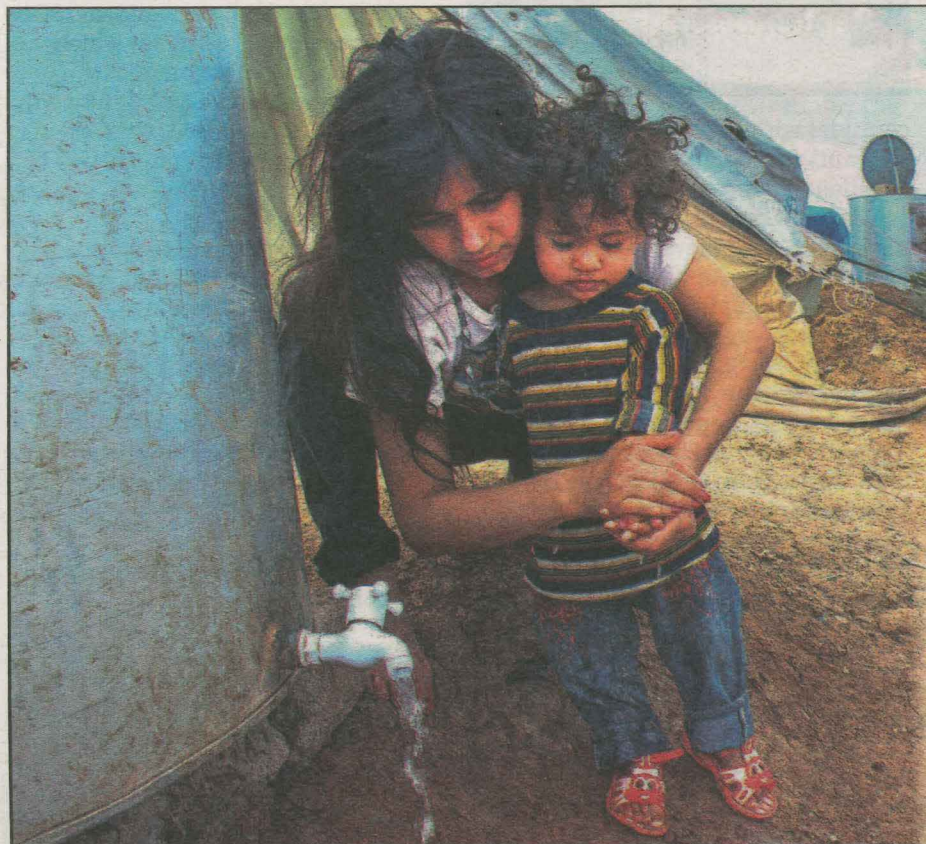


WESTERN Recorder

September 10, 2013

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 187, Issue 34



MORE THAN 1 MILLION SYRIAN CHILDREN

'Caught between'

GOVERNMENT & REBEL FORCES

*"People fleeing the war ... are desperate for hope and purpose beyond what the world can offer."—Don Alan**

By Charles Braddix

Damascus, Syria—Every day the numbers of refugees rise as Syria's crisis rages out of control and spills across borders into neighboring countries. There are now more than 2 million refugees—half of which are children. Another 5 million are considered internally displaced persons and 100,000 dead.

"This is an unparalleled challenge," said Don Alan*, a senior missions strategist for the Middle East. "It is destabilizing the whole region."

Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt struggle to cope with the escalating Syrian refugee situation. Within Syria, civilians are caught between armed rebels and government troops.

Over a period of three days in mid-August, 30,000 Syrians crossed the border into northern Iraq, overwhelming refugee camps. Drinking water and sanitation immediately became critical needs. Typically 6,000 Syrians a day flee their nation, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The influx into Iraq nearly doubled that figure.

Hundreds of civilians were killed, meanwhile, and thousands wounded as a result of a chemical weapons attack on the suburbs of Damascus. Both sides in the conflict accuse the other of this violation of international law. Most of the world's superpowers, however, suspect the Syrian government as the perpetrator and are considering punitive action.

□ See Syrian refugees ... Page 7

ABOVE: A girl helps her 3-year-old brother wash himself from a tap in a camp now with 35,000-plus Syrian refugees. (Photo by UNICEF/Salam Abdulmunem)

AT RIGHT: The number of Syrian children exceeds 60 percent of total refugees in Jordan, and stay in "Children's Camps." (IMB)



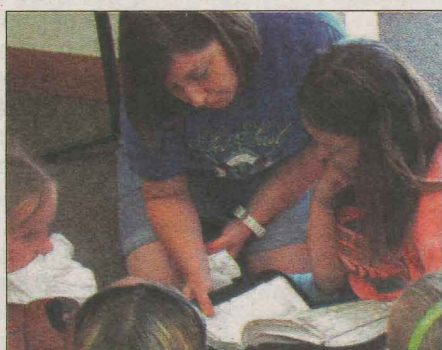
WMU CELEBRATES 100th birthday of GAs, Acteens

By Laura Wilson

Birmingham, Ala.—Not many organizations are rich with a heritage that spans more than 100 years, but Girls in Action and Acteens organizations sponsored by WMU have now passed the century mark of engaging girls in missions education and involvement.

Kentucky Baptists will be celebrating the occasion Nov. 9 during GA JAM at First Baptist Church of Bowling Green.

Stacy Nall, Kentucky WMU preschool, children and camp consultant, said girls attending the event will "be encouraged by former GAs and their



Girls are led in Bible study at GA camp. (Photo courtesy of Kentucky WMU)

love for missions. They will also learn how they can be involved in missions now and in their future."

History of girls missions

Nall said it may be difficult for today's GAs and Acteens to fully grasp the concept of 100 years of girls missions history. When GAs was started in

□ See 100th birthday ... Page 2

Black church plants grow, research shows

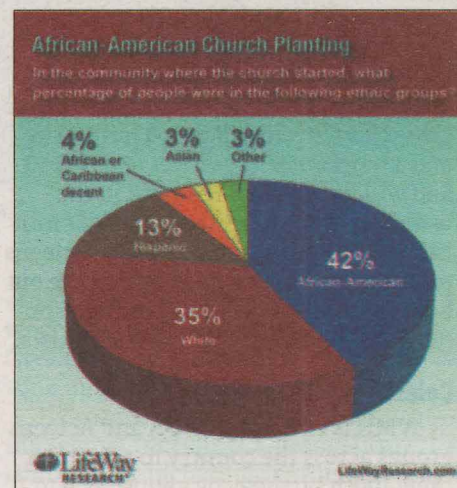
By Carol Pipes

Nashville—A steady increase in attendance has been the overall trend among African-American churches planted prior to 2012, according to a recent study by LifeWay Research.

An average first-year Sunday attendance of 37 doubled by the fourth year among the 290 African-American church plants in the multidimensional survey aimed at identifying characteristics of healthy new congregations.

Worship attendance, new commitments to Christ, church culture, facility usage, promotion and outreach, and church sponsorship and funding were studied in the project.

"This research has described in detail African-American church planting," said Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research. "More importantly, (it) has



begun productive conversations among church planting leaders across the U.S. about how best to train and equip new African-American church plants."

□ See Church plants ... Page 2

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100th birthday

Continued from page 1

1909, it was a time when large hats, high button-up shoes, and long Sunday drives in a horse and carriage were popular.

In 1907, Young Woman's Auxiliary was created for younger women and grew to 992 organizations within two years. The missing link was involving preteen and young teenage girls in missions, so WMU began publishing literature for these girls in 1909. These missions groups were first included in a 1913 report, and that year was claimed in later years as the official start of missions education for girls through WMU.

Although the names of the missions organizations for girls have changed over the years, its missions purpose remains true. As members of Junior YWA (1909), Junior Auxiliaries (1912), Girls' Auxiliary (1914), Junior Girls' Auxiliary and Intermediate Girls' Auxiliary (1924), Girls in Action and Acteens (1970), girls have come to understand God can use them now—even in their youth—to share His love with others and make a difference.

'Lifetime of missions'

Over the century, GA and Acteens have grown with girls and teens throughout the years. Heather Keller, children's ministry consultant for national WMU, said GA today as an exciting, active organization full of girls learning about and participating in missions work happening in their communities as well as around the world.

"GA is a place where girls can experience Jesus' love and compassion while they learn to be His hands and feet," Keller said. "It's often just the beginning of a lifetime of missions involvement."

As a missions discipleship organization for girls in grades 1-6, GAs learn about, pray for, give to, and do missions work. GA provides weekly curriculum, a Christ-centered peer group for girls, hands-on missions experiences, opportunities for girls to develop leadership skills, learning about the biblical basis for missions, and godly mentors for girls.

Acteens involves girls in grades 7-12 in missions and helps them develop an authentic faith that leads them to be compassionate and demonstrate a true servant's heart and attitude.

"Acteens is about empowering teenage girls to understand that God has a plan and a purpose for their lives and He can and will use them in His work in the world," said Suzanne Reece, student ministry consultant, national WMU. "Acteens teaches girls to see a need and figure out how to meet that need rather than simply acknowledging that the need exists."

Celebrating 100 years

WMU is encouraging GA and Acteens groups across the country to celebrate their 100th birthday by giving back to their communities, local charities, national organizations, and even international organizations.

"Leaders should shout about their church's legacy of helping to educate children about missions," Keller said. "We want to encourage GA and Acteens to work together on missions projects that will leave a lasting impact on their community, our country and our world." (WMU)

Visit wmu.com/ga100 for more information, including celebration ideas.

'Battle Plan' to equip men in pornography fight

By Erin Roach

Mobile, Ala.—A church in south Alabama is taking action to stop the scourge of pornography by hosting a men's event called "Battle Plan" to speak frankly about what must be done to equip believers for victory.

What they're doing, pastor Ed Litton said, can be replicated in churches across the nation.

Litton has been pastor of First Baptist Church in North Mobile, Ala., for nearly 20 years, and in the past five years or so he has noticed what he calls a cultural avalanche.

"I'm certain other people are seeing it too, but as a pastor I'm watching marriages in my church be ravaged and destroyed. I'm watching men become less directional about their leadership role in the home and the church," Litton, a former president of the SBC Pastors' Conference, said. "In counseling and trying to deal with these issues, we suspected that one of the major issues for men is pornography."

First Baptist North Mobile's effort



coincides with the Join One Million Men anti-pornography initiative (join1millionmen.org) set forth at the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting in June. That movement, launched by pastor Jay Dennis at First Baptist Church at the Mall in Lakeland, Fla., calls men to commit to sexual purity and to protect their families from the devastation caused by pornography.

On Sept. 19, from 6 to 8 p.m. men will gather at First Baptist North Mobile for a "Battle Plan: Men Fighting for Freedom" conference. Litton will lead the discussion, along with Neal Ledbetter, director of campus life at the University of Mobile.

Ledbetter is a member of First Baptist North Mobile, described by Litton as "a young man who's very sharp and really understands this generation of students and what they're struggling with."

"Our basic idea is that it's a frank conversation about porn and manhood and the ultimate beauty for which every man longs," Litton said.

First Baptist North Mobile also will provide a live video feed of the event, and people across the country will be able to watch it on their iPads, laptops or with others.

"We've got churches that are going to show it in the auditorium, and we've got churches that are going to tune into it in their small groups," Litton said.

Someone said recently that the antidote for shame is the phrase "me too," Litton said. People are better able to cope when they know they're not the only one struggling. But he'd add a second phrase, he said: Jesus said, "Come to Me."

"He's the source of cleansing and overcoming," Litton said. (BP)

Church plants

Continued from page 1

Stetzer added that large national studies on church planting have been conducted in the past, "but it would be wrong to assume that national factors are the same for every sub-population of church plants."

Worship attendance

The survey identified three characteristics that had the most positive impact on worship attendance, which were present in more than two-thirds of the churches: delegation of leadership roles to volunteers; leadership training for new church members; and a plan of personal spiritual formation for the church planter.

The study found worship style impacts attendance. The most common worship style used by African-American church plants was blended, cited by 45 percent of those surveyed, however, church plants with a more distinctive style, urban contemporary for instance, had higher attendance than churches using a blended style.

New commitments

The average number of new commitments to Christ for the first year of a church plant was 16, LifeWay Research found. The average number of new commitments peaked in year three at 20 and then remained at 12 or higher for the remainder of the years measured.

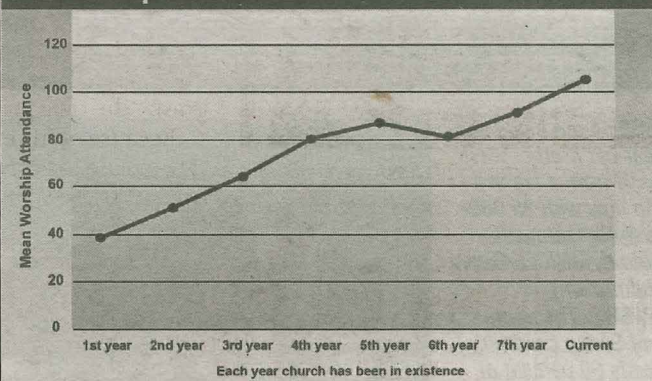
The study identified two characteristics that stood out as having a positive impact on new commitments to Christ and were present among more than two-thirds of the churches: door-to-door evangelism (75 percent) and the establishment of a new member class (68 percent).

Six characteristics were shown to impact both worship attendance and new commitments to Jesus Christ:

- Church planter compensated for their work (52 percent of the new churches).
- Weeklong boot camp or basic training provided for the church planter (42 percent).
- Church planter worked 60 hours a week or more on the church plant during the first two years of existence (39 percent).
- A sponsor or mother church permitted the plant to meet in the sponsoring church building (32 percent).
- The plants had their own facilities during the first five years (20 percent).
- The church plant incorporated a contemporary worship style (13 percent).

Church sponsorship and funding

The LifeWay Research study found 48 percent of new churches were sponsored by another church.

African-American Church Planting
Worship Attendance

The primary funding sources for African-American church plants were core members (84 percent), affiliated denominations (62 percent), the church planter or church planting team (49 percent) and the personal financial support network of the church planter (44 percent). The study also found 36 percent of church plants received funding from one or more sponsoring churches.

The average amount received by church starts from outside sources was \$21,818 in the first year. Average dollars received from members or attendees in the first year was \$33,301. During the first seven years, outside funding declined 44 percent, while dollars from members or attendees grew 211 percent, the research found.

Among the African-American church plants surveyed, 29 percent were self-sufficient by their first year. Half achieved self-sufficiency by the fourth year and 60 percent by year 10.

Church planters

The project indicated 55 percent of planters received church planting training prior to starting a church. But only 16 percent received specific training on the dynamics of the African-American context to planting.

Two-thirds were bivocational the first two years of the plant's existence. Despite so many having a second job, 63 percent of church planters worked 40 hours a week or more at the church plant. Slightly more than half (52 percent) received some financial compensation for their work as a church planter, but only 38 percent of them termed the financial compensation adequate to meet their basic needs.

Church planters from more than 20 denominations and several non-denominational churches participated in the study. Almost half (43 percent) were started since 2007. Most of them, 94 percent, still exist. Among the churches that closed, lack of financial support was the most common contributing factor. (LWCR)

Nearly half of new missionaries served overseas as students

By Tess Rivers

Hampton, Va.—David Taylor never imagined himself on an overseas mission trip. But when his Bible study leader at North Carolina State University asked him to pray about a summer mission trip in 2002 to Asia, Taylor agreed.

Taylor subsequently made the trip, and it changed the direction of his life.

"I assumed I would get a job, get married, make a lot of money and raise a family," said Taylor, one of 65 new missionaries appointed by IMB trustees at Liberty Baptist Church in Hampton, Va., on Aug. 28.

"God had different plans," said Taylor, who will be serving in Southeast Asia with the mission board.



Scott and Joyce Pittman, of Crestwood, will serve among Brazilian peoples. (Photo by Tom Townsend/WR)

Belinda Oakes*, who will serve in Central Asia, went on a mission trip nearly every year from the time she was 12.

"God began stirring up a deep desire in my teenage heart to share the gospel around the world," Oakes said. "When I was 21 on a mission trip to the Americas ... God called me to serve Him among the nations."

After college, Oakes spent two years in Africa as an IMB journeyman. For Oakes, her appointment is simply the next step in obedience to God's call to international service.

The implication of stories like these is not necessarily surprising—exposure to missions as a student is a first step toward long-term service. Of the new missionaries, 27 indicated that mission trips during high school and college sparked their initial passion for global outreach. Five others previously served with IMB through the Journeyman an International Service Corps programs.

The appointment service comes as classes resume across the United States and hundreds of student missionaries begin sharing their summer international missions experiences through IMB.

Kirk Jefford*, a junior majoring in physics at Washington State University, ventured in his first international trip to East Asia where he taught English on university campuses. For Jefford, who served through a new IMB initiative called Face2Face, it was his first time to grasp "the true joy of sharing Jesus."

Because of his experience, Jefford is rethinking his career goals. He plans to return overseas for six months as an IMB Hands On worker when he completes his



Paul and Tracy Barth, of Lexington, who will serve among European peoples, interact with family and friends during a reception following the appointment service. (BP/IMB)

undergraduate degree.

"I've got the bug," Jefford said. "I need to go back. Those few months were awesome but they weren't enough to cultivate relationships. I wish I could have stayed longer."

Allison Partinton*, who grew up as the daughter of missionaries in Japan, served with a Nehemiah Team in remote villages in the central Philippines along the Oras River.

While her experiences in the villages were much different from her life as a child in Japan or as a college student in the United States, Partinton's work taught her the importance of embracing the unreached.

"Unreached people groups are real. They are out there," she said. "I realized that where I want to be and what I want to do is to go where other people aren't going or can't go."

If this group of recently appointed missionaries is any indication, the future of world missions is promising. One day Jefford and Partinton may also stand in the place of Taylor and Oakes, commissioned as career missionaries for the sake of reaching the nations.

"Whether it's back to the river or somewhere new," Partinton said, "I want to be where people haven't had a chance to hear the gospel." (IMB)

*Names changed.

Elliff laments Christians' callousness

By Kate Gregory

Rockville, Va.—IMB President Tom Elliff is concerned that Christians have become desensitized to everyone's need for a Savior.

Christians pray for others' hearts to be stirred toward Christ, but they also need to pray that their own hearts are continually stirred by a deep burden for the spiritually lost, Elliff told International Mission Board trustees during their Aug. 27-28 meeting at the IMB International Learning Center in Rockville, Va.

Elliff said he has a hard time sleeping after watching the evening news, not just because of wars, disasters and other tragedies, but because "every one of us has learned how to look at the most horrific things you can imagine and be unmoved by them."

"We know where the great tragedies are, we see people running for their lives and starving physically," Elliff said. But most often they also are starving spiritually.

"We've learned how to be aware of lostness but not be moved by lostness," Elliff said. "We have a tendency when speaking of lostness to speak of it statistically." But statistical overload, he said, doesn't equate those numbers with individuals in dire need of Jesus.

The words of Proverbs 24:11 haunt Elliff: "Deliver those who are being taken away to death and those who are

staggering to slaughter. Oh, hold them back."

"Hold them back," God says. That's our mandate," Elliff said. "Everything we do must be framed in the light of the lostness of this earth. That's what we're about."

Southern Baptist churches need to be focused together in one sacred effort of pulling people back from lostness and an eternity separated from God, he said.

"Missions is the stack pole of the Southern Baptist Convention," he stated. "Missions is all about lostness."

When Southern Baptists give to the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, it isn't to meet a need IMB has, Elliff stressed. It's to meet the need the world has for the gospel.

Meeting the real need

Every penny of the \$175 million LMCO goal is absolutely needed, David Stevenson, IMB vice president of finance and treasurer, told trustees during his report.

Southern Baptists' international missionary count remains under 5,000, a limit necessitated by the economic downturn of the past few years.

The LMCO goal since 2009 of receiving \$175 million within one year has not been reached. The closest the offering has come to \$175 million was slightly more than \$150 million in 2006 and 2007 and nearly \$150 million in 2012.

"People ask, 'Why not lower the



Tom Elliff invites and the audience responds to a call to commit "to the next thing the Holy Spirit tells you about international missions." (BP/IMB)

goal?" Elliff told trustees. "The problem is not the goal; it's not high enough."

"We need to reach that goal just as a testimony of our awareness of the lostness of the world," he continued. "I am grateful for every coin that has come, for every person that has sacrificed, but now is not the time to retrench.... There has never been a greater time for missions than this."

Hispanics engaging lostness

Underlining that point, trustees approved IMB's launching of a new initiative called the Kairos Project to mobilize Hispanic Southern Baptists to serve as cross-cultural missionaries. They will serve in strategic roles around the world where their language skills and cultural

affinities will provide greater access to reach others with the gospel. Kairos is a Greek word that means "at the opportune moment."

Hispanics are one of the fastest-growing segments of the U.S. evangelical community, including Southern Baptists. It is estimated that the number of Hispanic Baptist churches will double to 7,000 by 2020.

IMB is seeking qualified applicants for the Kairos Project within the International Service Corps category of missionary service. ISC terms are typically two to three years. It is anticipated they will serve in Europe, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia and Latin America. (BP/IMB)

For more information, go to imb.org.

Shining light in darkness

The following is a guest column by Coy Webb, KBC Disaster Relief director. September is National Preparedness Month.

Since the year 2000, we have witnessed a multitude of record breaking disasters across the globe. From killer tornadoes to life-shattering earthquakes, from massive tsunamis to mega-storm hurricanes, disasters are dark times of pain and loss.

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

Through Disaster Relief ministry, the church has an opportunity to penetrate the darkness with the light of Jesus Christ.

Disaster Relief generates a platform for the gospel to those who are inaccessible and unreached. Disasters open doors to plant churches where they have not existed before, and to share the good news with those who are resistant to Christ.

As followers of Jesus, Disaster Relief offers opportunities for us to:

Engage unreached peoples. Disasters create access to unreached people groups around the world and in our own backyard.

Enter doors. People worldwide are more responsive to the gospel in the security of their home. This is particularly true in cultures where believers are persecuted. Disasters have the ability to open doors previously closed.

Care for the needy. Offering a hand of help is simply the right thing to do when people are hurting. Job was identified as a righteous man by his acts of compassion. "Whoever heard me spoke well of me, and those who saw me commended me, because I rescued the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to assist him. The man who was dying blessed me; I made the widow's heart sing. I put on righteousness as my clothing; justice was my robe and turban. I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame, I was a father to the needy; I took up the case of the stranger" (Job 29:11-16).

Share the gospel and plant churches. We must be cautious not to manipulate or be overly aggressive in the midst of pain and loss. Most people will appreciate genuine help, prayer and caring concern. Compassionate ministry creates receptiveness to our message of hope and salvation, and opens the way for new churches to be planted.

Enable the local church. The storms of life break down resistance and create opportunities for local churches to offer help, healing and hope to their neighbors. Disasters produce occasions to be the hands and feet of Jesus in practical ministry.

In the dark hours of disaster, people desperately search for light. God has called us, as the people of God, to be light in the darkness.

"And if you offer yourself to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted one, then your light will shine in the darkness, and your night will be like noonday" (Isaiah 58:10).

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Eliza Broadus: Supporting, strengthening missions for 100 years

"We stand facing a marvelous opportunity awaiting a Christless world—its doors flung wide open, its arms extended in urgent invitation, its young people—the most impressionable element—astir—awake—alive, knowing not which way to turn their new found strength. 'Come over and help us' is the cry from all parts of the world."

Eliza Broadus spoke these poignant words with the eloquence of any Baptist preacher of her day, imploring women gathered in Lexington 100 years ago this year to become engaged in missions. Her fervent pleas still echo in Baptist hearts today. "Those who have the image of Eliza Broadus as a diminutive, kind, gentle, old lady need to be reminded that during her young womanhood, words such as being capable, efficient, and hardworking described her well," observes Jack Birdwhistell in a biography recently republished by Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union.

As I read the story of this remarkable woman from Charlottesville, Va., for whom our state missions offering was named in 1976, I felt a strong connection across time. At age 8, the daughter of a Baptist pastor and university professor, Eliza—who was called "Lida" by family and friends—moved in 1859 with her family to Greenville, S.C., where her father would serve as a founding professor of Southern Seminary, which I would many years later attend. Many a day, I have walked down these same streets, surrounding the Baptist Courier where I served for 13 years before coming to Kentucky as editor, on which the seminary was born. The lanes still bear the names of these Baptist giants: Boyce, Manly, Williams and (John A.) Broadus—Eliza's dad—though the historical significance is undoubtedly lost on many of today's residents.

Eliza's father also served as a chaplain for the Confederate Army in 1863 at the special invitation of General Stonewall Jackson, Birdwhistell records. After he penned an anxious letter to her, young "Lida" was baptized in the Reedy River, which flows through the heart of Greenville. A beautiful suspension bridge spans the river's falls—now a small cascade gracing a city park—commemorating the place where the first settler, Richard Pearis, is said to have built grist and saw mills in 1768.

When times grew tough during the Reconstruction period, the fledgling seminary's enrollment dwindled and the school moved to Louisville in 1877. Eliza's family soon

followed. The Southern Baptist Convention took a crucial step that same year in recommending that its two mission boards organize "Central Committees" to encourage starting a female missionary society in every church. Eliza and five other women from Louisville were appointed to Kentucky's Central Committee, a role in which she served for more than 50 years.

Ten years later, when the Woman's Missionary Society (now Union) was recognized as an auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention, Eliza was chosen as Kentucky's first representative (vice president) on its Executive Committee. And, in 1903 at First Baptist Church of Winchester, she helped organize Kentucky WMU. But her greatest contribution, according to Birdwhistell, was a training school for female missionaries, helping a generation of Baptist women to hear "the cry from all parts of the world" and answer God's "urgent invitation" to missions.

"The influence of Eliza Broadus cannot adequately be measured," said Joy Bolton, executive director of Kentucky WMU. "Eliza believed in missions and the role that women could and should have in doing and promoting missions."

While others were often identified in various leadership roles, the presence and encouragement of Eliza Broadus in making things happen was crucial," Bolton said, noting that she was an excellent writer, public speaker and creative problem solver.

Today, the offering named in her honor provides significant funding for critical ministry needs and missions work all across Kentucky, such as church planting, language missions and international student ministry. "We are grateful for the trust that Kentucky Baptists place in us and the opportunities to partner in missions that come through the offering," Bolton said. Every new opportunity that comes WMU's way carries on the legacy of Eliza Broadus, she noted. "It is so exciting to learn (about missions) and get involved, to see the difference your praying and giving makes, and to go work alongside others to share Christ," Bolton said.

"When ministries that have received EBO funds report on their work and include mention of EBO, that is all the more encouragement for people to keep giving and praying," she added. And while it is always exciting to hear good reports from these ministries, Bolton said that it is not really about thanking Kentucky WMU, but about thanking the Lord and Kentucky Baptists.



After Thought

By Todd Deaton



You—a youth worker?

By Art Toalston

I've worked in our church's youth ministry for about five years. I generally take attendance, make a bit of small talk with the middle school boys, try to be attentive as the lesson is taught and, on occasion, I pray at the end of the session.

I've also taught the lesson about a half-dozen times and have improved a bit. But I like the praying role. The guys are quiet and I can pour out a bit of my heart for them.

Everybody's been patient and kind with me. They've offered lots of encouragement. And even though I'm not a

great youth worker, at least I am one.

Previously, I was an "attendee" on Wednesday nights, but God convinced me to do more. First I sat in with a truly good youth worker, then another. It was awkward. What do I know about boys? Our daughter, what a pleasure; these

FIRST PERSON

boys, what a challenge.

Over time, something marvelous has happened:

I've begun to see middle school boys as genuine human beings. I can talk with them, at least to an extent I never thought possible. I'm not afraid of them. I'm praying for them at a pivotal juncture when their lives are wide open. And I'm seeing lots of other ways to be mindful and prayerful for youth.

I know the importance of praying for:

■ Today's students—asking God to keep their hearts tender toward Him in this era of cultural lostness, asking God to bring a flow of witnesses into their lives who will nurture them as agents of God's redemptive mission on earth.

■ Today's educators—asking God to give them divine wisdom and a mighty dose of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23.

■ Our church youth ministry who know the critical importance of nurturing the next generation amid moral chaos and corruption.

Courageously pray about serving as a youth volunteer. And even if your Lord doesn't lead you to help in your church's youth group, you can still pray. (BP)

Art Toalston is editor of Baptist Press.

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Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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It's all about where you keep your focus in life

By Judy Woodward Bates

Few would argue that Amon was among the worst of Judah's kings. He was so hated that "Amon's own officials conspired against him and assassinated him in his palace" (2 Chronicles 33:24). And yet, his son Josiah proved to be one of Judah's best kings.

Scripture tells us, "Josiah was 8 years old when he became king. ... During the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, Josiah began to seek the God of his father David" (2 Chronicles 34:1, 3). While Amon had sought to please himself, young Josiah aimed to please the Lord.

The debate about nurture over nature has been going on for centuries, but the whole thing can be boiled down to one word: focus. While Amon sought self-satisfaction through possessions, power and tyranny, Josiah looked for fulfillment beyond himself and learned the only true satisfaction was in serving God.

There have been several high-profile trials in recent years, many of which involved horrific crimes and were perpetrated by people whose childhoods were horror stories within themselves. In every case, their attorneys argued that their clients' upbringing made it impossible for them to be anything but what they'd become. The Bible repeatedly refutes that kind of thinking.

Take my friend Tom, for example. His only memories of his father involve hearing his mother's screams as he cowered in their tiny shack's only closet. The day his dad left for good was a relief to Tom and his mother.

For several years, his mom, uneducated and with no family to fall back on, did her best to keep them in food, clothes and shelter, but things were always rocky and the two went to bed hungry on many occasions.

Then came the day 14-year-old Tom came home and found a note and a \$20 bill on the kitchen table. His

mother stated that she'd be gone a few days and for Tom to use the money for whatever he needed until she got back. That was the last he ever heard from her.

Tom was terrified that ending up in an orphanage or foster care would mean leaving his school where he had excelled. So what did he do? He went to a man who owned a nearby auto repair service and told him what had happened and how he wanted to be able to stay in the area.

The man hired Tom to work after school and weekends and promised to keep Tom's family situation a secret. He paid Tom a small salary and provided him with a room and bath in back of the garage.

Four years later, Tom graduated at the top of his class, earning a full scholarship to a small four-year college. There Tom applied himself just as diligently to his studies and a part-time job and graduated with a degree in business management.

"Until I was in college, I didn't darken the door of a church," Tom said. "I was too afraid some well-meaning person might report me to the state welfare. But I prayed ... studied my Bible and I put my faith in Jesus Christ to help me. He never once disappointed me."

Today, Tom and his wife teach fifth graders at their church and own a highly successful business. Tom is known by all his employees as a tough, but fair boss.

"Laziness doesn't cut it with me. Excuses don't cut it with me. I'll help anyone I can when he's down," Tom said, "but I won't allow anybody to use his past as an excuse for his present."

"Life gave me a boatload of excuses for not making it, but by keeping my focus on Jesus Christ, I grew to know that, through Him, I could do anything I needed to do to make a success of my life."

Judy Woodward Bates, an author and speaker, is on the web at bargainomics.com.

FIRST PERSON

Shortcuts to healthy marriage

By Scott Wigginton

Q: I am a newlywed. Are there any shortcuts, tips or secrets to building a healthy and Christ-centered marriage?

A: The bookstores are full of shortcuts, tips and secrets. How ironic that while tips have never been more plentiful, self-reports from more than 50 percent of marriages do not reflect high levels of contentment. Building a marriage on tips and techniques is like constructing your dream home on sand; it may look beautiful in the beginning, but eventually a storm will reveal its faulty foundations.

Gene Packwood suggests we learn something from the "slow food movement." There are four basic tenets. Don't eat food that won't rot. Don't eat food if you cannot pronounce the ingredients. Don't eat food you can't cook in your own kitchen. And don't eat food that was not available before 1900.

Packwood suggests that there should be a "Slow Marriage Movement" that eschews the fast food marriage mentality of our society. Slow marriages in a fast culture carefully return again and again to taste of the sweet love of God. As we "taste and see that the Lord is good," we acknowledge that our Heavenly Father is the giver of every good and perfect gift—especially marriage.

Slow marriages use the simple ingredients found in I Corinthians 13. They take time to cook. Slow marriages stay fresh with Christ, with communication and with forgiveness. And slow marriages know that God created marriage way before 1900.

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



Advancing the kingdom

By Laurie Valentine

Using the Kentucky Baptist Foundation to accomplish your legacy giving objectives can benefit both you and the Baptist causes you wish to support.

As the trust agency of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, the Foundation receives legacy gifts for the support of all Kentucky and Southern Baptist causes. The Foundation, as a "member of the family," has an appreciation for the mission and ministry of the causes that will be supported through your gifts.

This connection assures you, as the giver, the Foundation has each cause's best interests in mind as it manages the gifts made for that cause's benefit.

Many givers want to benefit more than one cause and realize that dividing their gift may result in lower total support. A single trust or endowment fund can be set up with the Foundation to provide support to more than one Baptist cause. This can result in more consistent levels of support for all—each cause will have the benefit of the same level of competent investment management oversight services and the economies of centralized fund management.

Setting up the Foundation as the manager of your gift assures the causes you want to support are left to do what they were called to do—missions, Christian education, child care, evangelism, disaster relief, etc. You relieve their board, trustees or staff from day-to-day investment research, analysis, decision-making, transacting and reporting, and place those responsibilities with the organization whose mission is to provide competent, prudent financial management for the causes designated by its donors.

The board and staff of the Foundation have a sincere desire to help each Kentucky Baptist determine how they can advance the kingdom and practice their Christian financial stewardship at a deeper level. This desire is reflected in the variety of legacy gift plans offered and the ability of the Foundation to accept gifts of any size.

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation.



Get back to the basics of a dynamic faith

By David Jeremiah

None of us set out to live a mediocre spiritual life. But in the midst of our busy schedules, many of us have forgotten something very important. We have forgotten to practice the basics that shape us as Christians.

Back to the basics

■ **Worship.** Worship is seeing the things on earth in perspective to the things in heaven. When you understand what the Bible says about God in His majesty, you will be able to praise Him, no matter what your present circumstance. Worship God every day in your prayers, songs, thoughts and conversations. If you only practice praise on Sunday mornings, you'll miss what God wants to do in your life the other six days of the week.

■ **Prayer.** If you want to find out where you are spiritually, ask yourself this question: What is the level of my commitment to my prayer life? If you want the Lord's blessing on your life, there just isn't any alternative to prayer. Prayer is the way you defeat the devil, reach the lost, restore a backslider, strengthen the saints, send missionaries out, cure the sick, accomplish the impossible and know the will of God. Prayer is the business of Christianity, and it nets amazing results.

■ **Bible study.** Reading the Bible takes discipline in the same way that exercise does. You can't just do it when you feel like it. Set up a system in your life to study the Bible on a daily basis. The Bible not only

provides information; it gives practical instructions for dynamic Christian living. When you read the Bible, ask yourself three important questions: What does the passage say? What does it mean? How can I apply it to my life? Find out what God says and do it.

■ **Scripture memorization.** Commit yourself to Bible memory. Sometimes you need a word from God when there's not a Bible available. If your mind is filled with the word of God, then it can't be filled with impure thoughts. Two things cannot occupy your mind at the same time. Psalm 119:11 says, "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You."

■ **Journaling.** A journal is simply a book in which you keep a personal record of your spiritual journey. Record your goals, prayers, thoughts or Scriptures. Not only will the journal keep you accountable to spiritual disciplines, it will encourage you for years to come as you record God's work in your life.

■ **Church fellowship.** Is church membership really important? Some people claim that they can worship God from any location. So what makes the church necessary in my Christian experience? God never intended that any Christian should live in isolation. Hebrews 10:25 says that we need to "stir up love and good works" and to "exhort one another." Be sure to find a church where you are spiritually fed and have opportunities to serve the body of Christ.

■ **Giving.** Giving may be the most

neglected of the basics, and yet every single one of us is responsible for what we do with our money. God's plan for our financial success is clear. Giving, or tithing, 10 percent of your income to your church not only provides for God's work, it shows God that He is your priority. The Bible tells us that if you give generously to God, He will open the windows of heaven and pour out a great blessing into your life.

■ **Witnessing.** When researcher George Barna asked Christian adults what their most important goal was in life, not a single person said to make disciples of Christ. Yet what was Jesus' last command to us as believers? To make disciples of all the nations.

Basic training

As you've been reading, were you reminded that you have slowly forgotten to practice one (or more) of these basics in your life? If so, it's time to get back to basic training.

With a specific basic in mind, ask yourself three important questions: What needs to change in my life to make time for the basic? What prevents me from making these changes? What are the consequences to my spiritual life if I do not change?

It's not always easy to practice the basics of a dynamic faith. But as you do, you will discover a life so full of God's presence that you will never forget them again. (BP)

David Jeremiah is the founder and host of *Turning Point for God* and pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church in El Cajon, Calif.

NAMB: Military chaplains 'will not' support same-sex unions

By Mike Ebert

Alpharetta, Ga.—The North American Mission Board has issued new guidelines for Southern Baptist military chaplains in light of the U.S. military's recognition of same-sex marriage.

The guidelines reiterate Southern Baptist doctrine and the expectation that SBC chaplains will not participate in or attend wedding ceremonies for gay members of the military.

"Our chaplains want to uphold the authority and relevancy of Scripture while continuing to serve in a very diverse setting," said Doug Carver, the retired Army major general who leads NAMB's chaplaincy efforts. "We believe these updated guidelines will help them do that while still sharing the love and the hope of Christ with everyone."

The updated guidelines are being issued in response to the military's repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and the U.S. Supreme Court's abolishment of the Defense of Marriage Act. The U.S. military requires all chaplains to be endorsed by a recognized denomination. NAMB serves as the endorsing entity on behalf of Southern Baptists.

The updated guidelines address four specific areas:

Doctrine—Chaplains will be expected to conduct their ministry in harmony with Article XVIII of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000: "All ministries regarding human sexuality will reflect the historic, natural and biblical view of marriage as God's lifelong gift of 'the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime.'"

Pastoral care—The guidelines remind chaplains that Southern Baptists view all sexual immorality as sin that violates God's biblical standards for purity and that "responsible pastoral care will seek to offer repentance and forgiveness, help

and healing, and restoration through the mercy and grace of Jesus Christ's sacrificial gift of love on the cross," the document states.

Restrictions—The guidelines state that "NAMB-endorsed chaplains will not conduct or attend a wedding ceremony for any same-sex couple, bless such a union or perform counseling in support of such a union, assist or support paid contractors or volunteers leading same-sex relational events, nor offer any kind of relationship training or retreat, on or off of a military installation, that would give the appearance of accepting the homosexual lifestyle or sexual wrongdoing. This biblical prohibition remains in effect irrespective of any civil law authorizing same-sex marriage or benefits to the contrary." Chaplains also are prohibited from participating in jointly-led worship services "with a chaplain, contractor or volunteer who personally practices a homosexual lifestyle or affirms a homosexual lifestyle or such conduct."

Pluralism—The guidelines acknowledge that SBC chaplains serve in a pluralistic setting but expect, under U.S. Department of Defense guidelines, that the rights and freedoms of chaplains will be protected so they may "preach, teach and counsel in accordance with the tenets of their denominational faith group and their own religious conscience." In addition, chaplains are expected to: "Treat all service members, regardless of rank or behavior, with Christ-centered dignity, honor and respect while assisting the institutional leadership in its religious mission requirements and responsibilities as guaranteed by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution."

"These guidelines simply provide clarification on specific issues and give our chaplains the freedom and protection for their ministry," Carver said. (NAMB/BP)

Marriage benefits granted to gay couples

By Tom Strobe

Washington—Two departments of the federal government announced Aug. 29 homosexual couples who are legally married will be treated the same as heterosexual married couples for purposes of taxes and Medicare coverage in nursing homes. The new rules apply to same-sex couples regardless of the state in which they reside—even if that state has not legalized such marriages.

The Department of the Treasury, in conjunction with the Internal Revenue Service, said such gay couples will be considered married when it comes to all federal taxes, including income, estate and gift taxes. As a result, legally married same-sex couples must file their federal income tax returns as either "married filing jointly" or "married filing separately."

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), meanwhile, announced that a person enrolled in a private Medicare plan will be able to benefit from equal coverage for care at a nursing home in which a same-sex spouse resides.

Pro-family advocates decried the new

regulations, especially their impact on states where same-sex marriage remains illegal.

Brian Brown, president of the National Organization for Marriage, charged the Treasury Department with "grossly overstepping its authority."

"The Obama administration is intent on forcing same-sex 'marriage' on an unwilling public," Brown said. "Congress alone has the responsibility of determining federal tax law."

Gay marriage supporters, however, applauded the administration.

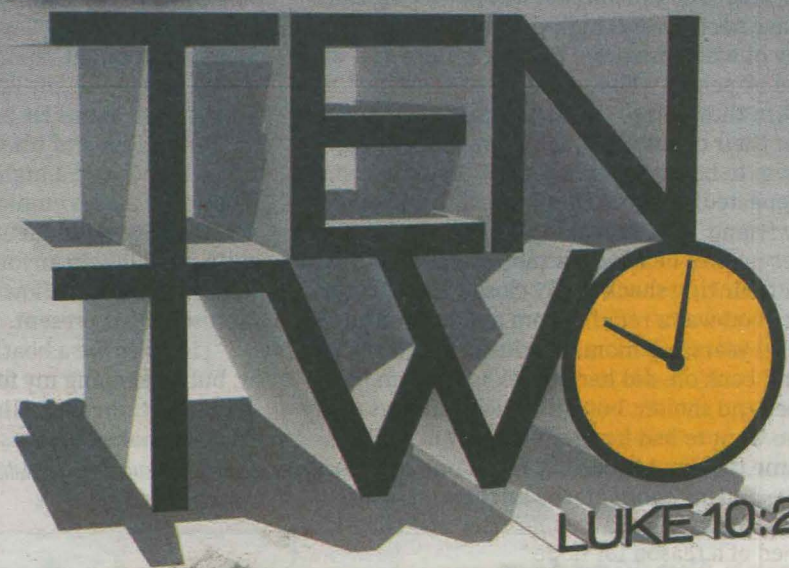
"No family should have to worry about losing important federal rights and benefits, simply because they live in a state that doesn't recognize them as equal under the law," said Chad Griffin, president of the Human Rights Campaign.

Under the new rules, a same-sex couple can marry in a jurisdiction where such a union is legal and still receive the benefits if they live in a state or move to a state where gay marriage is illegal. The rules apply only to marriage, not to domestic partnerships or civil unions.

Same-sex couples may file claims for tax refunds back to 2010, according to the Treasury Department. (BP)

IT'S TIME TO PRAY

NAMB



"He told them: 'The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.'"

October 2, 2013

Lead your church to join churches
across North America on
Wednesday, October 2,
in praying Luke 10:2 for
workers in God's harvest.

Learn more at namb.net/TenTwo

Continued from page 1

A regional risk assessment consultant who advises Christian organizations said, "Analysts seem to believe that if such action does occur it will be a limited strike on Syrian government targets."

He urged Christian workers in the region to be diligent, increasing their situational awareness, paying close attention to how they may be perceived by the local population and national governments.

The consultant said the possibility of punitive military action against Syria increases the risk.

Valerie Amos, United Nations under-secretary general for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief coordinator, said, "We are not only watching the destruction of a country, but also of its people."

Half of Syria's 2 million refugees are children; three-fourths of which are under the age of 11. Many are undocumented and easily fall prey to exploitation. They display symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and experience elevated levels of depression.

"What is at stake is nothing less than the survival and well-being of a generation of innocents," said UNHCR High Commissioner Antonio Guterres. "The youth of Syria are losing their homes, their family members and their future. Even after they have crossed a border to safety, they are traumatized, depressed and in need of a reason for hope."

'There is hope'

One Christian worker in Beirut, Lebanon, said the presence of refugee children from Syria is overwhelming. In addition to the trauma they have experienced in fleeing their country, many of the children have no place to live or go to school, no income or food to eat. For most, they are not welcomed and are even despised.

"We're talking about kids who have seen horrific murders, heard stories of rape and torture, kids who have not only seen what bombs can do, but have felt them," said a worker.

"These are kids who can't even



Days before the sudden influx of Syrians into Iraq, monitors reported that people were arriving by bus and setting up makeshift camps on the Syrian side of the Peshkhabour border crossing. (Photo by UNHCR/G. Gubaeva)

comprehend peace anymore," she said, "and they've tragically lost every ounce of hope. Most of them just want to stay alive, and some days they don't even want that."

But there is hope, said Alan, the missions strategist, even though the situation seems hopeless—and it's not just hope for the children.

"I think there is an incredible opportunity," Alan said. "People fleeing the war and atrocities are desperate for hope and purpose beyond what the world can offer."

Alan urged Christians around the world to respond to both the physical and spiritual needs of Syrians, whether they are refugees or are living in Syria.

"Give and pray," he said.



A Syrian refugee boy receives a bottle of water at the Jordanian border. In order to exit Syria, he had to wait several days without food and water. (IMB photo)

BGR sends relief

Jeff Palmer, executive director of Baptist Global Response, said BGR and its partners have provided more than \$750,000 in relief goods for those suffering in the crisis. Assistance comes in the form of emergency food packets, hygiene kits, materials to construct basic shelters and small amounts of medicine.

"It is a small amount compared to the ongoing need," Palmer said.

The majority of the displaced are families, and most of them are women and children, Palmer said, adding, "Husbands, fathers, brothers and uncles stay behind to protect their precious resources, unfortunately many times in vain."

"May we be broken not just by the sadness and terrible stories we are hearing," Alan said, "but may we be broken at the lostness and darkness that makes such brutality possible."

Alan added, "This is a spiritual battle. The pressure on us is how to respond in a way that meets needs and shares the hope that is within us."

He asks that God would help them minister to those who are displaced and have no shelter, that they might help those who are wounded and need medical attention, that they may care for children who are traumatized by the war.

"Pray that the Lord will help us speak with all boldness and with signs and wonders," the pastor said, "that souls may come to Him with mouths filled with praise." (BP)

*Name changed for security reasons.

SBC ethics leader: Bible Belt collapsing

By Jeff Brumley

Russell Moore has been making the rounds of national media outlets, telling his secular interviewers of the collapse of the Bible Belt and how it is bad for America, but good for the church.

Moore, president of the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, made a splash with those comments in an Aug. 16 Wall Street Journal article in which

"We are no longer the moral majority."

Russell Moore

he said "we are no longer the moral majority. We are a prophetic minority."

The article does not say if he is referring to the SBC, to a wider conservative Christian movement or to American Christianity as a whole.

But the topic arose again in an NPR interview when Russell explained to host Jeremy Hobson that Christianity is separating itself from the culture.

He told Hobson, "It's very good for a church to live up to what the Bible has called us to be all along, which is a counter-cultural reality that points to the kingdom of God, not just the values around us."

The downside, Moore added, is that Bible Belt values "held some bad things back" in the society—"just in the sense of family stability, the sense of encouraging some good, moral standards in some ways."

Moore conceded that conservative Christians can no longer assume societal and political support for their view of marriage. But the church must continue to push for the one-man, one-woman definition because it provides stability to families.

But no longer being the majority voice, Moore added, means recognizing they must "speak prophetically" to the culture inside and outside the church. (ABP)

NEWS BRIEF

Blind eye on marijuana

The U.S. Justice Department announced Aug. 29 it would not challenge 2012 voter initiatives that legalized small amounts of marijuana for recreational use in Colorado and Washington state, which became the first to authorize the drug for non-medicinal use. Twenty states and the District of Columbia have legalized medical use.

The Obama administration's ruling is "extremely unsettling," said Barrett Duke, vice president for public policy of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. "For it to decide to let the states establish their own laws on drug use signals its surrender on the war on drugs," Duke said.

"All the other states in the union should be concerned about the federal government's willful disregard of federal drug laws and for the threat it poses to their ability to prevent the rise of drug use in their own states."

EXPOSITORS



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Saying 'yes' to the call

Former 'punk' returns to serve
Oneida as principal

In July 1986, a Western Recorder column titled, "A rude, disrespectful punk," was written about a former Oneida student. In that article, Barkley Moore said, "Every time my courage falters, every time I hear so-and-so is hopeless, I look at David and know that all things are possible with Christ."

The following is David Robinson's account of his Oneida experience.

"By the time I reached the halls of Oneida Baptist in 1977, I was a 14-year-old alcoholic and drug user. I was stuck in a world of drugs, violence, gangs and chaos. The years of my gang involvement in Cincinnati had resulted in my family home being burned to the ground. I was a product of an abusive home life, stuck there after being abandoned by my natural mother. Due to my gang involvement and drug-use history, I had been denied admittance to several boarding schools. In one final, desperate act, my parents contacted Dr. Barkley Moore. He accepted me immediately, with all my faults and failures.

"Oneida gave me a fresh start when no one else would. In the beginning, I hated being at OBI. I longed to be back in downtown Cincinnati running with the gangs and selling drugs. However, at Oneida I began to find a sacrificial love that I had never before experienced. It was this love that accepted me, with all my faults and sins. It was this love that began to break down the walls of a rude, disrespectful punk.

"The love of the staff at OBI began a transformation within me before I realized what was happening. I began to see

and feel, for the first time, the love of Christ. I came to realize that the war within myself was between God's calling on my life and my own worldly desires. After I was caught doing drugs,

Dr. Moore gave me a second chance to leave the old life behind. I soon accepted the Lord's saving grace.

"After that decision, I began a life-long pursuit of serving Him with my life and talents. The love and acceptance I received at Oneida has compelled me to live a life of service. My desire has been to share the same love that I found as a young, rude disrespectful punk with all those the

Lord brings across my path."

I called David about returning to Oneida to serve as principal, and at the time he was lying in a hospital bed in Huntington, W.V. David had suffered a terrible leg injury from a table saw accident, but in spite of his physical condition, he did not hesitate. He didn't ask me about salary or benefits. He didn't ask for time to recover from his injury.

David's willingness to say "yes" reminded me of Luke 5:11: "So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him." In that passage, Jesus' first disciples left everything and followed Him. They didn't concern themselves with small or even practical details. They simply said "yes" to the Lord's call.

I am so thankful the Lord has called David and his family back to Oneida, and am also thankful for so many other Oneida faculty and staff who have said "yes" to the Lord's call.

Larry Gritton Jr. is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, a Christian boarding and day school. Website: oneidaschool.org. Phone: (606) 847-4111

This is
Oneida

Larry Gritton

Broadcasting a new way

Student leaves media job to
answer a call to the ministry

Student Brandon Caudill has one of those unique voices that radio broadcasters possess. You just like to hear them talk because of the smooth sound of their voice. Caudill still uses his voice for our Clear Creek Chimes program, but he is preparing for God to use his voice in a totally different way now.

"I began to feel God's call into the ministry after hearing a convicting revival message concerning the Great Commission," said Caudill. "I knew God was calling me to something far greater than myself and that He wanted me to pursue a solid biblical education for His purposes.

"I first heard about Clear Creek from a friend who was a student at the time. After much prayer and confirmation, I resigned my broadcasting job of eight years and moved to Clear Creek to begin classes.

"I had never given much thought to becoming an evangelist or missionary, but I was willing to do whatever God wanted me to do," Caudill said. "When I took a course in North American church planting with Dr. Bob Hughes,

God really helped me nail down what it was He wanted me to do.

"Around this same time, my wife, Candace, also began to feel this same calling. Since then, we have prayerfully considered each step of preparation in order to serve God as He desires."

"My wife and I had been praying about where God would have us serve, and God seemed to keep pointing us to Cincinnati," Caudill said. "Recently, we were able to meet with Dennis Holmes, the SEND North America coordinator for church planting there. During our visit, we had the opportunity to see a

majority of the possible plant sites all around the city and the surrounding suburbs. We also were blessed to meet with a couple of planters already serving in the area.

"Although the works we visited were doing well, they didn't knock a dent in the need for the gospel in the Queen City. We are still prayerfully considering if God would have us serve there and if so, when. We are very excited about the opportunities that lie ahead."

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

Rural church plant baptizes 146 since '12

By Lonnie Wilkey

Cunningham, Tenn.—Phillip Chambers says he is a mail man.

Only he doesn't work for the United States Postal Service. He is the bivocational pastor of Yellow Creek Baptist Church located in Middle Tennessee.

Instead, the mail he delivers is God's word each and every Sunday morning and Wednesday night.

Apparently those in attendance are paying attention and heeding the messages Chambers delivers. The rural congregation has grown from 42 people in its first service five years ago to an average attendance of 200, with a high attendance of 292 this past Easter.

Yellow Creek baptized 89 people in calendar year 2012 and has baptized 57 people so far in 2013.

The church, which has been renting a building, is in the process of constructing a new facility about six miles from its current location.

"It's all God," Chambers says of the growth.

Chambers was key in starting Yellow Creek five years ago, but he was not the first pastor. He felt the call to start Yellow Creek during a meeting in 2008.

He noted that he fought that call for about three months until he finally surrendered to God. Chambers went through the local association and the Tennessee Baptist Convention to begin the church. He was called as pastor in January 2012.

Looking back, Chambers, who still works with a local radio station, said his call was "a process. I fought it and tried to do other things, but I have no doubt that I'm where God wants me to be."

He is the first to admit that the location for Yellow Creek "did not make sense" but that is where he felt God was leading him to help start a new congregation.

"We're in the country and have people drive as much as 45 minutes one way to come," he said.

In addition, the facility they used for

five years has "an uneven floor, an air conditioner that can't keep it cool, only two bathrooms, and we've had to knock out every wall we could," Chambers said, explaining that the growth is not related to the building in which they meet.

Neither is the growth related to a worship style, he continued. "We sing both hymns and praise and worship music."

The secret for the growth is really not a secret, the pastor shared.

"It's simple and it's biblical. Yellow Creek people, all of them, are fired up for God and are constantly inviting their lost friends and family members to church.

"Once people get a taste of salvation and then once they get a taste of their friends getting saved, they just keep on and keep on inviting people to come," he noted.

He noted that the church begins each year with a 21-day fast in January "to dedicate our year to the Lord. We've seen

incredible things at Yellow Creek as a result of fasting and prayer," he said.

Among them, he cited people getting jobs, having children when they thought they were unable to, physical healing, financial miracles, marriages saved, addictions removed, and more. "It's quite common for us to call a church-wide fast and prayer for situations because we have seen firsthand the power and results," he said.

Chambers said the church also has been very active in the community, helping and leading a free clothing giveaway each spring and a food giveaway in the fall that provides a week's worth of food to more than 400 families. The church also prayerwalks the local schools each year and members volunteer throughout the year.

Chambers said that the Lord is also blessing the church financially. The land on which they are building their new 14,500-square-foot facility is paid for.

Yellow Creek, however, remains true to its Southern Baptist roots, stressed Chambers, and gives 10 percent of its undesignated receipts to the association and the Cooperative Program. (BP)

**"It's simple
and it's
biblical.
Yellow Creek
people, all of
them, are fired
up for God."**

Phillip Chambers

Deadline Oct. 11

CALL FOR RESOLUTIONS

**KBC's Committee on Resolutions
will receive resolutions for
consideration at this year's
annual meeting until October 11.
This year's meeting is on
November 12 at Lone Oak
Baptist Church in Paducah.**

FORWARD TO WHAT LIES AHEAD

Philippians 3:13-14

If you have a resolution to be considered:

E-mail to: communications@kybaptist.org
(preferred)

Mail to: Committee on Resolutions
c/o KBC Executive Office
P.O. Box 43433
Louisville, KY 40253

Executive Office
502-489-3374 or 866-489-3374
www.kybaptist.org/annualmeeting

Resolutions Must:

- Be typewritten, titled & dated.
- Be accompanied by a letter or e-mail from a church qualified to send a messenger to the annual meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Convention certifying that the person submitting the resolution is a member in good standing.
- Include complete contact information for the person submitting the resolution and his or her church. No person may submit more than three resolutions in a single year.

IMB's School of Prayer graduates inaugural class

By Don Graham

Richmond, Va.—Thirty years ago, Scotty Tipper's prayers never got any higher than the top of his head.

At the time, Tipper was a deacon at his church in south Georgia. He taught Sunday School, even served as the church's discipleship training director. There was just one problem: Tipper wasn't a Christian.

"I knew I was lost," he said, "but I'd been in church my whole life."

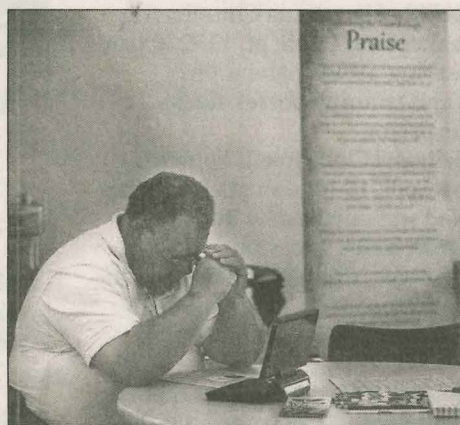
That truth ate away at Tipper's insides until he couldn't ignore the Holy Spirit any longer. During the invitation at church one Sunday morning, he stood up from the choir, walked down to his pastor in tears and told him that he needed Jesus.

It was a life-changing moment, Tipper said. Today the retired educator is experiencing that same kind of spiritual transformation again—this time in his prayer life.

Tipper, now 63, was among 15 students who graduated from the inaugural class of the School of Prayer for All Nations (SPAN), July 29-Aug. 2, at the International Mission Board's missionary training facility near Richmond, Va. The class represented a wide cross-section of Southern Baptist life, drawing laypeople like Tipper, pastors and even former missionaries from states as far as Indiana and Texas.

"Before I came here, I would say that I could pray with the best of 'em," Tipper said. "But now, I don't want to pray with the best of them. I want to pray the way that Jesus prayed. That's the transformation I'm talking about."

It made such an impact that Tipper phoned his pastor to tell him that he



Scotty Tipper, a retired educator from south Georgia, was one of 15 students from churches across the Southern Baptist Convention who took part in IMB's first School of Prayer for All Nations, July 29-Aug. 2, near Richmond, Va.

would personally pay the pastor's SPAN registration fee if he would attend. "He said, 'Is it that good?' And I said, 'It will change your life.'"

What is SPAN?

SPAN began in 2012 when IMB President Tom Elliff called on Southern Baptist churches to recognize prayer's indispensable role in the Great Commission and to redouble their efforts to bathe the denomination's international missions efforts in a "blast furnace" of prayer for the nations. Elliff said a "school of prayer" was needed to help fan the flames, and in July that vision became reality as SPAN held its first training session.

The school is led by Gordon Fort, IMB senior vice president of prayer mobilization and training, who said its purpose is to teach students to walk closer with God, pray more fervently for spiritual awakening, intercede for missionaries

"If my soul is not rested in Him, I can't be fervent in prayer."

Scotty Tipper

'Come with me' cards

Crossings uses 'vade mecum' to invite others in experiencing God

The term "vade mecum" is something you don't hear and perhaps you have never heard of it?

I was first made aware of the term nearly two years ago by a person within the hospitality industry. The Latin root includes two important definitions, one in noun form and one in verb form. The noun form means "ready reference manual" and the verb form is an imperative form of "come with me."

At Crossings, we now have a vade mecum for our ministry in a business card fold-up size that all employees can carry with them. This ready reference manual includes our mission, values, the plan of salvation in six steps, our six-step service process, and our logo. Actually, it defines our purpose and how we accomplish our calling in a very concise and understandable way.

Since we first received these, I have given some out each day as I get into a discussion with people about Crossings.

Perhaps what is unique is that the term "camp" is not referenced or

mentioned on the fold-up card. You may think, "Well, camp is what we do." That is correct, but our purpose is about the gospel. The card we have, in my estimation, is timeless and applicable to any Christ follower regardless of your job.

This is a great reminder that our purpose in life is not our job, even if our job is a ministry-related position. Our purpose is to be conformed to the image of Christ and to be a witness for the gospel with all people. We are to love God, love people and be a servant at all times.

While all this may sound strange, we are excited and will be printing these by the tens of thousands. Our plan is to give them away continually by inviting people to come to experience salvation in Christ and then be His image bearer to a lost world.

The next time you see one of our staff, ask them why Crossings exists and you, too, will be given a vade mecum.

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

Crossings Ministries



David Melber

and the nations and mobilize others to join in prayer.

The disciples didn't ask the Lord to teach them how to heal people, cast out demons or feed 5,000, Fort said. "The only thing they asked Him was to teach them how to pray. In this spiritual discipline of prayer, I believe there are things that can be taught."

Things like spiritual warfare, how to listen to God while praying, the role of fasting in prayer, how to pray Scripture and how to pray for the nations are just some of the subjects SPAN students cover.

Just studying the meaning of some of the Greek and Hebrew words for prayer made an impact on Tipper.

"The thing that hit me the hardest was that one of the words for prayer means 'to cry out desperately, lament,'" he said. "Why don't we pray that way all the time? To cry out for the missionaries? That God's presence would be on them as the Holy

Spirit leads them, that they would have a fruitful ministry, and that people would come into His kingdom."

SPAN classes are designed to be intimate, no larger than 21 students. Sessions run monthly; registration for the five-day experience is \$250 per person or \$450 per couple, which covers lodging, meals and conference materials. Students must complete homework before attending, including enlisting at least five prayer intercessors who will commit to pray for them before, during and after their time at the school.

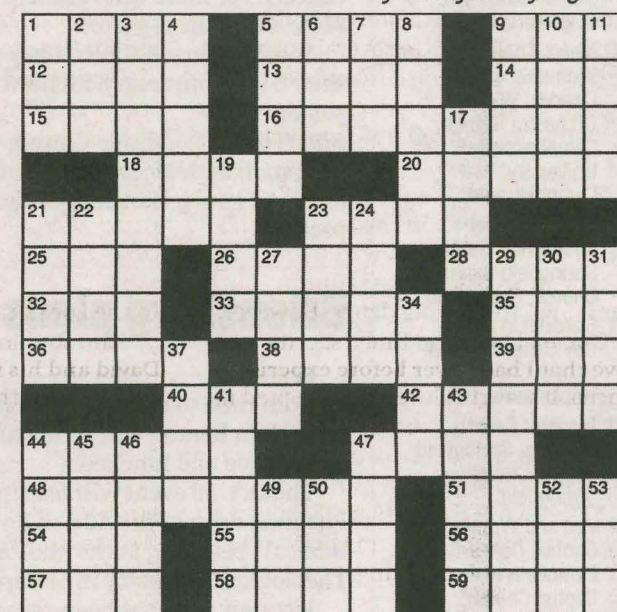
Large blocks of time are carved out of each day's schedule for prayer. While some is done alone, students are also assigned to small groups. One evening, students were asked to pray through the night, signing up for 20-minute shifts to provide real-time prayer support for missionaries working in other time zones around the world. (IMB/BP)

Bible Crosswords

By Evelyn Boyington

Across

- 1 "Behold the ____ of God, which taketh away the sin" (John 1:29)
- 5 "From the blood of ____ unto the blood of Zacharias" (Luke 11:51)
- 9 Afternoon repast
- 12 ____ code
- 13 Haircare name
- 14 Lacking polish
- 15 "Thou hast strengthened the ____ hands" (Job 4:3)
- 16 "The kingdom of heaven is like unto ____ hid in a field" (Matthew 13:44)
- 18 Parts of a tennis match
- 20 "I will ____ mine arrows upon them" (Deuteronomy 32:23)
- 21 Earthy
- 23 Greek letter
- 25 Broadcast
- 26 "And they came to the threshing-floor of ____" (Genesis 50:10)
- 28 "He ____ on the ground, and made clay" (John 9:6)
- 32 Party necessity
- 33 More pink
- 35 Avenue, in Avignon
- 36 Cozy place
- 38 Turner, for one
- 39 "The harvest is the ____ of the world" (Matthew 13:39)
- 40 This means business (abbr.)
- 42 ETS output (pl.)
- 44 One of the twelve cities of the tribe of Benjamin (Joshua 18:24)
- 47 "Let them sing aloud upon their ____" (Psalm 149:5)
- 48 "The Lord taketh ____ in his people" (Psalm 149:4)
- 51 Aden, for one
- 54 Poetic contraction
- 55 "They ... were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the

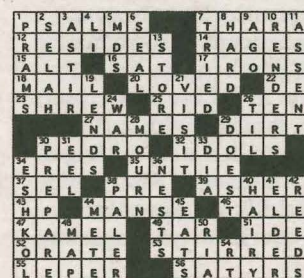


#172

- word in ____" (Acts 16:6)
- 56 Great Lake
- 57 Arrest
- 58 "Our end is ____, our days are fulfilled" (Lamentations 4:18)
- 59 We should love in word, in ____, and in truth (1 John 3:18)

Down

- 1 Before grace there was the ____
- 2 Linking verb
- 3 "Make ready quickly three ____ of fine meal" (Genesis 18:6)
- 4 Soaked up too much sun
- 5 "Many of them ... which used curious ____ brought their books ... and burned them" (Acts 19:19)
- 6 "Crossing the ____" (Tennyson work)
- 7 Christmas ____
- 8 "He that is ____ in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matthew 11:11)
- 9 Not fictional
- 10 Succeed the old-fashioned way
- 11 Speechless
- 17 De rigueur at resorts (pl.)
- 19 Thing to be shed
- 21 "Whosoever slayeth ____, vengeance shall be taken on him" (Genesis 4:15)
- 22 Texas university
- 23 Silents star Theda
- 24 Utopia
- 27 Chalky substance
- 29 Steady but unrelenting weight
- 30 "Thou shalt not approach to his wife: she is thine ____" (Leviticus 18:14)
- 31 Williams, and others
- 34 Assess
- 37 Feminine name
- 41 Hebrew month (Nehemiah 2:1)
- 43 "Out of his mouth went a sharp two ____ sword" (Revelation 1:16)
- 44 U.S. ____ (sports event)
- 45 ____ bargain
- 46 "Your bones shall flourish like an ____" (Isaiah 66:14)
- 47 "I will meet them as a ____ that is bereaved" (Hosea 13:8)
- 49 "Teach the children of Judah the ____ of the bow" (2 Samuel 1:18)
- 50 Miss. Riv. arsenal
- 52 "He maketh me to ____ down in green pastures" (Psalm 23:2)
- 53 G-man
- 54 Not left (abbr.)



MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF



September

- 12 Retired DOM Luncheon, Severns Valley Association, Elizabethtown.
- 12 Children's Minister's Retreat, Cedarmore, Bagdad.
- 13 Business and Finance Committee, Kentucky Building, Louisville.
- 16 Pre-Retirement Planning Conference, Calvert City First Baptist, Calvert City.
- 17 Pre-Retirement Planning Conference, Rosemont Baptist Church, Lexington.
- 18 Pre-Retirement Planning Conference, Kentucky Building, Louisville.
- 18 Missionary Retreat, Cumberland Falls State Park, Corbin.
- 20 Men's Chorale, Women's Chorale, Wind Orchestra Retreat, Campbellsville University, Campbellsville.
- 20 Disaster Relief Chaplaincy Training, Springfield Baptist Church, Springfield.
- 21 Children in Action Day Camp, Second Baptist Church, Hopkinsville.
- 21 Disaster Relief Training, Springfield Baptist Church, Springfield.
- 21 Men and Women Chorale Concert, Campbellsville Baptist Church, Campbellsville.
- 23 Reaching the Summit, Central Baptist Church, Hawesville.

■ **CENTRAL CITY**—First Church will hold Second Blessings Giveaway Sept. 14, 8 a.m. **Bob Lowery** is pastor.

■ **EDDYVILLE**—First Church will hold homecoming Sept. 15, noon, with a potluck meal and guest speaker **Jerrell White**. **Timothy Perdue** is pastor.

■ **GLASGOW**—Glasgow Church will host the "Living Proof: Beth Moore Live Simulcast" Sept. 14, 8:15 a.m. **Erdie Carter** is pastor.

■ **IRVINE**—Knob Lick Church will hold homecoming Sept. 15 with guest speaker **Larry Baker**, director of missions with Bates Creek Association, and **West Side Singers** in concert. **Fred Livingood** is pastor.

■ **LEBANON**—Lebanon Church will hold a Judgment House drama called "Unexpected" Sept. 12-14, 19-21, 6 p.m. **David Whitlock** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Deer Park Church will hold Neighborfest Sept. 14, 3 p.m., with horse rides, live music, food and an inflatable. **David Platt** is pastor.

Green Acres Church will host Café Kononia: Southern Gospel Concert and Ice Cream Social Sept. 15, 6 p.m. The **Mattingly Family** will be in concert. For more information, call (502) 964-8165. **Phil Ellis** is pastor.

South Jefferson Church recently celebrated their 91st anniversary. **Richard Carver** is pastor.

■ **MAYFIELD**—Northside Church will host "Living Proof: Beth Moore Live Simulcast" Sept. 14, 8:15 a.m. Lunch is included. **Monte Hodges** is pastor.

Briensburg plans pastors' conference and luncheon

Benton—Every pastor needs to be ministered to from time to time, so Briensburg Baptist Church in Benton will be hosting a pastors' conference and luncheon.

The Oct. 30 event will feature evangelist Bob Pittman, dean of the Adrian Rogers Center for Biblical Preaching at the Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, Tenn.

Pittman, who has been preaching for more than 49 years, has served as senior pastor at several Baptist churches in Alabama and Tennessee. Since the age of 16, he has preached at

■ **MOUNT STERLING**—Macedonia Church will host guest speaker **Paul Day** Sept. 13, 6:30 p.m. He will be speaking about correlations between God and training horses. **Kevin Strausbaugh** is pastor.

■ **PADUCAH**—Bellview Church will hold fall revival services Sept. 15-18 with guest speaker **Phil Glisson** and worship leaders **Bud** and **Barbara Lee**. **Mike Nolen** is pastor.

Washington Street Church will hold a Sunday School conference Sept. 14, 9 a.m., with guest speaker **Steve Parr**. **Ray Henderson** is pastor.

■ **PAINTSVILLE**—First Church will host the second night of Enterprise Association's 136th annual meeting Sept. 17, 5:30 p.m., beginning with a meal. First Church pastor **Wayne Cornett** will be speaking.

■ **PRESTONSBURG**—First Church will host the first night of Enterprise Association's 136th annual meeting Sept. 16, 5:30 p.m., beginning with a meal. Guest speakers include **Sam Schmidt** and **Jerry Workman**, pastor of First Church, Prestonsburg.

Fitzpatrick Church will hold Service Sewing Extravaganza Sept. 14, 9 a.m., with meals provided. **Tommy Reed** is pastor.

■ **SOMERSET**—Mount Pleasant Church will hold homecoming Sept. 15 with a meal after the morning worship and **Little Paint Quartet** in concert. For more information, call (606) 274-4101. **Jesse McCoy** is pastor.

■ **WACO**—Bethlehem Church will host a youth hayride and chili supper Sept. 14, 5 p.m. **Mark**

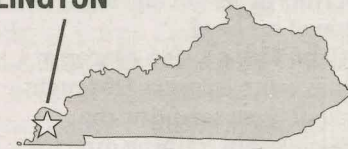
more than 900 revival services and conferences on the continents of North America, Europe and Africa.

Pittman is author of "The Truth About Trouble," "Words of Encouragement" and "Words of Cheer." He has served as SBC Pastor's Conference vice president and as a trustee of the SBC Baptist Sunday School Board (now LifeWay).

The Briensburg Baptist Pastors' Conference will be held from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Reserve a seat by Oct. 16. Call (270) 575-3757 or email briensburgchurch@mchsi.com. (WR)

Spotlight on ...

ARLINGTON



Milburn First Church will hold a discipleship training fair Sept. 16, 5:15 p.m. **Glen Stewart** is pastor.

McGuire is pastor.

■ **WEST PADUCAH**—Mount Zion Church will host the "Living Proof: Beth Moore Live Simulcast" Sept. 14, 7:30 a.m., with a light continental breakfast. **Tim Smith** is pastor.

■ **WINCHESTER**—Central Church will host "Living Proof: Beth Moore Live Simulcast" Sept. 14, 9:30 a.m. **Travis Drake** is pastor.

Northside Church will host Associational Revival Sept. 16-20, 7 p.m. **Jesse Kline** is pastor.

KBC president to speak at CU chapel Sept. 11

Campbellsville—Dan Summerlin, president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and pastor of Lone Oak First Baptist Church in Paducah since 2002, will speak at Campbellsville University in Ransdell Chapel Sept. 11 at 10 a.m.

Summerlin is a member of the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention. He also has served as vice president of the KBC and is a trustee of the Western Recorder.

Prior to Lone Oak, Summerlin, a graduate of the University of Alabama and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, served as pastor of University Baptist Church in Huntsville, Ala. (CU)



Dan Summerlin

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: Do you need a church pianist? Try piano CDs for congregational singing. Worship Service Resources have hymns, choruses, Christmas and lyric slide DVDs. Free demo. Church discounts. Go to wrspianocds.com or call (1-877) 977-6800.

SEEKING: Hillcrest Baptist Church, Hopkinsville, is seeking an associate pastor of education/discipleship. Full-time position in growing church, presently serving 700-750 in Sunday School. Resumes accepted through Sept. 15. Send to Hillcrest Baptist Church, 920 Skyline Drive, Hopkinsville, KY 42240, Attn: Webb Ross, or email hbcstaff_1@hillcrestbc.net.

SEEKING: Woodlawn Baptist Church in central Kentucky, is seeking a full-time pastor. Small church with great growth potential. If led by God, submit resume to home@woodlawnbaptist2serve.org.

SEEKING: Second Baptist Church of Madisonville is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumes to Pastor Search Committee, Second Baptist Church, 633 Bishop Street, Madisonville, KY 42431-1379.

SEEKING: Liberty Baptist Church in London, is seeking a bivocational pastor. We are looking for someone who is an enthusiastic soul winner and has a vision for church growth; a man of God who loves to shepherd all ages and has good

leadership skills. If you feel God's leadership in applying for this position, send resume to smurray@napierlawoffice.com.

SEEKING: Bardwell Baptist Church is seeking a part-time youth pastor to lead youth grades 6th-12th. For more information, contact pastor Rodney Bice at bbcpastor1@windstream.net, or call (270) 628-3645.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Lebanon Junction is seeking resumes from potential candidates for pastor. FBC is dually aligned with the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship and the KBC. Send resumes to the Pastoral Search Committee, P.O. Box 577, Lebanon Junction, KY 40150.

SEEKING: East Hickman Baptist Church is seeking a part-time youth minister. Send resume to Personnel Committee, East Hickman Baptist Church, 6418 Bates Creek Road, Lexington, KY 40515, or via email to easthickmanbc@easthickmanbc.com.

SEEKING: Administrative secretary for Lyndon Baptist Church in Louisville. Person must be adept in the use of Microsoft Office programs, familiar with various social media, and skilled at, or willing to learn, website maintenance. Salary commensurate with skills and experience. Send resume or queries to lyndonpastor@aol.com.

SEEKING: White Stone Quarry Baptist Church is now accepting resumes for senior pastor. Applicants must proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and must uphold the doctrines of the Baptist Faith & Message 2000. A minimum of 1 to 3 years experience preferred. Need an energetic person to lead while working to reach the unchurched in a growing community. Send resume to whitestoneapplicant@gmail.com, or mail to White Stone Quarry Baptist Church, Attn. Search Committee, 2764 Blue Level Road, Bowling Green, KY 42101. Resumes will be accepted through Oct. 15.

SEEKING: Ferguson Baptist Church in Somerset is seeking a part-time minister of music. Submit resume to fergusonkybapt@yahoo.com or mail to P.O. Box 247, Ferguson, KY 42533. For questions, call the church at (606) 679-1690.

SEEKING: Southside Baptist Church in Princeton is seeking a full-time student and children's minister. Seminary training and experience preferred. Email resumes to mark@southsidebaptist.com, or mail to Southside Baptist Church, Attn. Mark Williams, P.O. Box 684, Princeton, KY 42445. For more information about Southside, visit southsidebaptist.com.

SEEKING: Okalona Missionary Baptist

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.

Church, in Nancy, is seeking a full-time pastor, called by God, to lead the congregation according to God's will. Send resumes to: Resumes, P.O. Box 99, Nancy, KY 42544. Deadline for receipt is Sept. 30.

SEEKING: Auburn Baptist Church is seeking a pastor. Email resumes to pastor search committee at tcorum@loganele.com.

SEEKING: Grace Baptist Church, in Lexington, is seeking a part-time minister of music to direct adult choir, lead worship service and guide children's music programs. Mail resumes to: Minister of Music Search Committee, 811 Bryan Avenue, Lexington, KY 40505, or email to dfoley@gbcllexington.org by Oct. 6.

Mackenzie's 'Big Difference'

Lifts town's hearts & Haitian children

By Mark Kelly

Nederland, Texas—Children who survived the Jan. 12, 2010, earthquake in Haiti are being helped by two kids in Texas whose imaginative book project has caused a stir in their hometown.

Two years ago, Mackenzie Howell, then a 5-year-old student at Langham Elementary School in Nederland, Texas, was riveted to the TV by a children's documentary about the devastating earthquake. She was deeply moved by what she saw, and God touched her heart to help children who, in her words, "had lost their moms, their dads, their homes and their schools."

But how could she help? How could a child make a difference for children in need?

Mackenzie started off selling homemade crafts and cookies to help children in Haiti, and her proceeds went to help with a Baptist Global Response school project there. When that was completed, Mackenzie began thinking about what else she could do.

She wondered: What if she wrote a book about a child who makes a difference?

Now 7-year-old Mackenzie is promoting her story, "Leila's Big Difference."

Mackenzie's mother and grandmother helped her learn about Haiti through a contact with the Baptist relief organization and a prayer guide provided by the International Mission Board's Kids on Mission website. Mackenzie used what she learned to dream up a storyline. Her mother helped her pull the story together.

"(Mackenzie) had such a burden for people she has never met—and followed through with raising money her own way."

Jo Brown

Meanwhile, a friend, 9-year-old Jace Theriot, created illustrations.

Mackenzie's family had 100 copies of the book printed, and she set a goal of raising \$500 to help children in Haiti. The family promoted the book among members of Hillcrest Baptist, where Patrick Hunter is the pastor. Plans were made to sell the book at a nearby mall.

"We originally ordered 100 books, trusting God that we would be able to sell them and send \$500," said Mackenzie's mother Alison. "But word about her book has rapidly spread in our community, and since the event at the mall, we have continued to get many requests for copies. Some of those requests have been large orders."

A church in Houston, where Jace's grandfather attends, ordered 50 books to distribute at a prayer breakfast. First Baptist Church in Nederland asked Mackenzie to set up a book table for their VBS Family Night. A member of a church in a nearby town heard about the book from

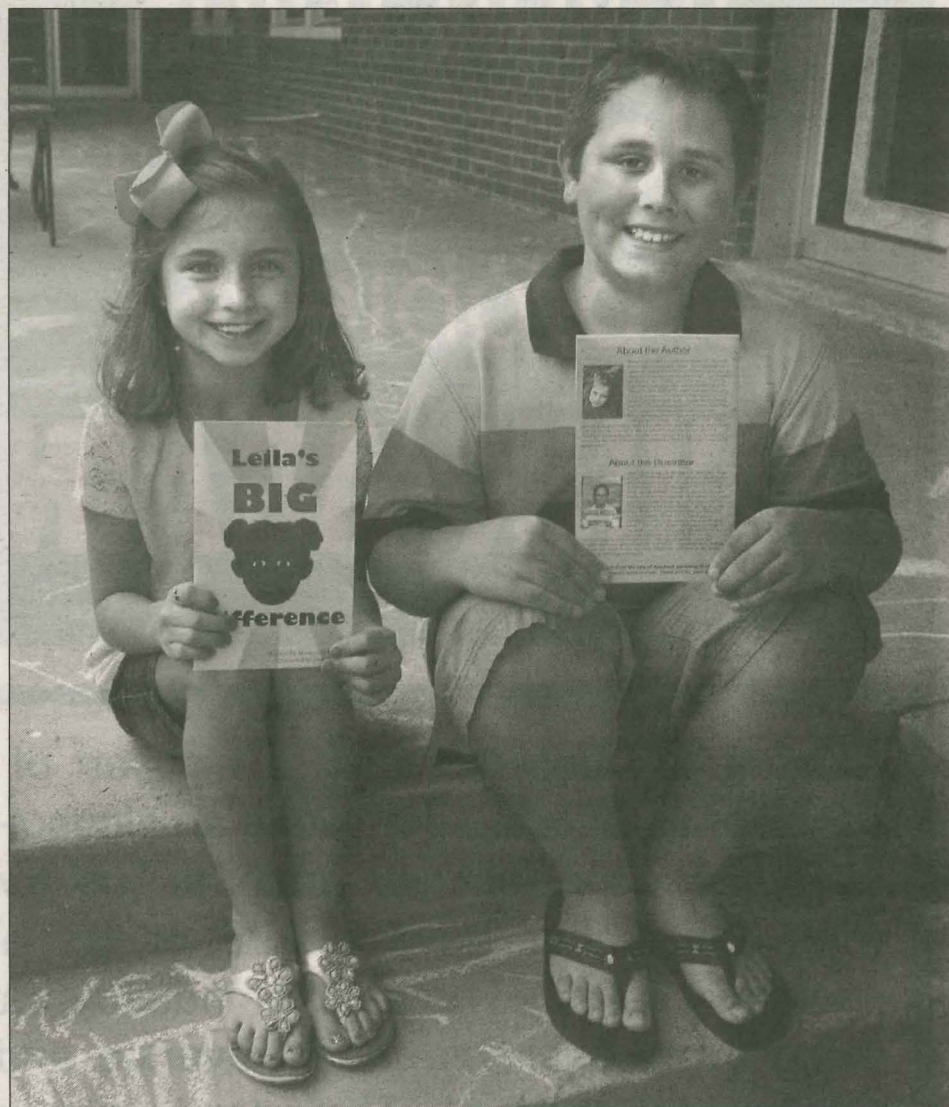
Jace's dad and purchased a book for every child participating in their Vacation Bible School, which already was planning to focus on the needs in Haiti. Mackenzie and Jace were invited to read their story to all the kids attending the VBS.

"Mack and Jace were nervous to speak in front of almost 100 people," Alison Howell said, "but they did

great."

The initial print run of 100 books led to a second run of 100. Those also went quickly and another 200 were ordered.

Mackenzie had sold nearly 400 books by the end of July. The proceeds—more



Mackenzie Howell, 7, and Jace Theriot, 9, of Hillcrest Baptist Church in Nederland, Texas, pose with copies of their book, "Leila's Big Difference," which they are promoting locally to help children who survived the 2010 Haiti earthquake. (BP)

than \$2,000—will be sent to Illinois Baptists to help with work in Haiti that follows up on work BGR conducted in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake.

"This has been a wonderful experience. It is so exciting to see how God is moving," Alison Howell said. "Our goal is to bring Mackenzie to Haiti during the summer of 2015. Until that time, we will continue to pray and give."

Jo Brown, who with her husband David leads Baptist Global Relief work in

the Americas, was deeply moved by Mackenzie's heart for children in need.

"To think that a child 5 years old had such a burden for people she has never met—and followed through with raising money her own way," Brown said. "Adults do not do that. And it hasn't stopped but carried on as Mackenzie has gotten older. It just makes my heart sing." (BP)

"Leila's Big Difference" is available through the Hillcrest Baptist Church website, www.hbcnederland.com.

Wives find renewed faith after husbands 'visit' heaven

By Corrie Mitchell

Eva Piper considered herself a shallow Christian until the accident that revitalized her faith and turned her Baptist pastor husband, Don Piper, into the best-selling author of "90 Minutes in Heaven."

"It wasn't until Don's accident that I really opened myself up to an honest relationship with the Lord," said Eva Piper.

Eva Piper writes about life after her husband's alleged visit to heaven in "A Walk Through the Dark," released on July 30. Her book comes nine years after the publication of her husband's book, which spent more than five years on The New York Times' best-seller list.

While the survivors' tales of visiting the pearly gates have been a boon for publishers, they've also had a more direct impact on spouses and parents. For the family members, life—and faith—changes nearly as much as it did for the men they nearly lost.

Don Piper was hit by a semi-truck while driving home, and paramedics pronounced him dead at the scene. But, 90

minutes later, he said he was prayed back to life by a fellow pastor.

Eva Piper's book recalls her frustration with her husband's disappointment at being brought back to earth and long nights spent beside hospital beds asking God "Why?"

The niche genre of "to-heaven-and-back" books have hit bookshelves with surprising regularity—and success—in recent years.

Writer Paula Black has recounted her husband Dale's trip to heaven following a plane crash he survived at 19. She intersperses her yet-to-be-published narrative with questions she asked her husband, ones she thought a reader would ask.

Her husband wasn't initially interested in being "one of those people" writing about something that can't be proven. But eventually, she said, it had

such an impact on her that he finally agreed to include it in his 2010 book, "Flight to Heaven."

"It has completely transformed my faith," said Paula Black, who didn't hear about her husband's trip to heaven until 40 years after the fact.

She said Dale Black's experience allowed her to grasp the concept of "God is love," which took on a new reality and depth after he told her about heaven. Raised Christian, Paula Black said talking with her husband about his experience brought substance to her faith, and enriched Scripture.

"It changed my understanding of who God is," she said. "I had a saving relationship through Jesus, but it brought it so much alive."

Black and Piper said that their husbands' accounts made heaven more real for them. The same is true for Annette

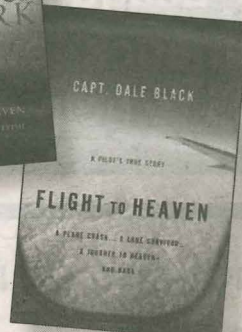
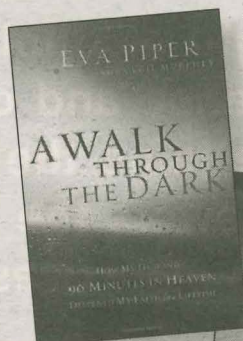
Wiese, whose husband Bill Wiese penned "23 Minutes in Hell" in 2006. She said she had never given much thought to hell before the book.

"I never realized how important the decision of faith is to that degree and impact," she said. She believed her husband's vision right away, "because I knew his character."

Despite the positive approaches and renewed faiths of these wives, many critics have worked to dispel firsthand after-life accounts.

"While it is understandable that one might attribute value, ground beliefs, or construct narratives from them, hallucinations cannot provide evidence for the existence of any metaphysical beings or places," Oliver Sacks, a noted neurologist, wrote. "They provide evidence only of the brain's power to create them."

Eva Piper said she's received a scattering of negative notes, "but far less than I imagined." Most people, she said, "really, really want to know about heaven. They want to know that there's a better place than where we're living now." (RNS)



If you think
alcohol isn't
a problem -
THINK AGAIN

HOW ALCOHOL ATTACKS THE BRAIN

A guide to the sequential damage alcohol inflicts on neural tissue

1.

First, alcohol affects the forebrain and assaults motor coordination and decision making.

1

2.

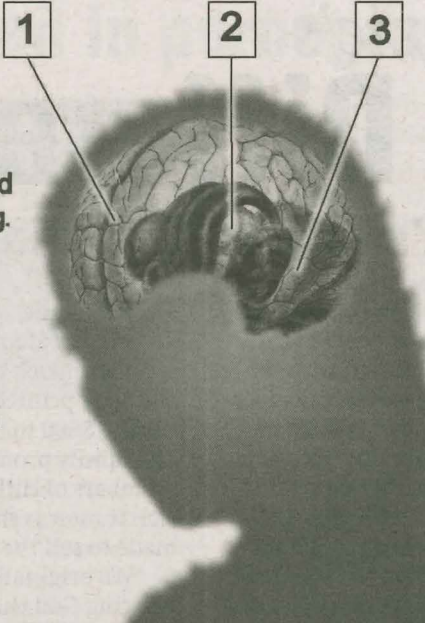
Then, alcohol knocks out the midbrain, and you lose control over emotions and increase chances of a blackout.

2

3

3.

Finally, alcohol batters the brainstem as it affects heart rate, body temperature, appetite and consciousness, a dangerous and potentially fatal condition.



Alcohol has become such a big part of American life today that we rarely stop to consider its effects. We live in an alcohol-infused culture that encourages and entices everyone, especially our youth, to "just try it". Many people, including Christians drink wine with dinner, have a drink or two after work to relax, or have a few beers at sporting events. The alcohol industry has saturated our world with their advertising, using every available media avenue and its lobbying power, to promote alcohol as recreational and fun. They don't want you to think about the negatives - that would cut into their profits. The Kentucky League wants you to know the truth. Alcohol is harmful, dangerous, and addictive.

THE FACTS ABOUT ALCOHOL IN AMERICA

- ❖ Nearly 15 million Americans abuse alcohol or are alcoholics.
- ❖ Alcoholism is the third leading lifestyle-related cause of death.
- ❖ In 2011, 9,878 people were killed in alcohol-impaired driving crashes, accounting for 31 percent of the total motor vehicle traffic fatalities.
- ❖ In 2011, more than 180,000 people were injured in alcohol-impaired driving crashes.
- ❖ Alcohol is a factor in 40 percent of all violent crimes.
- ❖ 6.6 million children live in a household with at least one alcoholic parent.

The Kentucky League continues to fight alcohol every day because we believe that people of faith are called to influence and change the culture in which we live. Therefore, the Kentucky League joins the National Transportation Safety Board in recommending that America lowers the blood-alcohol content level that constitutes drunk driving to 0.05 to help save lives and prevent injuries.

Kentucky League on Alcohol and Gambling Problems
Kentucky Ethics League, Inc.

2722 Crittenden Drive ♦ Louisville, KY 40209-1114

Phone (502) 635-0002 ♦ <http://www.kentuckyleague.org>

