

WESTERN Recorder

August 6, 2013

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 187, Issue 29

'Defining moment'

Church planters encouraged: Seize conference momentum

By Joe Conway

Plano, Texas—More than 4,200 church planters, pastors and church leaders flooded the hallways of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas, for the North American Mission Board's second Send North America Conference July 29-30.

The gathering was marked by masses of participants praying in response to speakers, hundreds of connections between churches and church planters, and individuals seizing their moments to penetrate

lostness in North America. Many attendees expressed the belief they were witnessing momentum building toward a movement to reach the continent.

The conference opening combined video, graphics, precision projection and an individual performance that

□ See Send ... Page 6

Aaron Coe, NAMB vice president for mobilization, tells a church planting story about his great-great-grandmother, Lucy Clements, during the opening session of the 2013 Send North America Conference. She started a Sunday School class in her Louisville front yard during the 1930s that later became Bethlehem Baptist Church. (Photo by John Swain)

DOMA aftermath Ky. law faces same-sex suit

By Todd Deaton

Louisville—Following the U.S. Supreme Court's 5-4 decision striking down a key provision of the Defense of Marriage Act, Kentucky was hit with a lawsuit July 26.

Two Louisville men, who were married in Canada in 2004, have filed a federal lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of Kentucky's law against gay marriages. Though the lawsuit does not specifically seek to legalize same-sex marriages, according to The Courier Journal of Louisville, the suit does seek a permanent injunction to recognize those performed in other states.

"All states will be forced to publicly state where they stand on the issue of traditional marriage."

Dan Summerlin

Gregory Bourke and Michael De Leon told The Courier-Journal that after adopting children, they recognized the limitations of Kentucky's law, which does not recognize the validity of their family. Only one could be an adoptive parent; the

□ See Lawsuit ... Page 3

Toole: God turns mission trip theft into 'blessings'

By Robin Cornet Bass

Las Vegas—"Our first reaction was utter shock," said Todd Toole, pastor of Burlington Baptist Church in Burlington.

The SUV and trailer driven in advance of a mission trip to Las Vegas—loaded with thousands of dollars worth of musical equipment, carpentry tools, personal luggage and mission trip supplies—was gone. Stolen in the time it took to have a meal at a Chili's restaurant.

Toole's thought about the 62 members of his northern Kentucky church who were en route to Las Vegas by plane, fully expecting to dive into a wide range of prepared ministry projects. Concerts and construction repairs. Vacation Bible School and a revival. Ministry plans for Las Vegas' homeless.

When word of the misfortune reached Kentucky, Toole said members of

Burlington Baptist took a love offering and sent nearly \$5,000, but it was not until Las Vegas news stations reported about the Kentucky church's "crippling theft" that God revealed His plan.

"What happened as a result is something that seldom gets any publicity at all—a simple, common mission trip—has turned into something of epic proportion," Toole said. "Doors have been opened to us that would have never been opened had we not been on TV."

Drawing from Joseph's confrontation with his brothers in Genesis 50, Toole said the mission team claimed verse 20, which in part says, "You planned evil against me; God planned it for good."

What did God's plans for good look like to Burlington Baptist?

"It looks like a Bible school that had twice as many kids as they thought would show up," Toole said. "It looks like

a truck driver from Georgia who heard the story and gave us \$150."

While area churches contributed VBS supplies, stuffed gift bags with items for the homeless, and loaned Burlington Baptist musical equipment, participants in the mission trip were approached on the street by inquisitive Las Vegas residents. Each encounter provided the opportunity to share their real mission of telling God's good news.

"A great majority in our group has realized they are in the midst of something, a once in a lifetime miraculous event," Toole said. "(They know) God is in the middle of everything that is happening here."

God also is working back in Burlington, Toole noted, with Cincinnati reporters picking up the story and giving his church more publicity "than in the last 165 years of its existence." (WR)



Judy Andrew was one of 70 Burlington Baptist Church members who carried out their plans to minister near Las Vegas last week, despite the theft of personal and church items. Andrew is seen here helping children at Summerlin Community Baptist Church's Vacation Bible School. (Photo provided by Burlington Baptist Church)

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Kentucky Baptist wins Miss Kentucky title

By Ken Walker

Lexington—Jenna Day plans to use her platform as the new Miss Kentucky to advocate for special needs children—while hoping encounters with the public will open doors to discuss her faith in Jesus.

"I want to spread Christ-like love to people," said the member of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville. "I hope my biggest witness will be that they see some sort of light in me.

"What I have is security, joy and unconditional love. When you have unconditional love in Jesus there is nothing that can stop you. ... Even on a bad day, you know you're loved."

A Louisville native and 2009 graduate of Male High School, Day is the daughter of longtime Highview members Daniel and Leslie Day. Jenna has one sister, Courtney Nitz, who lives in Lexington.

The crown marked her first victory in four attempts. As the pageant winner, Day received a \$12,000 scholarship and the use of a new Lexus for a year. She will also compete in this year's Miss America pageant, which airs on national television Sept. 15.

A senior at the University of Kentucky, Day is taking a year off from school because of the demands of her new position. She hopes to surpass the 400-plus personal appearances recorded by Mallory Ervin, Miss Kentucky in 2009.

Employed by the state agriculture department during her reign, Day will



Miss Kentucky Jenna Day, a Kentucky Baptist, poses after the recent crowning with her grandmother, Louise Day. Both are members of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville. (Photo provided by Jenna Day)

promote Kentucky Proud. The initiative encourages residents to buy healthy vegetables and other locally-produced foods. In addition, she plans to train a spotlight on special needs children.

This cause became dear to her during childhood, originally through extended family members. Her aunt and role model—former Jefferson County Judge Executive Rebecca Jackson—taught special education classes and later ran a supported employment agency.

Day gained more appreciation for

what families of special needs children experience during high school through a teacher.

Jeffrey Wright was the father of a special needs son named Adam. She said "life chats" with Wright inspired her because she saw how much love and dedication went into raising a special needs child.

And, she saw how Adam taught his father how to love. In the same way, special needs children can show everyone that there is a plan and purpose for their life as well, Day said.

She called this experience the finishing touch on a long journey that revealed to her that she should speak up for these children.

"A lot of times people want to know, 'What does God want me to do?'" Day said. "I think you have to listen to the little things. Sometimes God doesn't hit you over the head with His plan. It's a combination of moments."

She said her supportive role will revolve around advocacy and education. In addition to publicly supporting organizations that help such children, she will let others know about their capacity for achievement.

Many people don't believe special needs youngsters have any potential, which can result in bullying in school and later in life on the job, she said.

"I want to educate people and get them talking about this issue so when people see a special needs kid they will look at them as an inspiration," Day said. "They do amazing things every day." (WR)

Baptists take sides in Frankfort ordinance debate

By Bob Allen

Frankfort—Baptist clergy are lining up on both sides of a debate about a proposed fairness ordinance dividing city commissioners in Frankfort.

Hershael York, a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and pastor of Buck Run Baptist Church in Frankfort, joined 14 other area Baptist clergy in a recent op-ed piece in the Frankfort State Journal opposing a ban on discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations based on sexual orientation.

The Lexington Herald-Leader, meanwhile, carried a commentary by Chuck Queen, senior pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Frankfort, supporting the measure, in which a final vote is expected Aug. 26.

The ordinance provides city residents to be free from discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodation based on—among other categories—gender identity or sexual orientation. The proposed ordinance exempts religious organizations and calls for creation of an 11-member city human-rights commission.

Queen, who aligned himself with Frankfort Fairness Coalition, said the ordinance is needed because there are no state or federal laws that prohibit discrimination against gays and lesbians. Immanuel Baptist Church is aligned with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

"I cannot understand why any Christian would be opposed to an ordinance that is about fairness and equal protection of rights under the law," Queen said.

But York and the other pastors noted tolerance is a two-way street.

"The proposed fairness ordinance is coercive and damaging to people of faith who are being asked to violate their consciences," the article said. "We believe that any people whose conscience is violated by providing a place for activity which they believe to be inconsistent with their faith and contrary to their morals should not be coerced and forced by the government to do so."

York and the other ministers described the ordinance as unnecessarily divisive, claiming no evidence exists that members of the LGBT community in Frankfort are currently being deprived of housing or jobs.

Other Baptist ministers signing the op-ed piece were Brad Hockensmith of Evergreen Church, Mike Hamrick of Sand Spring Church, David Rayborn of Providence Church, Larry Brown of East Frankfort Church, Everett Hawkins of Faith Church, Gary Hagar of Westview Church, Tom Troth of Hillcrest Church, Michael Hail of Crestwood Church, Sean Post of Thornhill Church, Scott VanNeste of Bellepoint Church, Steve Weaver of Farmdale Church, Jeff Eaton of Hope Community Church, Jeff Sargent of Bethel Church, and Howard Beaman, director of missions for Franklin Association. (ABP)

Acts 1:8 college students return with stories to tell

By Todd Deaton

Louisville—Thirty-six students and four Baptist Campus Ministry leaders from 10 colleges led a chapel service at the Kentucky Baptist Building July 24, celebrating how God was at work during their missions adventures this summer.

Through BCM's (Acts) 1:8 Leadership Experience, the college students served in four countries—Russia, Ireland, Greece and Zimbabwe—and partnered with four Kentucky churches—First Shelbyville and First Murray, and Christ Fellowship and Eastwood in Bowling Green. They returned with not only memories that will last a lifetime, but also a heart for missions that will shape eternity.

Holly Stone, a student at Morehead State University from Wheelersburg, Ohio, represented a team that served in Shelbyville and Russia.

She recalled how when her group arrived in Russia, they were split up into cars. "It was really scary because we didn't know where we were going," she confided. But as they pulled up to their destination, a translator announced, "This is the house of the church."

"My immediate thought was, 'Wow! That's a wonderful way to describe the church,'" Stone said, explaining that a healthy church is "able to love people, accept people, and then go out" and serve others.

Her group also worked with youth in Shelbyville, assisted with fair ministry and apartment outreach, and aided tornado victims in West Liberty.

Peter Northcutt, a student at Murray

State University from Murray, traveled with a group to Northern Ireland.

"One of the main goals of (Acts) 1:8 teams is to go out and evangelize and minister to people," Northcutt began, but "while you pour out, you also are being poured into."

Northcutt told how though a discipleship session on "identity" and a phone call with his father had helped him grasp how much his Heavenly Father loves him. "It's one thing to know it in your head; it's another to know it in your heart," he nodded. "That's changed my whole identity as a Christian."

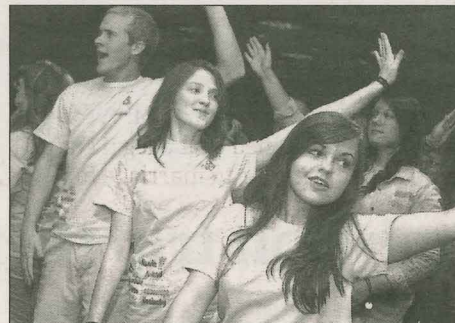
Spencer Austin, a student at the University of Kentucky from Bowling Green, spent two weeks in Athens, Greece, reaching out to youth by playing soccer and basketball.

Mission teams are not allowed to evangelize children there, Austin explained. "It was very discouraging for me to be really good friends with some guys and not be able to share with them the most important thing in my life," he said.

"I started praying really hard for these guys, and God showed me that you have to be OK with just being a light," Austin said. "Then right before we left, they started asking about the most important thing in my life," Austin recalled. "It was just beautiful how God tied it all together," he said.

Cory Spalding, a student at Kentucky State University from Lexington, shared his gratefulness for the 1:8 experience.

"I'm thankful because I have never felt more prepared to make disciples



College students with BCM's 1:8 Leadership Experience lead chapel service July 24 at the Kentucky Baptist Building. (Photo by Robin Cornet Bass)

before in my life. Yet I have still got a great journey for more of God," he began. "And I am thankful that I have experienced firsthand what Paul experienced in 1 Thessalonians 2:8," Spalding continued. "Not just because we were close to Thessalonica, but because the Spirit showed us God's heart for the people of Bowling Green and Athens, enabling us to see them as He does and to serve them with His love."

Jon Claude Bulew, a student at Morehead State University from Somerset, shared how God redirected his team to a rural school in Zimbabwe, where one kid asked, "Who is Jesus?" An hour later, 49 students gave their lives to Christ, he said.

"It was amazing to see how God worked there in a place we didn't even expect to go," Bulew said.

Launched in 2008, the 1:8 Leadership Experience has strengthened students' faith and equipped many for missions service beyond college. (WR)

'Think: Worship' conference urges 'worshipping God well'

By RuthAnne Irvin

Louisville—Worship is fundamentally about the gospel, speakers said at the inaugural "Think: Worship" conference at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"The gospel is a story that is all about worship and, because of that, worship in the church should be about the gospel," said Mike Cosper, pastor of worship and arts at Sojourn Community Church in Louisville, and author of "Faith Mapping: A Gospel Atlas for Your Spiritual Journey."

The conference, featuring Cosper and other speakers, worship ministers and music scholars, examined the theology of worship and the gospel in music, encouraging attendees to lead their churches to worship biblically.

Christian recording artist Michael Card, who has recorded more than 30 albums and authored or coauthored several books, spoke about lament and worship.

Card used anecdotes to illustrate the

thesis of his message: "Lament is not about getting stuff off your chest, but worshipping God well," he said.

Worship begins in the wilderness, Card said. "We're not the people who are together, but we're the people who know what pain is for," he said, calling for churches to make a place for people who are suffering.

"We desperately need people in our congregation who are suffering so we can learn from them—not fix them," Card said.

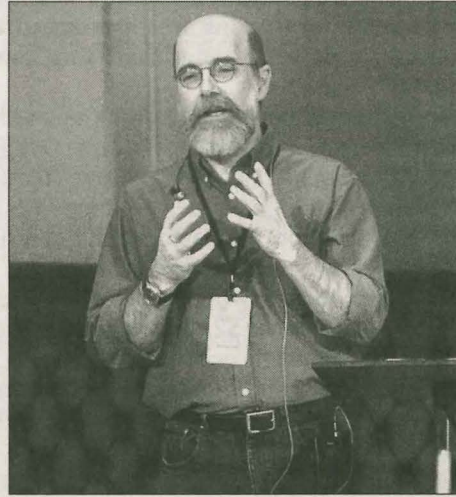
Cosper challenged attendees to examine their hearts about the self-centeredness prevalent in worship preferences.

Pleasing individuals in the congregation "leads to a church that's built around spectacle rather than a biblical set of priorities about who the church is and what the people do when they meet together," Cosper said.

Matt Boswell, pastor of ministries and worship at Providence Church in Frisco, Texas, speaking on "The Center of Christian Worship" from 1 Corinthians

"The gospel is a story that is all about worship, ... worship in the church should be about the gospel."

Michael Card



Christian recording artist Michael Card was among 23 speakers at Southern Seminary's "Think: Worship" conference. (Photo by Emil Handke/SBTS)

15:1-11, said the cadence of the Christian life is grace that leads to worship.

"We're not singers of songs; we're heralds of good news. We need to be reminded of the centrality of the gospel," Boswell said.

"Gifting may give a man a platform," he noted, "but character is what gives

him a voice. God's grace forms worship leaders."

Donald Whitney, senior associate dean of Southern Seminary's school of theology, spoke about private and public worship, noting that worship in Scripture is primarily congregational.

"Every glimpse given to us in Scripture of worship in heaven, with two exceptions, reveals congregational worship," said Whitney, who also is associate professor of biblical spirituality at Southern. "God is glorified more in congregational worship than in private worship," he said.

Whitney also spoke of personal worship, encouraging attendees to meditate on Scripture.

"Reading alone was never intended to be the primary means of absorbing the scripture," Whitney said. "Reading is the starting place, but meditation is the absorption of scripture."

The conference featured 23 speakers and two bands—Southern Seminary's Norton Hall Band and Sojourn Community Church Music. Breakout session topics ranged from songwriting to technology to worship presentation and planning to vocal help. (SBTS)

Lawsuit

Continued from page 1

other had to become a legal guardian, the C-J reported. A lawsuit, they decided, might hasten the process of legal change.

KBC President Dan Summerlin, senior pastor of Lone Oak First Baptist Church in Paducah, said the lawsuit was not surprising but, in fact, was predictable after the Supreme Court's June 26 ruling.

"In the future all states will be forced to publicly state where they stand on the issue of traditional marriage and this issue will be an ongoing struggle," Summerlin predicted. "As Christians, we need to lovingly stand firm without compromising the clear biblical principles on what is a marriage."

For Christians, marriage is a biblical issue, not a government issue, added Mike Stacey, pastor of Buena Vista Baptist Church in Somerset and chairman of the KBC's Committee on Public Affairs.

"No lawsuit can change what God has established in His word as to what the true definition of marriage should be," Stacey said. "This establishment, that marriage is between one man and one woman, was mandated by God from the beginning of creation."

"As a Kentucky Baptist, I believe the Commonwealth has already spoken on the issue as well," he said. "I do not believe this lawsuit will stand up in court because the state has established what we the people have voted upon."

Other states are also seeing same-sex lawsuits filed in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's ruling. Arkansas, which like Kentucky overwhelmingly approved a referendum on a marriage amendment to the state's constitution in 2004, for example, is now facing both a suit in the U.S. District Court in Little Rock and in Pulaski County Circuit Court, the Arkansas Baptist News reported July 25.

Larry Page, executive director of the Arkansas Faith and Ethics Council, told the Arkansas Baptist newspaper: "After

the U.S. Supreme Court issued its ruling ... on the federal Defense of Marriage Act, it was nearly a given that lawsuits to overturn state laws that restricted mar-

riage to heterosexual couples would be lodged. No one thought it would be as soon as the Arkansas case was filed, but proponents of the homosexual agenda apparently feel the need to take advantage of the momentum the court's decision has given them."

Kentucky voters affirmed the Marriage Protection Amendment by a 3-1 margin in November 2004. That measure also specified that a legal status identical to or similar to marriage for unmarried individuals will not be valid or recognized in the Commonwealth.

"We think it's unfortunate that there

are people out there who want to ban this state from defining marriage as it has been defined by virtually everyone since the beginning or recorded history,"

"No lawsuit can change what God has established in His word ... (about traditional) marriage."

Mike Stacey

Martin Cothran, senior policy analyst with The Family Foundation, stated in a July 26 post on the organization's website. Cothran was lead lobbyist for the Marriage Protection Amendment.

Paul Chitwood, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention,

said the latest case is a perfect example of why Kentucky's 2004 constitutional amendment is "so important."

"As recent rulings have shown, liberal judges appointed to the United States Supreme Court by our presidents are moving us in the direction of redefining

marriage at the federal level and overriding states' rights. Until then, our state constitution will serve to protect the only valid definition of marriage, i.e., being between one man and one woman," Chitwood said.

"While Kentucky Baptists make no apology for our defense of the valid definition of marriage, we must hold our convictions charitably and always strive to obey Scripture's admonition to "speak the truth in love" as we seek to be ambassadors for Christ, imploring all to be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:20)," he added.

Kentucky is one of 35 states that prohibit same-sex marriages. Thirteen states and Washington, D.C., now allow same-sex marriages. Four allow same-sex couples to enter civil unions, including three that prohibit same-sex marriages, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures website.

Churches' marriage policies being tightened

By Brian Blackwell

Alexandria, La.—Churches are beginning to add a stipulation in their bylaws that their ministers perform only traditional marriages on their premises, in response to the Supreme Court's same-sex marriage decisions.

Greg Erwin, a Baton Rouge attorney who represents the Louisiana Baptist Convention, the state paper and several Louisiana Baptist entities, said it is hard to speculate on what the decisions may mean for churches.

"The ruling means the same for Louisiana churches as for churches in all states except that in states where they have banned discrimination based upon sexual orientation, churches are more at risk than churches in states that would not pass such a law," Erwin said.

If the Supreme Court becomes reliably liberal by losing one conservative



Supporters of gay marriage rally outside the U.S. Supreme Court as the court was ruling on the Defense of Marriage Act. (RNS file photo)

judge to a liberal, Erwin said, the court in a future decision could require that churches marry homosexuals.

"It would seem that the law now is that churches do not have to perform marriages that violate its beliefs," Erwin said. "However, if a church rents out its facilities for weddings to anyone

but same-sex couples, then a court could find that the church is discriminating in violation of law by only refusing to rent to homosexuals.

"The free exercise of religion guaranteed by our Constitution is subject to future restriction by Congress, legislatures and the courts under the guise of balancing competing rights," the attorney said. "We are at risk by staying true to our biblical principles."

Stacy Morgan, a church administration strategist for the Louisiana Baptist Convention, is working with Erwin to develop a standard policy that churches may adopt regarding the use of facilities and church membership.

Morgan advised churches to start a conversation on how they will address the issue. Some churches acted before the Supreme Court rulings to include wording in their bylaws that they would recognize marriage as only between a man and a woman. (BP)

CP & 'The Insanity of God'

I recently read "The Insanity of God" by Nik Ripken (pseudonym) and found it to be a tremendously impacting book. I have known the Ripkins for nearly 20 years, having served as pastor to members of Nik's family. I also assisted with the memorial service when their teenage

Together
We are the KBC

Paul Chitwood

son died unexpectedly from an asthma attack while they were serving as missionaries in Africa.

The book is a powerful telling of the Ripkins' journey as missionaries, researchers and encouragers to persecuted believers throughout the world. I highly recommend it.

If you go to a Southern Baptist church and have ever doubted the worthiness of your investment in the Cooperative Program, please read "The Insanity of God."

The book is not about the Cooperative Program, but is a dramatic and powerful illustration of how God has used the generosity of Southern Baptists to shape a man, his family, his life's work, and literally impact the world.

Nik, who was raised on a farm in Kentucky, was called by God to ministry and attended a Baptist college supported by CP. Once there, God began directing Nik toward a real live mission work when he met "a real live missionary" who was, in all likelihood, supported by CP. Nik further prepared for ministry at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary where he completed two degrees funded by—you guessed it—CP.

The Ripkens then made their way to Africa to invest their lives in sharing Christ among the nations. Their work was made possible because Southern Baptists invested in CP to support them on the field.

Because of CP, Nik was able to help oversee the humanitarian relief efforts in Somalia during the early 1990s, one of the most massive relief projects in history. His experiences were instrumental in God directing Nik to begin researching how the Christian faith manages to survive and often thrive in persecution. Nik's discoveries are fascinating, inspiring, heartbreaking and life-changing.

As an example, consider this excerpt from an interview Nik conducted with a man whose family had suffered torture, starvation, and captivity because they were Christians.

Nik writes, "I cannot forget the words of my friend, Stoyan. 'I took great joy that I was suffering in my country so that you could be free in your country.' And then he raised his voice to say, 'Don't you ever give up in freedom what we would never give up in persecution! That is our witness to the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ!'"

Nik continues his work today, as do tens of thousands of Southern Baptist students, professors, church planters and missionaries, because Southern Baptist churches continue to give through the Cooperative Program. We bear witness to the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ—together!

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Billboard displays need to know Baptist heritage

A billboard that appeared recently on the south side of Paducah is creating something of a stir, particularly among area Baptists, after a local TV station aired a report. But some aren't sure how best to respond, if at all.

Although Kentucky Baptist Convention President Dan Summerlin, who is pastor of Lone Oak First Baptist Church in Paducah, had not seen the sign in question, he said he has received some calls of concern from other pastors and church members who were distressed by it.

The billboard, which cost a local Church of Christ member \$2,100 to erect, challenges Baptists about the origin of their name. The premise behind the sign's four questions is that John the Baptist is the founder and Baptists should not be called by that name because it is not found in the Bible, Summerlin summarized. "People who know the truth can easily disarm those statements," he countered.

The key for most, however, is the sign was erected by an individual, not a church, Summerlin added. "In fact, his church (nor other Church of Christ congregations) would not finance the sign and wants him to take it down," he said. And, for Baptists in the community to make a big deal out of the sign, it might provide a forum to express his views further, he warned.

However, Summerlin said he would remind his church members: 1) we do have freedom of speech; 2) his information is and we should not be concerned; 3) Baptists need to know our heritage so we can answer those questions if asked; and 4) there are many more pressing issues, like winning the lost.

For answers, the Western Recorder turned to Greg Wills, the new theology dean and professor of church history at the Southern Seminary.

"These questions derive from a misconception that Baptists believe that John the Baptist established the Baptist denomination. They do not believe this," Wills corrected. "They believe instead that Jesus Christ established the church, and they have ever sought to form their churches in accordance with the authority and will of Christ for his church," he said. While not ashamed of their name, Baptists care more about the name "Christian," and they care little for arguments about names, he said.

According to Wills, when a number of Christians about 400 years ago began recognizing Scripture did not teach infant baptism, they organized churches according to the New Testament pattern and refused to recognize infant sprinklings or immersions as valid. "Each church typically

called itself a "church of Christ," he explained, but their enemies dubbed them "Baptists" or, more commonly in the 17th century, "Anabaptists."

The movement that resulted in the formation of the Churches of Christ, the Christian Church and the Disciples of Christ originated about 200 years ago, under the leadership of Alexander Campbell, Wills continued. Among other things, the Churches of Christ sought to convince Baptists to abandon confessions of faith, Calvinism, paid clergy, mission boards, Sunday schools and seminaries. "As long as churches have significant differences in the substance of their beliefs and in their practices, they will of natural necessity have different names to distinguish them from one another," Wills said.

Knowing our Baptist beliefs and history will enable us to counteract misunderstandings such as the billboard propagates, agreed Chuck McAlister, the KBC's evangelism and church planting team leader. Still, he feels the best course of action may be to simply ignore the sign.

"A debate between a member of the Church of Christ and a Baptist does nothing except fuel the belief shared by many unchurched people that we are answering questions that people are not asking and focusing on matters they do not care about," McAlister said. "The unchurched do not care about hearing a defense of our Baptist beliefs; they care about life issues that are challenging them right now."

Years ago this approach might have sparked debate, but not now, said Howard Atkinson, director of missions for West Union Baptist Association in Paducah. "Our focus is on engaging conversation with those in our community who do not presently participate in any church," he said. "People are looking for purpose, hope, love and forgiveness."

While he believes pastors should help their church members understand their Baptist heritage, a debate would only serve to provide material for those outside the church to criticize Baptists for our lack of love toward each other, Atkinson agreed. Instead, he advocates a more positive witness to the community.

"We must remember the three witnesses we have: our spoken witness, our lived out witness, and our church witness (how we treat each other and how our local churches cooperate together for the sake of the kingdom)," Atkinson said. "It really is true: 'They'll know we are Christians by our love.'"

Point well taken: Our greatest concern always should be giving the best possible witness for our Lord and the "church of Christ"—which encompasses not only Baptists, but all believers.

After
Thought

By Todd Deaton



Modeling servanthood

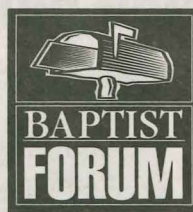
I have just returned from Crossings for Kids Camp at Cedarmore. We (St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville) took 27 kids and six adults and just had a grand time. To top it all off, three of our kids made decisions to follow Christ!

The Crossings leadership, which consists primarily of college kids, is just fantastic and does an amazing job connecting with campers and influ-

encing them for Jesus.

Servanthood is a key characteristic of the Crossings staff, and everyone on the property gives themselves wholeheartedly to others. I believe it all starts at the top, and so I was not surprised to find Crossings President and CEO David Melber taking a turn in The Shack concession stand on Tuesday night (see photo).

David Garrard
Louisville

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Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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Recovering from your 'moronic 2 minutes'

By Joe McKeever

Have you ever had a meltdown?

In the news recently, two Atlanta radio jocks were fired for the on-air mocking they did of a New Orleans icon, former Saints football player Steve Gleason who has ALS (Lou Gehrig's) and lives in a wheelchair and speaks through a computer.

They made fun of him, parodied his situation, and someone role-played Steve speaking of his coming death and such.

It was the ultimate in offensive.

In the article which ran here in New Orleans, one of the terminated radio jocks said, "What were we thinking?" The jocks apologized, and in a subsequent story, Gleason said he accepted their apology.

One of the men called it "a moronic two minutes." No argument.

I have had a few moronic two minutes in my long lifetime, and expect some of our readers have also.

I know a pastor who was so exasperated with his small congregation that in a Sunday morning sermon, he berated them for their laziness and unresponsiveness and, working himself up into a lather, stalked out of the service, leaving his people sitting there.

The deacons—I think the church had three—went to him that afternoon to try to bring him to his senses.

Later that day, in the evening service, the pastor apologized to the church and kept on talking. Big mistake. The more he tried to explain why he did what he had done, he slipped into that same rant and once again, walked out of church, leaving the members stunned.

You will not be surprised to learn he was fired that week. An uncontrolled display of the flesh by an undisciplined minister has aborted many a ministry.

Impulsive humor is often repulsive humor.

Impulsive anger has caused a zillion problems. (Just the other day, I heard of a man who owned racehorses growing exasperated because a prize stallion kept fading in the stretch and failing to win. In a burst of anger, the owner took a shotgun and killed the horse on the spot.)

Impulsive buying by a husband or wife has ruined many a marriage.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is ... self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23).

When Margaret and I were young marrieds, we moved 350 miles with our 1-year-old son to enroll in seminary. This was the first time Margaret had ever

lived away from her hometown and I was trying to learn subjects like Hebrew and Greek while holding down a part-time job. The stress on our marriage was considerable.

On one occasion during one of our frequent arguments, I was so angry, I put my fist through the wall. Granted, it was only sheetrock and that's not hard to do, but the sight of that—and the humiliation of having to go to the campus housing office and report it so it could be repaired—got my attention.

More and more, as I prayed about my temper, Galatians 5:22-23 kept returning to my mind. The solution to my anger, I realized, was not working on anger issues. It was to be filled with the Spirit and let Him bear His fruit through me.

As I grew in Christ, the temper—and everything else—came more and more under His control.

What should you do after a "moronic 2 minutes?"

I apologized to Margaret for the display of the flesh. She forgave me, then said, "I was goading you into it." Her taking part of the responsibility helped me deal with it.

When any of us have such a meltdown, there is no substitute to the basic Christian steps all of God's people are asked to do when they sin:

- Repent.
- Confess.
- Apologize to our victims and the spectators.
- Restore or repay, to the extent you can.
- Learn from it.
- Now, get up and try again. Do not park by your failures, do not grovel in your failings and do not camp out on your weaknesses. You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you, including overcoming this failing.

■ Put it behind you now and be proactive for the future. Anticipate moments and situations that could be stressful, and prepare. Pray!

You are not perfect and never will be in this life. But the Lord deserves servants who strive to please Him in all we do.

"Set a guard upon my mouth, O Lord. Keep watch over the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3).

Uncontrolled and undisciplined anything is always unworthy of Christ-followers.

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

VIEWPOINT

Investing through mutual funds

By Don Spencer

Trillions of dollars in our country are invested through mutual funds. They have become one of the most popular mediums for investing. But are mutual funds the right choice for you?



Advantages—Diversification is at the heart of mutual fund investing and greatly reduces the risks that come with owning a few stocks or bonds. The average investor cannot typically own enough stocks to be adequately diversified. By investing in a single mutual fund, the investor is investing in many different companies.

Professional management is another benefit. Few investors have the time or experience needed to manage personal investments on a regular basis.

Liquidity is the ease with which an asset can be bought or sold quickly with relatively small price changes. Mutual fund shares may be acquired or liquidated at a moment's notice at a fund's next determined net asset value.

Finally, mutual funds provide **convenience**. Funds generally provide many features that make the investment process an easy one.

Disadvantages—No. 1 is cost. The median expense ratio for domestic equity funds is around 1 percent—sometimes higher. That's money deducted from your investment every year, regardless of performance.

Professional management—You may feel the cost is justified for experienced management. However, a large number of fund managers have limited experience. Very few funds consistently beat market averages. When they cannot match the market, what are you getting for your money?

Long term investing—Every text on investing teaches, "Invest for the long term." However, many popular funds turn over most of their portfolio during the course of a year.

Taxes—You have no control over mutual fund distributions. When the fund sells a stock, any gains realized become taxable in that year. If you buy your own stocks, you can control when you sell, thus deferring the tax on capital gains until a time of your choosing.

Before you invest, do some more research. After all, it's your money.

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

Dog day doldrums? Here are five summer prayer action steps

By Phil Miglioratti

We've entered the dog-days of summer—this often oppressive and sweltering time of year that coincides with traditional summer slumps in church attendance as families scatter for vacations and other summer-time activities.

But our need for prayer is never greater. Here are five suggestions to make your dog days sparkle with spiritual freshness:

Family table time

Ask each church family to use at least one family meal each week to pray for their neighbors, whether those who live nearby, people they work with or fellow students. Keep a log of the names and needs of those the Lord leads toward in prayer. During a Sunday morning service, ask families to come prepared to share their prayers and God's responses.

Schedule a church picnic

Before the festivities begin, ask every family to form a circle and to pray (facing inward) for the church, its spiritual

health, its ministry vision and its evangelistic effectiveness. Reverse positions to face outward and pray for the community, its needs, its leaders and the church's influence on it.

Weeknight prayer meeting

Take the midweek prayer service outside. Those who cannot handle the walk or the heat may stay inside and pray using this as a template. Ask everyone to pray with their eyes open, looking at and praying for:

- God's good creation.
- The church facilities.
- Residential areas.
- Schools.
- Recreational, medical or business districts.

Secret saint

Ask everyone in the congregation to become a secret intercessor. Prepare cards with the names of your church family for distribution on a Sunday morning—perhaps a reverse offering where everyone picks a name as a basket is passed. Ask the church family, including youth and older children, to pray

each day for a week for the person whose name they drew. The following Sunday simply ask for testimonies of what it was like to pray once a day for their person or if anyone sensed a special blessing from the Lord because someone was praying for them.

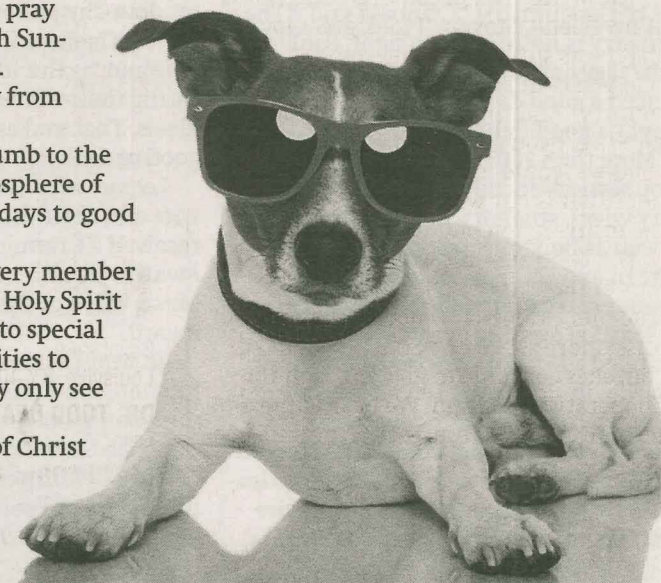
Pastoral prayer

Recruit volunteers to pray aloud for the pastor each Sunday during the summer. Encourage them to pray from their deepest passion.

So, rather than succumb to the slow-down, casual atmosphere of summer, put those dog-days to good use.

Prayer: Encourage every member and family to invite the Holy Spirit to alert them every day to special summertime opportunities to pray for people they may only see in the summertime.

Care: Show the love of Christ to them through practical and appreciated acts of service or mercy.





Church plants

Continued from page 1

traced the significant moments Southern Baptists have seized throughout history. Afterward, Aaron Coe, NAMB's vice president of mobilization and marketing, told attendees his prayer was that the conference would be seen as a turning point in SBC history.

"Will this be a defining moment or will this be a forgotten moment?" Coe asked. "The difference between a defining moment and a forgotten moment is a seized moment. We're praying that we are able to give you the tools over these next days for you to seize the moment."

Large group sessions, workshops and breakout meetings all were built around the effort to equip individuals and churches for growing the kingdom.

Prestonwood pastor Jack Graham closed Monday afternoon's session by encouraging church planters.

"Church planters, you are on the front lines in cities across this continent, and you are taking the gospel into the cities to penetrate lostness here and around the world," Graham said. "Thank God that NAMB is saying, 'Plant churches. Make disciples.' NAMB does a lot of good things, but it is important that they now say, 'Plant churches. Make disciples.' And we support them in it."

The Monday evening session featured Jim Cymbala, pastor of The Brooklyn Tabernacle, calling for attendees to come forward if they felt God leading them to step out into a new dimension of service. Thousands came forward as Cymbala led in prayer.

"If you don't want to be in a fight, get out of the ministry," Cymbala said. "The ministry is nothing but a fight. Paul didn't say at the end of his life, 'I have danced a good dance.' He said, 'I have fought a good fight.'"

More than 100 breakout and workshop sessions included offerings for ministry wives, students and worship leaders as well as language tracks in Spanish, Korean and Chinese. At least 1,300 attendees registered for ethnic tracks.

Monday evening events for students included a hip-hop concert by Grammy award-winning artist Lecrae (see story at right). Multiple environments were created for churches and church planters to network. Thirty of NAMB's 32 Send cities hosted sessions for attendees to explore partnership and planting opportunities.

Coe closed the conference with a challenge.

"How do we go from this moment to a movement?" Coe asked. "It takes people. There are entire communities in the United States and Canada that have no churches. We've got a lot of work to do. As we leave this Send North America Conference, I hope you leave encouraged that Jesus is for you."

"Let's agree as the people of God not to leave complacent or go back to the status quo, but to leave this place to make a difference in the world for the glory of God. Join me in not letting this be a forgotten moment," Coe said. (NAMB/BP)

Rap artist Lecrae: Hip-hop missionary



Award winning hip-hop artist Lecrae.

Nashville—Rap music, said hip-hop artist Lecrae Moore, is an expression of urban culture that permeates all ethnicities and racial boundaries—and one more way for Christians to be missionaries in today's culture.

"The urban culture sees artists as modern-day philosophers," Lecrae said. Hip-hop is more influential today than ever and "is the voice that is communicating their value system and their ideals. That makes it a powerful tool—for good or for bad."

Lecrae, who lives in Atlanta with his wife and their three children, has received a Grammy Award and two Dove Awards. He also won 2010 Best Hip-Hop Music Video at the GMC Music Video Awards.

To hear Lecrae discuss his ideas about hip-hop, Christian labels and being a missionary for the urban culture, check out "The Exchange," a weekly podcast by LifeWay Christian Resource, or go to blog.lifeway.com/theexchange. (LifeWay/BP)

Uptown Baptist tops 30th church plant

By Tobin Perry and Sara Shelton

Chicago—Take a step into Uptown Baptist Church in Chicago and it's clear this Southern Baptist congregation cares about the nations. But that care isn't just written on 27 colorful sanctuary banners in the native tongues of 27 local people groups. It is demonstrated by a history of starting new churches to reach these people.

Even after helping plant at least 30 Chicago churches over the past 35 years, Uptown has six ethnic churches that meet in its building. The church also partners with church planter Dave Choi and his Church of the Beloved, a two-year-old multicultural church in the Windy City.

"Church planting is the best way for the gospel to be spread and Christ to be glorified," said Michael Allen, Uptown's pastor since 2005. "I think more and more pastors are becoming aware of this fact: If we want to reach our cities, our state and our country for the gospel, there is no better way to do it."

Chicago represents that need as well as most cities. The city has only one SBC church for every 31,791 people in the Chicago metro area. Evangelicals make up less than 10 percent of the area's population.

Uptown's planting legacy began with its own founding as a church plant in 1976 by Chicago native James Queen. In the 1980s, Allen said, Queen and other church leaders noticed the growing diversity of the church's neighborhood. To help reach these different ethnic groups, the church started—or opened their building up for others to use—churches that spoke the people's languages.

"Our church planting strategy diversified when our community diversified," Allen said. "Long before the International Mission Board strategy of adopting a people group overseas, we were adopting people groups right in the neighborhood because they just kept coming. God was bringing them to our doorstep."

The church now employs a new strategy to reach the nations in Chicago—partnership with an intentionally multicultural church plant.

Even on the budget of an inner-city church with an attendance around 180, Uptown contributes what resources they can to Church of the Beloved. The church also supports the church plant through prayer, encouragement and people when needed.



Michael Allen, pastor of Chicago's Uptown Baptist Church, stands in front of banners with the name of Jesus Christ written in the native tongue of each of the 27 people groups Uptown has planted churches among in Chicago. (Photo by Ted Wilcox/NAMB)

The church also has remained consistent in its giving to cooperative Southern Baptist missions. The church contributes 12 percent of its budget to missions, which includes giving to the Cooperative Program and the Chicago Metro Baptist Association.

Allen sees his church's involvement in church planting as part of a cycle that began long ago when Southern Baptists helped start Uptown by helping obtain a building for the church.

"Being a part of church planting shows that we're bigger than just ourselves," Allen said. "So let's dig in and facilitate what's a national movement and the national direction of our denomination. Our church has been so blessed throughout the years by our own denomination that we want to give back and serve." (NAMB/BP)

In Recognition of Deceased Kentucky Baptist Leaders

The 2013 KBC
Obituaries Report

will include information on deceased persons who have served our Lord and Kentucky Baptists in a noteworthy manner. We are including persons who died during the convention year, **September 1, 2012 through August 31, 2013.**

These persons would be Kentucky Baptist ministers, missionaries, educators, laypersons, institutional leaders and staff and others whose Christian service has significantly benefited our state convention fellowship and mission programs.

These obituary entries will be reported to the 2013 KBC annual meeting in Paducah. You are an important part of our network to gather information on those servants who deserve to be remembered among Kentucky Baptists.

Please forward this information before September 3 to:



Executive Office
PO Box 43433, Louisville KY 40253-0433
ATTN: Debbie Bannon
e-mail address:
debbie.bannon@kybaptist.org



We Need Your
Help To Gather
the Following
Information:

- Full name of deceased
- Date of birth
- Date of death
- Active or retired status
- Name of church where member, association, state where located
- Service or ministry worthy of recognition (briefly stated)

Transportation safety crucial for churches

By Diana Chandler

Indianapolis—While police haven't determined whether anyone is to blame for a bus accident that killed four and injured 33 Indianapolis church members en route from a summer youth camp, GuideStone Financial Resources recommends churches take specific safety steps before planning road trips.

"It's not enough to address safety concerns on a case-by-case, trip-by-trip basis," said Jim Welch, GuideStone's director of property and casualty product development. "The church is responsible for putting protections in place for transportation for all ministries, on all trips. It requires leadership commitment, resources, time and consideration."

Church-sponsored transportation safety is in the spotlight after a bus just one mile from its destination of Colonial Hills Baptist Church crashed July 27 on an interstate exit ramp, slamming into a concrete barrier and rolling over, ejecting some of its 37 passengers.

A youth pastor, his pregnant wife, their unborn child and a church

volunteer were killed as others were hospitalized, including one teenager with critical injuries.

Indiana State Police told USA Today that questions remained unanswered days after the tragedy.

"We are looking into seeing if has any records they'd be willing to offer up to show us," USA Today quoted 1st Sgt. Tyler Utterback of the Indiana State Police. "It's not a requirement."

Keeping certain vehicle records and building safeguards around ministry transportation should be clear church priorities, Welch said, recommending precautions regardless of whether churches own or charter the vehicles.

Make sure drivers are properly trained, screened and rested; make sure vehicles are properly inspected, maintained, operated and stored, and make sure church representatives and others involved have signed participation agreements and behave appropriately, Welch recommended.

When using a charter bus, make sure the driver has a valid commercial driver's license.

Participants, and guardians of participants under age 18, should sign agreements specifying the activity, waiving the church's liability for trip injuries and granting the church authority to obtain any necessary medical treatment for participants, Welch said.

Maintain government required registrations and inspections, and regularly self-inspect vehicles, he said, covering such basics as tire condition and pressure, lights, engine condition, safety equipment, oil and gas levels and windshield wipers. Welch recommends stocking vehicles with safety supplies and equipment, including a fire extinguisher, a first aid kit and emergency flares.

Insure church-owned vehicles with commercial auto policies, not modified personal policies, and if chartering, take out policies for "hired and non-owned" vehicles, Welch said.

For more information, check out Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company, GuideStone's alliance partner, which offers free information at BrotherhoodMutual.com. (BP)

ROAD RULES

- Keep vehicle records, registrations, proof of inspections up-to-date with copies in each vehicle.
- Perform vehicle inspections prior to and after each use.
- Make sure drivers are properly trained, screened, licensed and rested.
- Passengers should sign liability waivers and permission forms to allow for emergency medical treatment.
- Adequate supply of supplies, such as fire extinguishers, first aid kits and emergency flares, on board.
- Proper insurance coverage.



Southern Baptist ethicist links immigration reform to the gospel

By Tom Strode

Washington—Widespread agreement on immigration reform exists among Americans in spite of differences on how to achieve it, Southern Baptist ethicist Russell Moore said at a Capitol Hill news conference.

The president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission gave a hopeful assessment to reporters July 24 as evangelical Christians gathered to pray and persuade members of congress to reform a system that has resulted in an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants living illegally in the U.S.

The future of immigration reform remains uncertain in the House, where Republican leaders have said they will work on their own legislation and not take up a bill approved by the Senate in late June. Some conservative Republicans

have sharply criticized the Senate measure, especially its approach to border security.

Moore described the consensus as remarkable "not only among people who agree with us on immigration reform."

"Most of us in this country agree the system is broken," he said.

"Most of us in this country agree we have to have some way of addressing the 11 or so million people who are living in invisibility right now.

"I also think that many of the people who would be reluctant right now are reluctant because of genuine concerns that we share. They want to make sure that the process is done right, so it doesn't have to be done again in the future. We think that can be done," Moore told reporters.

"They want to make sure there's accountability for people who have come here illegally, that they are held accountable to the full responsibilities of citizenship. We share that concern, and we think there's a way forward there," he said. "And they also want to be sure that

we have borders that are secure and a rule of law that is upheld. We share that concern as well, and we also think there's a way forward there."

Moore described the differences over immigration reform as "not a clash of world views as much as it is

a question of prudentially how do we get forward with some common goals that the country seems to be coalescing around" currently.

The Evangelical Immigration Table

"We are defined by the gospel ... a gospel of both justice and mercy."

Russell Moore

(EIT), a coalition of evangelical leaders that supports broad immigration reform and includes Moore, sponsored the news conference, a worship service and visits to congressional members by more than 300 evangelicals.

At the news conference, speakers pointed to growing evangelical support for immigration reform, citing the more than 180 leaders who have signed EIT's principles for reform and the more than 10,000 "grass-roots signatories" to the document.

Moore pointed to the gospel as the reason for his support of immigration reform.

"As evangelical Christians, we are defined by the gospel of Jesus Christ, a gospel that is in scripture a gospel of both justice and mercy, of righteousness and compassion," Moore said. "And we're here today not as a political pressure group or a political action committee. We're here as a group of believers in Jesus Christ who want to let our elected officials know that we are praying for them, we're praying for wisdom, we're praying for discernment, and we're praying for justice and for compassion in a system that is broken." (BP)

REVVING UP YOUR MINISTRY

August 17, Louisville
Highview Baptist Church
(Fegenbush)

August 24, Lexington
Immanuel Baptist Church

September 7, Owensboro
Bellevue Baptist Church

9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
(registration begins at 8 a.m.)

Register online at www.kybaptist.org/supersaturday Questions? 1-866-489-3571

Eastwood Baptist Church
60th Anniversary
SKyPAC - Bowling Green, KY
Sunday, August 18
8:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Former members welcome.
Please register at
www.eastwoodbc.org
or call (270) 842-7867

Celebrating
Past...Present...Future

Moving mountains

Part two of valedictorian's speech at 2013 OBI graduation

The valedictorian of the OBI Class of 2013 was Anna Davidson. What follows below is the second part of her valedictory address to the congregation that attended our graduation service on May 18.

"The development of character through perseverance, the improvement of mental, social or physical skills, or most importantly, the opportunity to inspire someone else, to encourage them and give them confidence in their God-given talents and ultimately in their value as a human being. To me, this is what a successful life is.

"All we need to do to confirm this definition is look at the life of Jesus. Jesus did not experience riches and true acclaim in His earthly life. He was born in an animal feeding trough, worked as a carpenter for most of His adult life, and died the object of scorn and derision by those He most desperately wanted to reach. What is readily observed in His life, however, is a love for and willingness to spend time with those the world had forgotten and those held in lowest esteem—children, women, tax collectors, adulteresses; the list could go on and on—as well as His message of love to the world as it is written in John 3:16, 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.'

"His legacy was one of healing the sick and infirm, of sharing hope with the down and out, with those who had failed and had no personal vision of redemption or forgiveness. He loved the unlovable and made an eternal impact

in the lives of everyone with whom He came in contact. I submit that no other course in life could be any more important and lead to any more success than the pathway that the Son of God and creator of the world chose.

"I firmly believe that Jesus has created each of us with a special purpose. In Psalm 139:16, David wrote to God saying, 'All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.'



Elsewhere, in Ephesians 2:10, it says, 'For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.'

These verses make it very clear that God has a plan for each and every one of us (His masterpieces)—a good plan. The challenge, of course, is figuring out what that plan is and what we were custom created to do.

"James 1:5 says, 'If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.' This is the first and greatest key to figuring out what God created us to do. Often God has given you and me certain talents or aspirations that point us in the direction He wants us to go. Engineers, doctors, lawyers, plumbers, professional athletes, nurses, mailmen, missionaries, pastors and pilots can all play an equally valuable role in the kingdom of heaven. The key is to look at the Bible to get an idea of the characteristics Jesus displayed as He went about His daily life and put them into practice everywhere we go and in all that we do."

Oneida Baptist Institute, Box 67, Oneida, KY 40972; OneidaSchool.org.

Clear what?

Student recalls God's leading him to Clear Creek's campus

How does a family from Southern Illinois end up at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College in southeastern Kentucky? The answer to that question is one that many families look back on as their time at Clear Creek comes to an end.

Dottie Evans graduated in May with her associate's degree in Christian Ministry. Her husband, Jeremiah, graduated in 2012 with his bachelor's degree in Pastoral Ministry. She recalls the unique way of God leading their family to Clear Creek several years ago.

"My husband had surrendered to a call to ministry and felt like he needed some education and training," said Evans. "It just so happened that a deacon from our church in Illinois was living in Tazewell, Tenn., which is located just a few miles away from Clear Creek.

"Our family took a vacation in the Gatlinburg, Tenn., area and on our way back home we stopped for a visit with him.

"As we were visiting with him we talked about where Jeremiah could get some training for the calling God had

placed on his life. We talked about some different schools and then one man in the group asked us if we had ever heard of Clear Creek. We said that we had never heard of the place. They

told us that we could pass by it on our way home so we drove through the campus on our way home and wondered if we could ever live here.

"We returned back home and continued on with life," Evans said. "But it seemed as though God just began to close doors at home related to anything that we tried to do there. So, we eventually came to campus for a visit and God made it very clear to us that this is

where He wanted us to be.

"I initially had no desire to take any college classes," Evans said. "But within the first year, God began to place on my heart a desire to learn more. I started out with just a couple of classes, but the more I heard my husband talk of everything he was learning from his professors in his classes, I wanted to learn more, too."

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

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

Supreme court may be near review of HHS mandate

By Tom Strode

Washington—A court setback to a Pennsylvania family business that objects to the Obama administration's abortion/contraception mandate heightens the likelihood the Supreme Court will soon decide whether for-profit companies have religious free exercise rights, says a legal expert.

A divided, three-judge panel of the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia denied a preliminary injunction requested by the Conestoga Wood Specialties Corp., saying "for-profit, secular organizations cannot engage in religious exercise."

Had it been granted, an injunction would have blocked enforcement of a controversial rule from the Department of Health and Human Services that requires employers to pay for coverage of contraceptives, including ones that can cause abortions.

The Third Circuit opinion, issued July 26, clashed with one issued only a month earlier by the full 10th Circuit Court of Appeals. The 10th Circuit rejected the Obama administration's argument that protections under the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) do not extend to for-profit companies. That court in Denver ruled corporations such as Hobby Lobby and its sister corporation, Mardel, "can be 'persons' exercising religion for purposes" of RFRA.

Kyle Duncan, general counsel of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, told Baptist Press, "That split is likely to deepen as other courts of appeals weigh in. It seems to us that the Supreme Court

needs to resolve the issue.

The Sixth and Seventh Circuit Courts have heard arguments in similar cases but have not issued rulings, Duncan said.

The Supreme Court may have the opportunity shortly to decide if it is ready to settle the difference. He expects the Department of Justice to ask soon for a high court review, Duncan said.

He is "not surprised that there's a difference in opinion on these legal issues," Duncan said. He said, however, he is "disappointed" the Third Circuit "did not grapple" with the 10th Circuit's reasoning.

The Department of Health and Human Services issued the abortion/contraception mandate as a regulation to implement the 2010 health care law.

The Hahns, a Mennonite family that owns Conestoga, object to the controversial mandate because they believe life begins at conception. The mandate went into effect for Conestoga when its group health plan was renewed in January, and the company is abiding by the requirement.

The Greens, an evangelical Christian family that owns Hobby Lobby and Mardel, also oppose the rule because of their pro-life beliefs. Protected for now by a preliminary injunction, they have said they will not comply with the mandate even though it could cost them \$1.3 million a day in penalties.

The Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission has signed onto friend-of-the-court briefs defending the businesses' religious liberty in both cases. The Christian Legal Society wrote both briefs. (BP)

NEWS BRIEFS

Syria crisis escalates

The civil war between Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's forces and rebel fighters, now in its third year, has sparked a refugee crisis that the United Nations says is the worst in nearly two decades.

The UN said that more than 1.7 million Syrians are refugees, while 4.5 million are internally displaced.

Refugees must register with the UN to receive food, cash, education and health care. Since many religious minorities, such as Christians, cannot or do not register, they are left out.

The massive flow of refugees is straining the already limited resources of neighboring countries. Iraq, Turkey and Jordan either have closed their borders or limited the daily intake of refugees.

Many of the country's Christians who have not left face dangers at home.

"Not only do the children face the daily violence of civil war, but they are also the targets of persecution, including kidnapping, because they are Christians," said Jerry Dykstra, a spokesman for Open Doors USA.

Cuba seminary revived

More than 70 Western Cuba Baptist Theological Seminary students

received diplomas recently through a partnership that has revived a Cuban seminary during the past eight years.

The Havana seminary, which was on the brink of extinction, has flourished under its partnership with Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

SBTS President Paige Patterson and missions professor Daniel Sanchez presided over the Havana seminary's two graduation ceremonies.

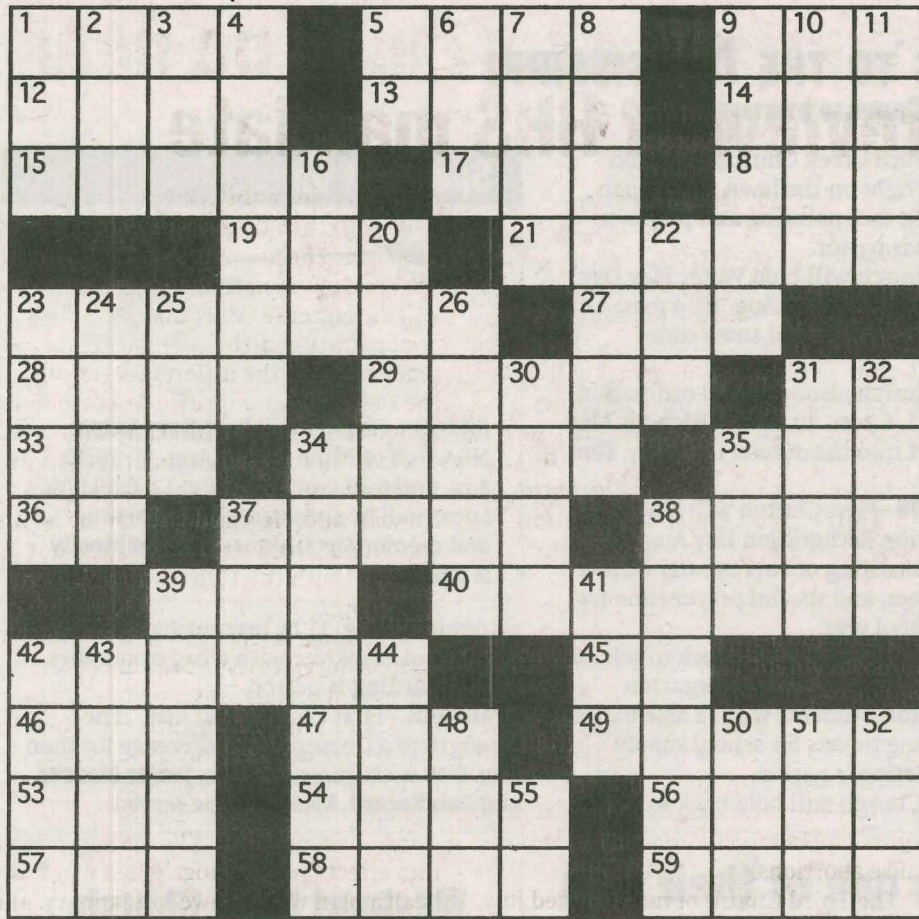
Vietnam religious rights bill

The Vietnam Human Rights Act (H.R. 1897), was added to the U.S. House of Representatives schedule July 26. The legislation focuses on the religious oppression of ethnic minority Christians and others.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has since 2001 accused Vietnam of forced recantations, imprisonments for preaching, the destruction and confiscation of churches and even the execution of Christians.

Vietnam denies the allegations.

If adopted, H.R. 1897 will prohibit any increase in non-humanitarian aid to Vietnam if significant steps are not taken to end religious abuses and return confiscated property to churches and religious communities.



#169

Bible Crosswords

By Evelyn Boyington

Across

- 1 Heavenly being (Fr.)
- 5 "___ gave names to all cattle" (Genesis 2:20)
- 9 Get equipped
- 12 "Who shall ___ us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" (Mark 16:3)
- 13 By the side of (prefix)
- 14 Talk baby talk
- 15 Made footprints
- 16 Arab chieftain
- 17 Classic auto
- 18 Looks at a book
- 20 Bureau
- 22 On the ___ day Jesus rose from the dead
- 24 Pronoun for an ocean liner
- 25 ___ Grande
- 26 Have a ___
- 29 Minor prophet
- 33 "So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month ___" (Nehemiah 6:15)
- 35 Like henna
- 36 "Take also of the tree of life ... and ___ forever" (Genesis 3:22)
- 37 "I am, and none ___ beside me" (Isaiah 47:8)
- 38 Ruby, and others
- 40 Born (Fr.)
- 41 "I took the little book ... and ___ it up" (Revelation 10:10)
- 43 "For I know the thoughts that I ___ toward you" (Jeremiah 29:11)
- 45 Rhombus or rectangle, for example
- 48 Dashes off
- 50 Poetic contraction
- 51 Solo for Dame Sutherland
- 53 "They came to the threshing- floor of ___" (Genesis 50:10)
- 56 Force to be accepted
- 57 Sacrifice
- 58 Singer McIntire
- 59 "I the Lord search the heart, I ___ the reins" (Jeremiah 17:10)
- 60 Table d'___
- 61 High school course (abbr.)

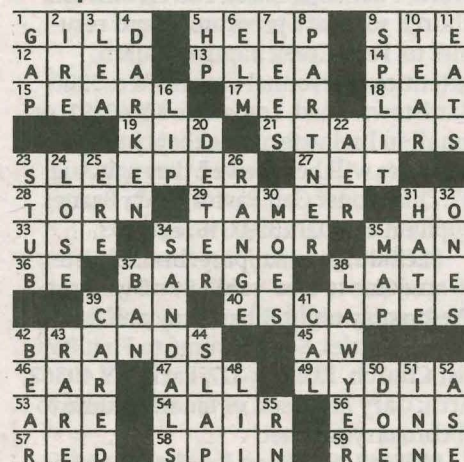
Down

- 1 "Our Father which ___ in heaven" (Matthew 6:9)
- 2 Conjunction
- 3 "The light of the ___ gospel of Christ" (2 Corinthians 4:4)
- 4 "Rebuke not an ___, but entreat him as a father" (1 Timothy 5:1)
- 5 Mimicked

- 6 Hoover, and others
- 7 Exodus hero
- 8 The ___ sisters of Little Women
- 9 Seaport in Israel
- 10 European deer
- 11 ___ point
- 19 Classified material
- 21 "___ the sick, cleanse the lepers" (Matt. 10:8)
- 22 "I give to eat of the ___ of life" (Rev. 2:7)
- 23 "I set my king upon my holy ___ of Zion" (Psalm 2:6)
- 24 Flower part
- 27 Boundary
- 28 Popeye's short answer
- 30 "Thou shalt be a good ___ of Jesus Christ" (1 Timothy 4:6)
- 31 "The day cometh, that shall burn as an ___" (Malachi 4:1)
- 32 "___ ye first the kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33)
- 34 ___ year
- 39 Female saint (Fr. abbr.)
- 42 "I will ... ___ thee in the way which thou shalt go" (Psalm 32:8)
- 44 "The law of his God is in his ___" (Psalm 37:31)
- 45 Kind
- 46 Understand, in a way
- 47 Arnie's ___ (golfer's gallery)
- 48 Make a ___
- 49 With "of," recently
- 52 Milne marsupial
- 54 Daughter of Zachariah (2 Kings 18:2)
- 55 Hammarskjold, to friends

Last puzzle's solution

#168



Remember the Crystal Cathedral?

Factors attributing to the bankruptcy of churches, ministries

Even if you never have visited the site of Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral, you likely have an image of that ministry and its facilities. The 13-story majestic Tower of Hope, which was dedicated to God's glory in 1968, now stands idle along with the thousands of dirty glass panes in the cathedral itself. This ministry is in Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings. It is likely thousands of other churches and ministries will be in bankruptcy within the next decade or two.

Ky. Baptist Foundation



Barry Allen

There are numerous factors that will contribute to this, but among the most significant is the passing away of the older contributors who have been and continue to be the sustaining members of evangelical churches and ministries around the world.

Those who are coming behind them, children and grandchildren, have not demonstrated anything like the level of commitment to share and to support their churches and ministries. Some futurists have projected a 70 percent decline in giving over the next decade or two if giving trends do not change dramatically. One writer has described it as "a silent tsunami that has already broken—unnoticed and miles off the coast." Regrettably, most churches and ministries are unprepared.

Did you know people over age 75 give

four times as much of their income as 25 to 44 year olds, according to "The State of Church Giving Through 2009?" Each younger generation gives significantly less of its income to ministry.

Although older members account for only 19 percent of the membership of churches in the USA, they give 46 percent of the donations, according to a Barna Survey. Can your church sustain a 46 percent drop in donations?

These older, more generous core members are the ones whose funerals are being held every day across this country. Collectively they will be passing 41 trillion dollars of wealth to their children, grandchildren, other heirs—and to the government in taxes. It is highly unlikely your church is receiving even a tithe of this largest generational transfer of wealth in history? Why? Because pastors and other church and denominational leaders are not allocating the resources necessary to educate, encourage and enable these faithful members to consider their church and other ministries in their estate plans.

The Kentucky Baptist Foundation exists for that very purpose. Please give us the privilege of assisting you and your church, and other ministries.

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

Campus projects greet returning CU students

By Joan McKinney

Campbellsville—Students soon will be returning to the Campbellsville University campus, and they will see numerous changes and improvements, including a new "front door" entrance.

One of the more notable changes, the Alumni & Friends Park, should be complete in early fall. The new entrance will be located on a one-half acre corner on North Columbia Avenue.

"We are so thankful for this new area," Otto Tennant, vice president for finance and administration, said. "It's an attractive corner that will welcome everyone to Campbellsville University. We have worked with the City of Campbellsville on landscaping the corners. We're excited to see this new addition."

Other campus improvements include a new residence village for women that will open the first week of August. The village allows for 48 students to live in apartment style housing. The new 14,000-square foot village is on Meader Street.

"The apartment style housing has been requested by our students," Tennant said. "We try to accommodate all students with different options and needs."

North Hall, a men's residence hall, also is being renovated, including new windows, shutters, floors, furniture, light fixtures and shelving.

Students will have another restaurant choice with the opening of the new Papa John's Pizza and University Grill in late September or early October.

The return of a campus grill also is a



The Alumni & Friends Park construction should be completed in early fall. (Photo by Drew Tucker)

request from students, Tennant said. The grill will share seating with Papa John's and will be open to the public.

A new cosmetology program is being offered through Campbellsville's Technology Training Center. The first class will begin Sept. 3, according to Carol Sullivan, director of the Technology Training Center. The class will consist of 20 students, and registration is now open.

The Cosmetology Salon Building will be open to the public for services by the students, beginning in November 2013.

Remodeling of the Turner Log Cabin in the Turner Log Cabin Park is ongoing. The area will allow for meetings for groups.

The Chowning Art Shop remains open Tuesday-Saturday, and the two buildings are part of a conceptualized "Art Village." (CU)

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF



August

- 15 Administrative Committee, Kentucky Building, Louisville.
- 15 My Hope with Billy Graham Training, Old Cedar Baptist Church, Owenton.
- 17 Super Saturday, Highview Baptist Church—Fegenbush Campus, Louisville.
- 19 FamilyFEST, Boone's Creek Association.
- 19 My Hope with Billy Graham Training, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Cunningham.
- 20 Committee on Committees, Kentucky Building, Louisville.
- 22 Committee on Public Affairs, Kentucky Building, Louisville.
- 23 English as a Second Language Tutor Training, Westport Road Baptist Church, Louisville.
- 24 Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington.
- 29 Committee on the Annual Meeting, Kentucky Building, Louisville.

September

- 5 Committee on Constitution and Bylaws, Kentucky Building, Louisville.
- 7 Super Saturday, Bellevue Baptist Church, Owensboro.

■ **ADAIRVILLE**—Adairville Church will host guest speaker **Tom Lawhon** Aug. 11, 10:30 a.m. A recognition service and reception will be held at 2 p.m. **Mark Bond** is pastor.

■ **BENTON**—Lakeview Church will host Blood River Association's men's breakfast Aug. 10, 8 a.m. **Bradley White** is pastor.

■ **BRODHEAD**—Rockcastle Association will host REACH Rockcastle, an association-wide tent revival, Aug. 6-10, 6 p.m., at the old IGA parking lot in Brodhead. **Gene Williams** will be one of the guest speakers.

■ **HODGENVILLE**—First Church, along with Lane Lindgen CME Church, will host guest speaker **Kevin Cosby** Aug. 9, 7 p.m.

First Church will hold "The Star Factor!" a musical by the children's choir, Aug. 11, 6 p.m. **Paul Richey** is pastor.

■ **JONESVILLE**—Macedonia Church will celebrate its 170th anniversary with a homecoming service Aug. 11, 11 a.m., and continue into the afternoon with a potluck meal, singing, testimonies and fellowship. **Gene Hill** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Fern Creek Church will hold Family Movie Night on the lawn Aug. 9, p.m., with inflatables, face painting and popcorn. **Linda Popham** is pastor.

Parkland Church will hold Water Play Day for preschool and children Aug. 10, 4 p.m., and for youth, 6 p.m. Snacks and snow cones provided.

Parkland Church also will hold ordination services Aug. 11, 6 p.m., to ordain **Rick Pinkley** and **Jay Stewart** into the deacon ministry. **Tom Curry** is pastor.

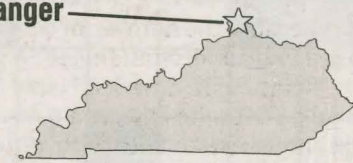
■ **MOUNT VERNON**—First Church will hold their annual Education Recognition Day Aug. 11 with a choir consisting of current and former school employees, and special prayer time for the coming school year.

First Church also will hold a back to school carnival Aug. 12, 5 p.m., for kindergarten through 5th grade. Students will be able to cash in winning game tickets for school supply prizes. **Eddie Nation** is pastor.

Maretburg Church will hold back to school

Spotlight on ...

Erlanger



Erlanger Church will host **Jerry Lucas**, NBA Hall of Fame player, Aug. 11, 10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., and Aug. 12, 6:30 p.m. Lucas will be speaking about learning and memory techniques. **Dwight Moody** is pastor.

recognition Aug. 11 by presenting each student and school employee with a bag of supplies.

Wayne Harding is pastor.

■ **PADUCAH**—First Church will host "The Strength of a Champion" conference for men Aug. 9-10 with guest speakers **James Merritt** and **Bob Record**. Meals will be served.

Churches, Mountain Outreach help one of their own

Williamsburg—One year ago youth pastor Josh Bowman and 10 young people from Wofford Baptist Church were on a mission trip in Haiti. While there, three of the boys learned their mother had two strokes, leaving her unable to return to work and with inadequate housing. At the end of July, a group from the church joined together to pray for the Berta family and decided then to raise money and build them a home.

Fast-forward one year and the group is hard at work with University of the Cumberland's Mountain Outreach, who came on board to help the family of three boys and their mom. Two of the boys are Mountain Outreach workers, and all three are UC students.

Volunteers from Wofford Baptist worked on the house recently, hanging and sanding dry-wall and siding and painting. The church group also raised money to be used toward paying off the mortgage.

MO's student organizer Jonathan Bowman,



UC student Dirk Berta (left) and Josh Bowman, of Wofford Baptist Church in Williamsburg, paint the porch ceiling of a Mountain Outreach home. (UC)

a member of Wofford Baptist, and his brother Josh Bowman, a UC alumus and the church's youth pastor, initiated the repairs to the Berta home. Jonathan Bowman said he found the work on the Berta home to be extra special.

"This is the most rewarding thing I've ever been a part of in my life," he said.

The family moved in to their new home at the end of July. (UC)

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR RENT: Two condos in Destin, Fla., for rent. Two bedrooms, two bathrooms, sofa bed. Special for August-December \$595/week. No clean up fee. Contact Lew Brammer at lbrammer@charter.net or (423) 309-4422.

SEEKING: Thornhill Baptist Church in Frankfort, Ky., is seeking a part time music leader. If you are interested, 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.

SEEKING: Elk Horn Baptist Church, a soul winning—life changing church, is seeking an enthusiastic and creative children's minister to provide vision, development, direction, and management of all aspects of the children's ministry from newborn through fifth grade (approximately 150 to 175 children). The children's minister will be responsible

for planning, coordinating and overseeing all areas of our growing children's ministry. The applicant must be a devoted follower of Jesus Christ and have a heart, passion and calling for children's ministry. A college degree is preferred, but not required; experience is a plus. To apply, email a resumé, along with a statement of beliefs and, preferably, a photo to office@elkhornbc.org. Paper resúmes can be mailed to Elk Horn Baptist Church, 3145 East Elkhorn Road, Campbellsville, KY 42718. A full job description can be found on the church website at www.elkhornbc.org. Resúmes will be accepted through August 11.

SEEKING: Lewisport Baptist Church is seeking a part time minister of music who is responsible for leading worship through working with choir and band. Send resumé and cover letter to lewisportbaptist@tds.net.

SEEKING: Crittenden Baptist Church is seeking a part time youth minister. Please send resumé to Personnel Committee, Crittenden Baptist Church, P.O. Box 132, Crittenden, KY 41030, or via email to crittendenbaptist@fuse.net.

SEEKING: Bethlehem Baptist Church, Louisville, prayerfully seeks a full-time senior pastor for non-reformed congreg-

ation. Send resumé, cover letter to Jerry Phelps, Bethlehem Baptist Church, 5708 Preston Hwy., Louisville, KY 40219. For more information, visit bethlehem.com. Church profile listed under "Working with God/Pastor Search Committee."

SEEKING: Office coordinator/secretary for Fern Creek Baptist Church (28-38 hours weekly). Applicant must be a spiritually mature Christian and active church member, have several years experience, and have strong computer skills. The applicant must be proficient in Word, Publisher, Excel, PowerPoint and church software programs. Send resúmes to: Fern Creek Baptist Church, Attention: Personnel Committee, 5920 Bardstown Road, Louisville KY 40291, or email to linda@ferncreekbaptist.org. Resúmes will be received through Aug. 12. Questions? Call Pastor Linda Barnes Popham at (502) 239-0316, ext. 103.

SEEKING: Interim/part-time minister to students to lead youth Sunday night, Wednesday night Bible study and fellowship activities. Send resumé to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 327, Paris, KY 40362, Attn: Gary Ellcessor, or email resumé to fbcrogary@att.net.

SEEKING: Southern Baptist Church is seeking a part-time worship leader/

Westport Road Church hosts training for ESL tutors Aug. 23-24

Louisville—Anyone interested in sharing the gospel by tutoring individuals in English as a Second Language are invited to attend Language Aug. 23-24 at Westport Road Baptist Church in Louisville.

The event begins at 6 p.m., EDT, Friday and continues until 3 p.m. Saturday. Fees are \$20 for materials and lunch on Saturday.

To register, contact Laura Moran by e-mail at lawy30@hotmail.com or by phone at (502) 299-3614.

The church is located at 9705 Westport Road.

To place an advertisement in the Western Recorder:

Rates are available upon request.
Call (502) 489-3428;
or visit
westernrecorder.org



Claims made by advertisers are not necessarily those of the Western Recorder's staff or directors.

pastor. Approximately 15 hours each week. Must have a true heart for leading others in worship, flexible music styles, and able to lead choir and praise bands. Send resumé to profile@youngerscreek.com.

SEEKING: Urgently needed for Hispanic ministry: 2 basketball goals, 2 volleyball poles, portable preferred. Email garnettbjones@gmail.com, or call (859) 361-3169.

SEEKING: Reidland Baptist Church is seeking a part-time minister of youth and recreation. Resúmes accepted through Aug. 18. Send to Youth Search Committee, Reidland Baptist Church, 5559 Benton Road, Paducah, KY 42003.

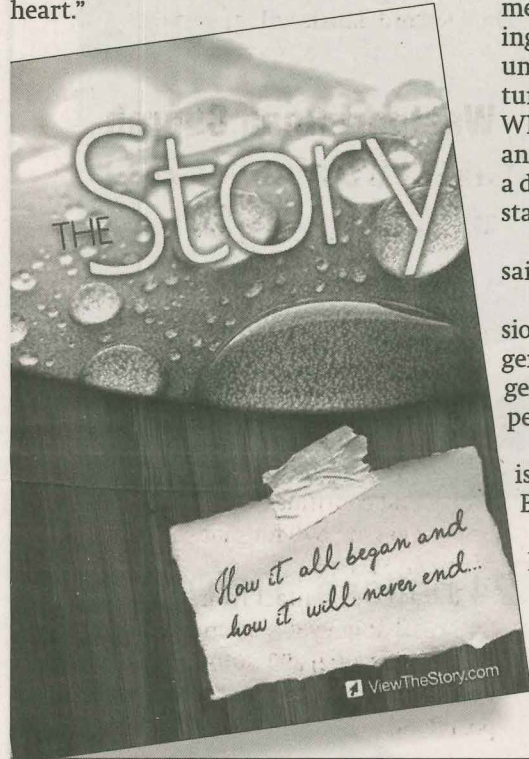
A new way for Christians to tell

By Dianna Cagle

Cary, N.C.—Because the number of people who have a basic understanding of the Bible “is shrinking in America,” Jerry McCorkle said he began to explore a new way to share the Christian faith with all people.

The result is “The Story” (viewthestory.com), an evangelism and discipleship tool to help relay the overarching story of the Bible—creation, fall, rescue and restoration.

“What we’re trying to say is that Jesus is the reality,” said McCorkle, executive director of Spread Truth Ministries (spreadtruth.com) based in Bloomington, Ill. “We need to know this big story, and we need to craft it in such a way that it taps into the deepest desires of their heart.”



Several Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary professors contributed to the materials, which are continuing to be developed, including the training manual, booklets, a recently released English Standard Version Bible based on The Story and applications for smartphones.

“It’s God’s story,” said George Robinson, assistant professor of missions and evangelism at Southeastern. “It’s a good way to re-center conversations on what matters the most.”

Alvin Reid is a professor of evangelism at Southeastern, and in his 18 years there, he has been “always thinking about effective ways to share the gospel in this culture.”

Reid uses the Apostle Paul as an example. When in Jerusalem, during New Testament times, Paul was speaking to Jews who had an understanding of the Scriptures, or the Old Testament. When he got to Mars Hill and Athens, Paul had to use a different approach. He started with creation.

“We used to live in Jerusalem,” Reid said. “But America is now Athens.”

This is evident by observing television, culture and music. “There’s a hunger for more,” Reid said. “There’s a hunger for truth. I believe we have to give people the whole panoramic view.”

Pairing evangelism with discipleship is key, Reid said. People need to see the Bible as more than a book of rules.

“The gospel is about knowing God,” he said. “I think the best way to share the gospel is to take them from where they are to the cross.”

Developing ‘The Story’

The Story was born out of a need

“(W)e need to craft (the gospel) in such a way that it taps into the deepest desires of their heart.”

Jerry McCorkle

THE Story

McCorkle faced in his Spread Truth ministry, which leads mission teams each summer to New York. Year after year, the teams tried to use the usual evangelism tracts or training materials but had trouble because many of them rely on a person’s knowledge of a basic biblical framework. So McCorkle developed a small tract called “More to Life,” which laid the groundwork for The Story concept.

Robinson happened to be in New York one year with another mission team he was leading, and he found an early Spread Truth tract. He had been developing

something on his own that mirrored some of the same concepts.

“I couldn’t just say Jesus died for your sins,” Robinson said, because “they defined the narrative outside of Scripture. I found I had to tell the whole story.”

Robinson began consulting with Spread Truth and Reid. It went from a small booklet to a training manual.

Individuals and churches can have a personalized Web page to keep track of how many contacts have checked their particular Story page. There are also applications for Android and Apple smartphones to help with sharing

The Story.

Churches can utilize their accounts to show how God is using members to witness to others. They can even display a digital map showing where The Story has been shared.

“It makes you want to share more,” he said. “The real challenge is day-to-day, recognizing the opportunities to share the story of the gospel in the context of this broader story.”

Spreading ‘The Story’

At this point almost 600,000 booklets have been distributed in English, Spanish and German.

“The Story has really developed into something far beyond what we ever thought,” McCorkle said. “We’re actually characters in this drama. We’re actually living in The Story.”

Knowing the basic themes of creation, fall, rescue and restoration will help people engage others with the gospel, he said.

“They will really see that this gospel flows along a plotline,” McCorkle said. “You can draw a person into it if you share it in a narrative form. That’s how Jesus did it. The story of Jesus is the underlying reality to which all the other stories point.” (BP)

Warren, Saddleback pastor, returns to pulpit after son’s April suicide

By John Evans

Lake Forest, Calif.—Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., returned to the pulpit July 27 for the first time since his son’s suicide.

Warren, author of the bestseller “The Purpose Driven Life,” had taken a 16-week absence after Matthew Warren, 27, took his life in April following a long struggle with mental illness.

Rick Warren took the pulpit at the Saturday evening service to a standing ovation, thanking Saddleback staff, members, his family and local pastors who supported him.

“In the middle of all that intense pain, Kay and I ... and our entire family, we’ve all felt the favor of God on our lives because of your prayers,” he said.

Warren, with comments from his wife Kay, shared the first message in a new sermon series titled, “How to Get Through What You’re Going Through.”

Warren said when he is asked how he and his family are getting through this time, the answer rests on three truths that never change.

The first, he said, is that life doesn’t make sense, but we can have peace because we know God is with us and loves us. Warren said that as we go

through grief, God grieves with us, and He wants to take our pain and turn it around as a means to help others who are suffering in the same way.

“He wants to use it as your life message and your life mission,” Warren said.

He added that he still does not understand why his son’s mental illness was never healed or why he died, but having an explanation is not the point.

“I would rather walk with God with all my questions unanswered than to have all my questions answered and not have Him in my life,” he recalled writing.

The second truth, Warren explained, is that everything on earth is broken, but we can still have joy because we know God is good and has a greater plan. Nothing works perfectly in this world, Warren said, and sin is wearing us down. But we can still rely on God.

“His plan is bigger than the problem you’re going through, and it’s a good plan,” he said.

Kay Warren took the platform to explain how she could choose joy even when her hopes were crushed by Matthew’s death. The third truth, she said, is that life is a battle, but we can have hope because we know there’s more to the story.



Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., preached for the first time since his son Matthew committed suicide following a battle with mental illness, explaining how God’s goodness has sustained him. (BP)

Kay Warren said that during her son’s mental illness, she did so much to build up hope that God would heal him, and she believed that He would. After Matthew’s suicide, all the things she had used to give her hope seemed to mock her, and she had to figure out what to do when the outcome was not as she expected.

“What I know about God prevents me from concluding that He is a fake or a phony or a tease, and what I know about myself prevents me from concluding that my faith wasn’t strong enough ...,” Kay Warren said.

What she is left with, she said, is an enormous mystery, but she is content to leave her questions unanswered until she sees Jesus, because she knows He has

never forsaken her or her family.

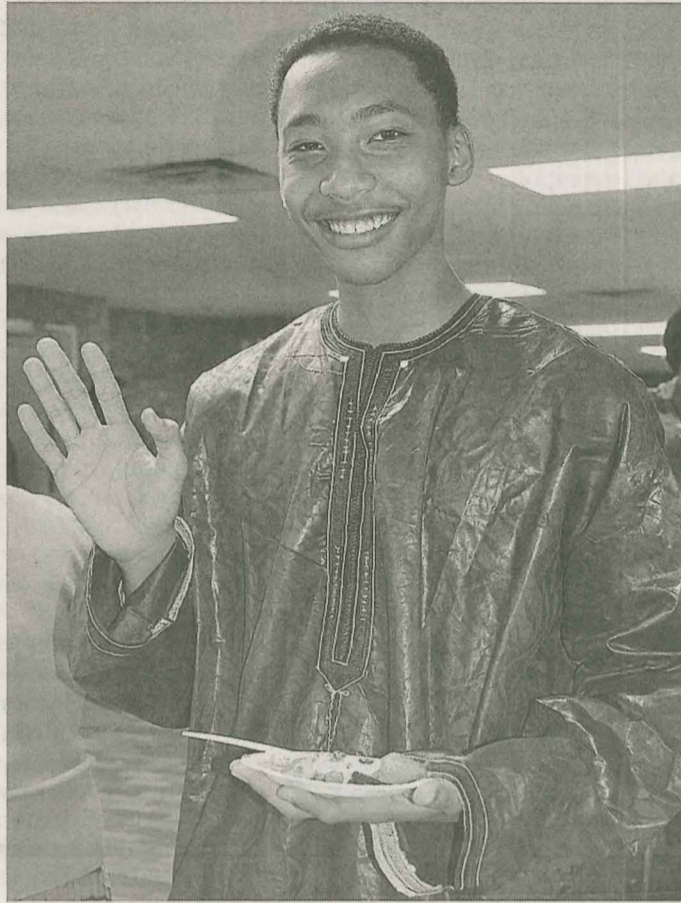
“Hope may not look the way that I thought it would, but hope is alive in us because we know,” she said.

Warren returned to the stage, telling the congregation that he comforts himself by knowing that even though Matthew’s life on earth was full of suffering, he is in his heavenly Father’s arms. Warren announced that just as Saddleback fought to remove the stigma from having HIV/AIDS, the next fight will be to remove the stigma from mental illness.

“If you struggle with a broken brain, you should be no more ashamed than someone with a broken arm,” Warren said. “It’s not a sin to take meds. It’s not a sin to get help. You don’t need to be ashamed.” (BP)

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