

WESTERN Recorder

February 4, 2014

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 188, Issue 4

Warnings about marijuana amid legalization push

By David Roach

Nashville, Tenn.—President Obama's comment that marijuana is less dangerous than alcohol has drawn objection from a Southern Baptist seminary president and stands in stark contrast to the arguments of many evangelicals about the personal and societal cost of legalizing the drug. For some, Obama's comment also provides an opportunity for ministry to marijuana users.

The president was asked about the

movement to legalize marijuana amid a lengthy interview with The New Yorker. "As has been well documented, I smoked pot as a kid," Obama responded, "and I view it as a bad habit and a vice, not very different from the cigarettes that I smoked as a young person up through a big chunk of my adult life. I don't think it is more dangerous than alcohol."

When pressed whether marijuana is less dangerous than alcohol, the president said yes, "in terms of its impact on the individual consumer."

"I smoked pot ... I view it as a bad habit and a vice ... I don't think it is more dangerous than alcohol."

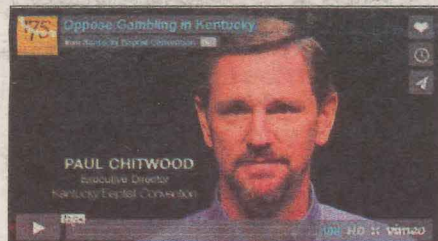
President Barack Obama

Obama said legalization of recreational marijuana use in Colorado and Washington is an important "experiment" and may

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KBC engages public debate on gambling

Chitwood urges Kentucky Baptists to action in video



Paul Chitwood, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, is featured in a video opposing expanded gambling. (KBC)

By Robin Cornet Bass

Louisville—The Kentucky Baptist Convention and its executive director, Paul Chitwood, stepped in the bright spotlight of public debate last week when it released a video opposing expanded gambling, calling on Kentucky Baptists to raise their voices "for justice."

On Feb. 5, KBC will broaden the scope of their audience to other "like-minded Christians and people of faith" with a 60-second anti-gambling advertisement on Christian radio stations. Chitwood told the Associated Press it is the first time he has known the KBC to use a paid ad to voice their opposition to expanded gambling.

Such opportunities are "a great platform for us to be able to tell our story," said Chitwood. "To help (people) understand the facts in this issue, and get beyond the rhetoric of the politicians and the casino industry."

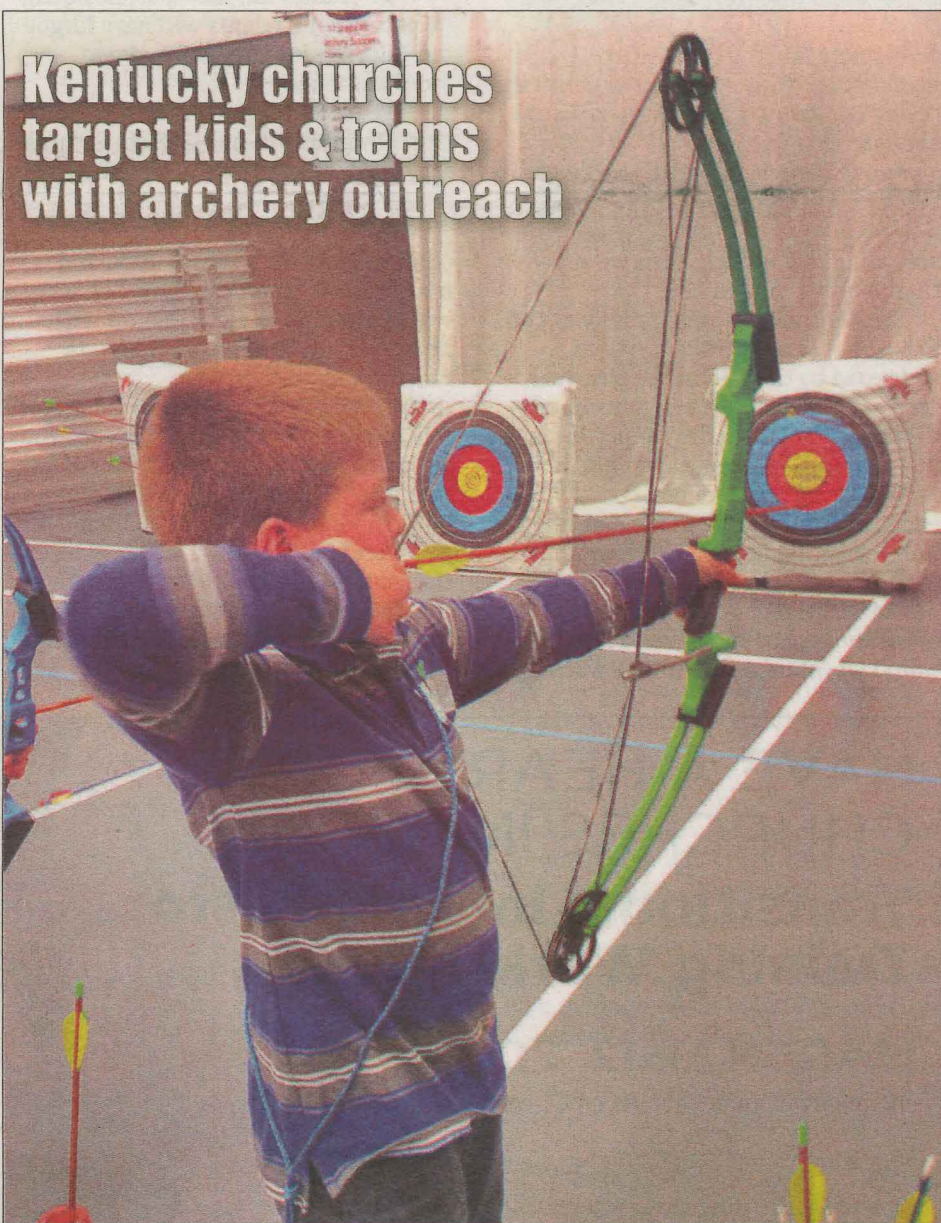
Chitwood has been fielding

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Centershot

By Whitney Jones

Kentucky churches target kids & teens with archery outreach



CenterShot, an example of affinity evangelism, is being used to attract children and teenagers to churches where they can learn about archery and the gospel of Jesus Christ. (Provided by Sharpe Missionary Baptist Church)

Paducah—Some churches in western Kentucky are using the popularity of the Hunger Games movies and a regional interest in hunting to share the gospel with children and their families.

Howard Fuller first became involved with Centershot Ministries in 2008 as an archery trainer. Centershot is an outreach ministry that uses archery as a means to assist churches in reaching their communities.

Fuller, education minister at Lone Oak First Baptist Church in Paducah, has been involved with bow hunting and archery his whole life, which is why the ministry that aims to "make Christ the target of your life" appeals to him.

Fuller has taken archery equipment and the devotionals that go along with the program on mission trips to Alaska, New Mexico and eastern Kentucky. Children both far away and in his own community are drawn to the opportunity to shoot a bow and arrow, he said.

"It's really kind of a magnet," Fuller said. "The kids come out of the woodwork. They're used to basketball and soccer and those kinds of things, and archery is something that's kind of new."

The sport creates a level playing ground and often the girls on the team outshoot the boys, he noted.

"You could have a 14-year-old girl that is not an athlete, and kind of a wallflower and she wouldn't get involved in a basketball game or a football game. But yet you give her some instruction in archery, and she can take on the high school quarterback and lots of times beat him in archery," Fuller said.

Centershot is an example of targeting affinity groups by using a shared interest

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Ministry workers 'discover' new ways of teaching children



A group of girls from Parkway Baptist Church in Bardstown entertains the Friday night Imagine Conference crowd with a cup game performance. (Drew Nichter/WR)

By Drew Nichter

Bardstown—It's called a rattleback—a small, unremarkable piece of plastic shaped much like a canoe.

But when set on a flat surface and spun in a clockwise motion, the rattleback will eventually "rattle" and reverse direction.

It is designed to spin in only one direction.

So it is with God's people, Gary Lindsey shared with children's ministry workers at last weekend's Imagine Conference.

"Jesus wants us to follow Him. He wants us to be in relationship with Him, even when we don't want to be," Lindsey pointed out.

Lindsey's rattleback experiment illustrated the idea of discovery-based learning, a growing trend in children's ministry.

John Bennett, preschool and children's ministry consultant for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, said children today retain more information through interactive and "experiential" learning.

Children "create their own path of learning," he said. "We don't tell them explicitly what to do. We let them create; we let them discover—and it sticks with them."

Bennett said the trend in children's ministry today is to move away from the "classical learning" approach to discovery-based learning.

At one church, children memorized a

Bible verse by creating a special hand-shake. During each motion, the kids recited a word from that verse.

"So, as they're learning the Bible verse, they're interacting with it," Bennett explained.

Lindsey, the children's minister at Irving Bible Church in Texas, stressed the importance of discovery-based learning at the Jan. 31-Feb. 1 conference at Parkway Baptist Church in Bardstown.

Using the rattlebacks with adults in Friday night's main session, Lindsey pointed out that everyone made his or her own discoveries about the toy. Those ideas were then used to make a connection to Christ, he noted.

"I wanted you to compare it to Scripture," he told the audience, "to see what can we learn and discover to use this as a tool to learn more about Jesus."

Although not every person's discoveries were the same, Lindsey said that's OK, because every experience will be different. There is really no one right answer, he added.

By using discovery-based learning methods, children are more likely to remember what they learned for a longer period of time, Lindsey pointed out.

With traditional methods, he noted, 90 percent of students will have forgotten information they learned two months earlier.

"We're not teaching kids what to think by giving them the facts of thinking," Lindsey said. "We're teaching them

how to think about their faith—how to question about what God has for them."

This was the fourth year the KBC has sponsored the Imagine Conference. Bennett launched the event shortly after joining the convention in 2009.

He said attendance each year has been steady at the conference, but he anticipates changing things up starting next year and "expanding the vision" of the children's ministry event.

"We've got several plans for taking it to the next level (and) really pushing people to the edge," he said. (WR)

KBC clarifies statements in Baptist Press story

Louisville—The Baptist Press article, "States budgeting more for missions," published Jan. 28 in the Western Recorder was not entirely accurate. According to the Kentucky Baptist Convention, the last paragraph was inaccurate and a couple of other minor details need clarification.

KBC stated it does not divide any budget surplus from the Cooperative Program "equally between the state convention and the SBC." Instead, KBC distributes all CP gifts at the same percentage ratio between the Southern Baptist Convention and KBC whether they be under, equal-to or over the CP budget goal.

In reference to the article stating that Kentucky approved a "flat budget," Lowell Ashby, KBC Finance and Business Services team leader, stated: "While we are back to where we once were, our approved CP budget for 2012-13 was \$22 million. That was increased for current fiscal year of 2013-14 to \$22.5 million, but has now been reduced back to \$22 million in the 2014-15 budget."

Also, Ashby said, "the footnote says that the information is based on reports or projections for 2014—the calendar year that most states use for their fiscal year. A more fair statement for Kentucky would be to include us in the paragraph of states that are reducing their budgets." (WR)

Gambling

Continued from page 1

interview requests from secular television and newsprint organizations following the video's release, and was a guest of radio host Leland Conway Jan. 29 on WHAS-AM 840.

"If our people would just be motivated enough to pick up the phone and leave a message on the (legislative) message line, I think that message will get across," Chitwood said during the interview with Conway.

"It's a compelling message and the end of the day the Bible answers Cain's question: Am I my brother's keeper?" Chitwood said. "Yes, you are—and to love your brother is not to take his money by swindling him."

During Chitwood's 3-4 minute radio interview, Conway questioned why the KBC was encouraging churches to get involved in public policy rather than strictly dealing with individuals in need of help.

"The reason is we do this because we deal with individuals," Chitwood responded. He then recounted a story about a widow and her two children who were left fatherless when her husband "fell prey to the false promises" of gambling and ended up taking his own life.

"Could there be a way not to just come alongside that widow? ... Could there be a way for us to stop the devastation on the front end, or at least slow it down?" Chitwood said.

Conway asked Chitwood, "Why this issue" and not others that are equally destructive?

"We're not a one-issue people," Chitwood replied. "If we live with integrity

according to our faith, then we apply that to every issue in life."

The Kentucky Baptist leader went on to point out issues that have been addressed by the KBC in the past year, such as alcohol abuse, religious liberty, exorbitant interest rates for payday lending, same-sex marriage and child abuse.

"There are a host of issues that we encourage our people that when you go into the voting booth, take your faith with you," Chitwood said.

House Speaker Pro Tem Larry Clark, of Louisville, has sponsored a bill that would let voters decide if they want to

change Kentucky's constitution and make casino gambling legal. The plan would allow up to eight casinos with five licenses allowed to be purchased by racetracks.

"Where gambling is legalized, misery follows," Chitwood says in the ads. "And yet year after year, a small group of Kentucky politicians pushes to expand gambling in Kentucky, promising that it will be an economic boon—and it will be to the casino operators eager to cash in on the misery of our fellow Kentuckians."

The legislative message line is (800) 372-7181. (WR)

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Racial Reconciliation Sunday: Diversity in churches remains elusive

By Bob Smietana

Nashville, Tenn.—Having a racially diverse church remains more dream than reality for most Protestant pastors. More than eight in 10 say every church should strive for racial diversity, according to a survey from LifeWay Research.

But few have diverse flocks. Most (86 percent) say their congregation is predominately one racial or ethnic group.

"Everybody wants diversity," said Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research. "But many don't want to be around people who are different."

The research study also found 91 percent say "churches should reflect the racial diversity in their community," and 79 percent believe their congregations look similar to the people in their neighborhood.

But Mark DeYmaz, pastor of Mosaic Church, a multiethnic church in central Arkansas, is skeptical. DeYmaz said pastors aren't always aware of how diverse their communities have become.

"Pastors would do well to spend one hour sitting at the front of the nearby Walmart or other local grocery to see if in fact their church reflects the community," he said.

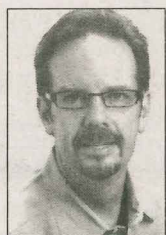
Data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows America is becoming increasingly diverse. About 17 percent of Americans identify as Hispanic. African Americans make up 13 percent of the population, followed by Asian Americans (5 percent), and 1 percent Native American or Native Alaskan. Another 2.4 percent identify with more than one racial group.

Non-Hispanic whites make up 63 percent of the population. That number drops to about 49 percent for children under 5 years old, according to a recent report from the Associated Press.

Change of focus

Derwin Gray, pastor of Transformation Church, a multiethnic congregation in Indian Land, S.C., said if pastors want diverse congregations, they need to change their sermons.

"We shouldn't long for racial diversity. We should long for the proclamation of Jesus, which creates ethnic diversity," Gray said. "The Apostle Paul didn't start



"Churches should reflect the racial diversity in their community."

Ed Stetzer

one church for Jews and one church for Gentiles in the New Testament. The gospel brought people together."

More focus on racial diversity in church could find a welcome audience.

A second LifeWay Research survey—this time an online panel of 1,036 Americans—found that three-quarters (78 percent) say "every church should strive for racial diversity."

More than half (51 percent) say they would be most comfortable visiting a church where multiple ethnicities were well represented. Three-quarters also said churches should reflect the diversity of their communities.

Change in churches

There are some signs the number of diverse churches in the United States

is growing.

A 2010 Faith Communities Today survey, which included 11,000 congregations of different faiths, found that about 12.5 percent of Protestant churches were multiethnic. That means in those churches no one ethnic group makes up more than 80 percent of the congregation.

DeYmaz said moving diversity from a dream to a reality will take hard work.

"Wishful thinking in this regard will not bring increasing diversity to local churches for the sake of the gospel," he said. (LifeWay)

CU honors Baptist pastor for 'bringing people together'

By Jose Soriano

Campbellsville—James Washington, pastor of New Zion Baptist Church in Adair County, was Campbellsville University's 2013 Racial Reconciliation Award recipient.

Washington, former pastor of Pleasant Union Baptist Church in Campbellsville, received the award at the annual celebration of the university's Dialogue on Race.

The Campbellsville University Racial Reconciliation Award is given to those who have shown outstanding characteristics of servant leadership in bringing people together past racial matters and across lines of ethnicity, and who have been significant bridge builders for the community, said John Chowning, CU vice president for church and external relations and executive assistant to the president.

Washington is president of the Taylor County Ecumenical/Ministerial Alliance, secretary of the Taylor County Ministerial Association, a member of the Zion District Association and the General Association of Kentucky Baptists and vice president of Zion District Sunday School and BTU Convention.

He is also a volunteer with the Hope Pregnancy Center in Campbellsville. He has been a journeyman ironworker and bivocational pastor since 1974.



James Washington (second from right), pastor of New Zion Baptist Church in Adair County, receives the Campbellsville University Racial Reconciliation Award from Michael Carter (left) and John Chowning (right). Also pictured is Renee Shaw, host of "Connections with Renee Shaw" on Kentucky Educational Television. (Joan McKinney/CU)

Washington was pastor at Pleasant Run Baptist Church in Green County from 1988 to 1995, when he began serving at Pleasant Union Baptist Church until 2002. He also was assistant to the pastor of Second Baptist Church of Madison, Ind., and was licensed and ordained at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church.

He studied at Kentucky Business College, Iron Worker Apprentice

School and Lexington Bible College.

Washington served as a member of the United States Marine Corps from 1970 to 1974 and was a drill instructor for two years.

He is married to Wanda Murphy Washington, an employee with Greater Campbellsville United, and has four children: Quantrell, Joshua, Jackey and Jami and seven grandchildren. (CU)

Centershot

Continued from page 1

that binds people together as a way to present Jesus and get them involved in the local church, according to Chuck McAlister, team leader for Kentucky Baptist evangelism and church planting.

"Archery is the fastest growing sport in the state of Kentucky," McAlister said. "That's primarily fueled by the interest in Hunger Games ... that so many people have if they're reading the books or seeing the movies. So that's what spawned our relationship with Centershot and then looking into forming a league and tournament."

Centershot is a combination of what McAlister and his team have identified as Kentucky's largest affinity groups: hunting, local schools and archery.

While Centershot participants don't necessarily hunt, Tim Franklin at Benton's Sharpe Missionary Baptist Church said many of the children in the area



Archery is a sport that appeals equally to boys and girls. (Provided by Sharpe Missionary Baptist Church)

come from families who bow hunt.

In addition to being Sharpe Missionary's children's minister and worship leader, Franklin is a teacher at North Marshall Middle School. He said several schools in the area have had archery programs, so many children are familiar with the sport and happy to have

another opportunity to play.

But Franklin said Centershot differs slightly from what they have experienced in the classroom because archery lessons are intertwined with devotions.

For example, Franklin tells a story about teaching middle schoolers about the man who built his house on a rock from Matthew 7. He compared the story to the children's feet being a firm foundation for when they shoot a bow and arrow.

Franklin, Fuller and McAlister are involved in the early stages of setting up a western Kentucky archery league along with a Centershot tournament, where students compete with each other. Fuller said McAlister and Pastor Tim Burdon at Marion's Mexico Baptist Church spearheaded starting a tournament, which will allow children throughout western Kentucky to enjoy friendly competition in a Christian atmosphere.

"It has the potential to really be something special as far as getting kids who may not attend church or who attend

periodically to become involved in a little archery league, develop some relationships and hear the gospel," Fuller said. It has the potential to really impact some teenagers."

Fuller couldn't help but share a story of a quiet girl from one of his mission trips to Alaska. After a night of archery training and devotions, all the local children were asked to come back for a second night for some friendly competition.

The final round included the girl, who was not an athlete, and three boys. While the boys quickly shot their arrows, she slowly and deliberately shot hers. To win, she had to hit the bull's-eye, which is the size of a quarter.

When she made that shot, Fuller said the room exploded with cheers. "She lit up like a Christmas tree smiling," he said.

Fuller said that one interaction shows how much archery can make an impact on a child's life, and even more so when the activity is partnered with the gospel. (WR)

Race Reconciliation

This guest article from Jared Lafitte is abbreviated from his blog post at jaredlafitte.wordpress.com.

For years, my heart ached to see a movement toward radical ethnic reconciliation and diversity in churches. When I moved to Louisville to attend seminary, the opportunity to be a part of a movement like this presented itself. One of the first people I met was an African-American man named Jamaal Williams, who lived a few doors down from me. We quickly became friends, and when he took a leadership role at a local Kentucky Baptist Convention black congregation, Forest Baptist Church, I jumped at the opportunity to join.

Forest Church was nearly 150 years old. They had white members in the past, but I was the only white person there at the time. Music and customs were different from what I was accustomed. It was awkward, and I wrestled with feeling out of place. I stayed because I wanted to see barriers demolished.

It was only a matter of time before that happened.

One conversation after another, I realized I had more in common with Forest's members than I thought. We all struggled with things like relationships, cars that didn't work, and low-paying jobs. Things they wanted in life—like healthy families, restored communities, and seeing the broken find joy in Jesus—I wanted. We went to movies and shared meals together. We shared our fears and struggles.

Living life and sharing struggles day-after-day with a community of black people showed me that the human soul, in all its valleys and triumphs, is colorless.

I know what it takes to have true ethnic reconciliation in our churches. But there's a caveat. If you start with the singular mission of tackling the race issue in your church, you'll never get anywhere. I believe the reason most churches haven't been able to tackle their lack of diversity is because they haven't been hitting the root issue.

Race isn't the problem. Sin is.

Sin, not race, makes us build walls and feel uncomfortable around people who aren't like us. Sin keeps us from seeing other people as people with hurts and hopes who will spend eternity either with God or apart from Him.

What we desperately need is for Jesus to pierce through our sinful condition and change us at the core so we can see people the way He does. Outside of the power of the gospel, nothing else will accomplish this.

As I've spent time with my black brothers and sisters in Christ at Forest, this happened in my heart and in theirs. One day, in the new heaven and new earth, people from every nation, tribe and tongue will worship God together. Ethnic fear and racial barriers will be gone forever, and people will have a simple, common focus: the glory of God and the endless pleasure we'll share together. *SBC Race Reconciliation Sunday is Feb. 9.*

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.



Paul Chitwood

It's time to tell them 'enough is enough'

Anyone else tired of the expanded gambling issue? Here we go again! It seems like this is the umpteenth time our governor and a small group of legislators have pushed for casinos in Kentucky, attempting to make them palatable by tying them to horseracing, education, the state's budget or some other cause. But nothing has really changed: Casinos were wrong for Kentucky then, and they are wrong for Kentucky now.

Why? Casinos prey upon vulnerable persons—your relatives, coworkers, friends and neighbors. Casinos seek to rob the pockets of families and undermine legitimate area businesses that produce beneficial products and provide essential services for communities. What beneficial product does a casino produce? They foster gambling addictions which destroy people's lives by taking away paychecks and possessions. Supporters try to console us since they may provide counseling to compulsive gamblers. Still, the counseling comes too late for some. The financial ruin and psychological damage has been done. All some would have us see, though, is the money the state's coffers might gain. From where does all this money come, and at what cost to our communities?

Here are some key questions: Is there ever a special interest group or cause worth our government tying its financial welfare to that would make its association with a predatory industry that undermines the social and economic welfare of its citizens appropriate? For our government to profit, is it right for it to put some of its citizens in a position where they have to become big losers?

In a recent BP article, Joe Carter, director of communications for the SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, observed that while casino gambling used to be associated with two resort destinations, Las Vegas and Atlantic City, 23 states now have commercial casinos. "Unlike the old Vegas-style resorts, the new regional casinos depend decisively on attracting gamblers who live in the region, who return frequently and who play modern slot machines," Carter said. In other words, Kentucky's casinos would be primarily preying upon local residents.

Citing a report of the Council on Casinos released last September, Carter also noted that problem gamblers account for 40 to 60 percent of slot machine revenues, and that people who live within 10 miles of a casino have twice the rate of pathological and problem gambling. Meanwhile, a survey of Gamblers Anonymous participants found that more than 26 percent had experienced gambling-related divorces or separations. Among other social consequences are a reduction in volunteerism, civic participation and family stability within 15 miles of a community where a casino is located. Is this really what we want for Kentucky?

For those of us who call ourselves Christians, how can

we say with integrity that loving God and loving our neighbors in any way allows us to stand back and idly watch as someone fleeces them, so that their spouses leave them or their kids may go hungry, lack clothes or not receive adequate medical care. Is it still a "commonwealth" when a few are granted licenses to profit wildly at the great expense or total demise of others? Ethically, can God's people turn a blind eye to this injustice?

"Are we our brother's keeper?" some may counter. "Didn't those compulsive gamblers choose to play 'those games,' despite knowing the consequences?" But it isn't a game! High stakes are involved. Losing turns tragic all too quickly. Don't we share some civic responsibility when we fail to speak out against social injustice and to decry the hardships that our leaders' decisions may wreak upon Kentucky's families?

Kentucky Baptists were victorious in efforts to stop seven casinos from entering the state in 2012 when a bill fell short in the Senate. "Gambling is a social justice issue that defines how it is that we love our neighbors and uphold the common good," according to Russell Moore, now president of the ERLC. Calling gambling a form of "economic predation," Moore, then a dean at Southern Seminary, wrote, "Gambling grinds the faces of the poor into the ground. It benefits multinational corporations while oppressing the lower class with illusory promises of wealth, and with (typically) low-wage transitory jobs that simultaneously destroy every other economic engine of a local community."

Yet, the social costs of gambling have all been stated time and again. Every February for the past decade, perhaps two, it seems that I or other editors of the Western Recorder have written articles warning of the woes of expanded gambling. Our Kentucky Baptist Committee on Public Affairs continually has taken strong stands. "This issue keeps coming up year after year," said KBC Executive Director Paul Chitwood, "and it's time that the Christian majority in this state rises up and says 'enough is enough.'"

This past week, Chitwood drew the attention of national media as he again urged Kentucky Baptists and other concerned citizens to become actively involved in opposing expanded gambling through 60-second radio spots aired across the state and in videos sent to KBC churches.

"Where gambling is legalized, misery follows," he warns, encouraging Christians to speak out against gambling legislation pending in the General Assembly. Download the video at <https://vimeo.com/84775309> and show it to your congregation, Sunday School class, or small group; then encourage others also to oppose any attempt to expand gambling in Kentucky by calling the Legislative message line at (800) 372-7181.



After Thought

By Todd Deaton

Be a champion

Please be a champion for Children's Bible Drill in your church and in your association. In 38 years of working with boys and girls in the local church, I have found no other program that does such a good job of helping children

learn basic Bible knowledge.

A child who participates in Bible

drill for three years will be exposed to 75 important verses and 30 key passages, and will know and be able to find any book in the Bible without hesitation. The Key Passages they will learn deal with important events, such as creation, the Ten Commandments or the resurrection of Jesus. The chosen verses are significant ones—life-changing verses that turn up frequently in Sunday School lessons, sermons, songs and devotional readings. Taken together, Bible drill content forms a core of

biblical knowledge that can be life-changing.

I hope you will encourage the children and the children's ministry of your church to participate. Feel free to contact me for more specific information about how Bible drill works, and about how you can get it started at your church.

David Garrard
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Letters to the editor:

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High-definition identification and Christian living

By David Jeremiah

"Unfortunately, you're not getting justice today. You're getting the end of injustice."

Those were the words spoken by Texas State District Judge Mark Stoltz to James Lee Woodard when he was released from prison after being locked up for 27 years for crimes he didn't commit. Advances in forensic science allowed for new DNA testing that proved Woodard could not have committed the crimes of which he was accused. When he left prison in April 2008, he was the 17th inmate since 2001 in Dallas County, Texas, to be exonerated on the basis of DNA testing.

Identification technology has definitely gone high-definition in recent years. But DNA is not the only advancement in identification technology. Scientists have discovered a way to retrieve fingerprints from surfaces that were wiped down to remove any trace of prints. And because the iris of every person's eye is as unique as fingerprints, iris recognition is fast becoming a way to identify individuals for access into highly secret corporate or government environments. And face-recognition technology is being developed for scanning large crowds to identify suspects who might otherwise pass unnoticed.

The more science studies people and products, the easier it is becoming to identify them specifically and in terms of groups to which they belong.

High-definition identification

These sophisticated identification technologies are available only to those who know how to use them. But did you know there is a high-definition identification system that is available to anyone and can be used at any time? In fact, instructions on this method were published in the most widely-available book in the world: the Bible.

The system: High-definition Christian identification. That's my way of saying what the Bible says—that Christians should be easily identifiable by their words, deeds and character.

Jesus never intended for Christianity to be a covert movement, known only to insiders. In the early years of the church in the Roman Empire, Christians' words and deeds set them apart from others.

High-definition living

As Jesus prepared to leave this earth, He gathered with His disciples for a final meal together and spoke to them of a new commandment, obedience to which would set His disciples apart and make them easily identifiable (John 13:34-35).

The requirement (verse 34): "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another."

The result (verse 35): By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Those early Christians understood they were to love others the way God had loved them (Ephesians 4:32). And it was profoundly noticeable.

And not just love for fellow Christians, but love for strangers, non-Christians, the poor, the persecuted—love for everyone. The post-apostolic church took literally the words of the apostle Paul written to the Galatian church: "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers" (Galatians 6:10). There is a sense in which the world has a hard time accepting our "love" if they look at the Christian church and see us not loving one another.

The phrase "love one another" occurs 13 times in the New Testament. In those verses, we are not given specific instructions on how to love. Rather, they are repeated references to the fact that Christ said we are to love one another. We are given a picture of love in 1 Corinthians 13—it boils down to obedience.

Will we choose to love sacrificially in all our relationships? Something very important depends on our positive answer to that question: whether the world will be able to identify us as followers of Jesus and be attracted to the source of our love. (BP)

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

FIRST PERSON

Value of divorce recovery groups

By James Stillwell

Q: A friend invited me to a divorce recovery program at her church. I'm separated with no real possibility of reconciliation. What benefit would I gain from being a part of such a support group?



A: Proverbs reminds us that "in the midst of counselors there is safety" (Prov. 11:14). In other words, you do well to surround yourself with support and words of encouragement from others who have traveled the path you are now on. Thousands who have experienced the tragedy and

trauma of divorce have found hope and healing in being a part of a divorce recovery group.

Author Harold Bloomfield was pointing to "the importance of working through painful resentments" when he wrote that "not (releasing) suppressed feelings of hurt and anger is to remain imprisoned by them." To be a part of such a support group is to allow the healing that only comes from dealing with "the unfinished business of the heart."

When God said "it is not good for man to be alone" (Genesis 2:18), He wasn't just talking about marriage. He was talking about the universal need for community. Finding a community where people know and understand what you are going through is to find the acceptance and openness necessary for healing.

The hospitality shown by leaders of a divorce recovery program is one of the truest expressions of the gospel. Jesus said he came to heal the broken-hearted. Allow yourself to know the life-changing holy encounter with sisters and brothers who have had the healing touch of the overwhelming and welcoming grace of God.

James Stillwell will lead a divorce recovery group beginning Feb. 24 at Calvary Baptist Church in Lexington. For more, call (859) 940-3241, email fjstillwell@gmail.com, or visit drjamesstillwell.com. Stillwell is minister to singles at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington. Email: james@ibs-lex.org.

Jesus always looks for faith (and finds it in the unlikelyst of places)

By Joe McKeever

Jesus was always on the lookout for faith. Like a geiger counter in search of uranium or a metal detector on the beach, His heart seems to have started pinging when someone in His presence got the faith-thing right.

Our Lord was busy teaching in a crowded little house in Capernaum one day when the ceiling began falling on him. Four local men had brought their paralyzed buddy for Jesus to heal, and unable to get him in the house because of the crowd, they carried him onto the rooftop and tore open the tiles. As the opening grew bigger, the crowd moved back and some of those inside helped to lower the man into the room. What a moment that must have been.

Scripture says, "When Jesus saw their faith," He forgave the paralytic of his sin, then healed him of his paralysis (Mark 2:1-12).

He could spot faith a mile off.

When the blind beggar of Jericho heard Jesus of Nazareth was coming without a clue whether the Lord was nearby or a mile off, he began yelling, "Jesus! Son of David! Have mercy on me!" Then, when people around tried to shush him, he began calling out even louder, "Jesus! Have mercy on me!"

As the Lord came within earshot and saw what was happening, He asked people to bring the man to him and healed him of his blindness.

Jesus loves it when people have faith in Him, and takes it as the unkind cut it is when people who should be displaying it do not.

To the fearful disciples who were crying that the boat was about to sink in the storm, the Lord said, "Why did you fear? Where is your faith?" (Matthew 8:26). They of all people—after all they had seen and heard—should have known they were safe in His presence. And yet, their faith deserted them.

The Lord watched as the poor widow took her place in the queue and moved along with the other contributors in the Temple treasury that day. Most had bags of coins to drop into the brass urns labeled for the support of the Temple, the priesthood, the holy days, and benevolence. The woman held two tiny coins in her fingers, the last bit of wealth she possessed on earth. As she dropped it into an urn and walked away, never knowing she has been spotted by the Savior of the world, Jesus told His disciples, "Everyone else gave of their excess. She has put in all she had. This woman gave more than anyone here."

He was impressed by her faith, by the faith of the blind beggar of Jericho, by the faith of the four men of Capernaum.

Faith always makes itself known.

The widow's faith showed up in her offering. The beggar's faith showed up in his persistence. The faith of the four showed up in their labors to get their friend to Jesus.

The widow said, "Whatever I have." The beggar said, "Whatever I have to do." The four men of Capernaum said, "Whatever it takes."

Faith itself is not visible, but its effects can always be seen.

There is no such thing as secret faith, any more than there can be a private atomic explosion. If it's there, it will be seen and known and registered.

The nature of faith is that there are always obstacles.

Either you don't have as much information as you would like, you're being discouraged by those around you, your knees are knocking, the vote is against you, you stand alone, or something. There is always the negative factor.

Here's one of the Lord's favorites:

A centurion of the Roman army stationed in Capernaum approached Jesus. "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home. He's in great pain."

Jesus said, "Then, come on and let's go to him."

The officer said, "Lord, I am unworthy for you to come into my home. If you will just speak the word, my man will be well."

He went on to explain, "I too am a man under authority. I say something to these soldiers and they do it. And that's how I know you are under the authority of God in Heaven."

The servant carrying out the wishes of his master has the authority of the master.

Jesus said, "I have not found such great faith with anyone in these parts." Then, He said the words and healed the servant. (Matthew 8:1-13).

Why was the faith of the centurion so special? He was the last one anyone expected to be having faith in a Jewish citizen, much less an itinerant preacher who was being castigated by their own authorities. He was a man of position, prestige and authority, and perhaps because of that, he had an insight into the authority Jesus was exhibiting.

Scripture says three times "The just shall live by faith." That's Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 1:17, and Galatians 3:11. Hebrews 11:6 says, "Without faith, it is impossible to please God." And 2 Corinthians 5:7 tells us, "We walk by faith and not by sight."

Don't like to walk by faith, do you?

You find it hard, and lonely, and uphill? There will come a time when "faith shall be sight," my friend, and you will be so glad you got this right.

Jesus wondered aloud, "When I return from Heaven, will I find anyone still living by faith?" Worshiping by faith. Giving by faith. Obeying by faith. Witnessing and serving and helping and forgiving, all by faith and not by sight.

I want to say, "Yes, Lord. Here's one!" as my hand goes into the air.

You too? Let's say it together now.

"Yes, Lord, I believe!"

Joe McKeever is a pastor, professor and author. For more, visit joemckeever.com.

Marijuana

Continued from page 1

help remedy the disproportionate number of marijuana-related arrests and incarcerations among minorities in America, where marijuana is classified as a schedule 1 drug, the same category as heroin and ecstasy.

"We should not be locking up kids or individual users for long stretches of jail time," the president said, "when some of the folks who are writing those laws have probably done the same thing."

Still, Obama said he has told his daughters that smoking marijuana is "a bad idea, a waste of time, not very healthy."

Baptist response

Albert Mohler Jr. responded that parents who "can muster only an argument that it is a waste of time, a bad idea and not very healthy" better be ready for their children to smoke marijuana.

Obama's statement "really doesn't get at the heart of the issue," Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said Jan. 21 in his daily podcast *The Briefing*. "It doesn't even get to the issue of intoxication whatsoever. It doesn't deal at all with the reality, as has now been well documented, that in the adolescent brain marijuana has a very dangerous and long-lasting, if not permanent effect."

"It doesn't deal with the whole issue of impairment. It doesn't deal with the potential of addiction, which again goes way up when you're dealing with adolescent smoking."

Mohler acknowledged that Obama "holds up a pretty good model of fatherhood" and likely said "a great deal more to his daughters than he told *The New Yorker*" in the mid-January article. But it is troubling that the president did not make a stronger public argument against marijuana use, he said.

When asked about the president's statements, White House press secretary Jay Carney said Jan. 22 that Obama remains opposed to nationwide decriminalization of marijuana and has not changed his position on the issue. Carney underscored the president's argument that minority Americans are prosecuted for marijuana use disproportionately.

Mohler agreed that America's drug laws need to be reformed, but he said it is illogical to imply that no users should be punished because not all users are punished. Obama seems reticent to take a strong stand against marijuana at least in part because of his own drug use growing up, Mohler said, a common mistake among parents in recent generations.

"If only the sinless can talk about the avoidance of sin and the reasons for avoiding sin, then we as a human race are doomed, because as the Bible says emphatically clearly, 'All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,'" Mohler said, referencing Romans 3:23.

Medical marijuana

Meanwhile Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said in a podcast released Jan. 23 that even so-called "medical marijuana," which is legal in 18 states and the District of Columbia, poses ethical problems.

Marijuana legalization

Well-funded advocates soften voters; governments eye tax dollars

Denver—Marijuana sellers in Colorado netted nearly \$1 million during the first day of sales Jan. 1 as citizens and tourist lined up outside new state-sanctioned "pot dispensaries" to legally buy the drug for recreational use and opening the door for a new taxable commodity.

Advocates for marijuana legalization say that vast amounts of money are in play. According to CNN, marijuana sales should reach \$2.3 billion in 2014, up from \$1 billion in the previous year. For states, and even the federal government, the amount of potential tax revenue is enough to make states relax laws and the federal government to turn a blind eye in states where medical marijuana and recreational use are already legal.

Six of the world's billionaires are helping to fund the push to legalize marijuana. Among the group are George Soros, chairman of Soros Fund Management; John Sperling, chairman and CEO of the Apollo Group (University of Phoenix); George Zimmer, founder and former CEO of Men's Wearhouse; John Mackey, founder and co-CEO of Whole

Foods; Richard Branson, CEO of Virgin; and the late Peter Lewis, former CEO of Progressive Insurance.

Soros and Zimmer, for example, both gave a combined \$3 million to the failed Proposition 19 marijuana legalization effort in California in 2010.

Lewis, who died in November, provided nearly \$40 million in resources for the legalization effort since the 1980s.

In the November 2013 elections, Illinois became the 20th state to adopt a law allowing the use of "medicinal marijuana." Soon after the state changed its marijuana laws, legalization advocates began talking about recreational use.

In fact, the larger strategy of legalization advocates has taken on the familiar refrain of "compassionate use" followed by the push for full legalization and regulation in virtually every state where marijuana laws have been relaxed. Their efforts may be bearing fruit. Several surveys now suggest a majority of the American people are in favor of making the once-taboo drug as easy to purchase as cigarettes and beer. (BP)

What churches can do

Teach what the Bible says about proper treatment of our bodies. Our bodies are God's creation, and the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Teach young people their worth in God's eyes. They should be made aware that their lives matter.

Encourage adults in the church to practice abstinence toward alcoholic beverages. To simply say one is legal and the other isn't is not persuasive to youth curious about marijuana.

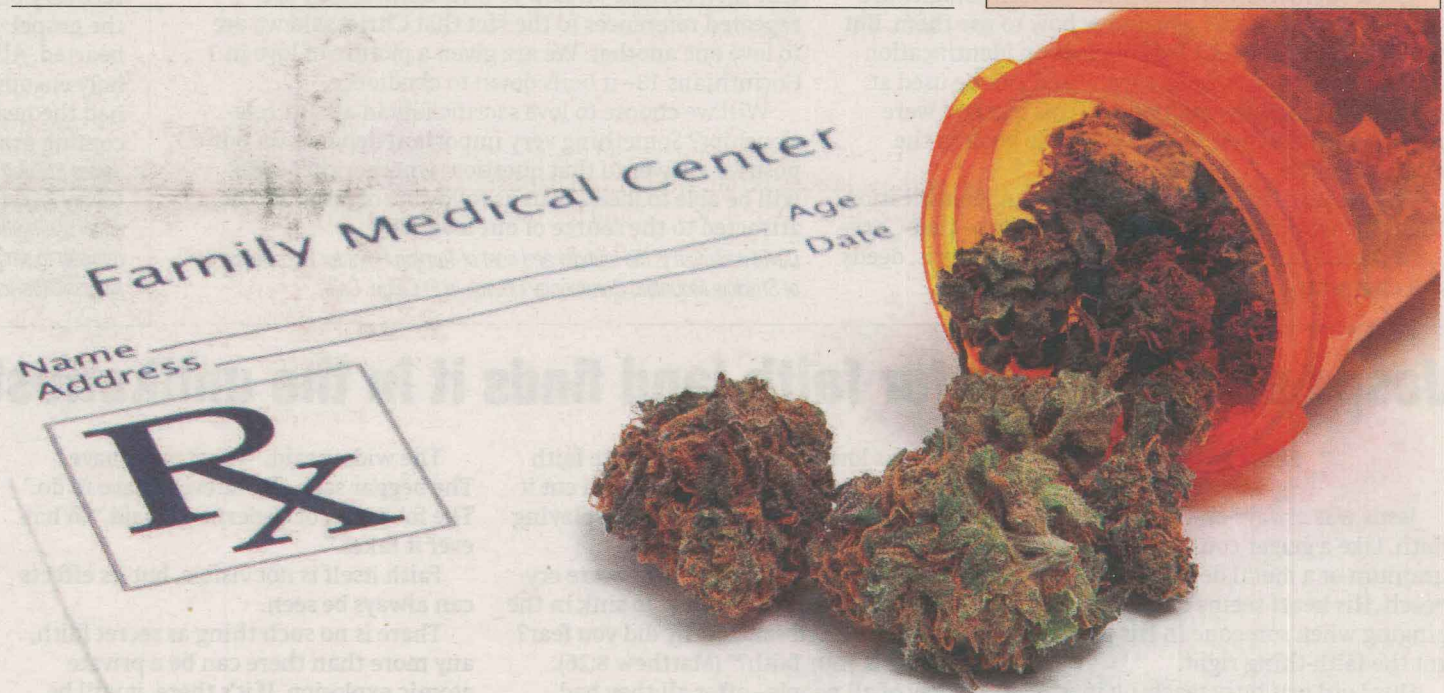
Hold Christ-centered substance abuse awareness seminars. Parents should be made aware of the signs of substance abuse and be equipped to minister to a child who has fallen under its power.

Develop wholesome, enjoyable activities and ministries that offer young people in the church good alternatives to non-Christian venues.

Promote ministry opportunities for young people in the church that can help them focus on service to God and others rather than self.

Remind youth of the Lordship of Christ. Christian teens must be made aware of the reality that their lives are not their own. Having trusted Christ as Savior and Lord, they must put Him first, above all else.

(Source: ERLC)



(iStock photo)

Moore said it is not a sin for an ill individual to use marijuana prescribed by a physician. He cited Proverbs 31:6, which references giving alcohol to someone who is dying or in great distress.

"There are all sorts of mind-altering drugs that are given to severely ill people in order to correct their illness, and sometimes even to put them out of consciousness. I would think of morphine, for instance. I think that's ethically alright," Moore said.

Yet medical marijuana, contrary to the claims of its advocates, is not primarily a drug prescribed for people in unbearable pain or on the verge of death, Moore said. Quoting a CNN article, he said only 2 percent of those prescribed marijuana in Colorado suffer from cancer and only 1 percent from HIV/AIDS. Ninety-four percent cite "unspecified pain" as the justification for their pot prescriptions. The average user of medical marijuana in California "is a 32-year-old white man with no life-threatening illness, but a long record of substance abuse," Moore said, quoting CNN.

Medical marijuana "is not something that is being given to people with terminal cancer, fighting off in a hospice sort of situation those last stages of pain," Moore said. "It's something that is being given very indiscriminately with a substance that has a long cultural history in this country of essentially inducing a kind of immediate drunkenness, which of course is prohibited in Scripture for a believer."

Moore urged Christians to prepare for both political engagement with marijuana advocates and ministry to individuals affected by the drug.

"On the left there is a progressive acceptance of marijuana use that comes out of the counterculture," Moore said. "And then on the right there is a libertarian understanding of decreasing law, of personal autonomy, individual autonomy and those sorts of things. Those two things come together to make marijuana legalization for various reasons more and more likely in this country. So even if you're not addressing this where you are, you probably will be soon." (BP)

Cannabis & Kentucky

Last month, Kentucky's House Health and Welfare Committee listened to testimony from parents of sick children about the "medical powers of marijuana," according to the Lexington Herald-Leader. House Speaker Greg Stumbo said while he is "open to listening to the debate," no bill to support medical marijuana has been filed in the House.

Kentucky Senator Perry Clark, of Louisville filed a bill Jan. 7 called the Cannabis Compassion Act, or SB 43.

"Cannabis is medicine. It just happens to be a prohibited medicine," said Clark in an interview with the Louisville Courier-Journal. "There's a cannabis tsunami coming. We can stand in the way, or Kentucky can become a leader and catapult ourselves forward."

Clark has filed similar bills in previous years, but each failed to win support. Senate Bill 43 was assigned to the Senate Licensing, Occupations, & Administrative Regulations Committee Jan. 13.

Alabama Baptist churches open doors to snow-bound commuters

By Neisha Fuson

Hoover, Ala.—Restrooms and free coffee. For some, those words posted on a sign outside Green Valley Baptist Church, Hoover, were the first glimmer of hope.

Typically the forecast of snow in Alabama brings happiness and hope for a flurry or two, but Jan. 28 brought much more than what meteorologists, or any Alabamian, bargained for.

Anywhere from one to four inches of snow fell between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. throughout the state—surprising central Alabama. Many areas like Birmingham were only expecting a “dusting of snow and no travel complications,” so schools and businesses were on a normal schedule.

The ability to deal with the unexpected weather issues was hampered because most of the heavy snow equipment for highways had been moved south to Montgomery where the largest amount of snowfall was expected.

Gov. Robert Bentley had even declared a state of emergency Jan. 28 at 6 a.m. and activated the Alabama National Guard to be on stand-by, but no one was expecting what happened that day.

Unprepared and in a hurry to beat icy roads, thousands tried to make their way to pick up their children or travel home to safety, but that only led to gridlocked roads and thousands of cars stranded on interstates, major thoroughfares and side roads.

But in the midst of the chaos, Alabama Baptists stepped up to help.

Called to love, act

Churches across the state opened their doors to offer warmth, food, clothing, a place to stay and fellowship.

Pastor Jeff Fuller, who serves Rockford Baptist Church and is a chaplain for the Coosa County Sheriff's Office, said his wife, Tina, is his hero. When the snow began to fall and a church deacon called to say there were a dozen stranded truckers near the church, Tina Fuller “did whatever she could” to help.

Grocery stores were inaccessible and many were closed so the Fullers asked church members Emojean and Mable.



Numerous cars pile up on Sanie Road, near North Valley Baptist Church, Odenville. Church members and staff opened the church's doors to serve as a place of shelter for those stranded. (The Alabama Baptist)

Austin for whatever food they could spare from their refrigerator and freezer. Tina Fuller gathered and organized the donated food to make a meal for those stranded, which by the end of the night, totaled 25.

For 48 hours the Fullers and a team of nine volunteers from the Central Baptist Association church housed and fed the displaced commuters, as well as law enforcement.

Mel Johnson, disaster relief strategist for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, said Rockford Baptist was a good example of a rural church becoming the “most significant source of support during a crisis for communities equipped with few emergency response resources.”

Jeff Fuller said, “We’ve done what we’re supposed to do. We’ve ministered to the people. ... And we’ll do this again if needed and we’ll always do it again because God has called the Church to act and when we say we love somebody, we



Rockford Baptist Church prepared meals for law enforcement working during the winter storm Jan. 28, as well as several stranded travelers.

have to put that into action.”

Like a ‘missionary’

North Valley Baptist Church in Margaret also sprang into action. The church’s Early Learning Center teachers spent the night and took care of the children whose parents were not able to pick

them up, said pastor Chris Crain. The nearly 30 children and teachers slept in a safe and secure area while at least 20 people walked in off the street to seek shelter.

People who were stranded near Odenville and Argo were directed by police to go to North Valley Baptist, Crain said.

The St. Clair Baptist Association church partnered with Margaret Elementary School who shared extra cafeteria food. Church members went to pick up the supplies at the school on 4-wheelers and the church served dinner and then breakfast and lunch Jan. 29.

“Everyone was safe and we made a lot of good friends. It was fun,” Crain said.

The situation reminded Crain that the staff and ministry team is “integral to the church’s mission.”

“This was one opportunity to demonstrate what it’s like to be a missionary in the Margaret area,” Crain said.

Churches open doors

Nearby NorthPark Baptist Church, Trussville, also housed children from the church’s Noah’s Park weekday child-care ministry. Noah’s Park workers and several church staff members stayed with the children, prepared meals and turned the event into a spontaneous church lock-in experience complete with games and fun activities.

Pastor Bill Wilks posted photos and updates on his Facebook page throughout the afternoon, night and following day to assure concerned parents.

And the list of churches opening their doors to the snow-bound continues:

■ First Baptist Church, Hayden, partnered with the Red Cross and made their facilities available for supply storage.

■ First Baptist Church, Sylacauga, opened its doors and partnered with the City of Sylacauga, Coosa Valley Ministerial Association and EMA, who provided blankets and cots.

■ Raleigh Avenue Baptist Church, Homewood, provided a temporary shelter from the cold and a place for 12 stranded motorists to stay overnight.

■ First Baptist Church, Birmingham, invited stranded commuters in the area in for coffee and use of the restrooms and ended the day serving more than 200 meals.

■ Green Valley Baptist served as a temporary emergency room and triage unit for travelers who could not make it to area hospitals. The temporary medical unit saw 18 patients, three of which had serious enough injuries to merit more care at a hospital.

Around 140 people spent the night at Green Valley, some of that number included children enrolled in the church’s preschool program.

“Our (church) family members did everything they could to refresh others. It was a unique situation but people were so nice and so thankful. Some people (we helped) were saying, ‘We’ll be here on Sunday,’” James said.

“We made some new friends and some new contacts and hopefully made a tough situation a little better for some people.”

By mid-day Jan. 30 most roads began to clear and people were able to make their way home with many stories of their own from what has been called by some “Snowpocalypse 2014.” (The Alabama Baptist)



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All in a busy day's work

Little accomplishments add up to a full day for this president

Have you ever finished a work day and wondered, "Exactly what did I do today?" My days seem to pass so quickly. I recently took the time to reflect upon one of my work days, and thought I would share with you some of the things I did so that you have an idea of the inner workings of our school.

I began my day by checking and responding to emails and voice mails. I never imagined I'd be so tied to a computer and a phone, but I guess that's the world in which we all live.

I then had a meeting with our facilities manager. We discussed staff housing, keys, the remodel of Anderson Hall, the lease regarding the mining of some of our school property, the office setup for a doctor friend who plans to volunteer at Oneida to see students, staff and local folks, and several other items.

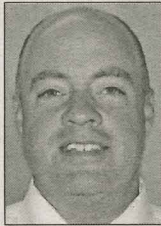
I drafted a contract for the doctor to use our facilities to see patients. I wrote a volunteer thank-you letter for the month of January. I met with our girls' basketball coach regarding a home-school church group joining our girls for camp this summer. I met with our minister of advancement and we discussed the contacts he has made with local folks about sending their children to our school.

I signed about 400 donor thank-you letters for the last one-third of the month of December. We are so blessed by the generosity of so many friends across this nation.

I missed chapel due to so many meetings. I hate to miss chapel. I met with

our upper school principal regarding needed teaching positions for next school year. I had a hamburger for lunch in our cafeteria.

This is Oneida



Larry Gritton

I met with a student who came to apologize for some bad behavior earlier in the day. I met with a staff member about an online course he needed to take. I took two phone calls from pastors about bringing volunteer groups this summer. I met with our athletic director about upcoming athletic events and issues. I discussed a potential music program with our lower school principal.

I met and chatted with a 1982 graduate of Oneida who stopped by to visit and explore the possibility of bringing his daughter to our school. I met with our dean of boys regarding some dormitory discipline issues. I said goodbye to a departing staff member and a departing student. I responded to a letter from a teacher concerning the use of certain literature in their classroom. I responded to two emails from prospective employees. I chatted on the phone with a newly hired houseparent.

I met with the pastor of Oneida Baptist Church and twice with our business manager. I scheduled a choir trip to the far end of western Kentucky. I met with a houseparent.

It was a busy day, but I am so blessed to be busy doing the Lord's business at OBI.

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

Equipped to serve

Student confident about his training at Clear Creek

Senior Craig Holder is another one of our students who came to Clear Creek Bible College from the surrounding area of Somerset, which is near our campus.

"I came to know Jesus Christ as my Savior when I was 16," said Holder. "I was on a mission trip to Vermont when the Lord convicted me of my need for a personal relationship with Him. I received my call to ministry later and knew I would eventually need to get some training."

"I am actually attending Clear Creek as a result of some friends who first visited the campus," Holder said. "I have two friends who were attending my home church in Somerset at the time they came to visit the campus because of their call to ministry. I came along with them on the visit and learned about the campus at that time. This was the only college I visited."

"When I talked with the people here it just felt right. I knew God was also calling me to study here so enrolled in classes."

"I am studying in the church ministries and leadership track," Holder said. "I am also serving at Beacon Hill Baptist Church in Somerset as a campus

missionary to Somerset Community College. The classes I have had available to me at Clear Creek, along with the practical experience I am gaining in my ministry position, are providing me with good experience for wherever God plants me in the future."

"The classes I have been able to take have equipped me to be able to apply what I have learned in the classroom in a ministry setting—no matter how large or small the ministry environment," Holder said. "I really enjoyed my educational administration class because a lot of the class was focused on Sunday

School and how to make it work in your ministry setting."

"I also enjoyed my ministry to youth course and how it helped prepare me to deal with certain situations in youth ministry."

"I feel God is leading me to serve in a local church after I graduate," Holder said. "I do not know where that might be specifically right now, but I am willing to go wherever God leads."

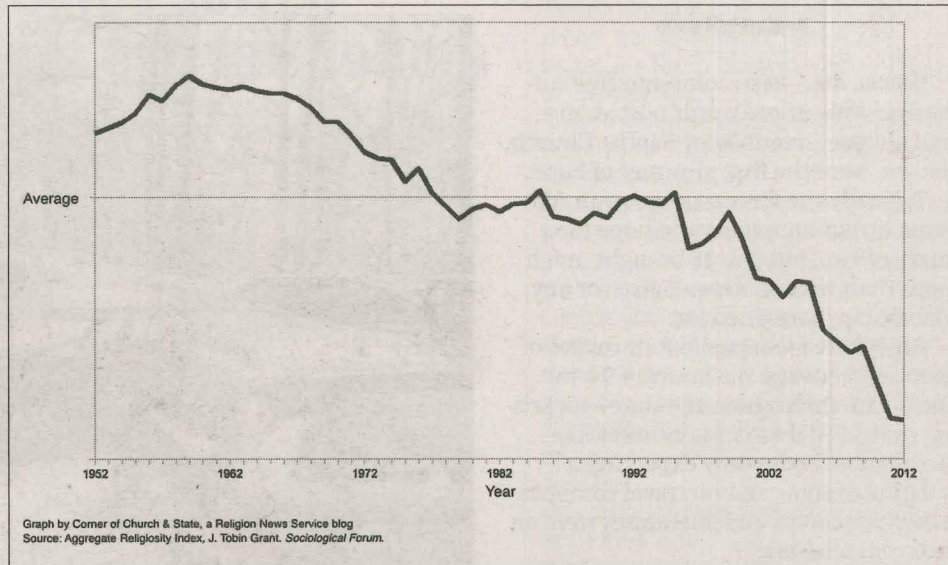
Donnie Fox is president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, 300 Clear Creek Road, Pineville, KY 40977; toll-free: (866) 340-3196; ccbbc.edu; email: dfox@ccbbc.edu

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

THE GREAT DECLINE: Religion in the U.S.



By Tobin Grant

Religiosity in the United States is in the midst of what might be called "The Great Decline." Previous declines in religion pale in comparison. Over the past 15 years, the drop in religiosity has been twice as great as the decline of the 1960s and 1970s.

How is this massive change in American religion tracked? Start with information from rigorous, scientific surveys on worship service attendance, membership in congregations, prayer, and feelings toward religion. Then use a computer algorithm to track more than 400 survey results over the past 60 years. The result is one measure that charts changes to religiosity through the years.

The graph above tells the story of the rise and fall of religious activity. During the post-war, baby-booming 1950s, there was a revival of religion. Indeed, some at the time considered it a third great awakening. Then came the societal changes of the 1960s, which included a questioning of religious institutions. The resulting decline in religion stopped by the end of the 1970s, when religiosity remained steady.

Over the past 15 years, however, religion has once again declined, but at a much sharper rate than the 1960s and 1970s. Church attendance and prayer is less frequent. The number of people with no religion is growing. Fewer people say that religion is an important part of their lives. (RNS)

Church input sought for compensation survey

By Shelly Moon

Dallas—Ministers and church employees are invited to participate in the 2014 SBC Church Compensation Survey, a tool used by Southern Baptist churches of all sizes to determine fair wages and benefits.

"GuideStone continues to be an advocate for pastors and church staff, ensuring that they are compensated fairly," said O.S. Hawkins, president of GuideStone Financial Resources. "That's why we partner with LifeWay Christian Resources and state Baptist conventions to produce this biannual study."

Each Southern Baptist church employee who participates in the survey plays a vital role in building one of the largest databases of church compensation information in the United States.

Survey results provide a baseline of compensation data among similar-sized churches within each state convention. Therefore, a higher number of participants yields a more accurate baseline of compensation data.

Al Fausch, director of business and financial administration at Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, N.C., said, "We receive numerous requests to answer compensation surveys throughout the year. We don't participate in them all, but we always try to complete GuideStone's survey."

Churches often do not participate in salary surveys because they do not have time or receive enough valuable information in return. But Fausch said GuideStone's survey is worth the few minutes

it takes to complete it. A key reason: The survey provides customized reports to thousands of churches to allow administrators, personnel/finance committees and minister search teams to better determine adequate compensation for ministers and staff.

Like many other church leaders, Fausch has accessed results from previous compensation surveys when hiring new staff to ensure that employees are being compensated at competitive levels.

"The results are easy to navigate," Fausch said. "I encourage everyone to participate. We are helping each other as well as ourselves by establishing accurate benchmarks."

At the conclusion of the survey, GuideStone and LifeWay will compile the submitted data and provide all users with access to the results.

"This survey, which is one of the most comprehensive of its kind, will help scores of churches as they seek to provide for those who are called to lead their congregations," Hawkins said.

Southern Baptist church ministers and staff have until May 31 to complete the online survey. Survey results will be released this summer. Survey participants will receive advance notification of the results and can begin to access the data upon notice.

Survey participants will be entered for a chance to win an iPad. For contest information visit GuideStone.org.

Survey results are not reported individually. Compensation and benefit information also can be submitted anonymously. (GuideStone)

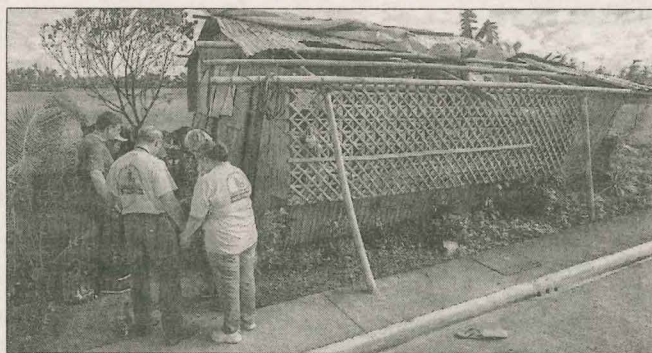
After Philippines typhoon, Baptists plan long-term assistance

By Mark Kelly

Cebu City, Philippines—While some disaster-response organizations are pulling out of Typhoon Haiyan relief efforts in the Philippines, Southern Baptists remain on the ground, helping neglected communities rebuild homes, schools and livelihoods.

Disaster response organizations in five Southern Baptist state conventions have each adopted an area of the Philippines, said Jeff Palmer, executive director of Baptist Global Response. Seven teams of volunteers already have served, and as many as 10 more could be scheduled in the next month.

"This is a long-term response, and the need is massive. We are initiating large-scale work with communities, local believers and volunteers and will be constantly assessing and gauging the effectiveness of our choices," Palmer said. "Please continue to pray for families in need in the Philippines. Pray for our team members and volunteers as they help in the face of overwhelming needs. Pray that we choose the most strategic



Disaster relief volunteers from the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention visited families whose homes and livelihoods were disrupted by Typhoon Haiyan. The volunteers listened to the families' heartbreaking stories and prayed with them, then distributed badly needed food and building supplies. (BGR)

and effective places to work that truly help people physically and spiritually."

Southern Baptists have donated about \$1.3 million for the relief effort through the International Mission Board and BGR. The main priorities in the work are repair and construction of houses and schools, along with water systems.

IMB has arranged for a volunteer coordinator to be assigned to the recovery. When that person begins work in mid-to late-February, the number of volunteers from the United States involved in the effort can be greatly expanded, Palmer said.

The task ahead is enormous, said a BGR partner who recently flew into Tacloban, a city of 220,000 that took the brunt of Haiyan's 195-mph winds Nov. 7.

"BGR is gearing up for long-term development work," said the partner, who could not be named for security reasons. "There is much work to do as we survey areas farther from town that have been neglected, but desperately need help."

More than two months after the storm, BGR partners reported Tacloban is returning to life, but there are still many visible signs of damage.

"One restaurant owner told us the typhoon and flooding was bad, but even worse was the damage done by looters right after the storm," the partner said.

A base of operations for the recovery effort has been established in Cebu City, Palmer said, from which five areas of work are being coordinated. Missouri Baptist Convention volunteers are working on Gibitngil Island; the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention is focused on Panay Island; California Southern Baptist Convention teams will work in

Ormoc; Tennessee Baptists are preparing to work on northern Cebu Island; and Kansas-Nebraska Southern Baptists are planning to set up an operations base in Tacloban.

In the fishing community of Agojo on northern Panay Island, a full 75 percent of the homes were damaged or destroyed in the storm, said Ben Wolf, who with his wife, Pam, directs BGR work in Asia Rim.

To help with home reconstruction, BGR has designed a housing kit that will put up a small, wood-framed shelter on stilts for about \$250, Palmer said. In some locations, construction will be done with local bamboo or local lumber.

On Gibitngil Island, bags of cement have been shipped from Cebu, and concrete blocks are being manufactured on site to replace a school building that was completely destroyed. A three-room school building has been re-roofed, and the school's water retention system has been restored and expanded. Volunteers from California and Louisiana have helped with that effort.

Palmer voiced gratitude "to all those who have helped in this response, both those who have worked so hard in the Philippines and those who continue to give generously to make this effort possible." He also lauded "the teamwork of those involved and the patience of those wanting to get involved."

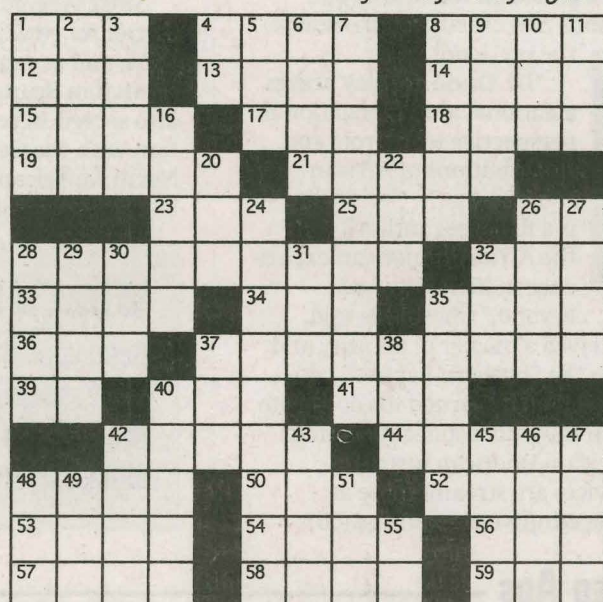
"While no response is perfect, we are in a good place to maximize our impact in the Philippines," Palmer said. (BP)

To become involved in post-typhoon recovery in the Philippines, go to "Funding Human Needs" to connect to IMB's General Relief Fund.

Bible Crosswords

Across

- 1 Atlas and Apennines (abbr.)
- 4 "Is there no _____ in Gilead?" (Jeremiah 8:22)
- 8 Son of Omri; notoriously evil king
- 12 Gershwain
- 13 Great Lake
- 14 KJV verb
- 15 Complete collections
- 17 "Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an _____ together" (Deuteronomy 22:10)
- 18 Curtain or horse
- 19 Canines, for example
- 21 Stage direction
- 23 Legal object
- 25 Chemical suffix
- 26 Certain physician (abbr.)
- 28 "The yoke shall be destroyed because of the _____" (Isaiah 10:27)
- 32 _____ ear
- 33 "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also _____" (Galatians 6:7)
- 34 Energy unit
- 35 Mad at
- 36 "They _____ my path, they set for-ward my calamity" (Job 30:13)
- 37 "There were set there six _____ of stone" (John 2:6)
- 39 Elder (abbr.)
- 40 "The everlasting _____, the Lord" (Isaiah 40:28)
- 41 One fleet of foot in the forest
- 42 Grand _____ auto
- 44 "Let them praise his name in the _____" (Psalm 149:3)
- 48 "_____ went before the ark" (2 Samuel 6:4)
- 50 Linking verb

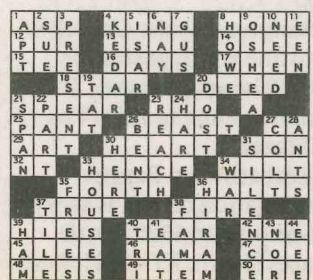


#187

- 52 "_____ my lips"
- 53 Works like a gem
- 54 Steadfast
- 56 KJV grain
- 57 Aid's partner
- 58 Saline drop
- 59 "When we came to the _____, that we opened our sacks" (Genesis 43:21)

Down

- 1 "There went up a _____ from the earth and watered" (Genesis 2:6)
- 2 Birch or ginkgo
- 3 Make contented
- 4 "_____ it ever so humble ..."
- 5 Son of Jether (1 Chronicles 7:38)
- 6 Feminine name
- 7 "A thorn in the flesh, the _____ of Satan" (2 Corinthians 12:7)
- 8 "_____ in me, and I in you" (John 15:4)
- 9 Animal not to be eaten (Deuteronomy 14:7)
- 10 Hubbub
- 11 Actor Cross
- 16 Sunset, for one
- 20 Coop dowager
- 22 Participle suffix
- 24 Hardly fickle
- 26 Gossip, literally (colloq.)
- 27 Addition column
- 28 "God is thy refuge, and under-neath are the everlasting _____" (Deuteronomy 33:27)
- 29 "Thou art _____, O Lord" (Psalm 119:151)
- 30 Paddle
- 31 NYC subway
- 32 "Is any thing _____ hard for the Lord?" (Genesis 18:14)
- 35 Asparagus unit
- 37 Sorrow
- 38 "The staff of his shoulder, the _____ of his oppressor" (Isaiah 9:4)
- 40 "The Holy _____ shall come upon thee" (Luke 1:35)
- 42 _____ and again
- 43 Colorfast
- 45 Father of Salathiel (Luke 3:27)
- 46 "Whosoever slayeth _____, vengeance shall be taken on him" (Genesis 4:15)
- 47 Idyllic spot
- 48 Exclamation
- 49 Where the action is
- 51 Baseball stat.
- 55 Son of Judah (1 Chronicles 2:3)



By Evelyn Boyington

Time, talents & treasures

KBF helps couple plan for future giving to children and church

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 administration 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 is a couple with two adult children who wanted to use appreciated assets to honor the Lord with a legacy gift for the benefit of their church as well as assist their adult children in financing the cost of their graduate studies.

With the assistance of our trust counsel, Laurie Valentine, this couple established an endowment fund with the KBF that will provide perpetual financial support in perpetuity for their church. In addition, they established a short-term charitable remainder trust with the KBF as trustee that provided financial assistance to their two children to complete their graduate studies, and following their graduation, the remainder of the trust assets was added to the endowment fund they estab-

lished for the church.

As a way to maximize the timing of the tax advantages of donating appreciated assets, this couple utilizes a donor advised fund with the KBF from which they make distributions periodically to

the charitable causes that are near and dear to their hearts.

Here's how they described their involvement with the KBF staff: "we were raised in Christian families that taught us the stewardship of time, talents and treasures was what God expected. When God blessed us with a financial benefit, we turned to the KBF because we were aware of its faith-based mission, its staff, which was

competent, open, honest and with a proven reputation. They presented us with ways to provide for our children's education, to help our church in a perpetual way and to benefit other charitable organizations. We have been able to generate larger than expected gifts because of the tax benefits derived from the gift ideas suggested by the KBF staff, who were knowledgeable professionals and able to explain clearly the different giving options."

Please give us the privilege of assisting you in stewarding out of the "treasures" the Lord has entrusted to you.

Ky. Baptist Foundation



Barry Allen

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



February

- 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.

March

- 4 Power Lunch, KBC Building, Louisville.
- 6 Seminary for a Day, Trace Creek Baptist Church, Mayfield.
- 7 Disaster Relief Chaplaincy Training, First Baptist Church, Richmond.
- 8 Vacation Bible School Clinic, Bellevue Baptist Church, Owensboro.
- 8 Disaster Relief Training, First Baptist Church, Richmond.
- 11 Transitional Interim Pastor Training, Warren Baptist Association, Bowling Green.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

CECILIA—Louie Williams has been called as pastor of Franklin Crossroads.

ELIZABETHTOWN—Randy Logsdon has been called as pastor of Berean Church.

FERGUSON—Ferguson Church will hold a youth revival with God's Graffiti, by **Tim Bertram**, Feb. 9, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m., and Feb. 10-12, 7 p.m., and **Uncaged Lion** in concert. For more information, call (606) 679-1690. **Jason Moore** is pastor.

HUSTONVILLE—South Fork Church will hold an ordination service for **Kevin Jones** and **Andrew McGinnis** Feb. 9, 2 p.m.

LOUISVILLE—Cloverleaf Church will hold Southern Gospel Music Concert with **Sons of Liberty** in concert Feb. 8, 7 p.m. For more information, call (502) 367-0218. **Geoffrey Lacefield** is pastor.

Fern Creek will hold Cups of Love Tea Party Feb. 8, 11 a.m., for children ages 2 through kindergarten. **Linda Popham** is pastor.

Hurstbourne Church will hold Knit Together Feb. 10, 7 p.m.

Parkland Church will hold family movie night Feb. 7, 7 p.m., in which "Despicable Me 2" will be shown. Parkland Church also will hold a parents seminar Feb. 12, 6 p.m. **Tom Curry** is pastor.

MOUNT WASHINGTON—First Church will hold a Valentine brunch called "Spiration" for moms and their children, Feb. 15, 9:30 a.m. **Billy Compton** is pastor.

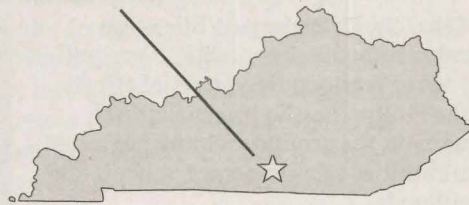
RADCLIFF—Farron Knopp has been called as pastor of Mill Creek Church.

SOMERSET—Howard Floss, co-author of "Breaking the Anger Circle" with **Joel Patton**, is available to speak to your church. For more information, call (606) 416-8307.

VERSAILLES—Versailles Church will hold a deacon ordination for **Rob Hodge**, Feb. 9, 5 p.m. **Michael Cabell** is pastor.

Spotlight on ...

BREEDING



Harrods Fork Church will hold "Service with a Vision," a ladies retreat, Feb. 8, 10 a.m., with guest speakers **Marsha Woodrum** and **Michelle Eastham**. **Jeffery Eastham** is pastor.

Stokes new Elkhorn DOM

Lexington—David Stokes, a longtime pastor and evangelist in Kentucky and Georgia, has been installed as director of missions of the Elkhorn Baptist Association.

Stokes, 55, a Florida native, holds a bachelor's degree from Mercer University in Atlanta and a master's degree in missions from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He served as senior pastor of The Baptist Church at Andover in Lexington since 2008 and was pastor of Bardstown Baptist Church from 2004-2008.

Stokes served as an evangelist and church starter for New Hope Ministries from 2002-2004, and as senior pastor of Norwich Baptist Church in Brunswick, Ga., from 1992-2002. He also served 10 years in a jointly funded position with the Georgia Baptist Convention and North American Mission Board in Atlanta beginning in 1982.

What's happening?

Send your church news and association events to:
Mountains to the Mississippi
sitha.salyers@westernrecorder.org

Campbellsville honors Black History Month with speakers

By Mikayla Smith

Campbellsville—As part of Campbellsville University's celebration of Black History Month, David Emmanuel Goatley, executive secretary-treasurer of the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention, and Gerald Smith, associate professor of African-American history and director of the African-American Studies and Research Program at the University of Kentucky, will be featured speakers during February.

Goatley, former pastor of First Baptist Church in Campbellsville, will speak on Feb. 12, 10 a.m., in the Ransdell Chapel during the university's regular chapel services.

Smith will be the featured speaker at the Kentucky Heartland Institute on Public Policy event Feb. 24, 5 p.m., at the Badgett Academic

Support Center.

"We are pleased to be hosting two excellent speakers as part of Campbellsville University's Black History Month emphasis," John Chowning, vice president for church and external relations and executive assistant to the president, said.

"Dr. David Goatley brings a national and international perspective to the role and contributions of African-Americans. Dr. Gerald Smith is a foremost authority on the African-American experience in Kentucky and beyond," Chowning said.

Goatley received a master of divinity and doctorate from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Smith earned his doctorate in history from UK with a concentration in urban and African-American history.

Chapel services are streamed live at campbellsville.edu/live-streaming. (CU)



David Goatley



Gerald Smith

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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 fbcbrogary@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 fbcbrogary@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.

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: 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: Cedar Creek Baptist Church (Louisville) is seeking to fill the position of a part-time worship leader (including a small band). Additional leadership of adult choir is preferable. Church musical style is blended. Experience preferred. Send resumé to CCBC, ATTN: Music Search Committee, 7709 Bardstown Road, Louisville, KY 40291, or email:

cedarcreekbc@gmail.com. Deadline for submission: Feb. 19.

SEEKING: Chief executive officer wanted. Leader in addiction treatment field with proven track record is looking for an energetic, experienced, ministry-minded, business professional. We manage 8 percent of Kentucky's accredited long-term residential treatment beds. With a budget in the upper six figures, this opportunity is a once in a lifetime chance to make an incredible difference in the lives of families all over the country. This business/ministry model is poised to become a standard of excellence in treatment. We are looking for that special someone to see this ministry through its next phases of phenomenal predicted growth. If you have a proven track record of excellence in leadership and are interested in this opportunity, send your resumé via email to kosborn@lexlf.org. Salary is negotiable.

SEEKING: Hughesville Baptist Church, Hughesville, Md., is accepting resumes for a senior pastor who can lead our family of God in southern Maryland. For more information and to apply, visit our website at hughesvillebaptist.com. Applications should be submitted to Hughesville Baptist Church, Attn: PSC, P.O. Box 550, Hughesville, MD 20637, or email to

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psc.chair@hughesvillebaptist.com by March 15 for priority consideration.

SEEKING: Woodhaven Baptist Church, Burlington, is seeking a full-time, bivocational pastor for a small, but growing church. If interested, contact Jack at jackandlindalawrence@gmail.com or (859) 586-6542.

SEEKING: Irvington Baptist Church is seeking a part-time youth pastor for approximately 20 hours per week. If interested, email resumé to mint01@bbtel.com by March 1.

SEEKING: Elizabethtown Baptist Church, a congregation of 280, is seeking a pastor. Send resumé to 1525 North Miles St., Elizabethtown, KY 42701. Resumes accepted until March 15.

Seahawk players seek to be champs beyond Super Bowl

By Shawn Hendricks

Newark, N.J.—Surrounded by reporters, several Seahawks players were enjoying their moment on one of the biggest stages in sports to share their faith in Jesus.

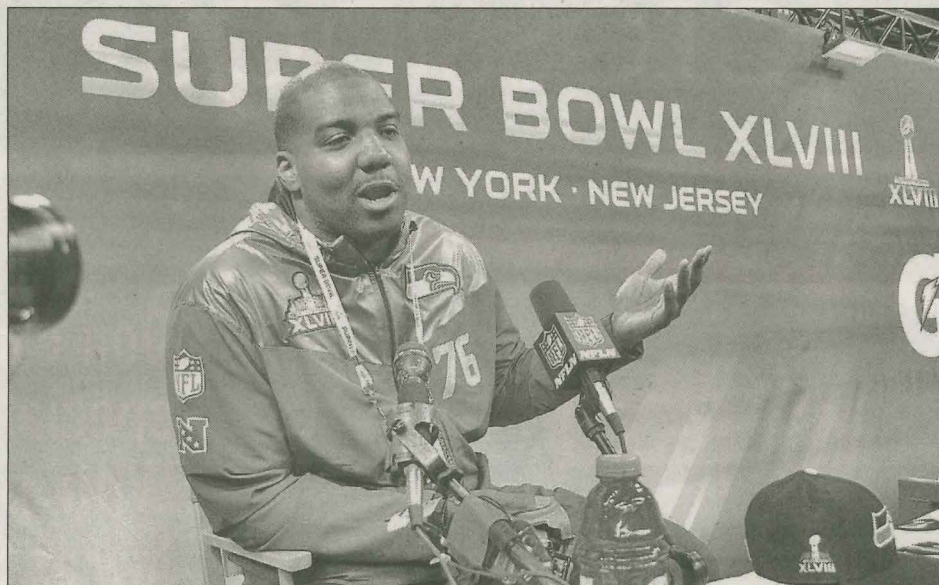
"God has me here for a very particular reason," Russell Wilson, the Seahawk's star quarterback, said as he sat in the middle of cameras and microphones at the Prudential Center in Newark, New Jersey.

"Just to be here in front of all these people, to go against the odds when everybody told me I couldn't. That's all God. That's not me," Wilson, who at 5-11 has been criticized in the past for his size and ability, said Jan. 28. "My faith ... brought me a long way."

In October, Wilson and several other Seahawks—Russell Okung, Chris Maragos, Clint Gresham and defen-



"God has me here for a very particular reason," Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson told reporters Jan. 28 (Shawn Hendricks/BP)



"Salvation is free for all of you. I'm a living testament that it's real," Russell Okung, the Seahawks left tackle said Jan. 28 during Super Bowl media day at the Prudential Center in Newark, N.J. Photo by Shawn Hendricks/BP

sive passing game coordinator coach Rocky Seto and running backs coach Sherman Smith—released a 15-minute DVD called "The Making of a Champion." Each shared their personal testimony and how their faith in Jesus impacts them on and off the field. The video can be viewed on Youtube and at makingofachampion.org.

After securing their spot in the Super Bowl, Seahawks long snapper Clint Gresham tweeted, "Hey pastors, if you are looking for a great evangelism tool, play @makingofaCHAMP for your Super Bowl halftime show!!#moac."

Gresham, who described his faith as "everything to me," said he remembers a time of emptiness in his life.

"God came in and cleaned me up and He gave me better love. I just want to tell as many people about that as I can," Gresham said.

Russell Okung, the Seahawk's left tackle, nearly gave an altar call during his time with reporters on media day.

"If you guys would have a relationship with Him, I'll tell you one thing: He saves. Jesus saves," said Okung.

"He's everything. He's better than an abuse, better than any history you

(left) behind. He's better than all of those things. It's a free gift. Salvation is free for all of you. I'm a living testament that it's real."

In the video, Okung shared about growing up in a single-parent home and never meeting his father who died when he was a young boy. Okung told reporters he believes God has blessed him with this opportunity to share the gospel and impact lives.

"I look back over where I come from and I realize it's nothing but God, nothing but Jesus," Okung said. "I feel like there is no coincidence. I feel like we've all been given a platform in some fashion and some way. It needs to be used. It needs to be used to bring glory back, to give it all back to God. To give it all back to Him."

Chris Maragos, a backup free safety who also is in the video, pulled a small stack of the DVDs out of his pocket and handed them to reporters.

"(God has) been able to open a lot of doors for us," Maragos, a former San Francisco 49er in his fourth year of the NFL, said. "Not only to talk about our faith, but also go and play a game that we love. For us, we need to be in a position where we're prepared to step through those doors when He's opened them."

"As big as this stage is, it's pretty minute compared to what and who God is and what He's been able to do on the cross for us," Maragos said. "It's fun to be able to highlight how good God's been in our life." (BP)

Bronco leans on faith, team after diagnosis

By Shawn Hendricks

Newark, N.J.—Jacob Tamme is used to intense competition. He's taken hard hits on the football field during his six years in the NFL. But when his wife Allison was diagnosed with thyroid cancer last year, the Denver Bronco said he was forced to rely on his Christian faith more than ever.

"My faith has been key," Tamme said Jan. 28 as reporters gathered around him and other players at the Prudential Center in Newark, N.J., for media day during Super Bowl week.

Tamme said he has seen how his faith also has strengthened him through challenges on the football field.

In his second season as a Bronco, Tamme has been called on at key moments to fill in for Pro Bowl player Julius Thomas, who struggled with a knee injury this season.

"We've gone through a lot as a team this year," Tamme said. "From all sorts of things ... to being out, to losing players to injury. I think the great teams are the ones that can do what we've done and overcome those things ... really come together as a team and support each other."

Having a tight-knit group of fellow believers who lean on prayer has helped, the former standout from the University of Kentucky said.

"We have a lot of guys on the team that are men of faith and guys who pray together and believe that there is

power in that," Tamme said. "We have a good group, a solid foundation as a team."

One teammate who Tamme pointed out as a spiritual leader is quarterback Peyton Manning. While Manning is known for keeping conversations with the media on football, Tamme described him as a solid example of how a player should handle himself on and off the field.

"Peyton as a leader is as good as it gets," he said. "He leads in a way that not a lot of guys are able to do. He is certainly a man of faith."

In the book "Manning," published

in 2001, the Bronco quarterback gave a rare glimpse of his faith.

"My faith has been number one since I was 13," Manning wrote. "Some players get more vocal about it ... and some point to heaven after scoring a touchdown and praise God after games. I have no problem with that. But I don't do it, and don't think it makes me any less a Christian. I just want my actions to speak louder, and I don't want to be more of a target for criticism. ... My faith doesn't make me perfect, it makes me forgiven."

Tamme said Manning is just one example of the many solid Christian



Jacob Tamme, Denver Bronco tight end, shared how his faith helps him through the challenges that come as a NFL player on and off the field. One of those challenges involved his wife Allison being diagnosed last year with thyroid cancer. (Shawn Hendricks/BP)



Peyton Manning (above), Denver's star quarterback, answers questions during Super Bowl media day Jan. 28 in Newark, N.J. Jacob Tamme, Denver's backup tight end who shared about his relationship with Christ, described Manning as a "man of faith." (Shawn Hendricks/BP)

athletes in the NFL.

"It's inspiring to get together with these guys," Tamme said.

While having the support of fellow Christian athletes is important, Tamme also pointed to the Bible as a source of strength and guidance.

"For me the Bible is the rock and the foundation of God's word," he said. "Just to have that foundation every morning is a discipline that I'm really working on."

"To be a part of a team like this has been more than I've ever dreamed of as a kid, to play in two Super Bowls in six years," he added. "To have a chance now to win one and get that ring—it's been a special year." (BP)



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