

WESTERN Recorder

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Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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States budgeting more for missions

Kentucky reaches 50/50 split with 7 percent shared

By Tammi Reed Ledbetter

Nashville, Tenn.—Trending among Baptist state convention meetings this year was the decision to send more money to the mission field—a challenge set forth by the Great Commission Task Force adopted by the SBC at its 2010 annual meeting in Orlando.

This year more than half of the cooperating state Baptist conventions increased the portion of undesignated Cooperative Program receipts from local churches sent to the Southern Baptist Convention. The Kentucky Baptist Convention is among them and will forward 46.5 percent of undesignated CP gifts SBC causes in 2014.

Those causes include supporting the International Mission Board, North American Mission Board, the convention's six seminaries, the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission and SBC operations by the Executive Committee.

The Dakota and Nevada conventions led the way by increasing the CP portion of their respective budgets by 4 percent. Both conventions made deep cuts to their budgets in recent years to deal with declining income.

'Benefits of giving'

SBC President Fred Luter expressed the need to support the Cooperative Program at every state convention meeting he attended. State conventions need to be steadfast in their efforts to share with churches the importance of giving to the Cooperative Program, he said.

"Each state must talk about the benefits of giving," Luter said, citing church planting, strengthening existing churches and "supporting our missionaries to share the gospel not only in America, but all over the world."

Luter voiced confidence that Southern Baptists will continue to value the Cooperative Program as they see the vital role it plays in every level of ministry each year.

"I truly believe effective communication about how important CP giving is to our local, state and national convention ministry will eliminate any concern that messengers may have" about the

□ See CP giving ... Page 6



Fred Luter

CINCINNATI CHURCH PLANTER: We're becoming 'The things a church should be'

By Tobin Perry



Cincinnati church planter Michael Clary baptizes Mike Bell in a portable baptismal tank. Clary planted Christ the King Church in downtown Cincinnati in 2010. Christ the King has baptized 45 people since its launch and now averages more than 400 people in attendance each weekend. (Photo courtesy of Christ the King Church)

Cincinnati—Michael Clary had reached the end of his rope. The 35-year-old church planter had been in Cincinnati nearly 18 months. Other than the Baptist association's director of missions, he didn't know anyone when he arrived. After slowly and surely putting together a core team, an admittedly poor leadership choice threatened to tear it all apart.

People were questioning his leadership; some left the church. And Clary was questioning himself.

"We had gone from zero to 30 and back down to 15 after a year and a half," said Clary, a North American Mission Board missionary. He pondered "all this wasted time, all this wasted effort."

"I wondered, 'Are we sunk?'"

Clary sat in a large restaurant near the University of Cincinnati campus that had become his makeshift office and prayed, read his Bible and journaled about his sins, his doubts, his dreams and everything else he could think of. Then Clary asked himself if he should continue or if he had learned a painful ministry lesson and the church should disband.

It would end what likely was the first Southern Baptist church plant within Cincinnati's city limits in nearly 30 years, said Dennis Holmes, Send North America: Cincinnati city coordinator with the North American Mission Board. Holmes has served as a church planting catalyst and director of missions in the city since 1984.

□ See Cincinnati ... Page 3

Tracking 2010's church plants: 91% success rate

By Kevin Ezell

Alpharetta, Ga.—All church planters are special to us, but the church planting "Class of 2010" gets some additional attention and scrutiny because in that year we began reporting on Southern Baptist church plants in some new ways.

In 2010 Southern Baptist churches planted a total of 943 new churches.

Each of the new churches has an SBC ID number which allows for year-to-year tracking as they report through the Annual Church Profile. The ACP is a self-reporting tool and not every church responds, but it's the best

statistical tool Southern Baptists have right now.

So, according to ACP, how is the Class of 2010 doing? We think pretty well so far. Here are some key indicators from the 2012 ACP, the last full

year of reporting available:

■ **Survival rate**—Of the 943 churches Southern Baptists planted in 2010, 856—91 percent—are still in operation.

■ **Membership**—2010 church plants saw a membership gain of 20 percent in 2012 over 2011. This is while membership across all SBC churches declined 0.66 percent.

□ See Tracking churches... Page 3

NEWS ANALYSIS

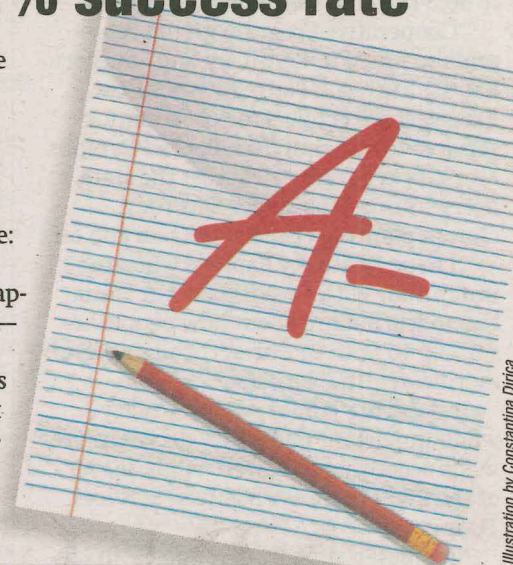


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Sidewalk counseling about being 'a light' of truth to abortion-seekers

By Matt Damico

Louisville—For Owen Strachan, convictions come with a cost.

Strachan, assistant professor of Christian theology and church history at Boyce College, has been pro-life for many years. It wasn't until recently, however, that he decided to act on his conviction.

"I was a passionate advocate for pro-life thinking, but it wasn't until coming into contact with (Speak for the Unborn)—and finding people who were putting their convictions to work—that I started to get practically involved," Strachan said.

Speak for the Unborn is a ministry that began in 2009 when a couple from Immanuel Baptist Church in Louisville decided they needed to reach out to women seeking abortions. Nearly seven years later, group from the church continues to go out every Saturday morning to do sidewalk counseling at the city's abortion clinic. On Tuesdays and Fridays, a group goes from Louisville's Kenwood Baptist Church, where Strachan serves as an elder.

As a professor at the undergraduate school of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and as a pastor, Strachan's primary calling is to teach, write and think. But he wanted to put his intellectual life to work.

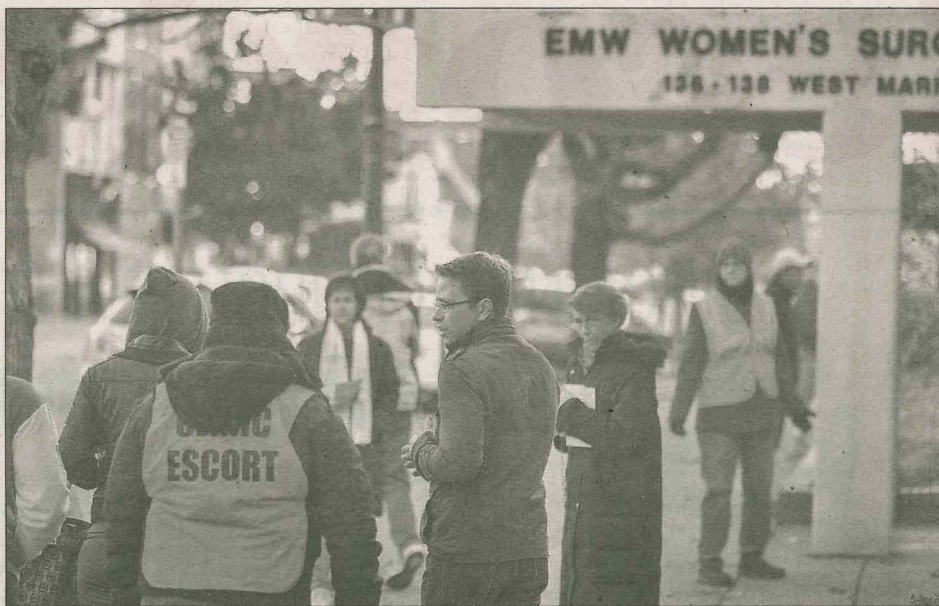
"It's an extremely good thing for our faith and convictions to cost us something," Strachan said. "In a Jesus-like way, we can put our doctrine into practice, and really experience the cost of gospel ministry."

Sidewalk counseling makes the cost quite tangible.

"It's not a fun ministry," Strachan said.

"It's not a fun ministry."

Owen Strachan



Owen Strachan (center), assistant professor of Christian theology and church history at Boyce College, seeks to counsel women to choose life outside a Louisville abortion clinic. (Emil Handke/SBTS)

The typical morning includes waking up early to arrive by 7 a.m., when the Speak for the Unborn volunteers stand on the sidewalk outside the EMW Women's Surgical Center next to a busy city street. As women walk from their cars to the clinic door, volunteers try to engage them in conversations, which rarely last longer than a minute.

Speak for the Unborn volunteers use this brief time to try and persuade these women—who are often with their boyfriends, husbands, friends or parents—not to abort their unborn children and to receive instead a free ultrasound at A Woman's Choice Resource Center, located next to the abortion clinic.

In the short time volunteers have to talk to these women, "you try to engage

them quickly, you try to plant a seed, speak a gospel truth. And then they go in and you lose them," Strachan said.

The brief amount of time is not the only obstacle Speak for the Unborn volunteers must overcome. There are pro-choice volunteers there, too.

These volunteers wear orange vests with the words "clinic escort" on the back to indicate why they're there: to help women enter the abortion clinic and to shield the women from the pro-life volunteers. Interactions with escorts can turn hostile.

"They have pushed and sworn at us," Strachan said. "I had one escort tell me that she'd wish I had never been born. I had shared how thankful I was that I hadn't been aborted and that the people walking into the clinic hadn't been aborted, and she shouted to me that she

wished I had been."

Despite the uncomfortable situation and the direct contact with what Strachan calls "tangible darkness," there are reasons to endure. Just as Paul promised, God often uses fools and seemingly foolish efforts to accomplish His purposes. Even when that foolishness includes preaching to a window.

"Many of us will try to preach to the window of the waiting room where the women going into the abortionist's chamber sit before they're called in," Strachan said. "We've seen women leave that waiting room and tell us that they could hear what we were saying outside. That's a great thing to know, but when you're actually preaching to a window, you feel like a fool."

There have been other occasions for hope, as well. Heather Van Roekel, a volunteer from Kenwood Baptist Church, talked with a lesbian woman on her way into the clinic, and through her kindness and pleading, the woman decided to go in for a free ultrasound at A Woman's Choice Resource Center. After seeing the ultrasound, she decided against the abortion. Van Roekel has continued contact with the mother and has brought her—and the baby—to church events.

Currently, Immanuel and Kenwood are the only churches formally taking part in Speak for the Unborn. There are a number of Catholics and other individuals who also do sidewalk counseling—although the number of escorts usually outnumbers the pro-life volunteers. King wants to see more evangelical churches involved, even if only one day a month.

"What keeps me going is that I want to be a light, and I want to suffer in his name, and I want my faith to taste and feel more real than it does when I try to risk-proof it," Strachan said. (SBTS)

Slight uptick in CP compared to 2013

Louisville—Kentucky Baptists begin 2014 having given more to missions and ministries through the Cooperative Program compared to the same point in the previous fiscal calendar.

As of Dec. 31, 2013, Kentucky Baptists' CP giving totaled \$6,654,050 compared to \$6,545,414 in December 2012.

"Cooperative Program giving represents so much in Kentucky and Southern Baptist life," said Paul Chitwood, KBC Executive Director. "Free consultation services to our churches, Baptist Campus Ministry programs all across the state, overseas missions, Super Saturday, church planting—the list goes on and on."

"I hope Kentucky Baptists who are unfamiliar with CP will take the initiative to learn more about how people are coming to faith in Christ through these sacrificial gifts," he added.

It is during January and February when important budgetary decisions are made according to Lowell Ashby, leader of the KBC Finance & Business Services Team.

"Increased support through CP in January and February to meet our current budget will allow us to confidently plan for continued support of local, national and international causes next year," Ashby said. (KBC)

Jones: Parents key in discipling next generation

By Matt Damico

Louisville—The call to disciple the next generation belongs to parents, said Timothy Paul Jones during a recent Alumni Academy course at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Jones, professor of leadership and church ministry, used his book, "Family Ministry Field Guide: How the Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples," during much the two-day course Jan. 9-10.

Jones encouraged pastors and youth ministers in attendance to teach parents in their churches, especially the fathers, how to disciple their children according to the expectations that Scripture places on parents. The way to do this, he said, is to create a ministry driven by grace, rather than by prescription.

The importance of grace in family ministry is why, Jones said, the instructions given to parents in Deuteronomy 6 did not work.

"Deuteronomy 6 is not wrong, but it's not enough, because it's not the whole story," Jones said. "Jesus delivered all that God's law and justice demanded," Jones said. Pastors and youth ministers should not, then,

"proclaim Deuteronomy 6, saying 'Do this, do this, do this,' without also turning towards Christ."

On the other hand, Jones urged those in attendance to avoid telling church members that "whatever you're doing (in family worship) is okay," but rather that God has provided means—through the church, the Spirit and the Scriptures—to pursue faithfulness in raising children.

"We want to proclaim to our people the fullness of the story that is centered in one God, a story of grace and a story that's passed from generation to generation," Jones said. "That's the big picture of what we want to happen in family ministry."

During the first night of the two-day course, Southern Seminary professors James Hamilton Jr. and Thomas Nettles joined Jones for a panel discussion about family worship.

"I learned from Don Whitney (another professor at Southern Seminary) that we ought to read the Bible, pray the Bible and sing the Bible," Hamilton said, as he led his family in reading a Psalm, a New Testament passage,

singing the doxology, reciting the Apostles' Creed and praying the Lord's Prayer.

Jones led his family through a reading in Hamilton's children's book, "The Big Story of the Bible," a reading and subsequent discussion from Matthew and then a time of family prayer.

John David Trentham, assistant professor of leadership and church ministry, led the first session about the faith of young adults. The next session featured a discussion between Randy Stinson, senior vice president for academic administration and provost of Southern Seminary, and David Prince, assistant professor of Christian preaching, about using sports as a means of discipleship for kids.

Alumni Academy offers ministry enhancement and ongoing theological learning for alumni free of charge.

The next scheduled Alumni Academy course will feature Boyce College dean Dan DeWitt teaching through his forthcoming book, "Jesus OR Nothing," May 22-23. More information is available at www.events.sbts.edu. (SBTS)

"God has provided means—through the church, the Spirit and the Scriptures—to pursue faithfulness in raising children"

Timothy Paul Jones

ERLC network equips Christians for culture

By Tom Strobe

Nashville, Tenn.—Southern Baptists and other Christians have a new means of being equipped to address the culture's contentious issues with the gospel of Jesus—thanks to the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

The Southern Baptist Convention's ethics entity unveiled Jan. 8 its ERLC Leadership Network and its related advisory council of SBC pastors and leaders.

The ERLC describes the new network as a blend of "university alumni association" and "comprehensive digital equipping hub." It is designed to provide outlets for "affinity" with and "resources" from the ERLC, and is open to men and women who seek to identify with the ERLC's gospel-focused approach to cultural issues in their roles as pastors, leaders or lay people.

The ERLC Leadership Network Council consists of 31 Southern Baptist pastors and leaders, including David Platt, Matt Chandler and J.D. Greear, who will guide the network and receive training from the ERLC staff.

"The ERLC Leadership Network is about ministering in the midst of a devil-haunted universe," ERLC President Russell Moore said. "As we come alongside one another, we'll talk about crucial ethical issues confronting churches and how we can engage the culture with a gospel focus."

"We'll think through issues that aren't yet confronting churches but will, and how we can best go through the difficulties of life and local church ministry with a joyful warrior, kingdom expectancy—marching toward Zion on the triumphant side of history," he said.

Council members, who will contribute some material for the ERLC, welcomed the new endeavor.

Chandler, lead pastor of teaching at The Village Church in Flower Mound, Texas, said he is blessed to be a council member.

"When I need help navigating the challenging ethical issues that exist in today's culture, the ERLC is a great resource for me," Chandler said in a statement on the leadership network website.

Greear, lead pastor of The Summit Church in the Raleigh/Durham, N.C., area, also praised the initiative on its website.

"The ERLC helps me think biblically and in gospel-responsible ways about the issues confronting our people every single day," Greear said. "To not speak and think about these issues would be doing our people a great disservice."

Benefits of belonging to the leadership network, according to the ERLC, include receiving unique content, gaining preferred access to commission events and securing discounts for ERLC events and materials. There is no charge to register for the network. Members of the network receive regular messages from the ERLC regarding materials and other benefits.

While the network is open to all, the ERLC will fill the network council annually on an invitation-only basis.

Network registration, a full list of council members and other information are available at erlc.com/network. (BP)

Send North America makes impact in 2013

By Adam Miller

Alpharetta, Ga.—The deaf residents of Manchester, Conn., now have a church of their own, as do the students at the University of Hartford—and it's right on campus. This is because God is using church planters to reach into the hard-to-reach areas of North America with the gospel.

These are just two success stories among hundreds from 2013 of God

using church planters, pastors, Southern Baptist Convention chaplains, Disaster Relief volunteers and a host of other Southern Baptists whose work has helped make an impact for Christ.

Through Send North America, the North American Mission Board's strategy for church planting and evangelism, Southern Baptists are helping start churches and reaching communities in the United States and Canada.

Emphasizing the work of discovering, developing and deploying missionaries in 32 strategic Send North America cities, Send North America is focused on mobilizing Southern Baptist churches to start churches in communities that are without a thriving gospel presence.

Allan Karr, Send North America campus mobilizer at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, said he has been

"We've had an incredible gathering of future planters. We've mobilized interns to Washington D.C., New Orleans and Pittsburgh. God is on the move!"

Aaron Harvie

praying Luke 10:2 for 10 years and that God is answering in some unexpected ways.

"In 2013 we trained and deployed church planters from five tribes of Burma to plant and lead five new churches in Colorado and North Carolina," Karr said.

Aaron Harvie, campus mobilizer at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said students are being deployed as church planting interns.

"We've had an incredible gathering of future planters," Harvie said. "We've mobilized interns to Washington D.C., New Orleans and Pittsburgh. God is on the move!"

Steve Canter, Send North America city coordinator for Send New York City, hosted dozens of interns who spent several months in the city this year assisting in church planting efforts.

"More than 30 men and women served this year in the Send North America Farm System," Canter said. "These are the missionaries of the future."

Other stories from throughout North America in 2013 included:

■ By the end of 2013 a total of more than 1,200 churches have been mobilized through NAMB's "Mobilize Me" process.

■ A church plant in Montreal, where

only 0.5 percent of residents profess Christ, launched with 400 people, has grown to nearly 500 and has baptized more than 100.

■ Canada increased by more than 30 church plants in 2013.

■ Eight multiplying churches have been developed in Boston in the last two years in a city where there were only two.

■ 35 Nepalese were baptized in Columbus, 118 people were baptized in Cleveland, and 96 Bhutanese refugees were baptized in Atlanta.

■ An unprecedented 19 churches, six planters, four interns and two apprentices were mobilized to Portland, Ore.

■ More than 500 participants at the 2013 Send North America Conference July 29-30 in Dallas indicated they were taking next steps in church planting.

■ More than 300 college students helped with rebuild efforts in New York in communities still recovering from Hurricane Sandy.

■ More than 200 new SBC chaplains were placed. SBC chaplains led more than 22,000 people to Christ and they baptized more than 4,000 people in 2013.

"There is still much to do, but it has been encouraging this year to see the momentum start to build," Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board, said. "I think God is giving us a glimpse of what He has planned if we are willing to send the resources and people to the places where they are needed most." (NAMB/BP)

Cincinnati

Continued from page 1

But God's answer to Clary was unmistakable. Keep going.

So Clary did. To demonstrate how much he trusted God, he took it a step further. Instead of waiting to grow the core group back up before launching the church, he circled a date on the calendar for the first public worship services—Jan. 10, 2010, just five months away.

Two weeks after giving the church's future over to God, Clary presented his vision to the core group.

"We're going to make disciples," he said. "We're going to share our faith. We're going to build community. We're going to study Scripture. We're going to do and be the things that a church should be. And we're not going to stray."

The vision had "no gimmicks, no church tricks," and it resonated, Clary said. The number of people in the core group more than doubled by the end of the year, replacing all the people who had left during the leadership crisis several months earlier.

Yet most church-planting experts would say the core group of 35 people was too small to try a public launch. So Clary kept praying—and God showed up, along with 70 people at the inaugural worship.

Since he figured many of attendees had been well-wishers simply wanting to support the first service, Clary thought the numbers would drop. They did—to about 55. But they never dropped below that again.

More than 400 people now attend



Cincinnati church planter Michael Clary embraces Brett Wert after he was baptized in a portable baptismal. (Photo courtesy of Christ the King Church)

Christ the King Church most weekends and 45 adults have been baptized.

Much of the growth has come from word of mouth rather than a coordinated marketing campaign. Now the church is making plans to launch its first daughter church in southwest Cincinnati in the next few months. The new church planter is from Christ the King. Clary credits the local Baptist association as an important part of Christ the King's launch and the new church plant.

"We've gone from total despair to the sky is the limit because the Lord has restored our dream of what we want to see in this city—a church that's making disciples, building bridges racially, and reaching people from all different backgrounds," Clary said. "We're seeing that dream come about. It puts in my heart a great sense of gratitude that God would be gracious to us in that way." (NAMB/BP)

Tracking churches

Continued from page 1

■ **Attendance**—Worship attendance also is growing among church plants—an 11 percent increase in 2012 compared to 2011. At the same time, across all SBC churches, worship attendance fell 3 percent.

■ **Baptisms**—Planting evangelistic churches is the best way to reach people for Christ. The Class of 2010 reported 3,394 baptisms. Among all SBC churches there is a ratio of one baptism for every 50 members. For the class of 2010 it's 1:12.

■ **Giving**—We are also encouraged that the Class of 2010 continues to give more each year—including to the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong missions offerings. Total missions giving for those churches that reported was \$2.9 million.

We will have a more complete picture after these churches reach the five-year point, but these initial numbers are encouraging and show us that new churches are a key part of reaching people for Christ and expanding God's kingdom. Please keep our church planters and their congregations in your prayers. There are still many challenges ahead for them as they push back lostness in difficult places. (BP)

Heed call to action

Chip Hutcheson, president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, is the author of this week's column.

Kentucky Baptists were encouraged by Paul Chitwood in his Jan. 14 article to contact legislators about two critical issues—passage of pro-life legislation and opposition to any form of expanded gambling. We must not take that call to action lightly.

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

These two issues have been the focus of the Kentucky Baptist Convention Committee on Public Affairs for a number of years, and when the issues are mentioned there is an immediate realization that we, as Kentucky Baptists, cannot be bystanders, but must make our voices heard.

Let's be realistic. Legislators are not surprised when pastors or denominational leaders call to discuss these issues. In a sense, they expect to hear from them. But when laypeople become involved, it sends an even stronger message. And the more laypeople who become involved, the better.

From time to time I have heard faithful church members say they justify inaction on legislative issues by saying they don't want to get involved in politics. Some even go to the extreme of not registering to vote. But that plan of action is counter to our responsibility to be not only faithful followers of Christ, but good citizens as well. If we are to promote the principle of "loving our neighbor as ourselves," we cannot sit idly by and see government going down a path that will not be in the best interest of all its citizens.

As one looks back at the writings of many of our Founding Fathers, you see some encouraging words about the involvement of those who seek to model the teachings of Christ.

Samuel Adams, regarded as the Father of the American Revolution, said, "He is the truest friend to the liberty of his country who tries most to promote its virtue." Adams made that statement as he implored people to elect virtuous leaders. That principle holds true with us today and can be expanded to include every one of us—it is our responsibility to promote virtue, and there can be no doubt that fighting for the unborn and opposing gambling fit the criteria of promoting virtue.

Some are concerned that they don't know what to say when contacting their legislators. That's not a problem. Legislators don't expect you to present a legal or in-depth argument for your position. All that is needed is to call the legislative message line at (800) 372-7181 and leave this comment for your legislators (both in the House and Senate), "Please pass pro-life legislation and do not allow any expansion of gambling in this state."

I assure you those on the other side of our positions are making their voices heard. We must do the same. Why? Because we love our neighbor as ourselves, and we want only the best for our commonwealth.

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Following Christ in today's confusing culture

At the risk of sounding like a school teacher, take out a sheet of paper and jot down every command of Jesus that you can recall in five minutes.

How did you do? Did you come up with 10, 15, 25? Would you believe that Tom Blackaby lists more than 50 in his book, "The Commands of Christ"? Here's a few to get you started, if you had a little trouble:

- "I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matt. 5:44).
- "Don't collect for yourselves treasures on earth" (Matt. 6:19).
- "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matt. 6:33).
- "Stop judging according to outward appearances" (John 7:24).
- "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15).

In his book, Tom Blackaby, one of Henry Blackaby's sons, asks pointedly: "How can we possibly call Jesus Christ our Lord if we have never taken the time to know what He has commanded?" He asserts: "We cannot obey His commands if we do not know what they are." Most Christians want to please their Lord, he allows, but charges, they "simply have not taken the time to study the words of the One they call their Master Teacher and Lord."

Ouch! That struck a nerve.

The focus of Blackaby's book is on discovering practical and tangible ways that we, as His disciples, should be demonstrating our love for our Lord in our daily lives. He takes Jesus' commands and explores them devotionally, breaking them down into six broad categories: coming to God; Christ as Lord; character; concerning others; calling; and words of caution. It's a worthwhile small group study.

While we operate under a spirit of grace and love, 1 John 5:3 encourages us, "for this is what love for God is: to keep His commands," and Psalm 119:11 stresses the importance of studying God's word: "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." James, however, convicts us, cutting right to the heart of what it means to be a true disciple: "But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." Hearing a great biblical message on Sundays is only beneficial if we then put the truth into practice the rest of the week. Or, we are just deceiving ourselves when we profess Jesus as "Lord."

In our culture, many nominal Christians may easily be led astray by prevalent errant voices that espouse non-biblical worldviews, particularly on social mores, such as



After Thought

By Todd Deaton

expanded gambling, homosexuality, gay marriage, drugs and alcohol. In Kentucky, our governor is again trying to convince us that there is nothing wrong with expanding gambling and allowing a few casinos to operate—so long as horseracing, education or the state's purses profit. On the facing page, LifeWay Research's president, Ed Stetzer,

observes how views about alcohol appear to be changing among some evangelicals.

This month, Colorado joined Washington in becoming the first states to "experiment" with legalizing recreational use of marijuana. And President Obama, in the Jan. 27 issue of The New Yorker, said he views it as "a bad habit and a vice." Fellow Baptist editor Lonnie Wilkey, of Tennessee, in his blog called it a "sad commentary on

society" when the president of the United States publicly states that an illegal drug is no worse than alcohol. Wilkey took exception: "(N)o political leader, regardless of party, should dismiss it simply as a vice."

"We live in such a hypocritical society. Society, in general, condemns smoking cigarettes. But, it's okay to smoke marijuana?" Wilkey continued. "It's no wonder that morals are on a decline in our nation. Our younger generation is confused by the mixed signals." As to whether marijuana is "no worse than alcohol," Wilkey quipped that a tweet from Jim Richards in Texas summed it up well: "I would say rattlesnakes are no worse than copperheads." Both have fangs!

Jesus commands us in Luke 9:57-62 to "Follow me," Blackaby emphasizes, asserting: "Anyone who tried to follow Christ on his or her own terms in the Bible was a disappointment to Christ and not worthy of being one of His followers." He cautions us, "Whenever there is an 'I will, but ...,' there is a half-hearted disciple."

With so many confused and competing voices out there, it may not always be easy for some to hear Jesus' words and do as He commands. So, Russell Moore of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission recently launched a podcast to provide practical guidance from a biblical perspective (<http://erlc.com>). In the months ahead, the ERLC also will offer summits to equip pastors, church leaders and other Christians in being faithful disciples as they grapple with today's cultural challenges (live-streamed at <http://erlc.com/summit>.) We commend the ERLC in their endeavors to make us better followers of Jesus and encourage Kentucky Baptists to take advantage of these opportunities.

'Sin no more'

I read with astonishment the words of "A brave man" in the Nov. 26 issue. It is not pious attitude to apply the true and indisputable word of God.



When we read Leviticus 18:22-30, it is evident that a nation which condones the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender) lifestyle will receive retribution from God Himself. When we read Romans 1:24-28 or 1 Corinthians 6:9-20, there can be no doubt that the LGBT lifestyle is considered to be sin by God the Father.

Yes, the love of God allows for forgiveness of sin, even as it was demonstrated by Jesus with the adulterous woman in John 8:10-11, but everyone today seems to forget the latter portion of John 8:11 where Jesus said, "... go and sin no more." The person participating in the LGBT lifestyle can be forgiven their sin, but in order for Christians to not separate themselves from that person is for that person to "go and sin no more."

What is happening is that individuals want acceptance in the church community and organizations based on the forgiveness generated by God's love, but they want to go on sinning. The principle set forth in 1 Corinthians 5:11-13 teaches we do not keep company with

those committing known sin who refuse to repent.

The United States and God's church here will not go unpunished for condoning any known sin being committed by any member regardless whether it is gossiping or respecting some person over others (James 2:9-10).

Yes, I realize I am a sinner saved by grace; but I am also one that as I identify or others identify sin in my life, I fall on my knees to repent and commit by the power of the Holy Spirit within to do my best to "go and sin no more."

Bill Woods, pastor
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Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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Letters to the editor:

The Baptist Forum section of the Western Recorder provides an opportunity for Kentucky Baptists to express their viewpoints. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Western Recorder's editorial staff, its Board of Directors, or the Kentucky Baptist Convention. Letters should be no more than 300 words in length and will be edited for style, clarity and space. Letters must reflect a spirit of Christian charity and civility.

'More talk' needed about alcoholism

By Ed Stetzer

Views about alcohol are changing among some evangelicals. Probably more people took notice of this when Moody Bible Institute changed its alcohol policy, but it's broader than that. I've had conversations about it with Wesleyans in Canada, Baptists in Texas and Pentecostals in Oklahoma. All see a shift in attitude.

Many conservative evangelicals have been moderationists for a long time, so an anti-alcohol sentiment is not universal among evangelicals. Sometimes observers will see "Northern Evangelicalism" as moderationist, with "Southern Evangelicalism" being abstentionists, and there is a good amount of truth in that geographic reality. However, it is still a bit more complicated since Wesleyans, for example, are concentrated in the North, and you cannot be a covenant member of a Wesleyan church if you use alcohol as a beverage.

I've always been very open that I don't drink beverage alcohol. Part of that comes from a heritage of alcoholism that inspires this post. I've seen it up close and know alcoholism's destructive power—yet, many evangelicals have not. More evangelicals may be exposed to the destructiveness of alcoholism if acceptance grows.

I believe this column would not be needed if everyone shared my view, but they don't. So my purpose is to point to a side effect of a growing acceptance of alcohol, and no one should disagree with the importance of this topic (unless you don't believe in alcoholism).

We need to talk more about alcoholism.

FIRST PERSON

After I read the article, "5 Uncomfortable Issues the Church Needs to Start Talking About," in RELEVANT magazine, I was more convinced that it needed to be written. In it, Zach Perkins explained: "At AA meetings and therapy sessions, talking about addiction makes sense, but for some reason, it's not a topic most church people want to hear about. Certain addictions are definitely more

socially acceptable to talk about than others. For example, it's OK to bug Frank about his smoking, but John's alcoholism is more hush-hush.

"And yes, in many churches, a person's addictions can become fodder for gossip," Perkins said. "However, if the Church were to first approach one another as family, then addicts in the Church might feel safer to be vulnerable about their struggles.

"Often, they just need to be loved and feel safe enough to know they can expose this part of themselves in a community where the addiction isn't crushing them every second," he said.

Indeed.

A friend's story

I recently was in a conversation with an old friend of mine who over the years had changed his view on alcohol, moving from an abstentionist position to a more moderationist one. But he found that, like a consistent percentage of people who intend to drink in moderation, he could not. He would later call that "alcoholism."

Some studies show that 30 percent of Americans will struggle with alcohol in some way. That does not mean they are all alcoholics, but there are real issues to be addressed. If more evangelicals are going to accept beverage alcohol, we need to have this conversation. Even if the views don't change, there are still many secret alcoholics. So let's have the conversation either way.

Following is an interview with an anonymous evangelical pastor who is a recovering alcoholic. I'm hoping it might help someone see a problem they might be ignoring in themselves or a friend.

Q: Tell us how you viewed alcohol and how those views changed over time.

A: I grew up in the South. I was taught that alcohol was "of the devil," but tobacco was a gift from God.

My family didn't drink. I never had alcohol until college, never partied much there, but I discovered in graduate school that it was good for relaxing.

I was a youth pastor for a while and never drank during that time. I had a hard enough time keeping some of my youth from DUIs as it was. Later, I planted a church that grew very quickly, and, again, a glass of wine became a way to relax in the evening.

Q: How could you tell and when did you realize you had a problem?

A: Alcohol became more of a need than a want. As success and stress increased, the need to use it to relax became more of a habit than an occasional thing. I started to hide it from family. I made promises to never drink during "work time," which of course began to shrink. My family and a couple of my staff expressed concern in a loving way, but I said I could handle it—a major flag.

Q: What is unique about being an alcoholic evangelical pastor?

A: I never thought it would happen to me, and most evangelicals view any form of alcohol as evil to begin with. However, that attitude has changed somewhat, and most of the church folks I know drink socially. However, I had a temperament/physical makeup that didn't allow me to do that.

I think we tend to view alcoholism as a sin, which it is, but it also has other factors which make it unique, like most addictions. However, the key to change is to change from the inside out. It also gives me a special heart for those who suffer from addiction, whether substance, sexual, spending, etc.

I have been able to look into a lot of eyes and say "I understand. There is an answer."

Q: How did the church leaders respond?

A: Very gracefully and lovingly. One leader said, "You've taught us not to shoot our wounded. We're not going to start with you."

People know if they "need to know." I know that sounds cryptic, but I don't identify myself first and fore-

Homosexuality and the family

By Scott Wigginton

Q: As parents, how do we deal with a teenager who says he is gay?

Beneath your question lie a number of other crucial questions with which parents and sincere Christians must grapple. Among these are:



■ What is the cause of homosexuality and same-sex attraction?

■ Can attractions and orientation be changed?

■ How do we understand homosexuality and same-sex attraction

in light of a serious understanding of Scripture?

Because this response is by necessity very brief, let me recommend an excellent resource by Mark Yarhouse that addresses this very complex issue. "Homosexuality and the Christian" deals with this issue from a solidly evangelical position, while keeping in mind both current research and many hurting parents and teens who struggle with same-sex attraction.

One of the crucial points made by Yarhouse is to be clear about the distinction between same-sex attraction, same-sex orientation, and homosexual identity. Parents must help teens understand that they may experience same-sex attraction or even orientation without that necessarily meaning that they are gay. In the same way that sin has affected every other part of the created order, it has also corrupted the sexual realm of attraction.

Certain individuals do experience a degree of unnatural attraction to the same sex. Others experience a more enduring attraction that is strong enough and durable enough for them to feel as if they are oriented toward the same sex. According to Yarhouse, however, each of these persons must make a decision about whether or not they will constellate their identity (and thus their actions) around their attraction or orientation.

Parents who have a child struggling with homosexual attraction or orientation will do well to remember the following:

- Be quick to listen and slow to anger.
- Carefully think through and know what you believe.
- Reject the temptation to assume that your parenting is the cause of these attractions.
- Remember that loving your son or daughter should not be conditional upon the choices they make in life.
- Take care of your marriage by finding a trained Christian counselor with whom you both can consult.

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

most as an alcoholic. It's not my true identity.

I am a Christ follower who struggles(d) with the sickness of alcoholism.

Q: How should Christians view Alcoholics Anonymous?

A: I cannot speak for AA. All I know is that it worked for me, and many times I see more of God and more miracles in the rooms of AA than in most churches.

Find help here

This is an important conversation that I hope others will continue. Here are some resources if you are struggling with alcohol addiction:

■ A helpful factsheet from the National Institutes of Health. Go to www.niaa.nih.gov and click on the "Alcohol and Health" tab. Then, view the information under the heading "Alcohol Use Disorders."

■ A guest post by Ray Ramos from the Recovery House of Worship. Go to christianitytoday.com and search "Ray Ramos."

■ Alcoholics Anonymous (AA.org)

■ Celebrate Recovery (CelebrateRecovery.com)

Ed Stetzer is president of LifeWay Research, a division of LifeWay Christian Resources.

Legacy giving 101

By Laurie Valentine

Did you know the average person with net worth has only 9 percent in cash? The other 91 percent is in non-cash assets like the equity in their home, life insurance and retirement benefits.



And, did you know that 60 percent of Americans die without a will and 70 percent of those with a will don't have a current will?

For churches wanting to encourage their members to practice their financial stewardship at a deeper level and educate them about ways to make over-and-above gifts to the church those are key facts of which to be aware. The reason? You can't put non-cash assets in the offering plate and many over-and-above gifts to charity are made through bequests in wills.

That over-and-above giving is known as "legacy giving". A legacy gift is a gift that can't be put in the offering plate because it is a gift out of assets, rather than income. Tithes and offering giving generally comes from income.

Legacy gifts are made in light of the giver's overall estate and financial plans. They may require a professional adviser to prepare documents to complete them. And, because such gifts can save taxes, the giver may be able to give more than they initially thought they could or at an earlier time.

Including a legacy gift in your estate plan can be as simple as including a bequest in your will or trust to your church or designating the church the primary or contingent beneficiary of all or a portion of a life insurance policy or retirement account. Since such gifts don't happen until death, you keep complete lifetime control and use of the assets.

Life income legacy gifts—charitable gift annuities and charitable remainder trusts—are ways to set up a future gift to charity now while keeping an income stream for life or a term of years. The amount that will be paid to you and/or others depends on the value of what is given, the ages of those that will receive the income stream and how long it will be paid to them.

Legacy gifts to your church or other Christian cause allow you to make a lasting difference for the cause of Christ in this world.

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation.

CP giving

Continued from page 1

viability of the Cooperative Program. Luter recommended churches consider the resources available from state conventions and the SBC to keep their members aware of the role of the Cooperative Program.

50/50 split targeted

Following approval of the GCTF recommendations in 2010, state conventions began a movement toward greater efficiency in response to support for Great Commission-related funding priorities among messengers to their respective annual meetings, even amid a downturn in receipts from local churches. By fall 2010, messengers in Florida, **Kentucky**, Nevada and Tennessee called for moving their state convention budgets toward a 50/50 distribution of CP funds so that ministry resources could be increased worldwide.

Kentucky made quick work of getting further down the road toward a 50/50 allocation, moving from 61.9 percent to state causes and 38.1 percent to SBC causes in 2011 to 55 percent/45 percent in 2013. This year 53.5 percent of undesignated CP gifts from churches will remain in state while 46.5 advances to SBC causes. Kentucky reduced the portion dedicated to shared items from 10 to 7 percent and increased the SBC portion of CP funds from 45 to 46.5 percent.

The Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, which began with a 50/50 distribution when it was founded in 1998, currently forwards 55 percent to the SBC while retaining 45 percent for in-state missions and ministry.

Rounding out the top five in order of greatest portion sent beyond the state's borders are the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia (54 percent to state causes/46 percent to SBC causes), Alabama (56.7 percent to state causes/43.3 percent to SBC causes) and Maryland-Delaware (56.96 percent to state causes/43.05 percent to SBC causes).

Shared ministry expenses

Fewer states are utilizing the practice of "shared ministry" allocations for items they deem dually beneficial to the state and national convention before dividing the net between in-state and SBC use. In 2014, 16 state conventions will utilize this practice: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, **Kentucky**, Maryland-Delaware, Michigan, Missouri, New England, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia and Wyoming.

Items identified as shared ministry expenses vary from state-to-state, but often include CP promotion; mission efforts previously funded or jointly funded by NAMB; retirement benefits provided for pastors and church staff members through GuideStone Financial Resources; and the expense of the state Baptist paper. A few conventions also include various personnel, property and technology expenses.

Georgia Baptists adopted a "straight allocation budget." While previously categorizing nearly 20 percent of the \$41.8 million budget as "shared ministry" items, the new model allocates 40 percent of CP gifts from Georgia churches to SBC missions and ministries, retains

Marriage defense rises in state conventions

By Tammi Reed Ledbetter

Nashville, Tenn.—Baptists once again underscored their commitment to traditional marriage in state convention meetings across the nation in 2013.

Ten state Baptist conventions that cooperate with the SBC passed resolutions dealing with marriage: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Hawaii, Missouri, Nevada, New England, Oklahoma, New Mexico and South Carolina.

Though Nevadans have voted twice to amend the state's constitution to define marriage as between a man and a woman (2000, 2002), the language continues to encounter legislative and legal challenges. During their annual meeting, Nevada messengers reiterated their support for protecting biblical

marriage by passing a resolution opposing "any attempts to redefine marriage apart from the definition set forth in scripture." The resolution also encouraged pastors and church leaders to "speak boldly about God's direction on the issue."

New Mexico messengers also passed a resolution dealing with marriage on the same day the New Mexico Supreme Court heard arguments about same-sex marriage licenses. Messengers indicated their opposition to "any attempt to re-interpret current New Mexico law to allow 'same-sex marriage,'" while also opposing "any form of gay-bashing."

Messengers to the Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention's 71st annual meeting reaffirmed their stance on traditional marriage in a Nov. 8 resolution.

Five days later, Hawaii became the 15th state in the nation to legalize same-sex marriage when Gov. Neil Abercrombie signed a bill allowing same-sex marriages to begin Dec. 2. In the midst of this, Hawaii messengers urged church members to continue their commitment to pray for others to know God's will through Christ and to uphold the biblical standard for marriage in their own lives.

Other resolutions passed by state conventions encouraged support of the Cooperative Program, addressed religious liberty concerns, expressed the need for revival, celebrated missions—in particular the anniversary of the Woman's Missionary Union—and affirmed biblical doctrine and Southern Baptist theology. (BP)



Frank Page

48.97 percent for Georgia Baptist Convention ministries, and dedicates 11.03 percent for "Mission Extension Ministries" to fund various GBC institutions, including the three Baptist-affiliated colleges.

New Mexico Baptists reduced the portion in the shared ministry category, while at the same time increasing their budget and the portion going to SBC causes. Kansas-Nebraska eliminated the shared ministry category and set their CP distribution at 77/23.

Budget changes in New England, Northwest, Ohio and Wyoming prompted slight increases in the items classified as shared ministry while Alabama Baptists increased the category from 1.64 to 10 percent.

Budget goals

Seventeen of the state Baptist conventions approved increases for their 2014 budgets: California, Colorado, Dakota, Hawaii, Illinois, Louisiana, Montana, Nevada, New England, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania/South Jersey, Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, Baptist General Association of Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming.

Flat budgets were approved in Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Kansas/Nebraska, **Kentucky**, Maryland/Delaware, Michigan, South Carolina and Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia.

Conventions reducing their budgets were Alabama, Alaska, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota/Wisconsin, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Northwest, Tennessee and the Baptist General Convention of Texas and Utah-Idaho.

In 2013, Alaska Baptists led the SBC in making the most extensive cut to a budget with a 19 percent reduction, while at the same time beginning to classify 12.36 of the budget as shared ministry.

At least two state conventions—the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Baptist General Association of Virginia—allow or encourage churches to customize what they label CP giving, continuing practices established more than a decade ago.

Baptist General Association of Virginia has three pre-set giving tracks, and one that a church can customize to fund SBC causes or those of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. The portion allocated for shared ministries with SBC equals 5 percent of total BGAV contributions to NAMB.

Baptist General Convention of Texas splits undesignated receipts from affiliated churches by retaining 79 percent for in-state use and sending 21 percent to out-of-state causes as specified by the church. Giving in 2014 from affiliated churches is forecast by BGCT to be \$48.95 million and is set to provide \$11.3 million to the Southern Baptist Convention, \$1 million to Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and \$1.8 million for the worldwide portion of what BGCT labels the Texas Baptist Cooperative Program.

BGCT also allows churches to customize the split between in-state and out-of-state allocations so that it matches a church's preference, as opposed to the preferred budget approved by messengers to the state convention meeting.

According to the SBC Executive Committee, contributions from each state

convention amounted to \$10,980,427 from BGCT and \$1,395,463 from BGAV for the previous fiscal year ending in September.

States reporting increases in the portion of CP allocated to SBC causes include Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Dakotas, Florida, Indiana, **Kentucky**, Minnesota/Wisconsin, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New England, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Penn/Jersey, Tennessee, Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming.

In anticipating CP income for SBC causes, the Executive Committee staff attempts to make projections based on the distribution approved by messengers in each state, but recognizes that the actual dollar amount fluctuates. How well cooperating churches in each state convention are able to fund their respective budgets and whether more churches adopt the 1 Percent CP Challenge to increase the portion they send to the state by a percentage point will become factors in actual Cooperative Program receipts received for SBC missions and ministries.

The trend in giving priorities is hopeful, said Frank Page, SBC Executive Committee president.

"Over a period of years, I have witnessed changing ministry paradigms in many of our cooperating state conventions," Page said. "Our state partners are responding to the desires of their churches to be more focused than ever on serving the needs of their churches while making sure that more resources go to reach the world for Christ. They have shown a keen willingness to do more with less. We value our state partners and thank God for the work they are doing to touch not only their states, but the world, with the gospel."

Budget surplus goals

Ten state conventions adopted the practice of dividing any budget surplus equally between the state convention and the SBC: Alabama, Arkansas, Kansas/Nebraska, Illinois, **Kentucky**, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, New York and Utah/Idaho. California went even further to specify that all of any surplus will be sent to SBC causes. (BP)

Analysis of financial data is based on information supplied by Baptist Press and state convention reports with projections for 2014 calculated or in some cases estimated by SBC Executive Committee staff.

State of the SBC: Bright future possible with God, says Page

By Timothy Sweetman

Kansas City, Mo.—Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, delivered a “State of the SBC” address at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary pointing out “fault lines” that are in need of “divine intervention.”



Frank Page

Under pressure

Page said he has a fascination with various scientific studies, including earthquakes, which are caused when the earth's tectonic plates move against one another along fault lines.

There are fault lines, Page said, in the Southern Baptist Convention where “pressure has built.”

“Sometimes pressure is eased in a godly, biblical and legitimate way, and sometimes things happen that cause lasting damage,” he said.

Page identified the Conservative Resurgence as “a time in our history when indeed there was a several-decades long struggle over the issue of how do

Baptists believe and hold to the veracity of the word of God.

“The arguments that came in those days found their roots decades ago, but the big fault lines and pressure was experienced perhaps most profoundly in the eighties and in the nineties,” he said.

Page also pointed to pressure related to the more recent debate about Calvinism.

“I do believe that this last year at the convention we saw God show up in a way that relieved some of that pressure, as leaders from both sides of the fence gathered to say, ‘We want to work together for the gospel,’ he said. “Too much is at stake not to do so. I applaud those leaders from both sides of the soteriological fence.

Page briefly mentioned a current “ecclesiological” fault line affecting the convention. Page said he believes there are developing fault lines with mounting pressures as Baptists struggle with how to govern a church, particularly as it relates to congregational governance, elder leadership and the role of deacons.

Dominant fault line

The most predominant fault line in

the convention, Page added, was neither theological nor ecclesiological. Instead, the greatest amount of pressure building is due to “methodological” tensions.

Some may describe it as “individual versus corporate,” “societal versus cooperative,” “contemporary versus traditional,” or “the young versus the old,” he said.

“This methodological divide is impacting the direction of our convention,” Page said. “I wake up every day asking myself the question: ‘Who are we? Who is the Southern Baptist Convention?’ There is no discernible answer.”

He attributed the record-low baptismal rates to the methodological divide within the convention.

“We can lament and we can say we’re a declining denomination,” Page continued, “and by many statistical analyses, we are. Some would say we’re a denomination in the midst of clarification, finally beginning to see things as they really are.

“We struggle also with the fact that one out of every five Southern Baptist churches do not send in any kind of report, so we have to extrapolate and to guess what is really happening out

there,” he said.

Need ‘divine intervention’

Regardless of what kind of statistical material is available, Page described in one sentence the state of the convention.

“The status of our convention is best described thus ... we are a group of approximately 46,000 churches looking for divine intervention.

“What is our future? I do not know,” Page said. “If things do not change, I can tell you in 20 years we will be happy to have 27,000, not 47,000 churches. If things do not change, our baptismal rates will continue to suffer. But there is a God!”

Page said he still has hope for the future of the convention, especially when he sees 16,000 students enrolled in Southern Baptist seminaries, the North American Mission Board’s goal of 15,000 new churches by 2020, and increased help for churches needing revitalization.

“When we realize that our answers are not in logistical moving around of chairs on the deck of the Titanic, but seeking absolute new Holy Spirit-given power, then we will say the future of this convention is bright indeed.” (BP)

Q&A

Winter Olympics outreach ready

By William Bagsby

Sochi, Russia—Will Baptists have a witness at the Winter Olympics in Russia? Will it be safe from terrorists? Will other issues arise?

Marc Ira Hooks, one of International Mission Board’s main strategists for the Sochi Olympics who was involved in outreach at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, spoke to such questions in an interview about this winter’s Feb. 7-23 games.

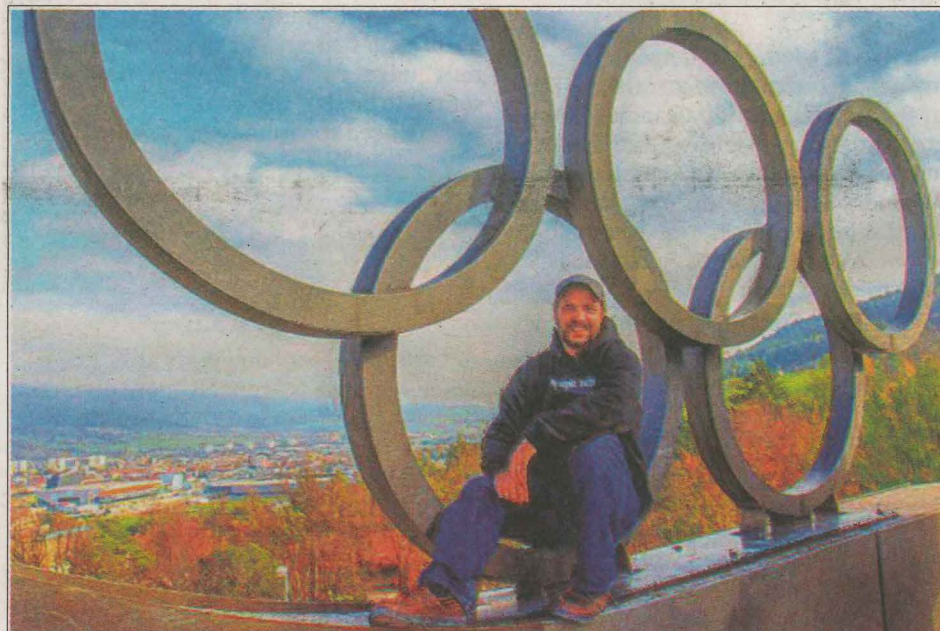
Hooks is the creator/co-director of Engage Sochi, the IMB’s initiative focusing both on church planting in the Winter Olympics host city and on outreach to Olympic competitors and guests from throughout the world. Earl Gillespie* is the other co-director of the project for the Olympics in addition to serving as the Sochi city strategist.

Q: What is Engage Sochi?

Hooks: We want something that is a multi-tiered approach and ... not just the fortnight of Olympic competition in Sochi. We’re talking about reaching the people of Sochi before, during and after the games.

Q: What has gone on in Sochi in preparation for those coming?

Hooks: For two years, people have been coming and working with our church planters in Sochi. In the winter they are doing ministry in the mountains at the ski resorts, and in the summer they’re doing beach reach and ministry in the city. So as our friends come in these next couple of weeks, it’s just another phase of building Christ’s church in Sochi.



Marc Ira Hooks, as co-director of Engage Sochi, is leading a focus on church planting in Sochi, Russia, as part of Southern Baptists’ outreach for the Winter Olympics. (BP)

Q: What sort of training has been given to those coming?

Hooks: This is a relational ministry and our folks will be coming and making relationships. The majority of our groups that are coming are performing arts groups. So we have a large men’s choir, a bluegrass band and a Dixieland band. We have a drama group coming and a church choir coming, and some people doing clowning. Basically, they’re going to be walking through areas, come together, perform, talk to people and disperse again. They’re not doing scheduled performances on stages, they’re there to meet people and their performing arts are a way to be able to do that.

Q: Are you frightened of the security issues?

Hooks: I would say I am concerned. It’s a healthy concern, however. I am confident in the Russian government’s ability to do what they say, and the Russian government has pledged that this will not only be the biggest Olympics in history, which I think it will be, but it’s going to be the safest Olympics in history. And so, while there have been threats made and

have been other threats that have been carried out, I really and truly believe that from January through March, Sochi, Russia, is probably going to be one of the safest cities on the planet.

Q: How can we include the Sochi Olympics in our daily prayers?

Hooks: We want to pray for all of our friends who will be in Sochi during the games and we want to pray that they are able to do the things that they are there to do. That they have more than just a pleasurable Olympic experience, that they are able to share the gospel and to reach people and connect them to a church planting network.

Pray for our Engage Sochi staff who are responsible for the mechanics of this whole project, making sure people are where they need to be when they need to be there, and are safe in doing so.

And for open hearts and receptivity, that God would draw to us the people that we’re supposed to talk to. (BP)

Monitor praises and prayer requests via Twitter @Engage_Sochi.

*Name changed.

NEWS BRIEFS

Olympian a Golden Gate grad

Paul Kingsman, a 46-year-old New Zealand Olympic medalist, received a master of theological studies degree during Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary’s winter commencement. He won a bronze medal for the backstroke in the 1988 Olympic Games. Kingsman is the teaching pastor at a Cross Marin Christian Fellowship in Novato, Calif.

Moore podcast debuts

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission debuted “Questions & Ethics” Jan. 13. The podcast, hosted by ERLC President Russell Moore, provides answers to questions from listeners regarding ethics and culture.

In introducing the podcast’s first episode, Moore said many people tend to think ethics is “about really, really complicated sorts of moral questions about human cloning and nuclear war.”

“But for most Christians, the issues that we deal with ethically have to do simply with what it means to follow Christ,” he said. “How do we live as Christians in our workplaces, in our families, around our dinner table, when it comes to choosing our entertainment options?”

In the initial episode, which is about 10 minutes long, Moore responds to the question: “What should I know about a potential spouse’s sexual past?”

Dan Darling, the ERLC’s vice president for communications, said, it permits Moore “to answer a variety of questions people are asking or should be asking.”

The podcast is available at the ERLC’s website at erlc.com.

Thin-blooded

Cold weather, like life, can be 'a shock to the system'

Perhaps my years in Florida made me a little thin-blooded, but I have been freezing this month! In my 25 previous years in Oneida, I don't ever remember weather as cold as we have had recently, but I am so thankful to be back serving in such a wonderful place.

On the night of the college football national championship game between Auburn and Florida State, I must have momentarily thought I was still living in Florida. A couple of other staff members and I decided we would grill out for the game. That might not sound unusual to you, but the temperature that night was below zero and the wind chill was -15 degrees.

As we were making repeated efforts to light the grill, one of us made the comment, "This might not be the smartest thing we have ever done."

Another said, "If we live to tell about it, this will make for a fun memory and story later."

I did wimp out a time or two and return to the warmth of indoors to check on the baked potatoes, but for the most part the three of us were outside for nearly an hour that night. A couple of other staff members drove by as we were grilling and gave us bewildered looks as if to say, "You guys have lost your minds."

This crazy night of sub-zero tailgating made me think about the young people who decide to come to Oneida. Entering our boarding school environment in such a remote location has to be shocking to their systems. As I

conduct orientation and interview new students, I can often see their anxiety about their new home and school. Our rules and structure must shock their systems much in the same way as the cold weather did mine as we grilled out that frigid night.

We often experience trials and problems with many of our young people, but it is such a blessing when we see them turn the corner and begin to accomplish great things. I encourage our faculty and staff to treat problems as opportunities to minister. Those opportunities to minister then become blessings. In essence, problems are blessings if we handle them the right way.

I typically ask our young people during interviews, "What are some goals you would like to accomplish while you are a student at Oneida?" Responses can vary, but most answers are usually along the lines of improving grades, making new friends, graduating and going on to college, and becoming more independent.

Recently a young man shocked me with his answer when he said, "I would like to one day be an ambassador for this school."

It makes us so proud when our young people succeed and go on to great things in life. Often times we have worked through problems with these young people and then we experience the wonderful blessing of seeing how the Lord is using them for His work and kingdom. We are all called to be ambassadors for Jesus Christ.

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

The Bible man

Student follows God's call to camp ministry, Clear Creek

James McDonald, a senior at Clear Creek Bible College, grew up in neighboring Knox County and knew quite a bit about our school. But McDonald never thought he would be one of its students.

"I grew up hearing about Clear Creek from all the local pastors in my county," said McDonald. "They all knew about Clear Creek and often referred to this place as the 'preachers school.'"

"Although I knew about Clear Creek, I never really thought about coming here. I was almost 40 years old and had flunked out of college 20 years ago. I never thought God would lead me back to a place like Clear Creek.

"My wife got sick a few years ago and God used that to lead me to Clear Creek. I told my wife if God would provide the way, I would come. Well, God did provide and I came. Now I am getting ready to graduate," he said.

McDonald serves as a full-time missionary in Knox County as the director of Emmanuel Bible Camp. He and his family coordinate Bible lessons for kids in the Knox County schools.

"I was raised going to the same Bible camp," McDonald said. "The lady who

ran the camp was 'the Bible Lady' in the county and she taught Bible lessons in the county schools for 50 years.

"I only lived a mile from the camp growing up so I knew it well," McDonald noted.

"My family and I live on the camp grounds full time now. When the Bible Lady passed away, there was a period of 13 years when no one took over the ministry.

"I felt God calling me to take over the ministry, so I quit my job and moved my family to the camp. We have been directing the ministry for 10 years now.

"I have never raised my kids apart from the ministry," McDonald said. "My daughters have been missionaries along with me and my wife in the ministry. They actually teach some of the Bible lessons as they are older now."

"I feel God leading me to the seminary after I graduate," McDonald said. "We are praying that God will send someone to take on the ministry after we leave. The public school system is one of the greatest mission fields in the world."

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

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

WMU challenged to raise missions bar

By Julie Walters

Birmingham—Raising the bar of missions involvement was the challenge woven throughout national WMU's board meeting Jan. 11-13 at Shocco Springs Conference Center in Talladega, Ala.

In her address, National WMU President Debby Akerman said Jesus raised the bar in Mark 8:34 when he said, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."

"Jesus raised the bar of discipleship to a level that would now require wholehearted surrender, sacrifice and service," Akerman said. "We, too, must say with those who came before us, taking up the Calvary cross of sacrifice, that we will wholeheartedly follow Jesus and do whatever My Lord gives me to do."

Tom Elliff, IMB president, also illustrated the need for raising the bar of missions involvement with some statistics:

- 75 percent of the world's population live in areas hostile to the Christian faith.

- Currently there are 864 strategic need requests from the field, but the current budget will only allow 576 new personnel to be sent this year.

"We need spiritual revival," the IMB's



Debby Akerman

leader said. "Missionaries working in difficult places would never be sustained by a mediocre faith."

"Missions involvement cannot be limited to a trip, or a focus for one week during the week of prayer," he said. "We must have a furnace of prayer, 365 days a year, to pray for an awakening across our nation and to pray for the nations."

Andrew Mann, a church planter with the North American Mission Board, thanked WMU for their prayer support and for raising awareness about human exploitation. "WMU brings a breath of life to a church," he said. "You are such a blessing. Through your Project HELP focus on Human Exploitation, you helped raise awareness in our area of needs related to human trafficking in New York City."

In closing, Akerman said, "As WMU guides our churches to look at the world through the eyes of Jesus and to love the world through the heart of God, Who so loved the world that He gave us Jesus, they will have a biblical, missional worldview."

"We extend a call to our churches and all who are part of WMU to live a totally surrendered life in Christ," she said, "to live a life marked by personal sacrifice to advance the gospel of Christ, and to live as a servant of our King Jesus through the missions objectives of WMU." (BP)

Mohler: U.S. more pro-life than in 1973

By Bob Allen

Louisville—Forty-one years after Roe v. Wade, America is arguably more divided over abortion than in 1973, a Southern Baptist seminary president and theologian observed on the Jan. 22 anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court ruling that reproductive choice is a private matter between a woman and her doctor.

Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said in his Wednesday news briefing podcast that abortion stands as "one great exception" to American culture's "great moral shift" away from traditional values.

Mohler, who also serves as the Joseph Emerson Brown Professor of Christian Theology, said most Americans hadn't really thought about the issue of abortion prior to the 7-2 Supreme Court decision handed down Jan. 22, 1973, that a woman's right to an abortion fell within the right to privacy protected by the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

"And, to our great shame, that included the vast majority of American evangelicals," Mohler said. "As a matter of fact, up into the mid-1970s most evangelicals sought not to be involved with the issue."

"As with the birth control issue, evangelicals made a hasty mistake deciding that this must be a Catholic issue," Mohler said. "And to their credit, Roman Catholics were largely those who populated the pro-life movement in the 1960s up to the mid-point of the 1970s."

Mohler said that all changed in the

last five years of the 1970s, as "evangelicals became awakened to the issue of the sanctity of human life."

"This came in the context of other cultural and moral changes as well," he explained. "This came in the context of an increased understanding of what was happening in America with the rise of no-fault divorce, with the largely universal reality of the birth-control culture, with the understanding that children themselves were being devalued and the family was being marginalized."

"But it was the understanding of the moral status of the baby in the womb

that helped to awaken evangelicals to the great threat to the sanctity of every single human life that legal abortion then represented," he said.

Mohler said abortion first became a political issue in the 1980 presidential election and has remained important in U.S. politics ever since, up to and including the upcoming mid-term elections in 2014.

Mohler said Americans today tend to be more opposed to late-term abortions than to those performed in the first three months of pregnancy.

"The Christian world view reminds us that every single human life is fully human, fully sacred, fully deserving of our protection, from the moment of conception until natural death," he said. "At every moment of human development that human life is equally sacred and deserves our full and equal protection." (ABP)

"It was the understanding of the moral status of the baby in the womb that helped to awaken evangelicals to the ... sanctity of life."

Albert Mohler

Churches bond over BCS rivalries

By Jeff Brumley

While plans have yet to be made by two churches who made a friendly bet of a mission trip on the BCS championship game, the pastors of the two congregations say the wager's impact is already producing spiritual fruits.

It all started in late December when good-natured ribbing broke out on Twitter between First Baptist Church in Tallahassee, Fla., and First Baptist in Auburn, Ala. The topic: whether Florida State or Auburn university would win the big game.

The biblical jibes continued escalating until a challenge was issued: the church in the losing city would have to travel to the winner's hometown for a joint mission project.

But the Seminoles' 34-31 victory has yet to produce a solid plan.

"We don't have anything yet, and we don't have a timetable," said Bill Shiell, senior pastor at the Florida church.

But what they do have are closer-knit congregations which have been inspired by the game and the wager.

"What has been fun here is that the Auburn folks in our church are also very excited about helping" with the mission project, Shiell said. "It has brought us closer together as a congregation across university lines of demarcation."

It's a similar story over in Alabama, where First Baptist Pastor Tripp Martin said the football-related bet was originally envisioned as a project for college students. But the subsequent hype has drawn other members into the mix.

"I think the neatest thing is the folks are genuinely excited about doing something together that's creating a larger connection in the congregation and between the churches," Martin said.

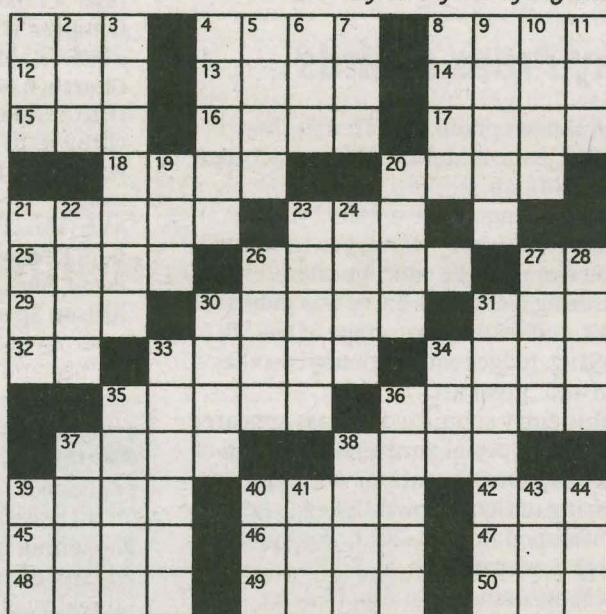
Meanwhile, both pastors said they are leaving the bulk of the planning to their college ministers. The onus is on First Baptist in Tallahassee to identify an actual need in the city that can be met by this particular group of traveling and local mission workers.

"It would be much easier for Tripp and me to just pick something, but it's better to have the students get together and brainstorm," Shiell said. (ABP)

Bible Crosswords

Across

- 1 Cleo's killer
- 4 Asa or Ahab
- 8 Perfect
- 12 "They cast _____, that is, the lot, before Haman" (Esther 3:7)
- 13 One who sold his birthright
- 14 "As he saith also in _____, I will call them my people" (Romans 9:25)
- 15 Where one uses a wood
- 16 "Six _____ shalt thou labour and do all thy work" (Exodus 20:9)
- 17 Reporter's question
- 18 "There shall come a _____ out of Jacob and a Sceptre shall rise" (Numbers 24:17)
- 20 Word's partner
- 21 "Stretch out the _____ that is in thy hand toward Ai" (Joshua 8:18)
- 23 Greek letter
- 25 To exhibit exhaustion
- 26 Burdened one
- 27 Golden State (abbr.)
- 29 Godfrey, to friends
- 30 "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy _____" (Romans 10:8)
- 31 "For the Father ... hath committed all judgment unto the _____" (John 5:22)
- 32 Bible div.
- 33 "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days _____" (Acts 1:5)
- 34 KJV verb
- 35 Out of (arch.)
- 36 Says "whoa"
- 37 "I am the _____ vine" (John 15:1)
- 38 "Nadab and Abihu ... offered strange _____ before the



#186

Lord" (Leviticus 10:1)

- 39 Hurries
- 40 Speed
- 42 Compass dir.
- 45 Opposed to aweather
- 46 "In _____ there was a voice heard, lamentation" (Matthew 2:18)
- 47 Iowa college
- 48 Kind of hall
- 49 Memo part
- 50 Before

Down

- 1 "A bishop the must be ... _____ to teach" (1 Timothy 3:2)
- 2 Betty White role on "Mary Tyler Moore" TV show
- 3 "God is ... a very _____ help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1)
- 4 "Arabia, and all the princes of _____ in these were thy merchants" (Ezekiel 27:21)
- 5 Danube tributary
- 6 Negative vote
- 7 Masculine nickname
- 8 American social reformer Julia
- 9 Son of Nun of the tribe of Ephraim (Numbers 13:8)
- 10 "I am instructed ... both to abound and to suffer _____" (Philippians 4:12)
- 11 Poetic contraction
- 19 Make lace
- 20 KJV verb
- 21 Measure of length
- 22 Say adieu
- 23 "_____ hither thy finger, and behold my hands" (John 20:27)
- 24 Tortoise's opponent
- 26 "My people are _____ to back sliding from me" (Hosea 11:7)
- 27 Pasture youngster
- 28 They head for the hills
- 30 Now's partner
- 31 "Let the lying lips be put to _____" (Psalm 31:18)
- 33 Provides shelter
- 34 "We do not _____ after the flesh" (2 Corinthians 10:3)
- 35 Loosens
- 36 "So _____ gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees" (1 Kings 5:10)
- 37 Game piece
- 38 "His _____ went throughout all Syria" (Matthew 4:24)
- 39 Son of Noah
- 40 Every third (comb. form)
- 41 "_____ thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye" (Proverbs 23:6)
- 43 Conjunction
- 44 Shoe width

By Evelyn Boyington

Governor sued for same-sex tax order

Jefferson City, Mo.—Four Missouri taxpayers filed a lawsuit on Jan. 8 challenging Gov. Jay Nixon's executive order to permit some same-sex couples to file a Missouri combined income tax return as "husband" and "wife" for 2013 in spite of a 2004 state constitutional amendment which defines marriage as between one man and one woman.

The lawsuit challenges Executive Order 13-14 as being unconstitutional and alleges that the governor is trying to thwart the will of the people of Missouri, with 71 percent of the voters having adopted "Amendment 2" in 2004. Nixon's executive order was issued last November and directed the Department of Revenue to accept combined returns from same-sex couples who properly

filed a federal joint return with the IRS. The IRS has decided to permit same-sex couples to file a joint federal return if the parties were married in a state that permits same-sex marriage.

The case was filed in Cole County Circuit Court in Jefferson City, Mo. The plaintiffs include Justin Mosher, pastor of Fifth Street Baptist Church in Hannibal, Mo., and chairman of the Missouri Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission; Don Hinkle, director of public policy for the convention and editor of its newsjournal, The Pathway; Kerry Messer from Festus, Mo., legislative liaison for the CLC in the Missouri Legislature; and Joe Ortwerth, executive director of the Missouri Family Policy Council. (BP)

Virginia AG asks court to strike gay marriage ban

By Robert Dilday

Norfolk, Va.—In office only two weeks, Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring announced last week that he will ask a federal court to strike down Virginia's constitutional ban on gay marriage, adopted in 2006 by about 57 percent of voters.

First reported by the Washington Post citing sources close to Herring, the attorney general's position is a dramatic change from his predecessor, Republican Ken Cuccinelli, who had pledged to defend the ban. Herring was elected last November in an election that placed Democrats in all of Virginia's top offices.

The News and Observer, Raleigh, N.C., reported Herring explained his decision by "citing his own evolution on the issue and his belief that such a ban is unconstitutional under the 14th Amendment's guarantee of equal protection under the law."

Herring said that Virginia has been on the "wrong side" of key legal battles in the past, and that the state should be on the "right side of the law and history" on this issue.

Seventeen states and the District of Columbia now recognize same-sex marriage. Federal courts have struck down bans in Oklahoma and Utah but the laws remain in place pending appeals. (Compiled with ABP and other news reports)

For family & kingdom

KBF assists couple in meeting financial goals of giving

The remarkable story of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation comes to life not in its impressive financial statements, but through the men and women who trusted the KBF and committed to it for administering all, or a portion, of the resources God entrusted to them for the benefit of their families and the kingdom causes near and dear to their hearts. It's a story of Christian stewardship that linked these men and women together with the KBF in a sacred trust.

Among those men and women are a couple with two adult children both of whom are in second marriages and both of whom have serious health challenges. This couple wanted to provide both adult children with income for the rest of their lives without giving the children ownership and control of any of their assets, and provide for their church.

During the time this couple was revisiting their estate plan with their personal attorney, their church had invited KBF trust counsel Laurie Valentine and me to present an estate planning and legacy giving seminar. From the seminar they learned about an idea they thought might accomplish their goal so they arranged for a private, confidential consultation session with

Laurie to explore that idea.

From that session they decided to include a testamentary charitable remainder unitrust in their wills, with the KBF as the trustee, which will receive the remainder of the surviving spouse's estate. This unitrust will pay their two children for their lifetimes 5 percent of the value of the trust as revalued each year. After both children are deceased, the unitrust will terminate, and the remainder will be distributed to the couple's church.

By using this approach this couple will assure whatever remains at the surviving spouse's death will be administered by a third party fiduciary,

namely the KBF, with the care, skill and prudence necessary to accomplish their goal of providing a flow of income to their children for their lifetimes and then providing for kingdom advancement through their church.

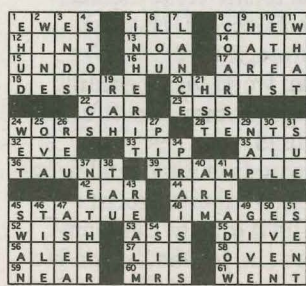
What a joy it was to assist this faithful couple in accomplishing what they understood to be God's plan for that which He entrusted to them. We want to help you accomplish what you understand to be His plan for what He has entrusted to you. Please give us that privilege. Call now toll-free.

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

Ky. Baptist Foundation



Barry Allen





CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January

- 30 Administrative Committee, KBC Building, Louisville.
- 30 Ky. WMU Winter Committee meetings, KBC Building, Louisville.
- 31 Imagine Preschool and Children's Ministry Conference, Parkway Baptist Church, Bardstown.

February

- 1 Reaching the Summit, Buena Vista Baptist Church, Somerset.
- 4 Power Lunch, KBC Building, Louisville.
- 6 Administrative Committee, KBC Building, Louisville.
- 7 Disaster Relief Chaplaincy Training, Westport Road Baptist Church, Louisville.
- 8 Disaster Relief Training, Westport Road Baptist Church, Louisville.
- 10 SEND>>St. Louis Vision Trip 2014.
- 22 Leadership Network Meeting, KBC Building, Louisville.
- 24 RISK 2014: State Evangelism Conference, Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.

Burk to lead Boyce's Center for Gospel and Culture

By Aaron Hanbury

Louisville—New Testament scholar and ethicist Denny Burk, a member of the Boyce faculty since 2008, will lead the new Center for Gospel and Culture at Boyce College.

Boyce College Dean Dan DeWitt said Burk is the "right man" to lead this new academic center for cultural engagement.

"Through his influential books and a widely popular blog, he has already proven to be a clear voice in analyzing political and cultural events through a gospel-lens," DeWitt said.

The center represents an effort to bring together energy and expertise into one focus that will serve the college's students and the churches they represent.

"My prayer is that the Center for Gospel and Culture will coalesce our faculty's energy in a way that services the church and engages the culture," he said.

For Burk, the timing of the center is crucial and strategic, as the cultural environment grows increasingly secular.

"Christians find themselves today living in the midst of a culture that in many ways is set against a biblical worldview," said Burk, who is author of a recent book about sexual ethics,



Denny Burk

"What is the Meaning of Sex?"

"This clash is not merely an academic debate but in very real ways presents a practical challenge to believers and their churches," he said. "How can Christians bear witness to Christ when they find themselves in the minority? Southern Baptists and the wider evangelical movement are facing real conflicts over religious liberty, the sanctity of human life, the definition of marriage and a host of other concerns.

"With the Center for Gospel and Culture, we plan to bring the gospel to bear upon these issues and to be a resource for those who are trying to be faithful to Christ in a decadent culture," he said.

The center, funded by the late Hazel L. Bishop, a benefactor and long-time supporter of the seminary, will train and equip pastors, missionaries, church leaders and educators for gospel ministry on the "front lines," according to DeWitt.

"I see the Center for Gospel and Culture serving those on the frontlines of gospel ministry in two ways," DeWitt said. "First, our hope is that through special events, like seminars and forums with guest speakers, the center will inspire and equip the students of Boyce College for future ministry. Second, we want to serve pastors, missionaries and leaders already on the frontlines through the resources such as articles that apply the gospel to contemporary cultural issues." (SBTS)

Western Recorder staff win Kentucky Press awards

Lexington—Western Recorder staff received five awards in journalism from the Kentucky Press Association Jan. 24 at a conference in Lexington.

Editor Todd Deaton and Robin Cornet Bass, news director of the Western Recorder, were honored among journalists from across the state representing primarily secular newspapers.

Deaton took first place in the Best Editorial category for a collection of three columns: "Toward a Christian response to homosexuality," "Boston: Making some sense of senseless violence," and "Shine bright—like a lighthouse."

Contest judges commented on Deaton's effective use of quotes to "bring it home" and his strength of opinion on the subject matter.

Bass received first place in two categories: Best General News Picture and Best Front Page. She also earned third place in Best Graphic and an honorable mention for Best General News Story.

The general news photo appeared in the March 26, 2013, issue and showed a reenactment of Christ's crucifixion.

"A standout among all the entries," judges wrote in their comments. "Draws you in immediately and you can read the emotion there."

Bass's winning front page entry was published June 18, 2013, and featured coverage of the SBC Annual Meeting. Judges complimented on the clean design and "great art."

The graphic entry submitted by Bass appeared Nov. 13, 2012, in a special anniversary edition of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, while the story about the hiring of Georgetown College's new president, published Aug. 13, 2013, was entered in the general news category.

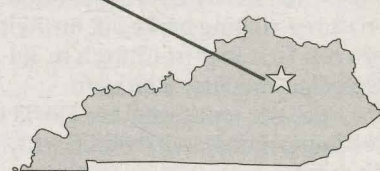
Alabama Press Association supplied the judges for the KPA Excellence in Newspapers contest. (WR)

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

Spotlight on ...

WINCHESTER



Calvary Church will host the Elkhorn Association Super Bowl Party Feb. 2, 5:30 p.m. **James McIntosh** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Carlisle Avenue Church will host The Way Basketball Family Celebration Jan. 31, 6 p.m., with free food, games, prizes and music. **Brad Walker** is pastor.

Parkland Church will hold a free community dinner Jan. 30, 5 p.m. **Tom Curry** is pastor.

■ **MOUNT WASHINGTON**—First Church will hold Scrapbookers Jan. 31, 6:30 p.m. **Billy Compton** is pastor.

■ **ONEIDA**—**John Routh**, pastor of Oneida Church, has announced his retirement from the pastoral ministry. He and his wife will be moving to Nancy, where Routh will be available for supply and interim work.

■ **VERSAILLES**—Versailles Church will hold Renew, Restore, Resolve: Women's Event Feb. 1, 9 a.m., with guest speaker **Allison Speer**. **Michael Cabell** is pastor.

What's happening?

Send your church news and association events to:

Mountains to the Mississippi
sitha.salyers@westernrecorder.org

CLASSIFIED ADS

RESOURCES: Website help by a U.S. based missionary. Websites for churches, ministries, non-profits and small businesses. Jim at (502) 410-4214. longviewnet.com.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Paris is seeking a full-time minister of music and education, experience and education preferred. Send resumé to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 327, Paris, KY 40362, ATTN: Gary Ellcessor, or email to fbcrogary@att.net.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Paris is seeking a full-time minister to students and families. This person will be working with all ages, from preschool to senior adults. Send resumé to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 327, Paris, KY 40362, ATTN: Gary Ellcessor, or email to fbcrogary@att.net.

SEEKING: Tunnel Hill Baptist Church in Elizabethtown is seeking a part-time youth director. Approx. 20 hours per week. Submit resumé to tunnelhillbaptistchurch@gmail.com no later than Feb. 1.

SEEKING: Part-time student minister

(6th-12th). South Jefferson Baptist (Louisville) is seeking God's person to lead the student ministry to our church and community. Education required. Musicianship a plus. Send resumé or info requests to Jerry, southjeff@mysjbc.org.

SEEKING: Christian Values Technology Company seeks mature business professionals for high-income opportunity. Home-based office. Hands on support and apprenticeship style training. For complete information, call Keith at (888) 395-6557.

SEEKING: Living Faith Baptist Church in Hartford is accepting resumes for a senior pastor. We are a young and thriving church that will benefit from an enthusiastic individual with spiritual maturity. Candidate needs to have a passion for proclaiming the gospel and reaching the lost. A degree is preferred, but not required. Send resumé to Kevin Burt, 75 Mount Carmel Church Road, Utica, KY 42376, or email to rbsautomotive@bellsouth.net. Resumes will be accepted through Feb. 28 and confirmation will be sent when received.

SEEKING: Forest Park Baptist Church is seeking a part-time minister of music. Resumes with references may be mailed to Forest Park Baptist Church, 520 Old Morgantown Rd., Bowling Green, KY 42101, or emailed to office@forestparkbaptist.org. For further information, contact the church at (270) 843-3419 or Debbie Lanham at (270) 782-9187.

SEEKING: Eubank (Southern) Baptist Church, congregation of approximately 300, located in Eubank, is seeking a senior pastor. Send printed (no email) formal resumé with cover letter to Eubank Baptist Church, P.O. Box 3356, West Somerset, KY 42564. Resumes accepted until March 31.

SEEKING: Seeking a full-time experienced, enthusiastic minister to preschoolers and children for a growing ministry in a strong, healthy church. Check us out at mtcarmelbaptist.org. Send resumes to mountcarmelbc@fuse.net.

SEEKING: Cedar Creek Baptist Church (Louisville) is seeking to fill the position of a part-time worship leader (including a small band). Additional leadership of

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adult choir is preferable. Church musical style is blended. Experience preferred. Send resumé to CCBC, ATTN: Music Search Committee, 7709 Bardstown Road, Louisville, KY 40291, or email: cedarcreekbc@gmail.com. Deadline for submission: Feb. 19.

TRAVEL: Hundreds of Bible land departures catering to Southern Baptists—Israel, Greece, Turkey, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Britain, Jordan, Egypt, etc. pilgrimtours.com (800) 322-0788.

'God's plan' leads Texas family to mountains of Peru

By Emily Pearson

Peru—Brian and Jennifer Pennington knew God was calling them to be missionaries—and that was pretty much the extent of their plan.

So when the couple from Fort Worth, Texas, and their two young sons arrived at International Mission Board's candidate conference for new missionaries, they didn't have much to go on.

"We were in Richmond, and everyone there already had their assignment before they got there," Brian recalled. "We were the only ones there who didn't know where we were going. Everybody's researching their people groups, and we're still trying to figure out, 'OK, God, where do you want us to work?'"

Brian first felt called to full-time missions in Peru while on a short-term missions trip in the Peruvian jungle, so he felt sure he would be heading back there.

"Our starting point was Peru," he said. "All I had ever been to was the jungle. But when we found out more about the position, it just wasn't a good fit for our family. So we looked at the positions that were left."

The only other position available in Peru was a church-planting position in the Andes Mountains.

"We weren't thinking mountains," Brian said. "But God showed us Isaiah 52:7, which says, 'How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news.'"

With a long-term plan in place, the Penningtons moved to San Jose, Costa



IMB missionary Brian Pennington (left) and his son talk with village residents in Chavin de Huantar, Peru, where the family has lived for the past three and a half years. (Rebecca Springer/IMB)

Rica, for a year of language training. But the curveballs didn't stop.

"We thought we were going to Huaraz, a city of 50,000," Brian said. "And we're from a city.... We thought, 'Well, we can do 50,000 people. That's still city-ish.'"

Just one week before moving from Costa Rica to Peru, the Penningtons were surprised again. Their future supervisor, who had originally written the job request, lived in Huaraz. But the Penningtons would actually be working three hours outside the city in a rural town of less than 3,000. They also were told they would be changing supervisors.

Although nothing seemed to be going according to plan, the Penningtons still

felt confident in their call. Not knowing what to expect, they switched gears and moved to the tiny mountain town of Chavin de Huantar. They were ready to be Christ's heart, hands and voice to the people of the Peruvian Andes.

Two weeks after arriving in Chavin, they met Patricia de Loarte, a Chavin native who had been living in the Peruvian capital of Lima. Patricia, a Baptist believer, had recently moved back to Chavin and had been looking for a church.

"It was an answer to prayer for us because here was someone that God had placed in our path who said, 'Come to my house. I want to start a Bible study

group,'" said Jennifer.

With Patricia's help, the Penningtons began a small Bible study where Peruvian believers study Scripture and learn to share the gospel with others.

As the group grew, Brian began teaching oral Bible storying as a way of sharing the gospel with those who could not read. Many Peruvians living in rural areas outside Chavin only speak Quechua—a difficult, indigenous language. Teaching bilingual believers in Chavin to tell Bible stories helps spread the gospel to other Peruvian villages where Quechua would be a major obstacle for most North American missionaries.

Patricia, a passionate evangelist and promoter of Bible storying, has also invited members of her former church in Lima to make missions trips to villages around Chavin. She encourages them to use storying as a primary method of evangelism.

"My prayer request is to reach the whole community," she said. "I offer this community to the Lord, so that we can see souls come to the Lord and know the Word, and meet with us."

"I think she realizes storying is a way she can tell others (about Jesus)," Jennifer said. "She sees this can be beneficial to so many people."

Despite the initial challenges and uncertainties, the couple believes moving to Chavin and meeting Patricia was part of God's larger plan for reaching the lost in the Peruvian mountains.

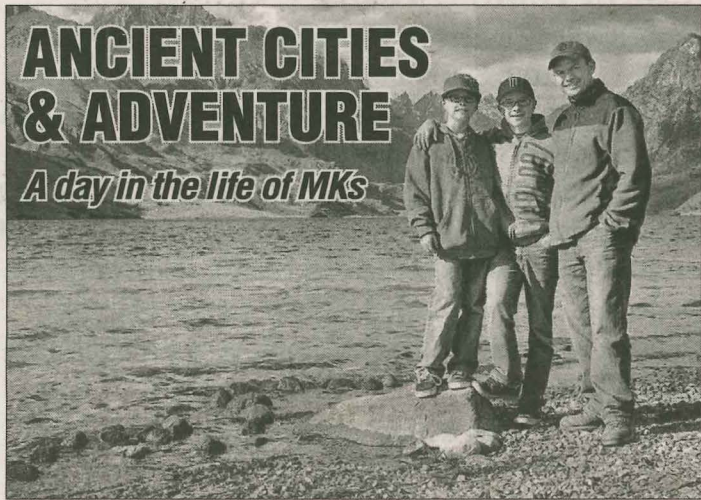
"In the end, we definitely could see that it was God's plan all along," Jennifer said of their ministry in Chavin. "Maybe we wouldn't have picked that job request if we had known it was a city of only 3,000 people. But that was the way that God got us there."

"Nothing actually turned out like it was supposed to be," Brian said, "but we've always taken comfort in the fact that God knew the whole time how it was going to be. It wasn't a surprise to Him, and we learned to trust Him."

Recently, God surprised the Penningtons once again. The family have accepted a new missions assignment to help with training, logistical support and strategy in an effort to plant churches in more than 100 communities across Peru. (IMB)

ANCIENT CITIES & ADVENTURE

A day in the life of MKs



IMB missionary Brian Pennington (right) spends time with his sons, Trevor (left) and Jordan (center), at a favorite lake in the Andes Mountains along the road to Chavin de Huantar, Peru. (Rebecca Springer/IMB)

By Elaine Gaston

Chavin De Huantar, Peru—The Peruvian town that Jordan, 14, and Trevor, 11, moved to in 2009 with their missionary parents, Brian and Jennifer Pennington, is the site of the Chavin culture, which roughly dates the age of David and Goliath.

The temple ruins at Chavin de Huantar, within walking distance where the Penningtons have lived, draws international tourists who make day trips to the site by taking a bus over the mountains from the capital of the Ancash region.

Jordan and Trevor, however, wander through the archaeological site's tunnels with familiarity, using their iPod flashlights to explore all the nooks and crannies.

"We've already seen it like 20 times," Jordan said. It's the standard "tour" his family does when visitors or missions teams pass through town.

Does the proximity of so much history make history their favorite subject? Not necessarily. The boys, both homeschooled, agree science is their favorite subject. Jordan said grammar is his least favorite subject.

After school, the boys often head outside to play pickup basketball games with their dad and neighborhood boys in a nearby schoolyard. Basketball is a fun way for their family to connect with boys in their town.

Another activity that tops Jordan and Trevor's list is skateboarding. They can't skateboard well in their town's rough streets, but they occasionally take their boards to a local park. When their family makes a trip to Peru's capital, Lima, they like to tote their skateboards along with them to ride in the city's skateboard park that overlooks the Pacific Ocean. They often meet other boys while they're skateboarding there as well.

There are obvious differences between living in the mountains of Peru and their hometown of Fort Worth, Texas. "No Mexican food" in Peru is one of them, the boys said. The fast-paced lifestyle in the United States is another.

"It's more chill over where we live than in the States, where it's all superfast and stressful," Jordan said.

However, the boys love both places. And they enjoy getting to see extended family when they visit Texas. Jordan said sometimes children he meets when he visits the U.S. imagine his life in Peru a lot differently than it really is.

"A lot of people think Peru is like deep jungle," Jordan said, "so when you tell them you were watching TV, they say, 'Whoa, you have TVs there?'"

One constant of the missionary life is change. Late last year, the Penningtons learned that they would be taking over a different assignment. That change meant they'd need to move from their mountain town to Lima.

Life in a megacity like Lima will be different. The boys said they will miss the basketball games with neighborhood boys and hiking in the mountains, but it will mean more skateboarding. (IMB)

Pastors & Church Leaders Conference

Please join us Sept. 25 & 26

Ransdell Chapel, Main Campus
Campbellsville, Ky.



Campbellsville University gives thanks for the special Christmas break to honor the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and for the safe return of our students starting the spring semester after being welcomed back to freezing temperatures!

Mission report: Grand Isle

CU students traveled to help the citizens in Grand Isle, Louisiana on their break through Baptist Campus Ministry where they partnered with First Baptist Church of Grand Isle and worked in and around the church, repairing pews, updating the church landscape, etc. Some of the students also participated in leading a worship service on Sunday nights for the members. On the journey were: Elise Bauer, Devan Bishop, Noah Blackburn, Matthew Bradshaw, Veronica Clark, Savannah Coker, Dustin Ford, Blake Hanna, Derrick Livingston, Sierra McGinnis, Krista Mitchell, Olivia Murphy, Taylor Murphy, Taylor Ohlm, Marissa Rehmet, Seth Royalty, Tanner Royalty, Rachel Sasko, Kameron Smith, Kacy Stinson, Austin VanMeter and Kaitlin Weeks.

Please schedule a visit!

Preview Days, main campus
Feb. 22 and April 5, 2014

Tiger Round Up Days
March 13 and 14, 2014

Mission report: Cuba

Board of Trustees member Dr. Joel Carwile and CU professor Dr. Twyla Hernandez and her husband, Rev. Clemente Hernandez, traveled to Cuba for a mission trip Dec. 6-10 to set up a new center of the Hispanic Baptist Bible Institute in the Iglesia Bautista Ebenezer in Banos, Cuba. Pastor Carwile's church, Valley View Church in Louisville, provided the financial support for the center. Pastor John Chowning's church, Saloma Baptist Church, also provided a sizeable donation in support of the 47 students there. In addition, they provided a month's salary for several pastors in the area, provided by other believers in the United States.

"There are a million stories that I could share about how God's hand was on this trip, and we give Him all the praise for all that is going on there. God is definitely at work in Cuba!"

- Dr. Twyla Hernandez

Mission report: Repair Affair

CU freshmen go out into the community and spend the day helping build ramps, roofs or decks onto homes that are in need during the annual Repair Affair.

"Repair Affair is important for the FIRST CLASS students because it gives them the opportunity to help someone they may never see again. It's a beautiful experience."

- Sadie Mills, Hardyville, Ky.

Five CU students preached at NFYP

A group of five students attended and preached at the Jan. 2-5, 2014 National Festival of Young Preachers in Indianapolis, Ind. The Academy of Preachers was launched on Jan. 1, 2009 with a grant from the Lilly Foundation with a mission to "identify, network, inspire, and support young people in their call to Gospel preaching." Campbellsville University is one of the founding partners that support the work of the Academy.

CU virtual chapel nears completion

The Virtual Chapel is nearly finished, according to Dr. Shane Garrison, assistant professor of educational ministries and director of theology online for Campbellsville University's School of Theology. He said there will be a lot of video content as they put the final touches on the project.



Campbellsville University Repair Affair students work on a roof with Kentucky Heartland Outreach.

Mission report: Haiti

Campbellsville University was represented in Haiti from Dec. 15 - 21, 2013. Sophomores Bethany Thomaston and Cortni Cruse traveled to Haiti on a mission trip with Crossings Ministries, a Christian summer camp that reaches thousands of middle and high school students from across the country. While in Haiti, Crossings staffers held Vacation Bible Schools in Haitian villages. Crossings also hosted a day camp at Camp Le Phare for the first time, partnering with Baptist Haiti Mission with the assistance of translators.

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