

WESTERN Recorder

October 8, 2013

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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WORLD HUNGER SUNDAY OCTOBER 13

Breaking the cycle of hunger

PIG FARMING: A means for pastors in India to support families, build communities

By Harper McKay

India—The smells of festering pig waste and rotting food would turn even the strongest of stomachs. But for Paulus Maharaj* and a handful of rural Indian pastors, they are the smells of progress to help their families and communities better support themselves.

It all began when Maharaj, a pastor and teacher, took time away from his hometown's overcrowded city streets to encourage pastors in the wide-open spaces of village life. What he saw in their homes, however, left a lasting impression.

"The pastors, their children eat only rice. They can't afford even milk or vegetables and fruit," Maharaj says. "Many pastors are not able to send their children to school."

People in this area of India typically need at least 5,000 rupees per month (a little over \$80) to support their families. The pastors Maharaj saw were making less than 2,000 rupees a month (\$30), if that much.

Most of the pastors relied on their already poor congregations—other villagers like themselves. Relying mostly on crops that struggled to grow in the hard dusty soil or on livestock prone to sickness and malnourishment, the church members simply could not afford to give much to their pastors.

Maharaj knew the pastors' ministries and families would continue to suffer unless they had help.

"I said to myself, how can I help these



Pastor Sontash Roraon (name changed) hurries to feed his pigs, hungry for their morning meal. (IMB/Victor Xingh)



Through pig husbandry, pastors in rural India are being trained to support themselves and their villages thanks to Southern Baptists' Global Hunger Relief (also called the World Hunger Fund). In a country where many are supporting their families on the equivalent of \$80 per month, pastors saw their incomes jump from \$30 to at least \$400 per month by raising pigs. (IMB/Victor Xingh)

HELPING KENTUCKY FAMILIES

Lord's Café feeds McCreary's hungry

By Drew Nichter

Stearns—McCreary County residents know God's beauty. They see it every day.

Much of the county is designated as a national forest, and is home to natural tourist destinations like the Big South Fork and Cumberland Falls.

More than 60 percent of McCreary County land is owned and protected by the federal government.

The region's natural beauty obscures an underlying ugliness that plagues much of its population: poverty.

McCreary County is among the poorest counties in the United States. It has been designated a "persistent poverty county," a place where 20 percent or more of the population has lived in poverty for at least the past 30 years.

"We have very limited industry here," said Grant Hasty, a local church planter. He estimated at least 80 percent of residents are either



The Lord's Café, a food ministry of Crossroads Baptist Church in Stearns, has served as many as 270 meals a day. (Photo provided by Grant Hasty)

unemployed or unable to work at all. With poverty, of course, comes hunger.

Many Kentucky families are considered "food insecure," according to

□ See Lord's Café ... Page 3



Kentucky Baptist Bill Johnson (left), is Sandy Rebuild project coordinator in Long Island, N.Y. Johnson, like several disaster relief volunteers, has agreed to serve long term. (NAMB)

Baptist generosity impacting lives in Sandy Rebuild

By Laura Sikes

Long Island—In the picturesque coastal village of Freeport on Long Island, N.Y., where super storm Sandy's surge flooded homes with as much as eight feet of water, neighborhoods look back to normal—at least on the outside.

Eleven months after the storm—with the damage primarily seen on the inside of homes—streets are clear of debris and most of the dumpsters that were filled with salt-water soaked furniture, appliances and ruined contents of homes are gone. But pod storage containers still sit on driveways as homeowners work on the interiors of their homes. One local refers to the sight as the "new normal."

Freeport is just one of the many affected areas where Sandy Rebuild teams are working in New York and New Jersey to help homeowners put their lives back together. Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers are providing much of the labor.

Not expecting the magnitude of the surge, many residents like Barbara and Brian Hindley did not evacuate, riding out the storm. Residents continue to live in their flooded out homes, some with only partial power, while repairs are made.

"We watched the water coming up the stairs," said Barbara Hindley. "We didn't expect it. We sat in chairs with blankets in the dark and waited for the night to be over."

□ See Sandy Rebuild ... Page 7

"God is up to something powerful here."

Bill Johnson

Ditch the cord.

GO MOBILE

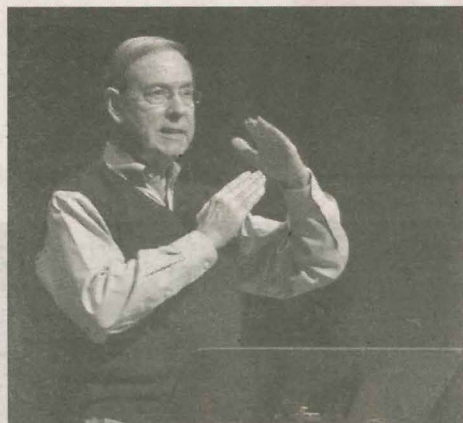
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Western Recorder 10-8-2013

Chapman speaks language of love & marriage



Gary Chapman, author of "The Five Love Languages," speaks during "The Marriage You've Always Wanted" seminar at Victory Church in Madisonville. (WR/Whitney Jones)

By Whitney Jones

Madisonville—It has been two and a half years in the making, but Josh Bumpus finally saw the fruits of his labor when bestselling author Gary Chapman took the stage for a marriage conference in Madisonville Sept. 28.

"We see so many broken homes here in our area, and I know they're everywhere, and I just really had a desire that God would really just teach people how to love each other and how marriage should work," Bumpus, pastor of First Baptist Church in Providence, said.

Bumpus and his wife attended a similar conference early in their marriage while he was in seminary at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. He said Chapman's instruction helped them so much as newlyweds that he wanted to bring the author and counselor's guidance to other church members in the area.

Chapman, author of "The Five Love Languages," spoke at Victory Church in Madisonville, instructing a sanctuary

full of married and engaged couples in how to better communicate and care for each other.

"Obviously there's a lot of pressures on marriage today," said Chapman. "A lot of folks have financial pressures and there are obviously normal conflicts couples have. But at the root of our problem is selfishness, that we look at the world in terms of what am I going to get out of this and if I'm not getting out of this marriage what I think I should be getting out of it then I'm going to bail out."

He said in a marriage communication is the crux of everything.

"We often say communication is the No. 1 problem and in a sense that's true in that the only way you can become one is by means of communication," he said. "The only way you can work through conflicts is by means of communication. Communication is to the marriage, what breathing is to the body. You just don't process life without positive communication."

'How not to fail'

Chapman's audience included some couples who hadn't yet entered the covenant of marriage.

Lauren Buswell and Jay Phelps were one week away from their wedding the day of "The Marriage You've Always Wanted" seminar. The Dixon couple received tickets to hear Chapman at a bridal shower, although Buswell had planned on attending anyway.

Phelps said what he wanted to learn most was "how not to fail."

But engaged couples and newlyweds weren't the only ones interested in finding out about how to make a marriage thrive. Diana and Bob Vance of Hanson have been married 11 years. She said that even though they've been married more

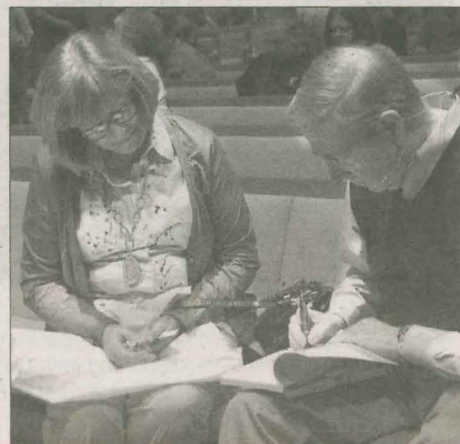
than a decade, she still thinks they could benefit from Chapman's message.

"I think no matter how long or how old you are you can learn," she said. Vance learned from the importance of asking her husband questions to get him to talk and learn more about what is going on in his life.

Partnering churches

Bumpus knew he needed more room and parking than his Providence church could offer for the seminar. So he reached out to Madisonville's Victory Church, a non-denominational church that provided an ample amount of space for the conference free of charge.

"You don't normally see to many churches partnering with other churches outside of the denomination, but it's very important because we're all the body of Christ," he said. "No matter our denomination or not, He's the foundation. We can accomplish so much in Christ when we see each other as brothers and sisters." (WR)



Gary Chapman signs a copy of his book for Diana Vance of Hanson at a marriage seminar in Madisonville. (WR/Whitney Jones)

SBTS professor's book offers help with Bible's storyline

By RuthAnne Irvin

Louisville—Helping Christians understand Scripture's storyline is the aim of his new book, said Thomas Schreiner, a New Testament scholar and pastor in Louisville.

Schreiner said "The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments" is "fundamentally for people who love the Scriptures and want to know the Scriptures, but they also want to have an understanding of how all of Scripture fits together."

Schreiner, professor of New Testament interpretation at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and author of commentaries on Romans and Galatians, described the book as having "a pastoral slant" rather than "trying to advance a new or novel scholarly theory." Schreiner also is pastor of Clifton Baptist Church in Louisville.

The thesis of "The King in His Beauty"—the title of which comes from Isaiah 33:17—is that God reclaims His kingship on earth among His people through one man.

"The story of the Bible is that God, as

Lord and Creator, is King, and He created us to rule the world for Him," Schreiner told SBTS's news magazine, Towers.

"Human beings rejected God's rule and sinned. God is King, but He doesn't treat human beings as He did fallen angels. He promises in Genesis 3:15 that victory will be won through the offspring of the woman who crushes the serpent."

In addition to private reading, Schreiner noted other ways the book might be used, such as an alternative textbook for an Old or New Testament survey course to help students connect the big story across the testaments.

"Sometimes there's not as much focus on how the message coheres with the rest of the Bible," Schreiner said. "We focus so much on the parts that we don't see the whole I look at the Scriptures in terms of a book's historical setting its fulfillment in Jesus Christ."

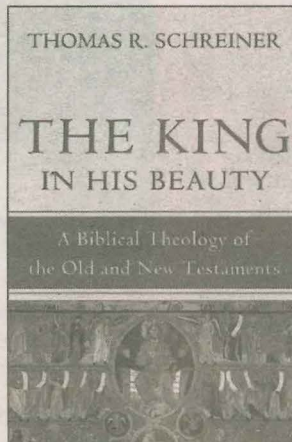
"The problem with many Old Testament biblical theologies is that they only look at it in terms of what it meant within the Old Testament itself, but I

think we should do both: We should look at Leviticus in light of its historical setting and in terms of the fulfillment we have in Jesus Christ," Schreiner said.

In "The King in His Beauty," Schreiner emphasizes the importance of studying the timeline found in Scripture of God's redemptive work on earth through Jesus Christ. "In biblical theology," he noted, "we focus on redemptive history and what each biblical author has to say, whether we are reading Leviticus, Lamentations or Luke."

Writing about the Old Testament for "The King in His Beauty" was challenging, Schreiner acknowledged, specifically in regard to the wisdom literature and how it fits into the redemptive storyline of the Bible. Books like Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, he said, point to the fear of the Lord.

"In Proverbs, how we live under God's reign is tied to the particulars, to the details of everyday life," he said. "We don't only have a cosmic plan; God relates to us as individuals as we await the consummation." (BP)



'Whosoever' pastors preach God's love, Jesus' atonement

By Robin Cornet Bass

Paducah—"For God so loved the world" begins one of the most frequently quoted verses in Scripture—and it was recited several times at "Whosoever Will Preach" when two pastors used the verse as a springboard for their sermons at Bellview Baptist Church in Paducah.

"It is indeed everybody's verse," Vines said, the namesake of Jerry Vines Ministries and past president of the Southern Baptist Convention ('88, '89). "We could preach it over and over again, and never exhaust the meaning of John 3:16."

Vines broke down the verse systematically and used each phrase to expound on the "inexhaustible love of God" and outline four characteristics of that love—namely that God's affection is global, sacrificial, personal and eternal.

■ **Global**—"For God so loved the world ..." means God loves all of humanity, Vines said, not just a select few. A God of such immeasurable love would not create more than 7 billion people for the sole purpose of "damning a portion to hell," he said.

■ **Sacrificial**—"... He gave His only Son ..." Love is not only an emotion, but a decision, Vines said. It was God's decision to send Christ and "when Jesus died on the cross, every drop of blood said, 'I love you. I love you. I love you.'"

■ **Personal**—"... that whosoever believes in Him ..." The word "whosoever," Vines said, is God's way of "rolling out the welcome mat. That word sledgehammers all racial distinctions. That word blasts away all gender distinctions. That word opens the door to whosoever will come and be saved."

■ **Eternal**—"... will not perish, but have eternal life." Vines described the gift of eternal life laid out in John 3:16 as a "beautiful balance" between divine sovereignty and personal responsibility. Heaven awaits for all, he said, but a personal decision first must be made.

David Allen, dean of theology of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, took the verse in a different direction and used John 3:16 as proof of universal atonement.

For the Calvinist, Allen said, the words "world" and "whosoever" in John 3:16 means all without distinction (white, black, Jew, Gentile), not all without exception.

Whereas, "Baptists who are not Calvinists believe Jesus died equally for the sins of all people," Allen said, "and with equal intent to save all who believe."

For a more thorough response to Calvinism, Allen pointed to the book, "Whosoever Will," he co-authored with Steve Lemke.

"Whosoever Will Preach," which was sponsored by West Union and Davies-McLean associations, also was held at Macedonia Baptist Church in Owensboro and also featured a sermon by Paige Patterson. (WR)

WORLD HUNGER SUNDAY OCTOBER 13

Lord's Cafe

Continued from page 1

Eric Allen, missions mobilization team leader for the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

"They don't know where their next meal will come from," he explained.

That's all changing in McCreary County thanks to Crossroads Community Baptist Church and the Lord's Café.

Hasty and his wife, Gina, planted Crossroads in Whitley City three years ago.

Two miles down the road, in Stearns, a restaurant building sat vacant.

Gina passed by the property time and again. Each time, "I said, 'Boy, that would make a great place for soup kitchen,' never knowing that's what God had planned."

Crossroads church acquired the building, remodeled it and opened it as the Lord's Café in June 2011.

More a full-service, family-style restaurant than a soup kitchen, Gina and other Lord's Café volunteers serve lunch five days a week in the summer when school is out and three days a week the rest of the year.

Each diner's order is taken by a volunteer server. When the meals arrive at the table, guests are asked for any prayer requests they may have—then each meal is prayed over.



A volunteer at the Lord's Cafe prepares fresh yeast rolls for guests. (Photo provided by Grant Hasty)

Early on, the Lord's Café served about 30 free meals a day. As word spread, that quickly grew to more than 270 meals in one day this past summer.

"Besides McDonald's, we're the busiest restaurant in town at lunch," Grant Hasty said.

With food ministries like the Lord's Café in the spotlight during World Hunger Sunday, Oct. 13, Allen praised the young church's efforts to share the

"bread of life" with those dealing with hunger—physical and spiritual.

"Hunger is a felt need that opens the door for sharing about the real need for the Lord that exists within every human being," Allen said.

The KBC distributed more than \$68,000 last year to food ministries in Kentucky. More than three-quarters of that amount came via the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund.

Those funds provided 76,000 meals for Kentucky families, many of whom, Allen said, "are forced to choose between paying their rent or buying food."

Thanks to the Lord's Café, many McCreary County families no longer have to make that choice.

"If the Lord's Café didn't feed them, we'd have many people who would just literally go without food," the pastor said.

And through these regular meals, lives are being changed.

Once a regular customer, Dean now volunteers three days a week as a dishwasher at the Lord's Café.

Gina Hasty said when Dean and his family started coming, he rarely spoke or even made eye contact with anyone.

"You could see a lot of wear and tear on his life," Gina recalled.

Two years later, Dean is a chatty, laughing, familiar face at the Lord's Café, Gina said. "He is a completely different person than when he first started coming."

Dean is so dedicated to serving others, he walks five miles to the café along roads cut into the Appalachian foothills.

The Lord's Café has profoundly affected Dustin Watson's life, as well.

Seventeen months ago, he was released from jail after a four-year stint. Now, he, too, is a fixture at the restaurant.

Watson said volunteering at the Lord's Café gives him a peace he's never experienced—"no way, no shape, no form."

A recovering addict, Watson said he prayed God would point him to a church where he wouldn't just sit in a pew. "I wanted to be put somewhere that I could be helpful and be used as an instrument," Watson said, noting he spent 14 years being a "stumbling block" to those around him. "And I wound up at Crossroads."

Grant Hasty said Dean and Dustin are the reason Crossroads church exists.

"In the last couple of years, we've seen a lot of relationships that have been built," he recalled.

And as new faces and regular customers walk through the café doors, Gina Hasty said the mission of Crossroads becomes clearer.

"We emphasize to live out Christ and not just to minister inside the walls of the church," she said. "It's taken a long time, (but) we're finally seeing a lot of fruit come forth from being there day in and day out." (WR)

World hunger

Continued from page 1

people?" Maharaj recalls. "I was thinking, what is the best way to keep their ministries going, to help them maintain financial stability without depending on outside income?"

A Thanksgiving Day discovery

Maharaj's dream took an interesting turn as he searched at the local vet school for a Thanksgiving turkey for a visiting American friend. There Maharaj heard the deep grunts of a much less attractive animal.

As it happened, the vet school specialized in pig husbandry, raising many breeds—black ones, brown ones, spotted ones. The school had scores of stalls packed with the biggest, fattest mama pigs he'd seen in some time, many with squealing babies following closely—a stark comparison to the stunted, sickly pigs he'd seen in most villages.

An idea flickered.

"Someone had told me about raising pigs before, but I didn't think it would work," Maharaj recounts. "At the school I came to know that it could be the easiest and best way to support the pastors and their families and help them be self-supported."

His dream began to take wings—or rather hooves.

Training begins

Maharaj and IMB representative Clifton Melek* soon developed a plan to provide pig husbandry training to rural pastors. One thing was lacking—seed money to get the project off and running.

The international relief organization Baptist Global Response, through Global Hunger Relief (also called the World



Paulus Maharaj (name changed) shares with new believers at the future site for a church and a pig project to support their families and villages. By raising pigs, pastors and villagers can earn more than 10 times what they need to care for their families. (IMB/Victor Xingh)

Hunger Fund), was able to answer their call for help.

At first, many pastors hesitated. Did they really want to wake up at dawn to feed their pigs? Was it worth wafting smells and endless squealing and grunting just steps from their houses? What would their neighbors think?

After an awareness day that included a tour of the vet school, 20 pastors decided to participate. For 15 days at the vet school, they learned the basics of raising pigs—feeding, providing shelter, administering immunizations and performing basic medical care.

The pastors also received two starter pigs through Global Hunger Relief.

Prodigal pastors

For most pastors, however, things got off to a rocky start. Surprisingly, a lot of opposition came from church members' interpretation of a familiar Bible story—the prodigal son. They associated caring for pigs with backsliding.

No one wanted their pastors trudging through pig waste in their most tattered clothing. No one wanted their pastors cleaning stalls covered in mud and

swarming with flies. To think of the prodigal son wanting to eat the rancid, discarded food that pigs slop up in seconds was repulsive. How could pastors have time for this and for ministry?

"People mocked me at first," says Kanai Hembrom*, a pastor who received training. "They laughed at me and said to me, 'What happened to you? Have you lost your mind?'"

Gateway to ministry

Over a year has gone by, and church members and neighbors have changed their tune. Within months, many of the pigs had five to six babies, increasing the pastors' wealth to at least 25,000 rupees (\$400) a month—more than 10 times what they need to care for their families. By the time the pigs were ready to sell in the market, each pig could earn the pastors up to 10,000 rupees (about \$160).

Rather than hindering ministry, pig farming has opened up new ways for pastors to serve their church members.

"One church member came to me because he owed 40,000 rupees in 15 days and could not pay it," Sontash Roraon recounts. "I went and sold two pigs

and was able to give him 20,000 that day."

Neighbors noticed how pastors' lives were improving because of the pigs, which grew faster than any they had seen before. They were healthy, robust and quickly sold to vendors.

"The people who are very poor are looking at me and saying, 'If this man can get this kind of income, why can't we?'" Sontash says. "A few of have already requested for me to provide baby pigs for them to begin raising."

Several pastors have been able to share their expertise and build relationships to share the gospel with people who have not heard it before.

Kanai Hembrom has done so well with his pigs that he is known by many as the "pig doctor" and is now called upon to administer vaccines and help farmers whose animals become sick.

Passing the blessing

The impact of Global Hunger Relief goes beyond the 20 pastors who were initially trained. After their farms begin to flourish, each is expected to train and provide two pigs to a "Timothy," who will then start his own pig farm to help break the hunger cycle in their areas.

Sontash plans to pass on his expertise and starter pigs to unemployed youth in his community who have little education and find it hard to feed themselves. "I just considered that this is a great return I can give to my community so they can be blessed by my work," he says.

Without support from Global Hunger Relief/World Hunger Fund, this program would still be just a dream.

"Thank you BGR and World Hunger Fund for making my dreams come true to help the pastors have income that is self-sustaining," he says through a huge smile. (IMB/BP)

*Names changed. More at worldhungerfund.com.

Pastor appreciation month

Scripture says, "Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life" (1 Samuel 7:15). While the phrase "all days of his life" may not seem terribly significant, I contend it is remarkably significant. Staying committed and faithful in ministry, over the long haul, can be incredibly challenging.

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

One study estimates the number of ministers who resign their ministry position each month hovers around 1,500. Another survey reveals more than half of seminary graduates have left the ministry within five years of graduation and less than 20 percent of those who begin serving as pastors will continue in that role until retirement.

The reasons for such high attrition rates in vocational ministry are many but, regardless of those reasons, the numbers are startling.

A New York Times article summarized the plight of many in pastoral ministry: "Members of the clergy now suffer from obesity, hypertension and depression at rates higher than most Americans. In the last decade, their use of antidepressants has risen, while their life expectancy has fallen."

Every Sunday I have the privilege of preaching in a different church in Kentucky. The pastor is usually present. While a few minutes of interaction before worship and casual discussion over lunch afterward does not provide the opportunity to see deeply into any man's heart, what I have seen gives me a growing love and appreciation for those who serve as undershepherds of the Good Shepherd.

I see men who love people and have a desire to serve others, men who love the Lord and want desperately to please Him with their lives. I see men of conviction, who would be willing to lose all of their worldly possessions before they would stop "speaking about what they have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). I see men who eagerly proclaim the gospel with the confidence that God will use even their stammering to bring the lost to Himself.

I also see men who carry heavy burdens. They carry the grief and pains of God's people.

They carry the brokenness of children whose parents are divorcing, the unspeakable sorrow of parents who must bury a child, the emotional devastation of a man whose wife has been unfaithful, the fear of a young mother diagnosed with cancer, the regret of a man who looks back on the wasted years of his youth, and the concern of a grandmother for her lost grandchild.

Yes, they cast their cares upon the Lord (1 Peter 5:7), but they do not have the privilege of turning off their love and concern for His sheep when they say "Amen."

God, thank you for our pastors. Bless, use, and reward them. And help us to appreciate, love and encourage them.

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

A visit to Kentucky Baptists' Bible college

Last week, I had an opportunity to tour Kentucky Baptists' Bible college, Clear Creek, and to visit with its president, Donnie Fox.

Nestled in an idyllic mountain cove in the state's picturesque Appalachia region near the Cumberland Gap—where early settlers first entered Kentucky—Clear Creek was founded in 1926 by Lloyd Caswell Kelly, then pastor of Pineville's First Baptist Church. From its beginning, the college's main focus has been equipping God-called men and women for Christian ministry.

Fox became president in 2007, but his roots grow deep in Pineville's soil. In 1962, his father, a 1949 graduate, returned to serve under D.M. Aldridge, Clear Creek's second president, as director of college relations. "I came to Clear Creek when I was 3 years old, and I've been tied to the school ever since," Fox said. "I grew up here and came to know the Lord at Clear Creek."

After surrendering to the ministry in 1990, Fox came back to the Pineville school in 1994 for training. He then served as pastor in Tennessee until 1999, when he followed in his dad's footsteps at Clear Creek, even serving in the same position. He would later move to the director of admissions role, and then become dean of institutional advancement, before assuming the presidency when Bill Whittaker retired. "I feel like I've been here all my life," Fox said, and he's pretty much right: "Clear Creek is in my blood."

Many of the college's stone-masonry buildings were constructed in the 1940s and 50s, using rock from the creek on campus. Its three-story dormitory and dining facility, Kelly Hall, however, was beautifully remodeled recently, along with some faculty housing. The newest addition, the Whittaker Classroom Building, which was constructed in 1998, includes an 88-seat lecture hall, a science lab, four classrooms and a bookstore. The school's library houses more than 45,000 volumes and approximately 20,000 electronic and media resources. A capital campaign is underway to raise \$1.2 million for resurfacing roads and parking lots.

Clear Creek's faculty is comprised of five full-time professors and several other faculty and staff members, with the heads of its three tracks—pastoral ministries, missions and evangelism and church ministry and leadership—all holding PhD degrees. The school is in the process of offering its degree programs completely online, though it still encourages students to attend a few

classes on campus.

Accredited by the Association of Biblical Higher Education and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Clear Creek currently has about 70 students enrolled in online courses—nearly half of its total enrollment, according to Fox. The average age of its students is about 32, and most are from

Kentucky, though the school does pull strongly from surrounding states, he noted.

"Many go right back into the church, frequently serving as pastors by the time they graduate," Fox said. "We also train a lot of missionaries and their families," he added. "We literally have alumni serving all over the world."

Fox's vision is to increase enrollment to consistently having more than 200 students. "That's one reason we are moving to deliver

what we have online," he said. To do this, he focuses on visiting churches, asking pastors and youth ministers to funnel young people toward Clear Creek. "We want them to think about Clear Creek whenever someone in their church says they have been called to ministry," he said, "and to direct their students to look at Clear Creek to at least see if this is where the Lord wants them to be."

Clear Creek's graduates, who serve churches all across the commonwealth, are grateful to Kentucky Baptists for the education they received there, and for the Cooperative Program support of our churches that provides it.

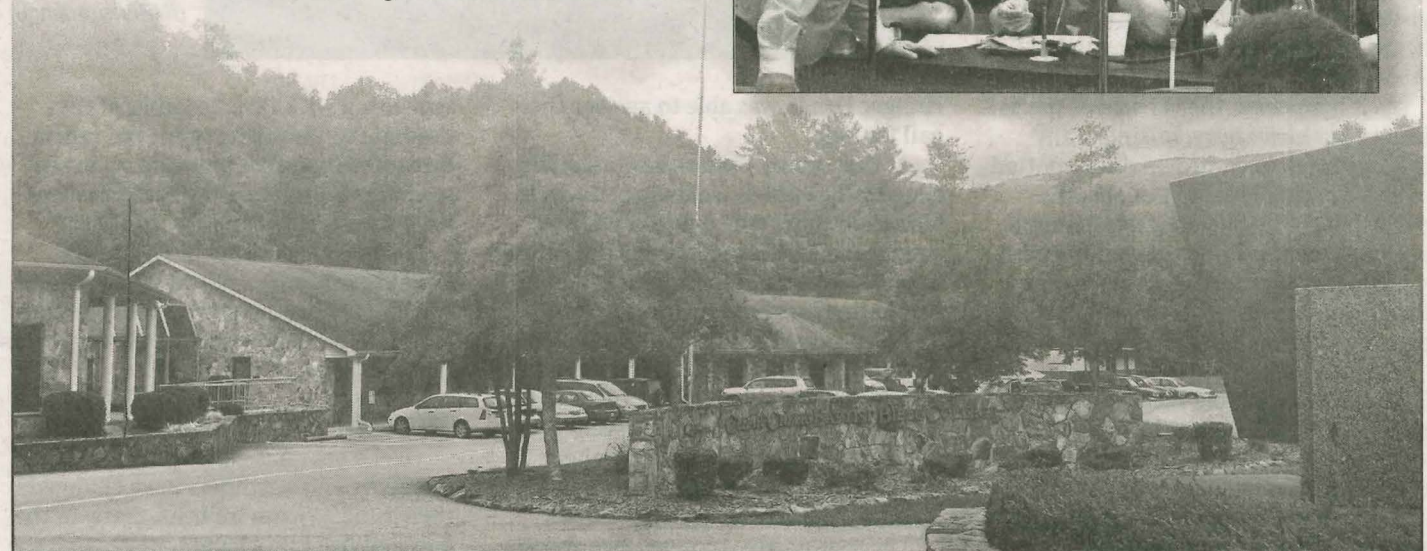
Dan Summerlin, president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, also visited Clear Creek last week and spoke in chapel.

The Paducah pastor, too, came away even more impressed with what is taking place there. "The students have a passion for evangelism, the word of God, missions and the Cooperative Program," Summerlin said.

"Whenever I speak around the state and meet people I can almost always pick out an alumnus from Clear Creek because of that passion they each possessed," he said. We are fortunate in Kentucky to have Dr. Donnie Fox and Clear Creek College as part of our team."

After Thought

By Todd Deaton



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Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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TenTwo: Baptists have so much to pray about

By Kevin Ezell

Southern Baptists have a huge task as we take on the challenge of lostness in North America.

For decades our population has been growing more ethnically diverse, but Southern Baptists have stayed far too white. While our urban areas have been growing—82 percent of the population now lives in cities or their suburbs—we have largely remained on the outskirts of town.

At the same time, attrition is chipping away at what was once a strong base. Every year some 1,000 Southern Baptist churches disappear, either by dying, leaving the denomination or fading into oblivion. Even more churches have become useless in reaching their communities for Christ.

Outside the South we have lost so much ground on the church-to-population ratio that some parts of North America have lostness rates similar to the international mission field. Our cultural, entertainment, educational and government institutions all seem to be running away from God at full sprint.

I believe the North American Mission Board's Send North America strategy has the potential to make great inroads into the spiritual darkness of North America. We hope to plant 15,000 churches in 10 years and raise up a new generation of missionaries who can be deployed to those churches. But our plans, strategies and resources will fall flat and fall short if they are not rooted in prayer.

As a group of churches, we have a lot of resources. We have money, buildings and talented people. We can

accomplish some good things on our own. But we won't ever accomplish the huge things God wants to do in North America and throughout our world without prayer.

That's why I hope you will join me in praying every day that God will lift up workers for the harvest field in North America and around the globe. Only God can work in the hearts of individual churches and congregations to respond to the great spiritual need our world has.

In Luke 10:2 Jesus tells us to "pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

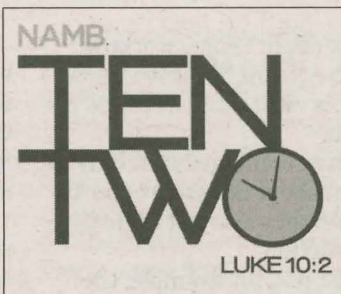
Notice Jesus didn't tell us to pray that there would be a harvest. The harvest is already there; it's all around us. What we need are more people willing to go into the harvest field.

We encouraged churches to set a day aside—Oct. 2, 10/2—as a special day of prayer to ask God to send more workers into the harvest fields of North America and the world. But this is not a once a year event. I hope you will consider making Luke 10:2 a daily prayer. Pray every morning or evening at 10:02. If your prayer calendar is already too full, at least try to pray this plea once a week.

We have a God-sized task to fulfill the Great Commission and we won't do it on our own efforts. If we are serious about wanting to unleash God's power in our lives and in our land, let's start on our knees, submitting our hearts and our plans to His will and His way. (BP)

For more information, visit namb.net/TenTwo.

Kevin Ezell is president of the North American Mission Board.



FIRST PERSON

Curbing the taunts!

By David Garrard

Who is teaching our kids to taunt?
The answer is ... almost everyone!



Athletes, movies, television shows, athletes, music, friends, athletes.

The pervasive spirit of our culture is one of "attitude." Basically a general cockiness that goes way beyond self-confidence.

The funny thing to me—as I watch our kids act out like this—is that this kind of attitude is usually not only unwanted, it is more often than not unwarranted. It is not an accurate reflection of true ability. In short, these kids are not as good as they think they are.

Philippians 2:3-5 says, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves, not looking to your own interest but each of you to the interests of others. Your attitude with one another should be the same as that of Christ Jesus."

If there was ever someone who had the right to taunt it was Jesus. He alone is all powerful, perfect, God's own Son—and yet He chose to carry Himself in a completely different way.

As His followers, we should do the same. We should teach our kids that, while this behavior is perhaps characteristic of our culture today, "attitude" has no place in the character of a Christian.

Look around. You will see it. And when you do, take a little advice from Barney Fife: "Nip it! Nip it! Nip it in the bud!"

David Garrard is minister to children at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville.

Cut expenses, reap big rewards

By Judy Woodward Bates

Brent and Ashley Fulmer wanted to go on their church's mission trip to Kenya, but it looked like the cost was going to make it impossible.

The two began praying and planning, and within 18 months they had saved more than enough to cover their travel and even were able to help fund another church member's participation in the mission. How did they do it?

First, they cut off their satellite TV service—a savings in their case of almost \$1,000 last year. They supplemented their TV entertainment by hitting their local library, where for free they borrowed movies and TV episodes on DVD and Blu-ray.

The pair also switched their cell phone service and data plans resulting in a net savings of \$560 the first year and \$480 the next.

So in 18 months, the Fulmers were able to sock away \$2,040 simply by switching their TV viewing habits and changing their cell phone service.

Next they completely eliminated their home phone and kept only their DSL line bringing their savings to \$2,940.

The biggest change in the Fulmers' lifestyle was becoming brown baggers. They started making their own lunches and adding snacks and beverages to their grocery shopping so they could each maintain a supply at their respective workplaces.

Even after allowing \$20 a week for this added grocery expense, the couple realized an estimated savings of \$4,500 in 2012 and another \$2,250 in the first six months of 2013.

They found some other ways to cut expenses, too, and their savings grew to nearly \$10,000.

So before you write off the idea of taking that mission trip, think like the Fulmers: What am I willing to give up to make this happen?

The Fulmers were part of a life-changing experience for countless Kenyans and, in the process, experienced a life change of their own. Now they're saving for next year's mission trip and a 10th anniversary second honeymoon. (BP)

Judy Woodward Bates, an author, speaker and TV personality.

Have you checked your blind spot today?

By Larry Doyle

We know how important it is to check the blind spot when driving. It is one of the most important lessons we learn in driver's education class. Failing to check the blind spot could easily result in an accident.

After years of insistence and persistence from my wife, I finally purchased blind spot mirrors for our cars. Now, I don't know how I got along without them all these years. And I don't know why I waited so long. They have literally saved my life more than once.

There are, however, other kinds of blind spots in life that are equally important. The truth is that most of us have huge blind spots when it comes to understanding ourselves and seeing ourselves as others see us. It is easy to recognize the faults and shortcomings of others and fail to see our own.

Jesus taught this truth to His disciples, "Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3).

Our inability to recognize our weaknesses and vulnerabilities is dangerous to our spiritual and emotional health. After the Last Supper with His disciples, Jesus predicted His arrest and subsequent death.

Then He said to His disciples, "You will all fall away because of me this night." Simon Peter answered and said, "Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away."

To this, Jesus responded, "Truly I say to you that this very night, before a cock crows, you shall deny Me three times." Peter then exclaimed, "Even if I must die with You, I will not deny you," (Matthew 26:31-35).

We all know what happened shortly afterward. In the face of accusations from a little girl, Peter denied the Lord three times.

It is obvious: Peter had a huge blind spot. He was not self-aware. It cost him his testimony and broke his

heart. It took the convicting work of God's Spirit to bring him to a point where he could see both his strengths and his weaknesses and to the realization that he must depend totally on God.

Many years later, a more humble and self-aware Simon Peter would write these words: "If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen," (1 Peter 4:11).

God's word serves as a spiritual blind spot mirror. The apostle Paul wrote, "For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you" (Romans 12:3).

God's word, just like the mirrors on our cars, is effective only if we put it to use. God's word is not a magical book of formulas and incantations to be recited when we are in trouble or need advice.

In a real sense it serves as a mirror, reflecting back to us the reality of our sins and human limitations, of God's mercy and grace, and God's desire to transform us into the likeness of His Son. In order for God's word to be effective, we must apply and obey the word, not just hear it.

"But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

"But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does," (James 1:22-25). (BP)

Larry Doyle is director of missions of the Piedmont Baptist Association in North Carolina.

COMMENTARY

"God's word ... serves as a mirror, reflecting back to us ... our sins and human limitations, of God's mercy and grace, and God's desire to transform us."

GA, Acteens vital to making disciples of next generation

By Laura Wilson

Birmingham, Ala.—It was as a GA at First Baptist Church in New Brockton, Ala., that Carmen Bruce remembers God beginning to speak to her heart and the Holy Spirit showing her need for a Savior.

"If I hadn't been a GA, I really don't think I would have understood the importance of personal involvement in missions," Bruce said. "I also would not have become aware of the cooperative effort we as Southern Baptists share in working together to carry out the command of the Great Commission."

To this end, Bruce sees Girls in Action and Acteens as organizations that teach the next generation to be true disciples of Christ.

"I wish children's and youth leaders in all churches, regardless of size, could understand they can have GA and Acteens programs and see the importance of these ministries.

"The need for a 'girls only' time is also very important," Bruce said. "This also helps us fulfill the biblical method of teaching found in Titus 2. Acteens can



Girls in Action and Acteens, organizations of the Woman's Missionary Union, have surpassed 100 years of engaging girls in mission education and involvement.

Although the names of the girls missions organizations have changed over the years, its purpose remains: God can use girls now—even in their youth—to share His love with others and make a difference.



most of all, I enjoy working with Acteens because I know that is what God has called me to do."

In Acteens, girls not only learn about ministry opportunities; they also put their faith into action.

Last fall, for example, the Mount Pleasant Acteens group announced to their church the beginning of a new ministry called Handing Her Hope and adopted it as their project for 2012-13.

Handing Her Hope is a ministry of Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church with Mt. Pleasant Mission Moldova to offer the hope of Jesus Christ in the midst of the darkness of human trafficking.

The ministry raises awareness of the reality of human trafficking, prays for victims and with those vulnerable to trafficking and raises financial support for Christ-centered anti-trafficking mission projects in the country of Moldova.

As of June, the financial support raised by the Mt. Pleasant Baptist Acteens totaled \$3,669.

Mt. Pleasant Acteens earned the money by making, packaging and marketing a hair tie-bracelet product called Marianna's, named in honor of a young Moldovan girl rescued from human trafficking.

"Our churches need true disciples," Bruce said. "GA and Acteens are an important part of that discipleship." (WMU/BP)



Carmen Bruce (standing back left), an Acteens leader at Mount Pleasant Baptist Church in Enterprise, Ala., helps girls understand the importance of personal involvement in missions. (WMU)

help our young girls learn how to be young women of grace and virtue and reflect the glory of God."

Her passion to minister to girls living near her and far away led Bruce to become an Acteens leader at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church in Enterprise, Ala.

"I enjoy seeing young girls become more active in serving," Bruce said. "But

GA, Acteens led her to the mission field

By Laura Wilson

East Asia—Amanda Mellot* knew God was calling her to missions through her involvement with Girls in Action and Acteens.

"I was burdened at a young age for lost people in the world," said Mellot. "I wanted to be part of what was going on in the world as God uses His church for His renown."

One of her first memories in GA is when she memorized Matthew 28:19-20, which instructs Christians "go and make disciples."

"I remember those words piercing my heart in a way I could not explain, but I knew it was true and that I wanted to be part of the commission Jesus gave us," Mellot said.

Ever since, she said that passage has been a big part of her life and impacts the way she views the world.

The knowledge and strength Mellot gained in GA and Acteens is now being used in her missions work in East Asia where she is a journeyman with the International Missions Board. A journeyman is someone who has a college degree, is under the age of 26, and gives two years to missions work.

Mellot said the greatest lesson she learned through GA is that many people in the world have never heard of Jesus nor have they ever had a Bible in their heart language.

"GA and Acteens is where I was encouraged to honor God with my life no matter what avenue is taken. This age in a girl's life is so critical for how she will be when she leaves her family, when she goes to college or off to work. When she is firmly planted in the world, she will remember the truth of who God is when pressures of this life are faced." (WMU/BP)

*Name changed.

GA set her mind on eternal things

By Laura Wilson

Denver—Lorna Bius, a LoveLoud missionary with the North American Mission Board, credits her involvement in Girls in Action as a young girl for her mindset and values.

"GA helped set my value system on eternal things," Bius said. "I realized that loving and serving Christ is the most important thing in life. God put this firmly in my mind during those developmental years. GA helped me understand my life is to be about God's mission."

Not only did GA help Bius understand eternal things, it also helped her see the world differently than she did before.

"GA helps young girls see the world God loves," Bius said. "It provides a sense of calling and helps girls understand practical ways they can share Christ and be on mission, even at a young age."

"The greatest lesson I learned in GA is that God's kingdom is real," Bius said. "He is on the move, and He will win. I can help reach the world He loves as I listen for Him each day and share His love with others."

From 2005 to 2012, Bius served as executive director of Nevada WMU. Since March, Bius has been continuing her missions work as the first NAMB LoveLoud missionary in Denver. She helps churches meet human needs while sharing Christ with neglected neighbors, communities and children.

"I am excited to see how LoveLoud will be able to strengthen the work of church planting and church revitalization," Bius said. "I look forward to building a strong network in the West. I am encouraged to see the willingness of SBC partners to work together."

(WMU/BP)

Journalist sensed her passion early

By Laura Wilson

Southeast Asia—Susie Rain* is spending much of her life traveling the world, connecting with people, taking pictures and writing their stories.

"You don't often hear about 'missionary journalists,' but that's what I am," Rain said. "I write and photograph stories about God's work and His people all over the world."

Her passion for missions started when she was in Mission Friends and then Girls in Action and Acteens.

"I used to sit for hours in the church library just looking through The Mag as my parents were in meetings," she recounted. "God started my passion for media at that young age and allowed me to be a tool in sharing His story."

Rain went from reading missionary stories in GA and Acteens publications to being a contributing writer in many. Since 1996, Rain has been able to tell people's stories from 140 countries.

Even when Rain isn't traveling the world, she is sharing God's word at home in Southeast Asia. She works in a refugee village where most of the people are migrant workers who escaped violence in a neighboring country. The goal is to plant seeds of the gospel among these migrant workers and let them take it back to their closed country.

"We use a lot of the principles and training I received as a GA and Acteen in teaching and sharing my testimony," Rain said.

"Kind of crazy to think that something I learned in a small town in Kansas also works in spreading the gospel in Southeast Asia." (WMU/BP)

*Name changed.

Sandy Rebuild

Continued from page 1

SBDR teams from North Carolina and Maryland did a complete tear out of the first floor, built new stairs and put in floors at the Hindley home. The couple, in their 80s, continues to live upstairs amidst ongoing repairs.

Southern Baptists plan a two-year rebuild effort, said Mickey Caison, NAMB SBDR recovery coordinator and overall director for Sandy Rebuild. The partnership includes the North American Mission Board and North Carolina Baptist Men working in cooperation with the Baptist Convention of New York, Metro New York Baptist Association, New Jersey Net and local churches throughout North America to repair and help restore communities.

"Our goal is to build a robust system of rebuild and recovery like Southern Baptists already have for disaster response," Caison said. "Historically, SBDR is good at response with almost 90,000 trained volunteers and 1,600 mobile units, but usually we leave a community within a few weeks or months because the response is over and the recovery is beginning. Recovery can take two, three or more years.

"We've brought the help in the past and started the healing, and there's been a lot of times where we've shared the gospel so we've brought hope in unique places. But by going in now with the rebuild and the recovery aspects of things we can stay involved with that family sometimes for weeks or months," said Caison.

Sandy Rebuild project coordinator Bill



Kentucky Baptist Bill Johnson (left), of Grayson, talks with Mickey Caison, Disaster Relief Coordinator for the North American Mission Board, while serving in Long Island, N.Y. (NAMB)

Johnson said even people from the affected area and beyond often ask him, "Why are you still here?" After the initial response and cleanup, most of the damage is now unseen and many think everything is okay, he says.

In Freeport, as in other coastal areas on the south shore of the island, the storm surge flooded every structure for almost one mile inland from the ocean. While the salt water came in and went out within hours, it left plenty of destruction—corroding electrical boxes, HVAC units and plumbing systems.

"There are many, many homes that need repair and that's what we are doing," said Johnson, a volunteer from Grayson, Ky. Even with damaged materials torn out, many homeowners do not have the resources to do necessary repairs. In the rebuild phase, Johnson said SBDR will keep its main presence on Long Island, but will also have a presence on Staten Island.

Johnson said the community has

"embraced Southern Baptists so readily and quickly" even though he was warned by one local that New Yorkers are skeptical and may feel you are "working an angle" when you work for free.

"Mickey and I keep saying that God is up to something powerful here," said Johnson.

In the New York rebuild as of mid-September, 111 job requests are listed with 27 completed, 29 in active rebuild and 65 open. Tom Vannoy, a volunteer from Wilkes County, N.C., said 798 volunteers have served on teams from 16 states including Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. Calculated volunteer wages have reached \$1.58 million with 56,290 hours logged.

Just this past week, Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief was asked to deploy a chainsaw team to New York City to assist in Hurricane Sandy long-term response. According to Coy Webb, director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Disaster Relief ministry. An eight-member team, led by Harold Smith, will deploy Oct. 11 and serve through Oct. 20, finishing some difficult work in areas that required high skill level, Webb said.

Long Island coordinator Tom Vannoy, who works closely with homeowners and volunteers, said meeting physical, as well as spiritual, needs is why Southern Baptists serve. Lasting relationships are formed and homeowners, like the Hindleys, remember the volunteers who serve them.

"Those relationships then grow into great opportunities to share Christ," said Caison. (NAMB)

NEWS BRIEFS

Faith-based dorm filled

Troy University has become the first in Alabama to offer a faith-based dorm to students who meet certain requirements, such as a 2.5 GPA and a letter of recommendation from a minister or community leader. The residence hall was built to "provide a forum for discussing one's faith," said John Schmidt, Troy's senior vice chancellor for advancement and external relations. "We believe we have an obligation not only to teach a person how to earn a living, but also how to make a life."

N.J. ruling a blow to marriage

A New Jersey judge has legalized same-sex marriage in the state, providing another victory to expand the legal definition of an institution previously limited to a man and a woman. In a Sept. 27 opinion, Superior Court Judge Mary Jacobson ruled the state's refusal to recognize gay marriage violated the equal protection clause of the New Jersey Constitution. She ordered the state government to begin Oct. 21 permitting same-sex marriages. Gov. Chris Christie has requested a stay on implementation of the ruling and quick consideration of an appeal to the state Supreme Court. The Newark (N.J.) Star-Ledger reported. If Jacobson's opinion stands, New Jersey will become the 14th state to legalize same-sex marriage.

FORWARD

Philippians 3:13-14

KBC Annual Meeting - Nov. 12, 2013
Lone Oak First Baptist Church

TO WHAT LIES AHEAD

KBC Mission Board Recommendations to be Considered for Fiscal Year 2014-15

The annual Cooperative Program Goals, as well as the percentages for the division of Cooperative Program funds between KBC and Southern Baptist Convention causes, are determined by KBC in its annual session. Upon recommendation of the Mission Board, the Convention in Lexington November 13, 2012 set the 2013-2014 goals and percentages as shown below. The Mission Board recommends to the Convention in Paducah on November 12, 2013 the following 2014-2015 goal and percentages.

	APPROVED 2013-2014 BUDGET	PROJECTED 2014-2015 BUDGET	VARIANCE
I. COOPERATIVE PROGRAM GOAL			
A. TOTAL COOPERATIVE PROGRAM GOAL	\$22,500,000	\$22,000,000	-\$500,000
1. SBC CAUSES	\$11,250,000 - 50.00%	\$11,000,000 - 50.00%	-\$250,000
2. KBC CAUSES	\$11,250,000 - 50.00%	\$11,000,000 - 50.00%	-\$250,000
B. COOPERATIVE PROGRAM RESOURCING	\$ 2,250,000 - 10.00%	\$ 1,540,000 - 7.00%	-\$710,000
1. SBC SHARED FUNDING	\$ 1,125,000 - 5.00%	\$ 770,000 - 3.50%	-\$355,000
2. KBC SHARED FUNDING	\$ 1,125,000 - 5.00%	\$ 770,000 - 3.50%	-\$355,000
C. OPERATIONAL BUDGET (c)	\$22,500,000	\$22,000,000	-\$500,000
1. SBC CAUSES (a)	\$10,125,000 - 45.00%	\$10,230,000 - 46.50%	+\$105,000
2. KBC CAUSES (b)	\$12,375,000 - 55.00%	\$11,770,000 - 53.50%	-\$605,000
II. OTHER ESTIMATED INCOME*	\$ 1,999,965		
A. ELIZA BROADUS OFFERING*	\$ 855,000		
B. OTHER*	\$ 1,144,965		
III. TOTAL KBC BUDGET GOAL*	\$14,374,965		
TOTAL KBC/SBC BUDGET GOAL*	\$24,499,965		

(a) The distribution of these items is voted by the Southern Baptist Convention.

(b) The distribution of these items is voted by the Mission Board, Kentucky Baptist Convention.

(c) Any Cooperative Program receipts in excess of the goal will be distributed at the same percentages.

*Projected 2014-15 Budget to be approved by the Mission Board upon recommendation of the Business and Finance Committee May 5-6, 2014.



Find information on the 2013 KBC Annual Meeting and Kentucky Baptist Pastors' Conference at www.kybaptist.org/annualmeeting.

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The tie that binds

Oneida is a special place where long lasting bonds are formed

Our soccer team recently won the Class A regional tournament and advanced to the state tournament in Elizabethtown. On the night our team won their sectional game, we took a fan bus carrying some of our student body to the game.

As we enjoyed watching our team celebrate their win, I was struck with the thought of how amazing it is that boys from eastern Kentucky, Asia, South America and Africa—who may not have known their teammates some six weeks earlier—could have already grown to love one another.

To most, we would appear to be a United Nations soccer team, but to me and to the students and staff who watched the game, we are the Oneida family. Many of our young people experience homesickness and struggle through their first few months, but the ones who make it past that point usually grow to love and cherish their Oneida family.

Sports has a way of bringing people together, but the Oneida experience has an even more powerful way of binding hearts together. The very best things I have in my life today are people that I first met at Oneida. My family and I spent nine wonderful years in Florida and made some great friends there, but my Oneida friendships just seem to have an extra special place in my heart.

I had a great friendship with a young man who would move away to Alaska after ninth grade. We kept our friendship going long distance throughout high school, and after graduation I flew to Alaska for a two-week visit. We

attended college about two hours apart and continued our friendship throughout those years. I officiated his wedding several years ago, and for the last several years we were living about five hours apart and our families saw each other fairly regularly. It has become a lifelong bond formed while we were students at Oneida.

I have been amazed at the number of former students who make return visits to our campus. Last month, a gentleman who had attended OBI in 1987 during seventh grade came back for an impromptu visit. He asked about many former faculty, staff and students. This gentleman only attended Oneida for one year, but still had an affection for our school and our people.

Playing in the state soccer tournament will be something our young people will never forget, but more importantly, they will long remember many of their teammates. Oneida is difficult to explain to folks who have never been here.

While in Florida I often spoke of OBI to friends and colleagues, but I always knew they didn't quite understand what Oneida really is. I have invited many of my Florida friends to visit us at OBI, and I also want to extend an invitation to all of our Oneida friends to stop by anytime and see for yourselves how our family lives and operates together. I'd love to meet you, introduce you to our students and staff, show you around campus, and share with you about our school.

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

Finding his way

Student experiences worldwide influence of graduates

Senior Matt Anderson will be finishing his studies at Clear Creek Bible College this December. As he looks back, Anderson said he is amazed at how God put people in his pathway who pointed him to our school.

"When I was 18 years old, I surrendered my life to serve the Lord," said Anderson. "But God used a different route for me. Instead of calling me straight into the ministry, He called me into the U.S. Navy first.

"As I look back, I now see how God was preparing me for the ministry during my time in the Navy. It was there that God used the opportunity to teach me many important disciplines and leadership skills.

"All those things that the Navy taught me are going to help me tremendously as I fulfill God's calling on my life in the ministry—wherever He plants me."

"While in the Navy I was stationed in Guam," Anderson said. "It was during this time when God began to speak to me about a call to ministry. I prayed that if God wanted me to leave the Navy and go into the ministry, then He

would need to make it hard for me to re-enlist. Well, God not only made it hard to re-enlist, He actually retired me. So, I knew without a doubt that God wanted me in the ministry.

"I actually heard about Clear Creek while I was stationed in Guam," Anderson said. "My pastor at the time was a Clear Creek alumnus. I also came to find out that the man who founded the church in Guam also was a graduate of Clear Creek. So, when I retired from the Navy, the Lord sent me to Clear Creek for my ministry training."

Anderson has made several mission trips to the Philippines and said he feels God leading him there after graduation.

"I am headed to the Philippines when I finish my studies," Anderson said. "I feel God calling me to the mission field to start a Bible school for the Filipino people to train them how to reach their people for Christ."

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

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

Criswell College's president to lead NRB

By Tammi Reed Ledbetter

Dallas—Criswell College President Jerry Johnson has been named president and CEO of the National Religious Broadcasters, effective Nov. 1.

The Washington-based NRB is an international association of Christian communicators whose organizations represent millions of viewers, listeners and readers worldwide via radio, television and the Internet.

Johnson was unanimously elected to the post during an NRB board meeting Oct. 1 to succeed Frank Wright, a Presbyterian who will step down Oct. 4 after a decade at the organization's helm.

Johnson has served as president of Criswell College in Dallas since 2010 and from 2004-08. He earned a Ph.D. in Christian ethics from Southern Seminary in Louisville in 2003, and he is a former faculty and staff member at Southern and at Midwestern seminaries and a former pastor in Texas and the

Denver area.

Johnson told the Southern Baptist TEXAN, newsjournal of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, he will be promoting NRB's threefold mission to advance biblical truth, promote media excellence and defend free speech.

Having devoted his life to advancing the gospel, Johnson said he affirms NRB's desire "to make sure people who are broadcasting in the name of Christ do it in a way that is faithful to the authority and infallibility of Scripture."

"If Christians want to be heard by the current generation, they will have to communicate the gospel in their 'media language' with excellence," Johnson said.

Johnson "represents a coming generation of leaders among American evangelicals," said Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary, where Johnson held various faculty and staff roles over a 14-year period, including dean of the seminary's undergraduate Boyce College. Johnson earlier served on the seminary's trustee board, twice as chairman.

Johnson's hire, Mohler said, "makes a powerful statement about the future of National Religious Broadcasters." (BP)



Jerry Johnson



Members and guests of the new West Virginia Chinese Baptist Church in Scott Depot, W.Va., mark the occasion of the constituting of the church and ordination of deacons. (BP/Submitted photo)

Chinese church launches in West Virginia with support of two nearby congregations

Scott Depot, W.Va.—A new Chinese congregation will join the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists this fall.

The West Virginia Chinese Baptist Church was constituted in a special service Aug. 11 at Good Shepherd Baptist Church in Scott Depot, W.Va., just east of the Kentucky border.

"We are thrilled to have these sweet Christians as part of our fellowship," Terry Harper, the convention's executive director, said. "We have long prayed for and looked forward to this day, and we rejoice to see it come to fruition."

Eddie and Mary Henson had a vision for a Chinese ministry 20 years ago when he was serving as associational missionary for the Huntington Baptist Association and the couple began a Chinese Bible study at Highlawn Baptist Church in Huntington.

Over the years, the group continued to meet, often calling a Southern Baptist Theological Seminary student to preach each week through a translator.

In 2010, the Chinese Bible study group called Sung Leun Noh and his wife Yujin to help lead them. The Nohs are native Koreans speak fluent Mandarin.

The Huntington group began talking with a Chinese group meeting in

Charleston, and they soon formed as a church plant meeting midway at Good Shepherd Baptist in Scott Depot.

Highlawn Baptist in Huntington hosted a sending service Aug. 11, expressing support for the Chinese members merging with the Charleston congregation, and Good Shepherd Baptist hosted a receiving service.

The Chinese congregation, now an autonomous church meeting at Good Shepherd Baptist, feels indebted to Highlawn Baptist for their sacrifice and diligence to share their facilities for many years, Harper said.

"They are also grateful to the Good Shepherd congregation for now providing facilities in which to meet. They also expressed appreciation to the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists and the North American Mission Board for their financial support during their fledgling years," Harper said.

"In a state that is 95 percent Anglo, we rejoice to have this group join our convention," Harper said. "We currently have one congregation that is predominantly African American, and now to have one Chinese church thrills us beyond measure. Our hope is to involve these folks in our convention." (BP)

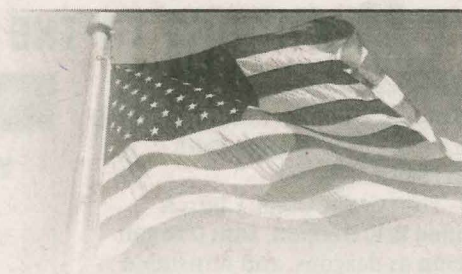
Students gather, lift up prayers at pole

Nashville, Tenn.—Teenagers across the country gathered at school flagpoles before classes Sept. 25 for the 23rd annual See You at the Pole day of prayer.

This generation of students will have a monumental impact for God's kingdom, said Weston Savell, student pastor at Fellowship of First Baptist in Roysse City, Texas, after witnessing the prayer meeting at Roysse City Middle School.

"This morning, I could feel the Spirit of God moving as we held hands in one accord and prayed for spiritual revival for our school, city and country," he said. "I felt like if we can get this generation ... really reach them ... and see them live out that faith with reckless abandonment, they will impact the church and the world."

Started in 1990 by 10 students in Burleson, Texas, See You at the Pole has grown into a global movement that—according to the event's website, syatp.com—draws more than 3 million students for prayer each year.



The event "is simply a prayer rally where students meet at the school flagpole before school to lift up their friends, families, teachers, school and nation to God," said the website, which also noted the event is student-initiated, organized and led.

This year, See You at the Pole was promoted on Facebook and Twitter under the hash tag #ifthen, based on 2 Chronicles 7:14.

"If we pray, seek, turn; then God hears, forgives, heals," the website said.

The Alliance Defending Freedom, in a memo directed to public school officials, stated that students have a constitutional right to participate in SYATP and to inform their fellow students about the event as long as they do not "materially disrupt the academic process while doing so." (BP)

Obama speaks to Iran's new leader about imprisoned U.S. pastor Abedini

By Grace Thornton

Washington—A historic phone call between President Obama and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani Sept. 27 capped a significant week in the case of an American pastor imprisoned in Iran.

During the 15-minute call, Obama voiced concern for Saeed Abedini, a U.S. citizen who marked a year of incarceration for his Christian faith Sept. 26.



Saeed Abedini

Though Secretary of State John Kerry has called for Abedini's release, this was the President's first time to speak out on the pastor's behalf.

Obama also expressed concern for two other Americans imprisoned or missing in Iran, in addition to dealing with other topics.

Abedini's wife Naghmeh said the call marked "the most encouraging news I

have heard since Saeed was imprisoned one year ago. I am very grateful to President Obama for standing up for Saeed and for the other Americans who are held captive in Iran. This development is truly an answer to prayer."

The conversation was the first time presidents of the two countries have spoken directly since 1979.

During a CNN interview Sept. 25, Rouhani was noncommittal when asked about Abedini, noting that he "cannot interfere in the judicial process" and that America also held Iranians whom he sought to be freed.

But Abedini's family is optimistic in the wake of the presidents' phone call, as Iran released 91 prisoners of conscience in the days leading up to Rouhani's Sept. 24 speech at the United Nations. Two of them were women held since 2009 on charges of "undermining the national security of Iran" after they converted from Islam to Christianity and joined a house church, according to Morning Star News.

The Abedinis are hopeful that the new Iranian president, elected in June on a platform of reconciliation and engagement with the West, will soon add the pastor to the list of those released.

Obama's move was "a significant step forward in this critical case," said Jordan Sekulow, executive director of the American Center for Law and Justice, which represents Naghmeh Abedini.

"We're ... grateful to President Obama for raising Pastor Saeed's imprisonment and call on President Rouhani to put his promise of being 'moderate' into action by releasing Saeed without further delay," Sekulow said. (BP)



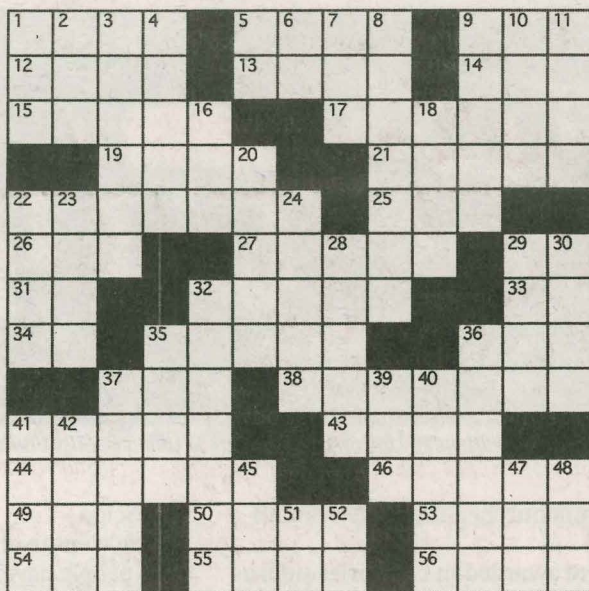
Naghmeh Abedini, wife of imprisoned Iranian-American minister Saeed Abedini, at Capitol Hill hearing on religious minorities in Iran on March 15, 2013. Behind her is her lawyer, Jordan Sekulow, executive director of the American Center for Law and Justice. (RNS/Adelle Banks)

Bible Crosswords

By Evelyn Boyington

Across

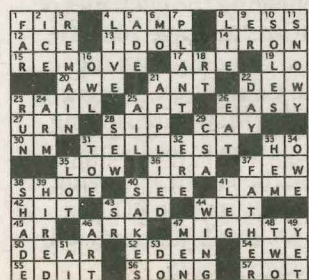
- 1 "Every one could sling stones at an hair breadth, and not ____" (Judges 20:16)
- 5 "In their hands they shall ____ thee up lest ... thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Matthew 4:6)
- 9 Before
- 12 Duke or duchess, for example
- 13 Word in a threat
- 14 Disagreement
- 15 Tribe of Israel
- 17 "So then they that are in the flesh cannot ____ God" (Romans 8:8)
- 19 This cookie didn't crumble (it's a success)
- 21 Lets up
- 22 Outgrowth
- 25 Linking verb
- 26 Canola, for one
- 27 "Joy that was set before him, endured the ____, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12:2)
- 29 Unit of weight (abbr.)
- 31 Behold's partner
- 32 "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no ____" (John 1:47)
- 33 "They fled before the men of ____" (Joshua 7:4)
- 34 French conjunction
- 35 "This he said, not that he ____ for the poor" (John 12:6)
- 36 Consumed
- 37 With Aaron, he held up Moses' hands (Exodus 17)
- 38 "But ____ us from evil" (Matthew 6:13)



#176

- 41 Maritime occurrence
- 43 "The third day he shall ____ again" (Matthew 20:19)
- 44 "Fallen ____ in Christ" (Christians who have already died) (1 Corinthians 15:18)
- 46 Stop on the journey from Egypt to Jordan (Numbers 33:27)
- 49 Tribe of Israel
- 50 "Hallowed be thy ____" (Matthew 6:9)
- 53 Continent
- 54 Hospital facility (abbr., pl.)
- 55 Sheet size
- 56 Ancient European
- 11 Part of the pasture populace (pl.)
- 16 Son of Peleg (Genesis 11:18)
- 18 Corn servings
- 20 Happen
- 22 "Make thee a fiery serpent and set it upon a ____" (Numbers 21:8)
- 23 Uproar
- 24 True's partner
- 28 Longer in the tooth
- 29 "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up ____" (Psalm 127:2)
- 30 Coffin and platform
- 32 Item of clothing
- 35 Find a solution
- 36 Disinclined
- 37 What are not barred (colloq.)
- 39 Illuminated
- 40 Ishmael's half-brother
- 41 Wise man
- 42 Peter, for one
- 45 "The Lord that delivered me out of the ____ of the lion" (1 Samuel 17:37)
- 47 To be under the weather
- 48 Panama, for one
- 51 Note on the diatonic scale
- 52 Printer's measure

#175



'It's a small world'

Grateful for brothers and sisters in the family of Kentucky Baptists

The saying, "ignorance is bliss," honestly applies to many aspects of life, but "knowing" is an enormous blessing—especially when it comes to the family of our churches across this state. I find that the older I get the more my perspective on life seems to change.

I believe God opens our mind's eye to see a bigger world as we gain some gray hair. While my kids will be quick to point out, "Dad, you are getting white hair," I'm not discouraged, but reminded that life on this earth is a progression toward being home with the Lord.

In the meantime, as God allows us to see a larger world. One of the blessings of my role in ministry is that I get to meet lots of people across our state. I have the opportunity to hear their life stories and how God is at work in the communities in which they live.

The phrase, "It's a small world," becomes more common each day as we witness random connections largely due to the Lord's activity as He joins us as believers in His work through sometimes the strangest of circumstances.

I am thankful to be a part of the Kentucky Baptist family—something I did not value much when I was young and before the white hair came along. The friends that God allows me to enjoy

because of the Kentucky Baptist family are a greater blessing than I could have ever imagined.

Ten months ago, the Crossings offices moved into the Kentucky Baptist Convention building, which has afforded a whole new set of opportunities in understanding more about life in Kentucky Baptist circles. I have gained some new friends that I already consider close Christian brothers.

I hope you, too, will cherish what you know and, specifically, who you know. As our world continues to seem darker, I am thankful God is placing new partners in my life. And as the years go by, I suppose we all will wish to have more brothers and sisters to stand with—many of who can be found in Kentucky Baptist life.

Crossings Ministries



David Melber

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



October

- 10 Ministers in Transition, KBC Building, Louisville.
- 15 Men's, Women's Choral concert, Parkway Baptist Church, Bardstown.
- 17 Committee on Resolutions, KBC Building, Louisville.
- 19 1:8 Leadership Experience orientation, KBC Building, Louisville.
- 22 Committee on Nomination, KBC Building, Louisville.
- 24 Administrative Committee, KBC Building, Louisville.
- 24 DiscipleShift 1 Conference, Eastside Community Church, Richmond.
- 24 Kentucky WMU Executive Board meeting, KBC Building, Louisville.
- 27 Women's Chorale Concert, Hartford Baptist Church, Hartford.

November

- 1 Engage International Conference, unnamed venue, Cave City.
- 2 RISK: Paducah Jail Ministry, Lion County.
- 2 Reaching the Summit Conference, Friendship Baptist Church, Irvine.
- 3 RISK: Paducah Friend Day, unnamed venue, Paducah.
- 7 Wildgame Dinner, Twelve Oaks Baptist Church, Paducah.

Richard Land to speak at Campbellsville University

Campbellsville—Richard Land, president of Southern Evangelical Seminary, will speak at the upcoming Kentucky Heartland Institute on Public Policy event Oct. 8, 6 p.m., at Campbellsville University.

Land, former president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Council, also will speak at Ransdell Chapel Oct. 9, 10 a.m.

Both events are free and open to the public.

Land "has influenced the course of public policy at the national and international levels tremendously over the past 25 years, and is highly qualified to discuss the major public policy questions confronting our nation and world," said John Chowning, founder of KHIPP and CU's vice president for church and external relations.

Prior to becoming president of Southern Evangelical Seminary, he served for 25 years as ERLC president. (CU)



Richard Land

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

■ **BARBOURVILLE**—East Barbourville Church will host the Knox Association annual meeting Oct. 14, 6 p.m., with guest speaker **Paul Chitwood**. **Josh Smith** is pastor.

■ **BARDSTOWN**—First Cedar Creek Church recently ordained **Eric Hatfield**, **Sam O'Bryan** and **Craig Watson** as deacons, and reinstated **Wayne Ritchie**. **Tim Lucas** is pastor.

■ **BRONSTON**—First Church will host the Pulaski Association annual meeting Oct. 10, 2 p.m. with guest speakers **Shelby Reynolds** and **Chuck McAlister**. **Carter Stewart** is pastor.

■ **CLAY CITY**—Powells Valley Church will celebrate homecoming Oct. 13, after the morning service, with special music and a meal. **Gary Willoughby** is pastor.

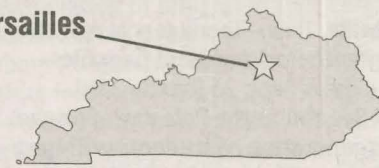
■ **CORBIN**—Calvary Church will host the Knox Association annual meeting Oct. 15, 6 p.m., with guest speaker **Barry Allen**.

■ **COVINGTON**—First Church will celebrate its 175th anniversary Oct. 13, 3 p.m. **Robert Dozier** is pastor.

■ **FANCY FARM**—Beulah Church will celebrate its 150th anniversary and homecoming Oct. 16, 10 a.m., followed by a potluck meal and music. **Ian Carrico** is pastor.

Spotlight on ...

Versailles



Versailles Church will hold Bluegrass and BBQ Oct. 13, 4 p.m. **Michael Cabell** is pastor.

■ **HUSTONVILLE**—Mount Salem Church will host the Lincoln County Association fall meeting Oct. 14, 6 p.m. **Kevin Pittman** is pastor.

■ **JEFFERSONVILLE**—Jeffersonville Church will host the Boone's Creek Association semi-annual meeting Oct. 14, 5 p.m. **Paul Hubbs** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—St. Matthews Church will hold Moment of Mayhem: Magic and Music Oct. 14, 6:30 p.m. **Greg Barr** is pastor.

■ **SPRINGFIELD**—Temple Church will hold homecoming services Oct. 13, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch. **Cal Adams** is pastor.

Car show enthusiasts cruise over to Union Baptist Church

By Chelsea Beville

Union—As the big block engines of muscle cars revved and smoke from the grill floated through the air, more than 1,500 people gathered in the parking lot of Union Baptist Church for the 4th Annual UBCruisin' Car Show in Union Sept. 21.

Kevin Milburn, pastor of the church, said the outreach event began in 2010 as a way to attract the unchurched in their community.

"We started by asking, 'How can we speak the language of the people?'" Milburn said.

Their conversational efforts initially drew 60 people and has steadily grown over the years, Milburn said, topping what he estimated was an attendance of 1,500 last month.

"Events such as these tend to attract a number of people who may not ever show up on our church grounds otherwise," Milburn said. "Our hope and prayer is that through such an interaction with the church, the perceptions



An estimated 1,500 people attended UBCruisin' Car Show at Union Baptist Church in Union. (Chelsea Beville/WWR)

of the lost and unchurched might be dramatically changed."

Trophies were awarded in categories such as Best of Show and Pastor's Pick from the 181 entries, ranging from a Ford Model T to a

2011 Scion.

"We want to change some of the misconceptions people have had with the church," Milburn said. "We want to be a church that is giving to our community." (WR)

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR RENT: Two condos in Destin, Fla. Special for remainder of 2013. \$550 week total price. lbrammer@charter.net.

FOR SALE: Two 2010 14-passenger buses, plus co-pilot. Sharp appearance, great condition with luggage compartment. 59,000-62,000 miles. V-8 Ford, \$39,000. Call Cliff or Andy at (615) 890-6368. Email: cwalker@thebuscenter.com.

FOR SALE: Sound/video/theatrical lighting. JCA Media, LLC, well known in KBC with 20+ years experience installing quality equipment at reasonable pricing. Contact: Jim Cottrell, owner, Elizabethtown, (270) 862-9586, or (270) 312-7492; Rusty King, project manager, Nashville, Tenn., (615) 972-8869; or Amy Cottrell, operations manager, Louisville, (502) 802-4310. Jcamedia.com. References available.

FOR SALE: Do you need a church pianist? Try piano CDs for congregational singing. Worship Service Resources—hymns, choruses, Christmas, lyric slide DVDs. Free demo. Church discounts. www.wsrpianocds.com or 1-877-977-6800.

SEEKING: Stithton Baptist Church in Radcliff is seeking a full-time/part-time children's ministry director. Formal training and experience are preferred. Email resumes to pastorgc@stithton.org, or mail to Stithton Baptist Church, 95 Park Ave., Radcliff, KY 40160. For more info about Stithton, visit stithton.org. Phone: (270) 351-6055.

SEEKING: Floyd Switch Baptist Church, in Eubank, is accepting applications for a part-time youth minister. Mail resumé to pastor David Gambrel at 171 Pleasant Point School Road, Waynesville, KY 40489. Or email to floydswitch@yahoo.com. Must be received by Oct. 22.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Louisa, a vibrant mission-minded church is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumé to Pastor Search Committee, 301 West Pike St., Louisa, KY 41230.

SEEKING: Vine Run Baptist Church, located in rural northern Kentucky, is seeking a pastor. Mail resumé to Vine Run Baptist Church, 8805 Warsaw Road, Dry Ridge, KY 41035.

SEEKING: Parkland Baptist Church is

seeking a full time minister of music to lead worship, age/graded music programs, choirs and orchestra. Resumes can be sent to the Personnel Committee, 7206 Shepherdsville Road, Louisville KY 40219.

SEEKING: Corinth Baptist Church in Winchester is prayerfully seeking a music/youth minister to live in our church parsonage. (859) 744-0018.

SEEKING: Wickland Baptist Church in Bardstown is accepting applications for a part-time youth minister. All details may be found at www.wicklandbaptist.org.

SEEKING: New Harmony Missionary Baptist Church in Benton is seeking a part-time children's pastor. Email resumé to nhmbc@newharmonybaptist.net or mail to New Harmony Missionary Baptist Church, P.O. Box 627, Benton, KY 42025. Phone: (270) 527-3811.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Madisonville is seeking an interim minister of music. If interested, inquire at (270) 821-3611.

SEEKING: Rineyville Baptist Church is accepting resumes for senior pastor. The

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ideal candidate is spiritually mature and must boldly proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ while upholding the doctrines of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. He should be in good standing with the Southern Baptist Convention. A theological degree is preferred. We are looking for an energetic person to lead while working to reach the lost in a growing community. Send resumé to P.O. Box 120, Rineyville, KY 40162. Resumes will be accepted through Nov. 15.

Singer turns limelight into God's glory

By Grace Thornton

Saline, Mich.—It was meteoric, the way Sean Panikkar's summer unfolded.

One minute he was teaching a biblical worldview class for the youth at his church, Fellowship Baptist in Saline, Mich., and the next he was competing in the finals of "America's Got Talent."

The tenor opera trio Forte—of Panikkar, Josh Page and Fernando Varela—came in fourth in the competition, which ended Sept. 18. The group garnered positive fan feedback from the first audition, with audiences drawn to their vocal harmony and backstory. The fact that they were of different backgrounds—Panikkar, Sri Lankan; Varela, Puerto Rican; and Page, a New Yorker—intrigued viewers.

"This group means something more than just singing, that when you see people from different backgrounds creating harmony, that's what the world needs right now," Page said on the show.

Panikkar agreed that what they have been able to do "has transcended notes on a page." What's incredible, he said, is to see how God's hand has guided their success. Panikkar sees his new limelight as a clear opportunity to radiate Christ.

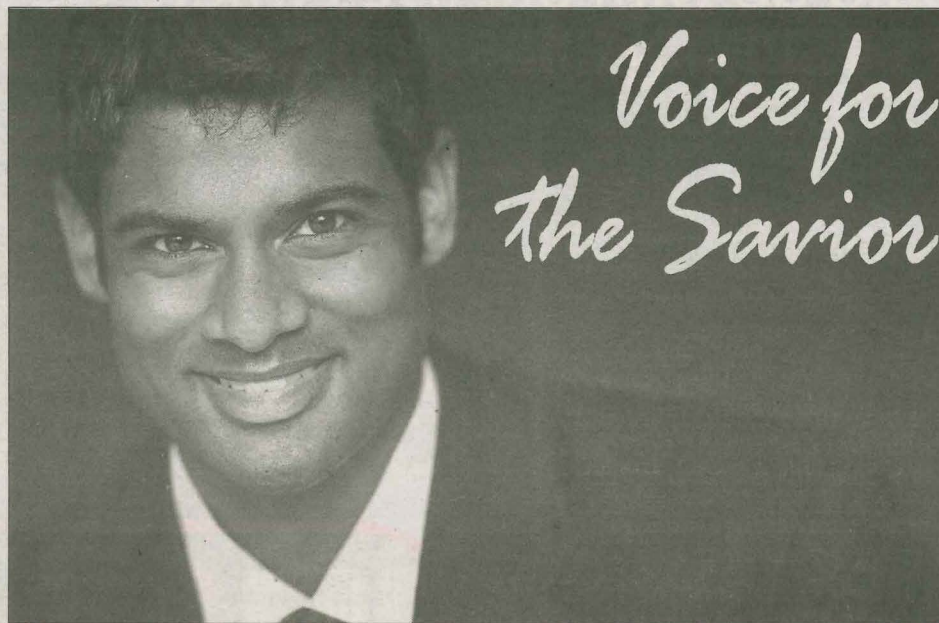
"None of this would be possible without God, and all this started happening after I accepted Christ," Panikkar said.

Many fans commented on how he smiles while singing—a marker of the joy he's been given, Panikkar said.

He's grateful that it shows. After all, a good smile is the way he met Jesus in the first place—a smile on the face of Jane Arvidson, a fellow member of the University Choir at the University of Michigan.

She radiated the joy she had in Christ, and "I literally couldn't take my eyes off of her. The thing that struck me was that she was always really happy," Panikkar said. "I finally got up the courage to introduce myself to her ... and I sent her a follow-up email telling her how refreshing it was to see somebody who smiled all the time."

She responded with a short email that simply said she smiled because Jesus



Voice for
The Savior

Sean Panikkar, a member of the tenor opera trio Forte on "America's Got Talent," is ready to showcase his faith amid unfolding opportunities after Forte finished fourth in the TV competition. Panikkar is a member of Fellowship Baptist Church in Saline, Mich. (BP/Kristina Sherk)

loved her.

"I immediately thought she was a Jesus freak," Panikkar said.

But as he got to know Arvidson, and as she backed up her convictions with solid answers to his questions, Panikkar said his false ideas of who Jesus was began to crumble.

He even went to church with her at Fellowship Baptist—and saw other people there who smiled like she did.

Finally over Christmas break of his sophomore year, Panikkar sat in his apartment and opened a children's tract she had given him.

"After all the debates and the different books, this little tract explained how simple it was to accept the free gift of Christ. I knelt down and accepted Christ into my heart."

That's when things began to change, Panikkar said.

"Shortly after that, I started to be recognized more and more for my singing ability and I began to feel led in that direction," he

recounted. "Doors began opening for me, and even though I had never dreamed of pursuing music, I began to be given opportunities."

It's something he never would've imagined as a shy kid whose parents accused him of lip synching in choir concerts—they had never heard him sing. "I was embarrassed to sing, so to avoid practicing at home, I just had a voice lesson every day," Panikkar said.

Eventually he was accepted to the UM's music program as a dual major in

music and civil engineering—his dream was to own a construction company.

But after he met Arvidson and opened the door of his heart to Jesus, Julliard came knocking, too—as well as the Manhattan School of Music and the Academy of Vocal Arts. Panikkar turned them all down to stay and get his master's degree at the University of Michigan—and stay near Arvidson. Not too long after, the two were married, and eight years later they have two children—Maria, 5, and Mark, 1. Jane is the music director at Fellowship Baptist.

Whenever Panikkar performs, Jane prays the words of a hymn over him—"Take my voice and let it be consecrated Lord to thee," substituting his name in the lyrics.

"My wife has been my prayer warrior from the beginning," Panikkar said. "Every time I open my mouth to sing, I pray that God would be glorified and that I would give my best for His glory, not my ego."

He said his relationship with Christ has enabled him to glorify God rather than focus on himself. That's helped as he's been thrust even more in the limelight through America's Got Talent.

Panikkar had just gotten home from singing "La Boheme" in Texas when he got a "very strange" email that a crossover tenor group on America's Got Talent was interested in him. The trio, Forte, had advanced to the next round at their audition then learned one of their members was ineligible to compete because he wasn't a U.S. citizen.

They found Panikkar while scouring the Internet, and he flew to New York to meet them.

"This was about a week before the second round of America's Got Talent," he said. "They invited me into the group, but I waited to fly home and pray with my wife before eventually saying yes."

After praying about it, he and Jane believed it would put him in a position where he could influence more people for Christ, so he said yes.

Panikkar was "invited to be a part of a very large stage," pastor Bert Spann of Fellowship Baptist said. "I believe that is strategically where the Lord wants the brightest lights. Sean is a mouthpiece, a voice, for the Savior He loves."

With the competition over, Forte is planning to tour and work on an album while the three tenors maintain their personal careers. (BP)

"Every time I open my mouth to sing, I pray that God would be glorified and that I would give my best for His glory, not my ego."

Sean Panikkar



Sean Panikkar (right) performs with Forte during the finals of NBC's "America's Got Talent" competition. (BP/NBC.com)

'Grace' film inspires books

By Aaron Earls

Nashville, Tenn.—A young girl longs to make a name for herself in the music world and escape the shadow of her one-time music star father.

With similar stories capturing media attention regularly, being culturally relevant will not be an issue for the film "Grace Unplugged" or two new books from B&H Publishing Group related to the movie—a novelization of the screenplay and "Own It," a nonfiction work encouraging readers to develop their own personal faith.

The novel, also titled "Grace Unplugged," follows Grace Trey as she lands a big music break that takes her away from her family and faith, into pop stardom. She pursues this dream on her own despite warnings from her father Johnny Trey, a former one-hit wonder who became a Christian and left the music industry behind.

Melody Carlson, an award winning author whose works have sold more than 6 million copies, penned the novel.

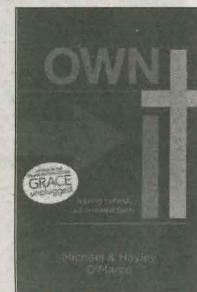
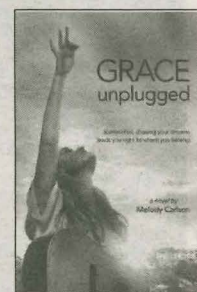
In the plot of both the book and movie, Quentin, the only Christian influence in Grace's new life, gives her a book to help her reconsider her choice to pursue career success at all costs. The book "Own It," written by husband and wife Michael and Hayley DiMarco, focuses on "leaving behind a borrowed faith."

"Own It" contrasts a personal possession of faith with faking, borrowing, renting, picking and choosing, or disowning it. The DiMarcos examine the results of owning faith with the purpose of helping to "navigate what to do when faith meets real-world challenges."

"Do you own your faith? Do you rent it? Or do you borrow it from your friends or family?" asks Russ Rice, one of the film's producers and book consultants. "Those are the questions Grace has to answer, and I hope the movie's audience and the books' readers answer them, too."

In addition to the B&H books, LifeWay Christian Resources partnered with the film to produce small-group material for both parents and students. The parents' study uses clips from the film and discussion questions to help participants examine their own parental pursuits, passions and priorities. The student version goes through the same material, but focusing more on Grace and the choices students must make with their faith.

The movie opened in theaters Oct. 4. Both novels are available now from B&H. (BP)



“We should go with our lives where we most need to go and where we are most needed.”

Frederick Buechner

I led a group to Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. We worked with people from all ranges of life: the hungry, the sick, the orphans, the elderly, the special needs, the ones practicing voodoo, and the terminally ill. We tried to show God's love to those who are considered unlovable in Haitian standards.

Tore
Karenbauer



Over the summer I had the privilege of working with UrbanPromise Honduras in Copán Ruinas. Through sharing the love of Jesus with these two sweet girls, I gained a deeper love and appreciation for education, allowing me to catch a glimpse of what life might look like for me in the future.

Jessica Carey



go with our lives **sp2013**

In the Busia district of Uganda, my group helped orphans write sponsorship letters, built a playground and visited village churches to show community support, an act which goes a long way in African culture. We helped with a pastoral training conference and experienced worship in a completely new way.

Austin Fraley



I served with groups traveling across the country of Guatemala. We taught Bible school, did home construction, visited a rehabilitation center, and saw beautiful markets. This summer enabled me to open up and truly be intentional with every person I meet: to focus on my relationships with myself, the people around me, and God.

Kati Wilson



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