____
- 2 "God hath spoken ____; twice have I heard this" (Psalm 62:11)
- 3 "Being ____ (2 words), not of corruptible seed" (1 Peter 1:23)
- 4 Tend to the garden
- 5 Mountain measure (abbr.)
- 6 Beloved general of Virginia
- 7 Creates from nothing
- 8 Japanese sash
- 9 Like dog days

Last puzzle's solution #165



Values before valuables

Inheritance: What kind are you bequeathing?

The matter of inheritance is exceedingly important and a crucial concern in the dynamics of family life today.

Parents consider at length what kind of inheritance they want to pass on to their children. And, children, in turn, when they attain a certain age, ponder what they are going to inherit from their parents.

The familiar and favorite parable of the wise father and the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-24) is the finest example I know of the kind of inheritance I would like to give as a parent and receive as a son.

To clarify what this parable teaches us, two common misconceptions must be addressed and set aside. The first misconception is an inheritance is something parents leave their children after they have died. However, if you think about it, this is far too limited a concept because parents begin bequeathing an inheritance to their children the moment the child is born in the sense of passing on certain life experiences and values that surely will shape that child's existence.

So, the request of the prodigal was not as brash as it first appeared. Like any young adult leaving home he

gathered up whatever inheritance had been shared with him and began transacting with life out of that legacy. As parents it is imperative we not wait until the end of life to consider what kind of inheritance we want to leave.

The second misconception is an inheritance consists only of money or physical property, which also is a far too restricted view, because an inheritance stands for all parents transfer to their children in terms of opportunities, values and a whole vision of life. This is not to imply the economic side is unimportant, because it is very important. But it is not everything, and a child is poor indeed

whose parents do not realize this and seek to bequeath only a monetary estate.

A child needs more from parents than money bequeathed at death, and this is why the father of the prodigal is so worthy of our attention. And, what makes it doubly important is this father is a reflection of our Father in heaven.

So, remember, it's more important what you leave in them than what you leave to them. "Instill your values... before you give them your valuables."

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

Ky. Baptist Foundation



Barry Allen

Create a missions legacy, churches urged

By Laura Fielding

Houston—The importance of leaving a legacy—both financial and spiritual—was conveyed to 900 pastors and church members at a luncheon hosted by the IMB during the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting in Houston.

Chuck Schneider, executive pastor of Sagemont Church in Houston, which funded the event, said the gathering's theme, "The Last Full Measure of Devotion," came from President Abraham Lincoln as he acknowledged those who gave the ultimate sacrifice at Gettysburg.

For believers, however, there is no fear of death, Schneider noted.

"The last full measure of devotion for us is the concept of what are we going to do as ambassadors, as we step off into the kingdom. What kind of legacy will we leave?" he asked.

John Morgan, Sagemont's senior pastor, talked about "trying to make up for lost time" after he realized that during his 40-plus years at the church only one person had remembered it in her will.

After learning that about 70 percent of Americans do not have a will, Morgan decided to make sure everyone at Sagemont had one. When they offered a lawyer's services to set up wills for church members, more than 1,700 wills, powers of attorney and physician directives were distributed.

Soon after that, Schneider invited PhilanthroCorp, a planned giving services organization and partner of both IMB and the Southern Baptist Foundation to visit the church.

In about two years, families contributed more than \$20 million to the Sagemont's nonprofit foundation, Morgan

said, and nearly \$20 million more is pending. God has provided for the church's needs, he said, since they committed to stop borrowing money in 1975.

"When we stopped begging the people and starting praising God and asking Him, the glory came down," Morgan said. "... All during this time period, we stayed the course of missions, missions, missions."

Then, saying "we have finally come to the good part," Morgan presented Elliff with a \$200,000 check for the Cooperative Program—the first check Sagemont has written from the endowment.

"Pastors, you don't have to save God any money, He's got plenty of money—He just can't find any stewards to entrust it to," Morgan said. "When your church becomes that kind of a church and, pastors, when you get a vision that reaches beyond where you live, God will open up the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that you'll not be able to receive."

Dave Clippard, IMB associate vice president of development, urged pastors to first create their family's personal estate plans and then help church members with estate planning. IMB's development office has several church legacy consultants who can help churches with planned giving.

In estate planning, "we simply ask a question, 'have you considered missions?'" Clippard said.

For more information, go to imbgiving.org, visit the PhilanthroCorp website at www.aboutplannedgiving.com or go to the Southern Baptist Foundation website at www.sbfnd.org. (BP)



July

- 12 GA Overnight, Jonathan Creek, Hardin.
- 12 Mother/Daughter Overnight, Jonathan Creeks, Hardin.
- 12 Teens 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

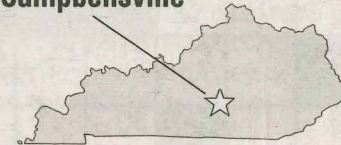
- 2 Courage Camp, Laurel Lake Baptist Camp, Corbin.
- 15 Administrative Committee, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville.
- 17 Super Saturday, Highview Baptist Church—Fegenbush Campus, Louisville.
- 20 Committee on Committees, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville.
- 22 Committee on Public Affairs,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

- **CADIZ**—East Cadiz Church will hold a block party July 6, 5 p.m., with **Cesar Arocher** and the Breaking the Barriers Faith Force Team. **Lester Watson** is pastor.
- **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Campbellsville Church will host Life Line Screening July 16.
- **CORBIN**—First Church will hold Patriotic Celebration and Ice Cream Churn Off July 7, 6:30 p.m. **Jim Hunter** is pastor.
- **CRESTWOOD**—Crestwood Church will hold a churchwide picnic and VBS Family Night July 10 with games and inflatables. **Donnie Patrick** is pastor.
- **FRANKFORT**—Crestwood Church will hold a Block Party July 6, 7 p.m.
- **HOPKINSVILLE**—First Church will hold a special service and fellowship July 7, 10 a.m., with worship, food, inflatables and water fun.
- **LONDON**—Emmanuel Church will hold Homecoming July 14, 11 a.m., with **Freddie Harris** as guest speaker and **The Risen** in concert. **Barry Robinson** is pastor.

- **LOUISVILLE**—Christian Business and Professional Women will meet July 11, noon, at Hurstbourne Country Club. For more information, call **Cathy Scrivner** at (502) 664-4565.
- Deer Park Church will host Life Line screening July 11. **David Platt** is pastor.
- Fern Creek Church will hold Son-Day Fun-Day July 7, 5:30 p.m., with food, games, inflatables, music, testimonies and door prizes. **Linda Popham** is pastor.
- Melbourne Heights Church will hold a Watermelon Festival July 13, 6 p.m., with watermelon, ice cream, live music and an inflatable. **Adam Schell** is pastor.
- St. Matthews Church will hold the Women's Ministry Annual Summer Supper July 9, 7 p.m., with **Pam Rice**, executive director of Neighborhood House, as guest speaker.
- St. Matthews Church also will hold a basketball skills clinic July 10-12 with morning and afternoon sessions for kindergarten through third grade. For more information, call (502)

Spotlight on ...

Campbellsville



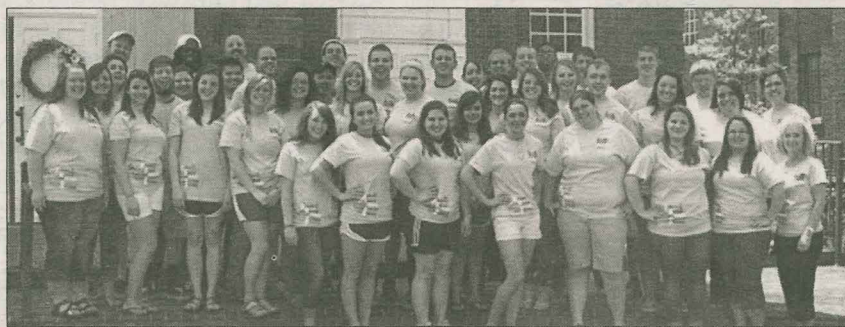
Campbellsville Church will hold Summer Basketball Camp July 15-17, 9 a.m. **Cameron Mills**, former University of Kentucky basketball player, will be guest speaker July 17, 11 a.m. **Ted Taylor** is pastor.

896-8882. **Greg Barr** is pastor.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Grace Church will host Elkorn Association summer missionaries July 14 as they share about their work. **Steve Price** is pastor.

Summer of service

A total of 38 Kentucky college students and four coordinators are serving this summer as part of the "1:8 Leadership Experience." Stay up to date on the teams' work at www.facebook.com/kentuckybcm.



Bowling Green/Greece Team: Spencer Austin of Bowling Green; Meredith Eckstein of Union; Kristen Large of Russellville; Emily Rose Lewis of Carrollton; Julie Paris of Ashland; Tara Shelton of Corbin; Destinee Smith of Pineville; Cory Spaulding of Florence; Perry Swack of Bowling Green; and Coordinator Jessica "Jessie" Morgan of Guston.

Cedar Crest/Belfast, Ireland: Chase Buchanan of Mayfield; Adam Davis of Lucasville, Ohio; Caitlin Elizabeth Glenn of Owensboro; Sarah Lambert of Ironton, Ohio; Peter Northcutt of Benton; Tamra Reid of Georgetown; Madison Schwetman of Murray; Jacob Sherrill of Princeton; Ashley Nichole Travis of Shelbyville; Amber Vance of Williamstown; Elizabeth Whisman of Mt. Sterling; and Coordinator Tren-

ton Fleener of Owensboro.

Murray/Zimbabwe Team: Jon Claude Burlew of Somerset; Emily Cain of Walton; Candice Coles of Russellville; Sarah Ashley England of Versailles; Morgan Whitney Harper of Brodhead; Megan Hogan of Saline, Mich.; Jia Ong Ong of Georgetown, Malaysia; Darren Jones of Louisville; Cheyenne Martis of Louisville; Hannah Marie Priest of Louisville; and Coordinator Jeff Finley of Murray.

Shelbyville/Russia Team: Emily Anderson of Somerset; Sara Donahue of Harlan; Chastity Hawkins of New Castle; Kamryn Olivier of Harrison, Ohio; Jacob Spence of Falmouth; Holly Stone of Wheelersburg, Ohio; Larry Thornhill of Shepherdsville; Zachary Wagner of Portsmouth, Ohio; and Coordinator Sitha Sayers of London.

Musician Hustad dies

Don Hustad, 94, a leader in evangelical church music who taught for decades at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, died June 22.

Hustad, once full-time organist for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, served on the faculty of Southern Seminary's School of Church Music from 1966 until his retirement in 1986. He continued to teach courses and lecture at the seminary in Louisville for the next 20 years.

He published five books, including "Jubilate!"—a book that analyzes evangelical church music and sets forth his own philosophy of church music—and "True Worship: Reclaiming the Wonder & Majesty." (ABP)

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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: 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: 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: 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.

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: 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: 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 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: Community Fellowship Baptist Church, in Hickory, Ky., is seeking a part time, paid children's coordinator. The ideal candidate will have some experience working with children and great organization skills. He/she will be a mature believer and possess a willingness to work within a leadership team structure. Please email resumé to our pastoral assistant at lizlindsey@cfbc.tv before our extended deadline of July 7.

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For more information about us, go to www.cfbc.tv or call (270) 856-4463.

SEEKING: Thornhill Baptist Church in Frankfort, Ky., is seeking a part time music leader. If you are interested, please call Sean Post at (502) 223-7302 or email sean@thornhillbaptist.org.

SEEKING: Cedar Creek Baptist Church (Louisville) is seeking to fill the position of a part-time worship leader (including a small band). Additional leadership of adult choir is preferable. Church musical style is "blended." Experience preferred. Send resumé to: CCBC, 7709 Bardstown Rd., Louisville, KY 40291, Attn: Music Search Committee, or email: cedarcreekbc@gmail.com. Deadline for submission is Aug. 15.

New Southern Baptist campaign targets global hunger

By Mark Kelly

Nashville—Worldwide, 870 million people don't have enough to eat—and the vast majority of them have no idea how much God loves them. A new initiative involving the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund aims to tackle both those problems.

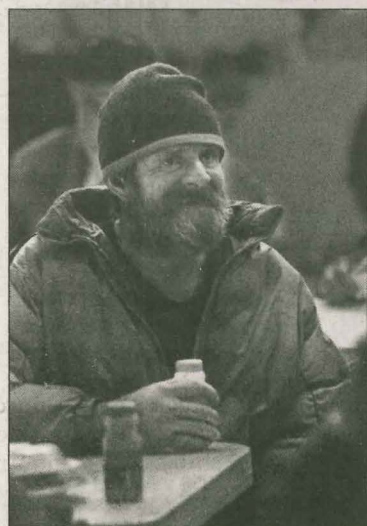
The new initiative, Global Hunger Relief, seeks to take the WHF's unique "dollar in, dollar out" message to new and wider audiences—and to challenge a new generation of believers to personally take Jesus' love to starving souls, in both word and deed.

"No one is for world hunger. We all think it's a terrible thing and we wish it would go away," said Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, which is charged by Southern Baptists with raising awareness about the hunger issue.

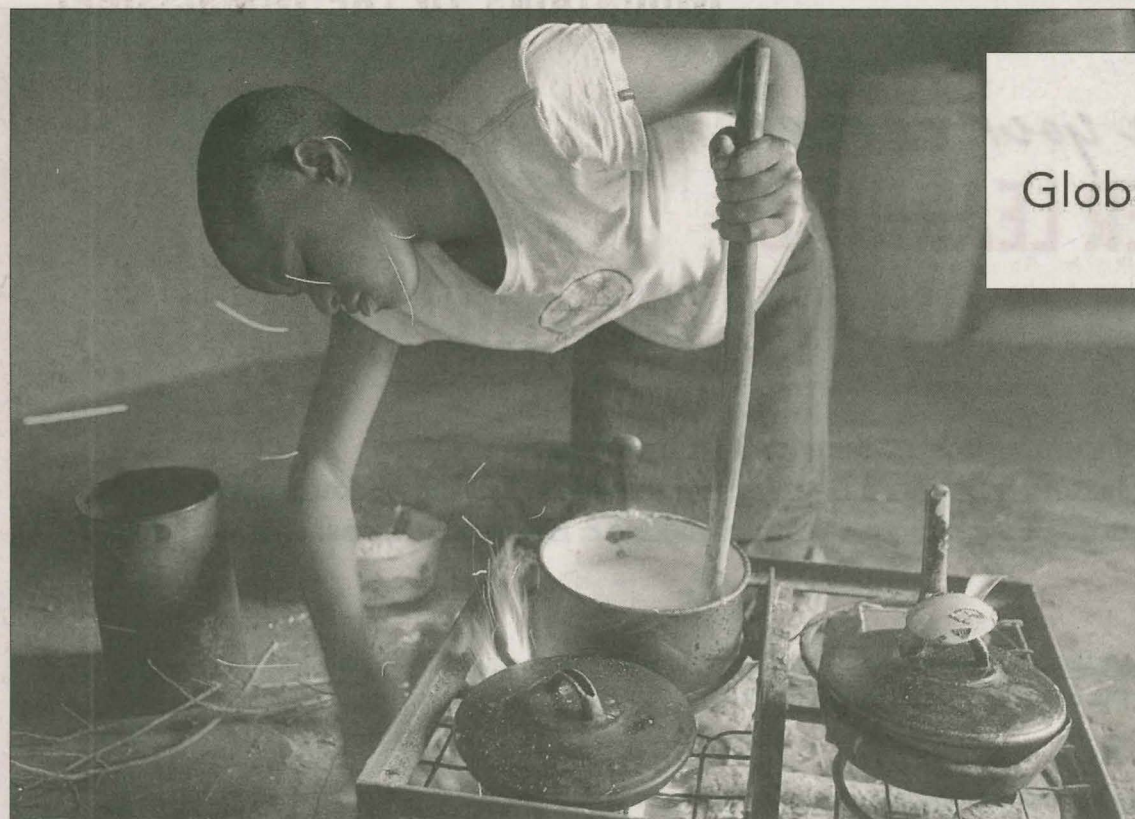
"Having the right feelings about hunger, though, isn't enough. That's the equivalent of the apostle John's warning against saying 'Be warmed and filled' to those in need," Moore added. "The World Hunger Fund—and the new Global Hunger Relief initiative—is a tangible way for Baptist Christians to feed hungry people in Jesus' name. The Bible tells us we'll be asked at the Judgment Seat about our response to the hungry. The least we can do is give, to offer a meal and the gospel of life to those who are starving."

While Southern Baptist donations to the hunger cause have tailed off over the past decade—from \$6.3 million in 2000 to \$4.6 million in 2011—the strategic value of those funds has increased dramatically, both in North America and overseas.

Tom Elliff, president of the International Mission Board, sees hunger funds playing a crucial role in taking the good news of God's love to people who otherwise are unlikely to hear.



Hunger ministries take many forms, such as a Thanksgiving dinner and on Skid Row in Los Angeles. (Photo by Greg Schneider)



An orphan in Zimbabwe cooks dinner with food purchased through the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund. Each month, she receives a food pack containing dried fish, rice, peanut butter, corn meal, dried and tinned beans, cooking oil, salt, tinned meat, sugar and soap. (BGR photo)

"Right now across the world there are more than 3,000 unengaged unreached people groups," Elliff said. "That means they have not had the privilege of hearing the gospel."

When IMB uses Southern Baptist hunger funds among the unreached, however, "every project is tied to a long-term strategy, not only for evangelism and discipleship, but for planting reproducing churches," Elliff said. "There can be no better investment of your resources and your life than through projects like that, which will bear fruit unto life eternal."

'Doesn't return void'

Hunger funds play a crucial role in Southern Baptist humanitarian efforts, as well, said Jeff Palmer, executive director of the Baptist Global Response international relief organization.

"Hunger strategies are one of the most effective tools we have in reaching people in need both physically and spiritually," Palmer said. "The simple act of helping people with their basic hunger need has shown over and over to be an effective compassion strategy that also gets us into heart conversations with people who do not know God's love."

"I have seen countless people touched by the kindness of having their basic needs met," Palmer added. "In many cases, they are surprised and sometimes astonished ... as we give a piece of bread, a cup of cold water or a way for them to earn more money so their family can have a healthier, fuller life. I have seen that the Word of God never returns void. I also have



Students at the Light of Hope Center ask God's blessing on a healthy lunch of rice, lentils and vegetables. The Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund provides two meals a day for these girls—meals they likely would not have otherwise. (BP photo)

seen that the compassion of Christ, meeting needs like hunger, doesn't return void either."

Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board, said NAMB's close work with Southern Baptist state partners "has given us many opportunities to be sure underserved communities in North America are receiving food for the hungry and a chance to experience the hope found in Christ. We look forward to this continued partnership and to expanding these opportunities."

Healthy churches that want God to use them in transforming lives and communities will touch needy people with the love of Jesus, added Thom Rainer, president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources.

"Healthy churches reach out to people in crisis," Rainer said. "Feeding hungry people is one of the best ways to help them

experience God's transforming love. LifeWay Christian Resources is pleased to support hunger ministries across America and around the world, and encourages churches and their members to participate in the Global Hunger Response initiative."

Wanda Lee, executive director/treasurer of Woman's Missionary Union, agreed, saying that followers of Christ must help with hunger issues.

"After hearing Jesus' teaching on the parable of the talents, the people asked him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you a drink?' And He answered, 'Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to Me' (Matthew 25:37,40 KJV), Lee said. "Jesus modeled for His followers how to reach into the heart of those who were lost and hurting by



GlobalHungerRelief

bread for life.

feeding them physically and spiritually.

"For many years, the World Hunger Fund has made it possible for many of our missionaries serving in places where hunger is a real and daily challenge to minister to the people they serve," Lee added. "Our gifts through the World Hunger Fund are enhanced by the support of the Cooperative Program to cover administrative costs, enabling 100 percent to be used for feeding hungry people. By following the example of Jesus, we become more like Him as we share His love."

100% meets need

Global Hunger Relief follows the unique "dollar in, dollar out" path blazed by World Hunger Fund. While many hunger relief organizations keep as much as 70 percent of donations for administrative overhead, the Southern Baptist channel sends 100 percent of every gift to meet hunger needs in North America and around the world.

Southern Baptist gifts through the Cooperative Program will dramatically enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of Global Hunger Relief projects, said Frank Page, president of the SBC Executive Committee.

"Because of the faithful gifts of our churches through the Cooperative Program, every penny of every dollar of personal gifts to Global Hunger Relief goes directly to feeding the hungry here in the United States and around the world," Page said. "Southern Baptists have been passionate about meeting hunger needs for many years. The new artwork for this historic fund will help connect a younger generation to the urgency of this need."

That new GHR logo will be a key element of a strategy to help a new and wider audience appreciate the effectiveness of combating hunger through a channel that dedicates their entire donation to gospel-centered projects that share God's love.

That strategy will continue to support promotion of World Hunger Sunday, which Southern Baptists observe the second Sunday of October each year, but hopes to leverage a fresh look and new media to raise awareness with a wider audience about Southern Baptists' unique approach to hunger relief. (BP)

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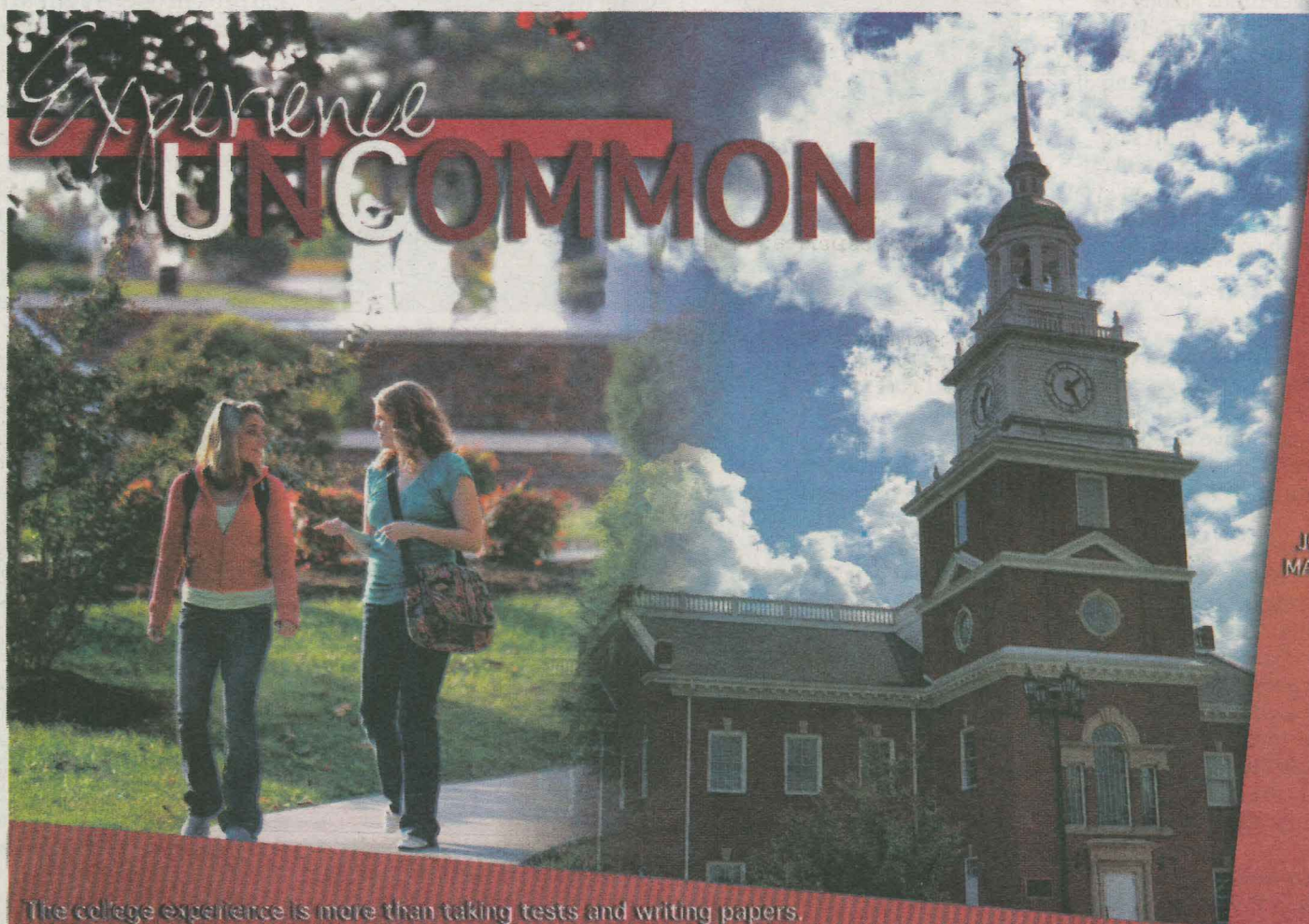
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