

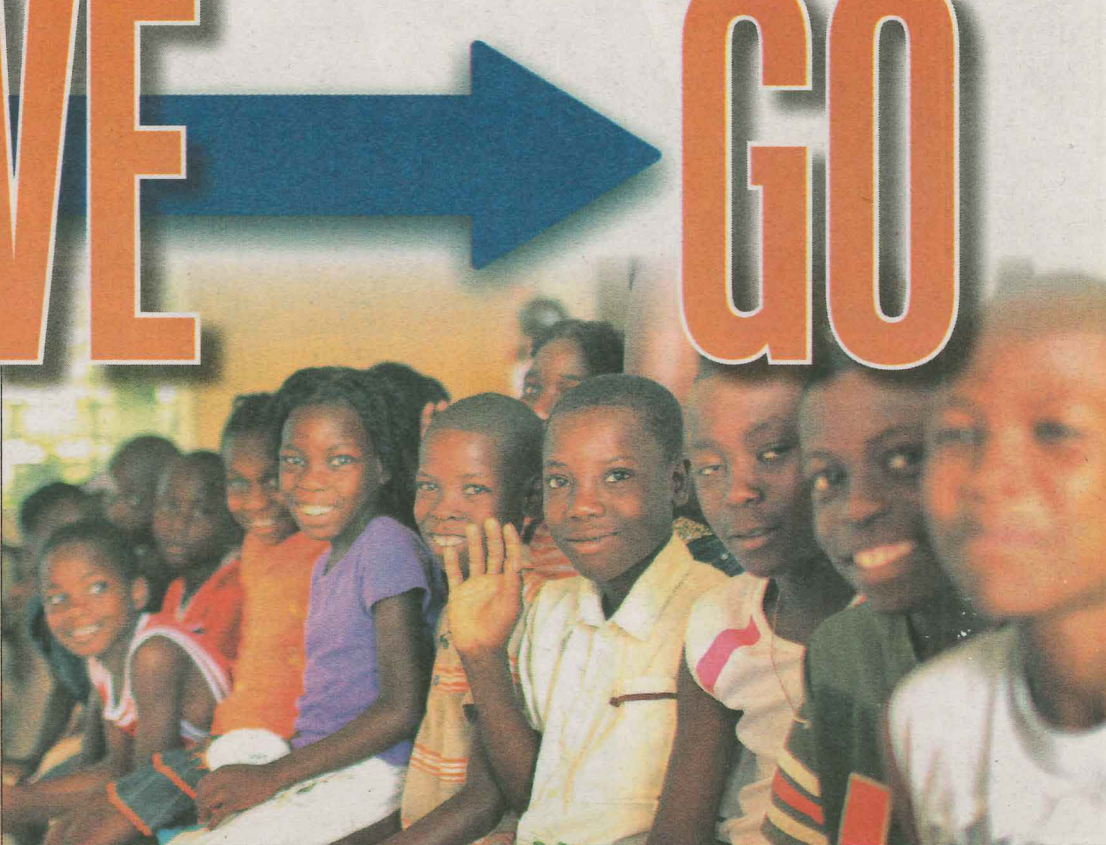
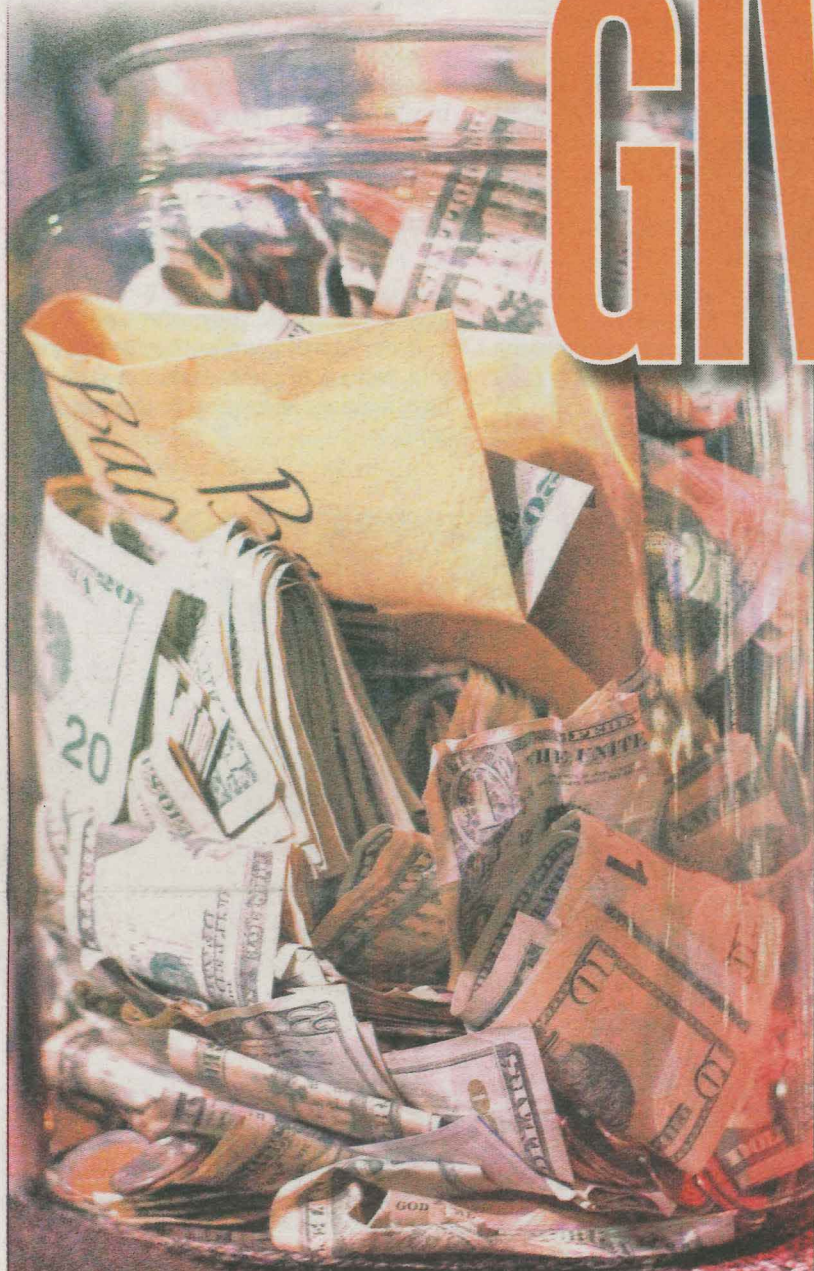
WESTERN Recorder

July 1, 2014

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 188, Issue 25

GIVE → GO



Crossings campers top \$1 million in missions giving

By Drew Nichter

Bagdad—One by one, students step forward to give. Coins and crumpled bills spill from plastic jars, are sealed inside envelopes—even pulled from sweaty baseball caps.

It is money earned from mowing yards, washing cars, selling brownies, walking dogs and babysitting.

They are gifts given with a desire to make a difference in the lives of students far away,

born at the same time but in very dissimilar surroundings and conditions. They are, literally and figuratively, a world apart.

Those worlds now come together quite often—students face to face, connected via technology and a long road of hard-earned dollar bills: 1 million of them, in fact.

Since its inception, Crossings has challenged its summer campers each week to sacrifice \$20 for their own wants—T-shirts, snacks, sodas—to

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Kentucky Changers New era, same impact

By Drew Nichter

Lawrenceburg—It certainly looks the same: Hundreds of student and adult volunteers fan out each day to repair homes—sweating together, hammering together and most importantly, sharing the gospel together in order to see Kentuckians' lives changed for eternity.

It looks like the same-old Kentucky Changers, but the ministry has certainly entered a new era.

The summer missions endeavor kicked off its 21st summer in June under the direction of Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union, which took over the min-

istry last September.

Responsibility for Kentucky Changers shifted to Crossings Ministries in 2012 as part of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's staff overhaul. Crossings managed Changers for one summer before approaching Kentucky WMU about taking it over.

Peggy Murphy, who had helped coordinate Kentucky Changers since 2002 through the KBC's former Baptist Men on Mission department, was hired by WMU to lead the ministry once again.

And she could not be more excited about it.

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On the inside...

The United States Supreme Court rules in favor of Hobby Lobby in its challenge to the federal health care law.



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Pastor's congressional connection leads to meeting with world leader



First Baptist Church of Somerset Pastor French Harmon (left) shakes hands with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at a meeting Harmon and Rep. Hal Rogers (right) attended with Israeli leaders as part of a congressional delegation to the country. Harmon served as the group's "spiritual chaplain" at the invitation of Rogers, a longtime member of First Baptist, Somerset.

Jerusalem—Having a United States congressman in the congregation can spawn some rather unique experiences for a pastor; like, say, meeting the prime minister of Israel.

French Harmon shared a few moments with Benjamin Netanyahu earlier this year as part of a congressional delegation to Israel for an educational seminar. Harmon was invited along as a "spiritual chaplain," the guest of Rep. Hal Rogers, a longtime member of First Baptist Church of Somerset where Harmon is pastor.

Rogers, Harmon and five other U.S. representatives traveled to Israel through the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, a bipartisan group that lobbies the U.S. government to support pro-Israel policies.

On the trip, Harmon said he and others learned "about the opportunities and

risks involved with the Israeli-American relationship." The delegation also visited several Holy Land sites.

The highlight, though, was meeting Prime Minister Netanyahu in his personal office, Harmon said.

"We had a chance to talk to the prime minister about Christians and how we pray for the peace in Jerusalem and how we are very supportive of what's going on in the country," Harmon recalled. "He seemed to be very receptive to that."

Harmon said he has led his church to better understand Israel and its impact on Christ followers. First Baptist, Somerset, hosts yearly trips to the Holy Land, offering members a "spiritual pilgrimage" opportunity, the pastor said.

"The Jewish people—they're our kinfolk. Jesus was a Jew," Harmon said. "We have a lot of connection to that country." (WR)



Above: Pat Woods' Graefenburg home was a hub of activity last week as about a dozen Kentucky Changers' volunteers installed a new roof, built a deck on the back and replaced windows and doors. Woods has lived at the home—street No. 316—for 34 years. She called the student and adult volunteers who spent the better part of four days at her home a "blessing." **From page 1, at left:** Kristen Wood (right), a member of Graefenburg Baptist Church, holds a 2-by-4 in place while Nathan Henderson, from CrossPoint Community Church in Maysville, traces a stair template to be used as part of the new deck on Woods' home. **From page 1, at right:** Kyle Eades, also from Graefenburg Baptist, concentrates as he nails down a shingle on the new roof of Woods' home. (Photos by Drew Nichter)

Changers

Continued from page 1

The WMU connection is "opening new doors" for Kentucky Changers, Murphy said, praising Executive Director Joy Bolton for promoting it through WMU channels.

Murphy said the WMU effect has already been felt. Three volunteer groups signed up for the summer projects after hearing about them at the organization's annual meeting in April.

Pastor Bill Houpt said he expects the word about Changers to spread quickly, especially among those smaller churches without a full- or even part-time youth minister. But many of them have WMU, he pointed out.

Last week, 250 students and adults took on 21 projects across Frankfort, Lawrenceburg and Graefenburg. Work at the homes included roofing, painting, deck construction, door and window replacement—even a little demolition work.

Anderson County High School served

as the Changers' home base for the week, but the real action was at the job sites. Houpt visited many of the homes and said, by mid-week, several students had made decisions for Christ.

"It's called Kentucky Changers, but the big change is in them," said Houpt, pastor of Little River Baptist Church in Herndon.

"Whatever we do here, in 50 years, will be gone. But what they've done for Christ will last forever," he said.

Pat Woods' Graefenburg home was crawling with teenagers—on the roof, on the porch, in the backyard. Her home of 34 years got a new roof, deck, windows and stairs.

There's also a new flower shelf painted with a snippet from her favorite verse, Psalm 23:1, "The Lord is my shepherd."

"It's just wonderful. That's all I can say. It's just a blessing," she said.

'More than just one week'

Through each week of Kentucky Changers, students "have their hearts broken for people," Houpt said. That has

prompted many students to perpetuate that giving spirit in their own hometown communities.

"It's more than just one week," he said. "It carries on for years and years."

That impact has even extended to "the nations," Murphy said a couple who met on a Kentucky Changers crew five years ago are now overseas missionaries with the International Mission Board.

"He wrote me the sweetest email two years ago and said, 'Changers is what changed my life,'" Murphy recalled.

Two of this summer's four Kentucky Changers projects are now in the books. The Hopkinsville project in early June attracted 234 participants. Nearly 400 volunteers are ready to get to work in Richmond and Louisville in the coming weeks.

Attendance at this year's projects is down, Murphy said, but she expects a strong bounce-back in 2015 as WMU church groups statewide have even more time to spread the Kentucky Changers message. "I think it's going to be great." (WR)



Top: Hailey Wood, from Graefenburg Baptist, paints a cross and excerpt from Psalm 23:1 on a flower shelf for Pat Woods' home.

Center: Chloe Liess hammers home a shingle on Woods' new roof. Chloe's father, Tony, is pastor of First Baptist Church of Maysville and served as crew chief at the Woods' home project.

Bottom: Woods (left), Kentucky Changers Coordinator Peggy Murphy and Lucy Lucas, a volunteer from Westport Baptist Church, chat for a moment. Murphy was hired by Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union last November to lead Kentucky Changers.

U.S. Supreme Court rules in favor of Hobby Lobby

Washington—The Supreme Court June 30 sided with the evangelical owners of Hobby Lobby Stores Inc., ruling 5-4 that the arts-and-crafts chain does not have to offer insurance for types of birth control that conflict with company owners' religious beliefs.

Beyond the specifics of the Hobby Lobby case before them, the justices broke new legal ground by affirming that corporations, not just individual Americans or religious nonprofits, may claim religious rights.

Does the decision mean, however, that the religious beliefs of business owners stand paramount? That they are more important than a female employee's right to choose from the full array of birth-control methods that are allowed under the Affordable Care Act? Or that a business owner may invoke his religious rights to deny service to a gay couple?

Not necessarily, legal experts say.

The decision for Hobby Lobby, the justices made clear, applies to privately held companies such as Hobby Lobby—not vast publicly held corporations, for which the owners' religious beliefs would be difficult to discern.

But in general, the ruling—the most anticipated in the high court's current session—is a victory for conservatives who had hoped the justices would find that the federal government had tread too heavily on the Constitution's guarantee of free exercise of religion.

"This case demonstrates that Americans don't give up their religious freedom when they open a family business," said Lori Windham, senior counsel at the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which represents Hobby Lobby. "The court understands that religion isn't limited to what you do in a synagogue on Saturday or a church on Sunday."



Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Committee, presents an award to the Green family June 11 at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting. The family, founders of the arts-and-crafts chain Hobby Lobby, successfully fought in court the Obama administration's contraception mandate requiring employers to provide health insurance covering medical technologies that can cause the death of an unborn child. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the company's favor June 30. (Photo by Van Payne)

What the majority opinion says:

- The 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which sets a high bar for any federal law that restricts religious practice, can be invoked by closely held for-profit businesses.

- Though employers at such companies cannot be forced to insure for contraception that conflicts with their religious beliefs, that doesn't mean that any religious employer can refuse to provide anything that doesn't meet their personal religious tests—blood transfusions or vaccinations, for example.

- The government could have found a way to achieve the goals of the act's so-called contraception mandate in a way that imposed less on religious rights, an RFRA requirement.

Lawyers for Hobby Lobby argued that the Affordable Care Act, President Obama's landmark health care law, had overstepped when it required the company and another owned by a Mennonite family—Conestoga Wood Specialties Corp.—to insure employees for birth control the companies owners found contrary to their Christian beliefs. (RNS)

Southern Baptists react to the Hobby Lobby decision

"This is an exhilarating victory for religious freedom. The Greens refused to render to Caesar that which did not belong to him and the Supreme Court agreed.

"As a Baptist, I am encouraged that our ancestors' struggle for the First Amendment has been vindicated. This is as close as a Southern Baptist gets to dancing in the streets with joy."

Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

"The major issue in this case was, and is, religious liberty as today's decision makes very clear. The debate over contraception will continue, but the debate over religious liberty has been significantly strengthened and clarified by this landmark Supreme Court ruling."

Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

"It is an absolute victory for the proponents of religious liberty. I am thankful that both common sense and conscience have seen a victory in a day where such victories are rare. For those who are strongly pro-life, I think this is a great day."

Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee

Former KBC-affiliated church to perform same-sex weddings for its members

Louisville—A former Kentucky Baptist church will perform weddings for same-sex couples who are members of the church.

Louisville's Highland Baptist Church announced recently its deacons approved a request from a homosexual couple to be married at the church.

Same-sex marriage is not legal in Kentucky. However, the state has challenged a federal judge's ruling that it must recognize all such unions performed in other states. The Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals will hear Kentucky's case Aug. 6, along with arguments on gay marriage laws in Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee.

Meanwhile, a federal judge struck down Indiana's same-sex marriage ban June 25.

Highland Baptist has also ordained gays and lesbians as ministers and deacons.

In a written statement, Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Director Paul Chitwood called Highland's

decision to allow same-sex weddings "predictable," saying the church has "surrendered its commitment to the clear biblical teaching on homosexuality."

Highland ended its affiliation with the Kentucky and Southern Baptist conventions in 2009, and left the Louisville-based Long Run Baptist Association two years later.

The SBC and KBC have both taken strong stances against same-sex marriage and its legalization on state and federal levels. The SBC has adopted four resolutions opposing the practice since 2003, the most recent in 2012. The KBC also adopted a 2012 resolution affirming the "traditional definition of marriage as a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman."

The situation at Highland "presents a strong case for the need of Kentucky Baptists to state clearly what we, as a convention of churches, believe on matters of human sexuality," Chitwood said. (WR)

Court unanimously sides with pro-lifers in free speech decision

Washington—The U.S. Supreme Court delivered a unanimous victory for the free-speech rights of peaceful pro-life advocates outside abortion clinics.

The high court last week struck down a Massachusetts law mandating a 35-foot buffer zone around abortion center entrances and driveways in which pro-life activity was barred. In their 9-0 decision, the justices ruled the 2007 law violated the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, thereby reversing a federal appeals court opinion.

In the court's opinion June 26, Chief Justice John Roberts said Massachusetts took "the extreme step of closing a substantial portion of a traditional public forum to all speakers" in enacting the buffer zones. The law, which was a wide ban on entrance into the zones with exceptions for specified groups, such as abortion clinic employees, "imposed serious burdens" on the speech of pro-lifers, he wrote.

Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, described the ruling as "a good decision," adding he was pleased it was unanimous.

"I'm thankful for the Supreme Court doing the right thing, recognizing freedom of speech and freedom of dissent," Moore said in a written statement. "Those of us who are pro-life have constitutional guarantees embedded in the First Amendment, along with everyone else."

Mark Rienzi, who argued on behalf of Eleanor McCullen, who does sidewalk counseling in Boston, said the court's opinion "has affirmed a critical freedom that has been an essential part of American life since the nation's founding."

"Americans have the freedom to talk to whomever they please on public sidewalks," Rienzi said. "That includes peaceful pro-lifers like Eleanor McCullen, who just wants to offer information and help to women who would like it."

Shawn Carney, campaign director of 40 Days for Life, said the decision should encourage his organization's efforts in Massachusetts. "We are hopeful that the chilling effect this law has had—not only in Massachusetts but also in other areas where such legislation has been proposed—will quickly begin to thaw in the wake of" the decision, he said. (BP)

Reflecting on last 3 years

This month, I begin my fourth year as the executive director-treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. Reflecting upon three years quickly gone by, I am humbled by the privilege God is allowing me to serve our KBC churches.

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

Revelation 19:7 says of the Lord's church upon his return, "His Bride has made herself ready." I believe one of the primary roles of pastors and the denominational missionaries who serve them is to ensure the local church is healthy, i.e., "has made herself ready," when Christ comes to claim her. I am grateful to be a part of making sure that is the case in Kentucky.

As a ministry update, the KBC Mission Board staff members are committed to doing more with less. Over the past five years, ongoing economic struggles and a bold commitment to get as much of our missions dollars as possible to the overseas mission fields have required us to make significant personnel reductions. We have experienced a 40 percent decrease in staff, reducing our personnel budget by approximately \$1 million.

On the upside, KBC churches now send a higher percentage of their Cooperative Program dollars to the International Mission Board than any other state convention, except the newly formed Southern Baptists of Texas Convention.

Even as we have made sacrifices for the sake of getting the gospel to the nations (Matthew 28:19-20), we have seen a more than 300 percent increase in salvations on college and university campuses across the state through the work of our KBC campus missionaries. We are also anticipating potentially doubling the number of church plants in Kentucky this coming year. And we are making significantly more contacts with KBC churches through our church consulting and revitalization team in an effort to strengthen their ministry.

Another area in which we have ramped up our efforts is in helping churches navigate the rapid changes in our culture. Making use of influence in Frankfort afforded to us by the significant population segment Baptists comprise in Kentucky has given us tremendous opportunities. We have been able to head off gambling expansion, continue to advocate for an unborn child's right to live, and attempt to stymie ongoing threats to religious liberty made by homosexual activists.

Our "Protecting Biblical Marriage" conference in May drew approximately 600 in attendance and 500 unique groups and/or individuals watching online, helping churches position themselves to deal with the coming challenges as marriage is redefined by federal courts and the Obama administration.

Obviously, I am very proud of the work of your Mission Board staff. One of the greatest privileges of my life is to serve alongside them and provide leadership to them. Thank you, Kentucky Baptists, for allowing me that privilege.

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

First scramble a success for Oneida's golfers

On a steamy but otherwise gorgeous Friday morning, 56 golfers teed off at Oneida Baptist Institute's inaugural alumni and friends golf scramble at Crooked Creek Golf Club near London. The charity event on one of the state's beautiful and challenging courses raised approximately \$2,500 for the boarding school nestled in the eastern Kentucky mountains, which plans to use the funds to re-launch its golf team.

Proceeds will be used to purchase golf equipment, shirts and hats for the team's players and pay for use of a local golf course during its first season. Oneida President Larry Gritton told the group of golfers gathered beneath the clubhouse's balcony, eagerly awaiting the scramble's start in their carts.



After Thought

By Todd Deaton

As a teenager, I played on golf teams for two high schools—though you couldn't tell it today. I have many fond memories of matches we played and friendships made on some pretty tough courses across the Palmetto State on those warm, spring days when the azaleas are in full bloom.

I still enjoy playing a round many, many years later, though the guys on a team sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Foundation with whom I played at Crooked Creek would all have to agree that I played around at golf—not a round of golf.

The winning team, however, apparently brought their drivers and putters (I doubt they pulled out their pitching wedges much). They shot a 51, or 21 strokes under par. For the uninitiated at golf, that means they probably scored a "birdie," or 1 stroke under par, on every hole, except for three par 5s, where they made an "eagle," 2 under par. For their amazing feat, they each received an Oneida shirt and hat.

While Gritton couldn't recall the names of all the players on the winning team, he did know that one of them, Mark Jackson, from Manchester, attended Oneida as a ninth-grader. Jackson, he said, appeared on CBS's "Amazing Race" twice in recent years. Another member, Mike Damrel, is an Oneida alumnus who now lives in Shelbyville, he added.

Corporate sponsors for the event included Pizza Pro, Kentucky Baptist Foundation, Rawlings and Goins Furniture Store, JBK Roofing Inc., Pepsi and IGA of Manchester. Door prizes were also given to many of the participants.

All in all, Gritton, who also was seen in a golf cart at Crooked Creek—though I don't know whether or not he'd reveal his team's score—was thrilled with how the event turned out. "We plan on making this an annual event, usually the day before our homecoming," he said.

That's welcome news, I believe, for I and a host of other golfers who are OBI alumni or friends would agree the scramble was a great way to raise money to support a worthy cause: helping kids attending one of our Kentucky Baptist schools. Best of all, because some alumni and friends were willing to sink a few putts, some Oneida students now will be able to sink a few putts, too, next season.



Photo by Steve May

"I believe starting a golf program will enable us to reach more young people," Gritton told the Western Recorder. "Some kids who might not be interested in playing other team sports will find their niche in golf, and golf is a life-long sport that our students can continue to play long after leaving Oneida."

And while attending Oneida, many of these students and their families will hear and respond to the gospel, through its chapel services and by seeing it demonstrated in the lives of the Kentucky Baptist school's faculty and staff.

Awaiting the new pastor

By Diana Davis

When your church is in transition—seeking a new pastor or other ministry staff member—there are a few things any member can do:

Get busy about God's work

■ Demonstrate faithfulness. This is not a time to relinquish church responsibilities or slack off in tithing or attendance. Your commitment is to God, not a pastor.

■ Some churches grow during a transition time. Invite friends; share your faith often; plan the largest, most evangelistic Vacation Bible School ever; grow your small group.

Encourage the pastor search team

■ Pray faithfully for the committee

and mail an occasional prayer note to them. Show great support, but don't slow their progress by probing for information. They are aware of the urgency and gravity of their assignment and will provide periodic updates to the church.

Fresh Ideas



Diana Davis

■ Consider ways you can help individual team members when they meet or travel. Babysit; mow their lawns; substitute for their regular church responsibilities; provide snacks for their extended meetings or travel.

Help church leaders

■ The added workload is heavy on ministry staff members, as well as office assistants, volunteer staff and church leaders. Pray for God to give them wisdom and strength.

■ Watch for ways to help and encourage them. Stop by the office and pray with them. If you see a need, do your best to help meet it. Volunteer readily.

Consider doing something tangible to thank them. One church sent their associate minister and his wife on a week-long cruise to express appreciation for their extra efforts.

Relax

■ Be positive. Your personal attitude helps set the pace for a successful transition period. Every word you speak about your church and pastor search team must be positive.

■ Pray for your church's future leader, even before God calls him. Wait for your new pastor's leadership before initiating major changes. Prepare yourself to accept and support him.

Transition can be terrifying and exhilarating. Isn't it great to know God cares about His church even more than you do?

Diana Davis is an author, speaker and the wife of Steve Davis, the North American Mission Board's vice president for the south region.

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Box 43969
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DR. TODD DEATON
Editor

DREW NICTER
Interim News Director

THOMAS C. TOWNSEND
Marketing & Business Manager

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8-year-old pleads: 'Pray for my friends'

By Erich Bridges

Jacob*, 8, probably isn't up to speed on the cultural and spiritual struggles going on in the United States. For one thing, he's a kid. He doesn't live in the U.S. most of the time, for another. His parents are Southern Baptist workers in North Africa and the Middle East.

He doesn't understand why violent conflicts are exploding around him and his family either. He just knows he misses his friends.

See, Jacob is sort of a refugee. His family had to leave the country they were serving because of potential threats. They're serving elsewhere for now, but leaving has been hard on all of them—especially Jacob.

"This past year I have had to move around a lot," Jacob wrote in a recent prayer message to American kids. "I love playing sports and meet lots of friends by playing sports at clubs. I have lived in three different countries. In each of those countries, I have friends."

"These friends are just like me," Jacob said. "But they don't know about Jesus. Please pray that these friends of mine would come to know Jesus. Also pray for them to be safe, as they all live in very unsafe countries where there are wars and bombs and really bad people. Pray that these bad people would come to know Jesus, too. Pray that it would be safer in these countries, so I can go back to them and see my friends."

I could leave it there, since Jacob's words are more powerful than anything I might add. But I read his simple plea for prayer as Southern Baptists, at their annual meeting in Baltimore, were doing some soul-searching about struggling churches, declining baptism rates and the lack of evangelism in an increasingly secular culture.

"God, please forgive us for not being obedient and sharing the good news of the gospel with those in our community," outgoing president Fred Luter prayed during the meeting. "America is rapidly ... turning into a

pagan nation," he said, and the only cure is Jesus.

But do we really believe that? Do we really believe that Jesus is the only way to reconciliation and personal relationship with God? Beyond all the debate about the best evangelism tools and strategies and approaches to employ in a rapidly changing culture, that is the fundamental question.

FIRST PERSON

Perhaps the most countercultural words in the Bible come from Jesus Himself, just before His death and resurrection: "Thomas said to Him, 'Lord, we do not know where You are going, how do we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him'" (John 14:5-7).

This is the heart of the gospel, according to the New Testament. There are any number of ways to communicate it and demonstrate it effectively, lovingly and redemptively. You can accept it, reject it or ignore it. But there is no way around it. Jesus is the way to the Father.

Albert Mohler once observed that the American evangelical church was "losing its voice" just as the opportunity to declare the gospel worldwide is greater than ever. The issue, he said, is a "failure of theological nerve—a devastating loss of biblical and doctrinal conviction. Put bluntly, many who claim to be Christians simply do not believe that anyone is actually lost."

The death of missions inevitably follows such a loss of nerve and conviction, since there is no reason to preach the gospel among all nations if preaching it and hearing it aren't life-or-death matters.

That brings me back to young Jacob. He might not have all the theological arguments and explanations worked out, but he loves his friends. He's also concerned about the "bad people" who are setting off bombs and hurting others, even though he's been forced to move because of the havoc they are causing. He knows they are lost, friends and enemies alike, and that it is indeed a life-or-death matter.

He knows Jesus is Lord and wants them to know it, too. That's all the theology Jacob needs. (BP)

*Name changed for security reasons. Erich Bridges is a global correspondent with the International Mission Board.

Encouraging healthy lifestyles

By Scott Wigginton

Q: How can we encourage our teenagers to live a healthier lifestyle this summer?

A: Good question—but let me raise the stakes a bit. How can your whole family live a healthier lifestyle

this summer as you take seriously the fact that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit who lives in you (1 Corinthians 6:19)?

Because we were bought with the high price of Christ's sacrifice, we are each stewards of the body we've been given. While not wanting to be legalistic or rigid in health habits, let me challenge you to a "Summer of Strength." Let's let the letter "S" help us keep some principles in mind.

- Single helpings at meals.
- Sugar fast (except for two days a week).
- Splash, Splash, Splash (drink lots of water).
- Six p.m. deadline for snacks (try to eat meals earlier in the evening rather than later).
- Stop and weigh in once a week with friends.
- Slow eating (be mindful of taste, aroma, texture).
- Stretch every day.
- Snack on fruits and vegetables.
- Six times Sixty (exercise 60 minutes a day, six days a week).
- Schedule your next physical.
- See health (read or watch something about health daily).
- Shop more on the outside aisles of the grocery store where the healthiest foods reside.
- Sleep at least seven and a half hours per night.
- Shift gears to experiment with new activities that will help you diversify.
- Soft drink fast (except for two days a week).
- Strengthen the core through exercises like sit-ups or planks every other day.

Remember that creating a new habit typically takes about 30 days. Feel free to modify this list to fit your needs. Check with your physician before committing to some of these.

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

Handling money reflects priorities

By Don Spencer

It seems that we, as Christians, are increasingly being put in positions of having to choose between the ways of the world (political correctness) and standing firm on the Bible's teachings. Being a Christian should change the way you approach everything in life, including finances. How we handle money reflects life's priorities.

That's why the Scripture places so much emphasis on stewardship.

As Christians, we need to be reminded of the different perspective we should have in dealing with financial issues. I offer five perspectives regarding money that we should reflect on as Christians. Note

I emphasized "reflect." It is one thing to say we believe them; it is another to put them into practice in such a way that others see the difference and it becomes a testimony of our relationship with God.

Our possessions are temporal. Do people see in us an attitude toward our possessions that reflects that belief (2 Peter 3:10; Luke 12:15)?

Our possessions are not a source of pride, power, prestige or conceit. This is the world's attitude of money and possessions. We are to be different (1 Timothy 6:17).

God owns it all. We are stewards. We should treat our possessions as managers of something that belongs to someone else (Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 12:16-21).

Concern for family financial support is scriptural. "If anyone does not provide for his family, especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8). In today's world, that requires a healthy concern for money.

Our stewardship is an outward indicator of an inner spiritual condition. How someone handles his money tells me volumes about his relationship with God.

Christianity doesn't just provide answers for 10 percent of our money any more than it only provides a way to live only on Sunday mornings.

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

Asking the question: Why a national denomination?

By Jason Duesing

The question of whether denominations are necessary often arises in my Baptist history and heritage classes. Averse to what they perceive as staid institutionalism or red-tape bureaucracy, students tend to categorize denominations as a generational matter, and thus look for something new for the present.

These motives are not entirely unfounded or born from ignorance, as there are plenty of generational traditions every new generation discards. We've done it, as did our parents and grandparents.

However, in this case, it is always a delight to inform students of the primary reason Baptists in this country ever saw the need to form a national denomination. They were motivated by something they called their "one sacred effort"—churches of all sizes cooperating together for the purpose of global missions. And, I quickly argue, that is the foremost reason why we should have, support, build and be proud of a national denomination today.

This question especially comes to mind at this time of year when the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention gather for their annual meeting.

But it is also relevant because we are at the 200th anniversary of the start of the first Baptist denomination in the United States, the Triennial Convention. Formed in May 1814, it would serve as the forerunner to the Southern Baptist Convention that would originate, sadly, in 1845 over a disagreement among Baptists in the North and South over the tragic and evil practice of slavery.

The Baptists of 1814 officially called their denomination "The General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States of America, for Foreign Missions" clearly not yet arriving at the penchant future denominations have for simple acronyms. In fact,

as this early convention set out to meet once every three years, the more natural "Triennial Convention" rose as the agreed nomenclature instead of GMCBDUSAFM.

So, why did Baptists form a national denomination 200 years ago? Here are the words from the Triennial Convention's first constitution:

"We the delegates from Missionary Societies, and other religious Bodies of the Baptist denomination, in various parts of the United

States, met in Convention, in the City of Philadelphia, for the purpose of carrying into effect the benevolent Intentions of our Constituents, by organizing a plan for eliciting, combining and directing the Energies of the whole Denomination in one sacred effort, for sending the glad tidings of Salvation to the Heathen, and to nations destitute of pure Gospel-light."

This shared idea of marshaling churches' energies to take the gospel of Christ was echoed through the first meetings of the denomination. The first president, well-known and admired Baptist statesman Richard Furman, underscored in his address that the convention "has assembled in Philadelphia ... to devise a plan, and enter into measures, for combining the efforts of our whole denomination, in behalf of the millions upon whom the light of evangelic truth has never shone."

Taking the light of the gospel to nations in darkness served as the primary motive for early American Baptists to organize and gather on a national level. As Southern Baptists, may the bicentennial anniversary of the beginnings of our forebears remind us that the Great Commission remains a good and primary reason around which churches should gather to do more together for the glory of God than we could ever do apart. (BP)

Jason Duesing is assistant professor of historical theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.



COMMENTARY

Gospel is the Goal

Students share Christ's love in Brazil amid World Cup frenzy

By Alan Brant

Rio de Janeiro—There were no flashbulbs or television cameras, only teammates—mostly children half his size and barefoot—who celebrated and mobbed Dane Van Ryckeghem after he assisted in a goal during the game.

The frenzy of World Cup soccer had nothing on the jubilant Brazilian neighborhood kids playing with visitors from the United States on a soggy field on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro.

Van Ryckeghem, a student at the University of Alabama, traveled to Brazil with a team of 12 other student volunteers with the mission of sharing the love of Christ against the backdrop of the largest sporting event in the world, the 2014 FIFA World Cup.

"I really wanted to spend my summer doing more than just working at a job and then going back to school," Van Ryckeghem said. "I wanted to do something that made a difference, and I wanted to see the world."

After hearing about a World Cup-focused trip—one endorsed by the International Mission Board—for students during a missions conference, he knew immediately he was going to Brazil.

"I absolutely love soccer and love the idea of spending part of my summer in

this setting," he said. "This is a dream come true to be here."

James Dubuisson, a junior at the University of North Alabama, took the first airplane ride of his life to travel to Brazil with the group. As a youth minister at First Baptist Church of Lawrenceburg, Tenn., he said a big part of his decision to come to Brazil was to serve as an example and encouragement to his youth group.

"I've been talking to my youth about being different and showing people (that believers) are different," he said. "So often we go to church, but don't act differently. I feel like this (trip) is me living that out—showing the kids, 'This is how to live out the difference of what Christ has done in your life.'"

After Dubuisson and the rest of the team arrived in Rio de Janeiro, they spent their first days ministering in an impoverished community. They served alongside members of a Brazilian Baptist church by playing with children, helping with a medical clinic and walking through the neighborhoods sharing the gospel with the help of translators.

"We're here for the World Cup, but more importantly we're here to share the love of Jesus with anyone and everyone

we can," said Lee Dymond, campus minister at Auburn University at Montgomery and leader of the volunteer team.

Jordan O'Donnell, a student volunteer from Virginia Tech University, admitted to feeling apprehensive at first about sharing the gospel in neighborhoods. But that nervousness quickly diminished, he said.

"It's challenging to share through an interpreter, but it got smoother as we went along," O'Donnell said. "I enjoyed the whole experience. It's interesting because sharing about Jesus in America usually gets a negative reaction. But here, walking through the community, everyone responded that they wanted to hear about Jesus—even a couple who had never even heard about Jesus before."

"I'm pumped," O'Donnell said. "I'm ready to get out there and do it again."

The team of students will continue to share the gospel during their stay in Rio. During some of their outreach, they are partnering with the Brazilian Baptist Home Mission Board in a soccer-themed evangelism strategy to share with fans arriving at Brazil's national stadium for World Cup matches.

"The World Cup is where the nations come to one place," Dymond said. "It's

Above: Thousands of fans in the Tijuca district of Rio de Janeiro watch Brazil's opening World Cup match against Croatia on a big screen at a massive block party. Brazilian International, U.S. student volunteers and International Mission Board missionaries are seeking to make gospel connections in similar neighborhoods around the city during the tournament. (Photo by Wilson Hunter) **Below left:** Nick Smirniotopoulos (left), a recent graduate of Virginia Tech University, shares the gospel with soccer fans outside Rio de Janeiro's Maracanã stadium. (Photo by Lina White) **Below right:** Dane Van Ryckeghem (center), a student at the University of Alabama, and some of his teammates share the gospel with Brazilians in a community on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro. (Photo by Wilson Hunter/IMB)

our opportunity to share the gospel and hopefully impact not just Brazil but all the nations that are coming to Brazil for the World Cup."

For his team, Dymond said he hopes as the students share the gospel and see people accept Christ, they will be emboldened with the knowledge that "if they can do it here during the World Cup, it will encourage them to when they go back home." (BP)





GIVE → GO

Left: Crossings campers at Cedarmore bring their missions offerings during worship time. Students have given more than \$1 million in the 14 years Crossings has collected money for overseas ministries. **Right:** Since 2011, that money has gone to send Haitian children to school and camp through Baptist Haiti Mission. (Crossings photos)



Crossings

Continued from page 1

help "the least of these," often teenagers just like themselves who are in need of food, education and, most importantly, the gospel.

Since 2001, campers have answered that challenge, recently topping the \$1 million mark in missions giving.

The 61 students from Central Baptist Church in Corbin last week gave more than \$300 on the first night of camp at Cedarmore. As it has for the last three summers, that money will be used to send Haitian children to their own camp.

"The No. 1 priority that (Crossings) always puts in the students' minds from day one is to give," said Jeff Sparks, the student pastor at Central Baptist.

"The biblical command to give is not quantified by a certain age or a certain stage in life," Crossings Ministries' President David Melber noted. "It's a part of worship that we honor the Lord by giving back."

Campers at Jonathan Creek in 2001

gave \$14,200 to an International Mission Board ministry in the Philippines called Project Mercy. The money helped purchase a van to transport children to and from Bible studies and other places.

In the years since, Crossings, through its summer offerings, has supported camps in Trinidad, Moldova and Ukraine and orphanages in Zambia and India.

Since 2011, Crossings has partnered with Baptist Haiti Mission, a 70-year-old ministry on the island nation, consisting of a network of churches, schools, conference centers, a hospital and, naturally, a camp.

But the Crossings message is no longer just "give" but also "go," Melber said.

"We see our role as a partner to help support and equip" missionaries, in the short and long term, he explained.

Chelsi Netherland spends her days handling guests' concerns out of Crossings' central office in Louisville. But she has also hugged and prayed with orphaned girls in India; she has worshipped with Haitian children.

"Crossings gave me the avenue to be able to go and follow the call that I felt

like the Lord had put in my life," Netherland said.

The Campbellsville University graduate spent two years on Crossings' summer staff at Cedarmore. There, she witnessed firsthand the effect giving to missions had on campers. She then experienced the fruit of their gifts in India and Haiti, she said, realizing, "this is impossible without the students here giving to send students there."

Sparks and a crew of about 30 from Central Baptist will return to Haiti in 2015 after first serving there in 2012. They likely will work alongside other groups from Kentucky, as well as former Crossings' staffers who now serve in Haiti as career missionaries.

"Not only are we giving \$20, but we're actually going to give our time. We're actually going to go," he said.

In a few weeks, Sparks and others will interview students to decide who travels to Haiti next spring. Thanks to camp, he said he anticipates a passionate response.

"It really does whet their appetite and pique their interest," Sparks said.

"They're seeing the videos, they're

hearing the testimonies—and then they say, 'I want to go.'"

And that's precisely Crossings' aim, Melber said: "seeing people step out in faith and live out their commitment to Christ (and) to be His witnesses, not only at home but beyond."

On a Crossings' information card are the words: "Vade Mecum"—Latin for "come with me." Whether that is to camp, Haiti or elsewhere, Melber said, Crossings wants to facilitate the task.

"When the Holy Spirit moves in the life of someone and says, 'We want to go,' we'd love to be able to say, 'Well, here's where you can go, and here's when you can get there.'"

And years from today, when campers at Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek reach \$2 million in missions giving, Melber said he expects that money will be distributed through a number of global partners.

"Here's an opportunity in Haiti; here's one in Cuba; here's one in Brazil; here's one in Zambia or Ethiopia," he said.

"Whether you're 10 years old or an adult, you can be involved in spreading the gospel to that country." (WR)

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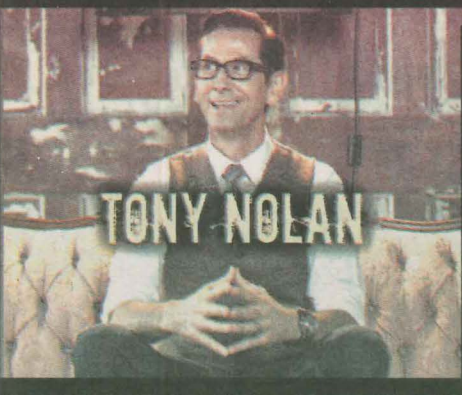
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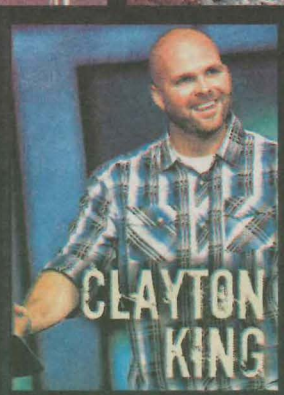
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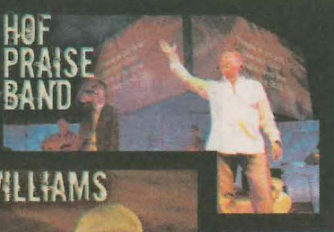
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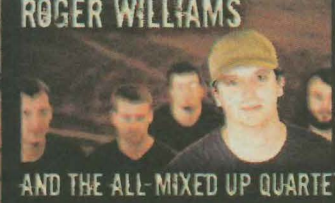
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3D DRAMA

Memories of OBI

2014 graduates share about their experiences on Oneida's campus

The following article features Oneida experiences from two 2014 graduates, young ladies from Harrodsburg and Nigeria.

Student 1: "I came to OBI in January of my sophomore year. Coming to OBI, I can say that I have found my true self. I struggled with anger and hurt over the stuff that I had experienced before OBI, and I have eventually overcome it. OBI has given me a chance to improve myself, as well as improve my grades. I never thought I would be able to say I'm going to graduate high school until I came here—and now I can say I am. Staying here at OBI has opened my eyes to make me realize I have an opportunity to pursue my dreams of being a nurse."

"I have improved so much while I've been here. Back home it was the 'cool' thing to get bad grades; but here everyone strives to get the best grades they can. Living in the dorms gives students an opportunity to interact with others from all around the world. The small amount of students in each classroom lets us be able to be taught by the teacher one on one if needed."

"The most important lesson I have learned from my OBI experience is I can do or be anything that I set my mind to. Coming to OBI, I have personally gained love for myself, as well as love for others."

"My plans after graduation are to go to college at Murray State University to become a successful nurse. I do feel I am

ready for my future role in society because I have gained maturity, and I take responsibility for the things that need to be done."

Student 2: "I woke up every morning to my dad singing, which meant it was time to pray. I woke up to morning devotions and slept with night devotions. I came to OBI as a Christian, which allowed me to count everything as a blessing. I came to OBI just for education, but God had something else for me. I stayed until my senior year, because He made it possible. Oneida offered me more opportunities to voice the gifts God has given me."

While at OBI, I participated in sports and in various things around the school. Joining student council allowed me to become aware of and appreciate school policies. Living with girls in a dorm was not significant since I had always been in a boarding school. I came to Oneida, and I just wanted to be friendly."

Oneida's chapel did not always excite me, but when God wanted you to hear something it was there—you heard it. Of all my years at OBI, my decision to be friendly got me a reward. I received the Brad Dorough Friendship Scholarship. It taught me to understand that every little work done will be rewarded in some way, some time and somehow. I feel fortified and well-built, so when I graduate, I am sure of myself and I trust God with my life in the real world."

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

This is Oneida



Larry Gritton

You are invited

Clear Creek welcomes all Kentucky Baptists to its open house July 11

I have heard it said many times: "Clear Creek? Yes, I have heard of Clear Creek."

"Have you ever been to the campus?" I ask.

"No, but I know someone who went there," they reply.

Our 700-acre campus is a beautiful sight to see. Every day God uses the fog to paint a new and fresh picture on our canvas here in the Appalachian Mountains. The beauty and wonder on the outside pales in comparison to the brushstrokes of God's handiwork within the body of our students, faculty and staff. I am constantly amazed at the how God can take a life surrendered to His calling and mold it into a useful tool for His kingdom work.

We want to invite you to a special Open House July 11 to experience what God is doing here at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. We are offering our hand of hospitality to anyone who would like to see our campus, talk to our faculty and staff or fellowship with some of our students.

We will begin in our beautiful chapel at 10 a.m. with an overview of who we are and what we are all about. Then you can tour our main campus, including the classroom building, library,

bookstore and business offices. Lunch will be provided for all who have pre-registered in historic Kelly Hall.

During the afternoon, we will have our campus housing areas open. Each area is unique to specific family needs. Also, if you have any questions about our school, academic programs, financial aid or how someone can apply as a student, we will have a representative from each of these departments, as well as the president himself available for questions.

We will conclude our time together with dinner and a drawing for door prizes. Those include a Kindle Fire, two full scholarships good for one online class and two \$25 gift certificates for our bookstore.

You can contact us today at (606) 337-3196 to RSVP for meals or (606) 337-1554 to reserve a room for either Thursday or Friday night. For more details, visit our website at www.CCBBC.edu.

We look forward to seeing you at "The Creek."

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

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



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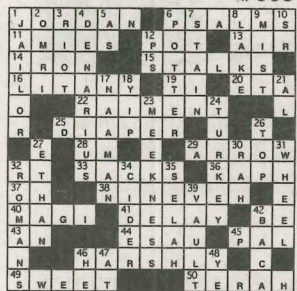
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Bible Crosswords

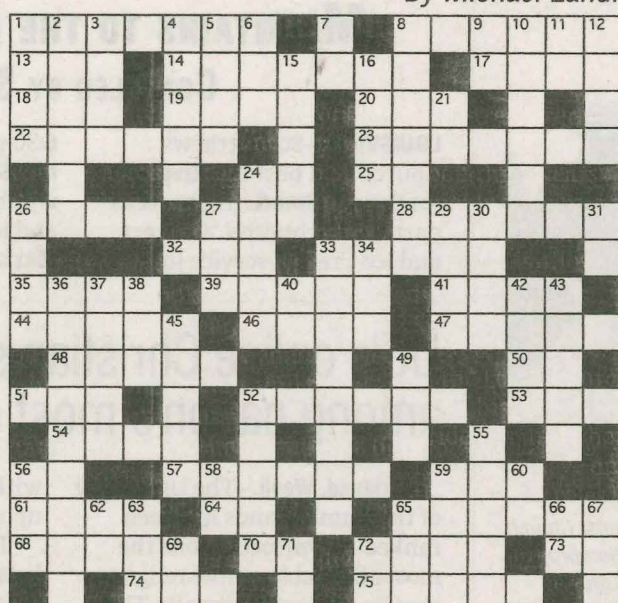
Across

- 1 Father of the Chosen People (Genesis 12:1-3)
8 Prophet who tore his cloak into twelve pieces (1 Kings 11:30)
13 Sheep's noise
14 Old Testament prophet, between Amos and Jonah
17 Brief letter
18 Samuel's mentor
19 The rock city of Idumaea (Isaiah 16:1)
20 No-good fellow
22 Lions failed to harm him
23 Third longest book of prophecy in the Old Testament
24 Northern central state, abbr.
25 Drill instructor, abbr.
26 King of Israel (1 Kings 16:16)
27 Jacob's son (Genesis 30:10-11)
28 Belonging to a son of Aaron (1 Chronicles 24:1)
32 This animal alive is better than a dead lion (Ecclesiastes 9:4)
33 Belonging to the man who shot Jehoram through the heart (2 Kings 9:24)
35 Nehemiah's priest and scribe
39 Eliasaph was the son of this man (Numbers 7:42)
41 A servant in the house of Saul (2 Samuel 9:2)
44 "All they that hate me love ____" (Proverbs 8:36)
46 Asian woman's garment
47 Abraham's son
48 "Cursed is the ____ who ... sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord" (Malachi 1:14NIV)
50 This place in Moab was ruined in the night (Isaiah 15:1)
51 "____! The gate to the nations is broken" (Ezekiel 26:2 NIV)
52 The judge and prophet who established the kingship in Israel (1 Samuel 8:21-22)
53 His wife became a pillar of salt
54 The Lord showed him a plumbline
56 Chemical symbol for argon
57 "Prophet of the Temple" and a colleague of Zechariah (Ezra 5:1)
59 "The name of the wicked shall ____" (Proverbs 10:7)
61 Needed for a photograph

#003



By Michael Landi



#004

- 64 Unit of dry measurement, abbr.
65 Moses successor (Numbers 27:18-23)
68 One of the twelve spies, the only one left alive in the desert with Joshua (Numbers 26:65)
70 Exist
72 Cast a ballot
73 Sleuth, abbr.
74 "I will spread my ____ upon them" (Hosea 7:12)
75 David's father
30 Egyptian goddess
31 Juan's yes
33 The weeping prophet
34 Word said by Christ on the cross (Matthew 27:46)
36 Second from the last book of the Old Testament
37 The son of Shema and the father of Jorkoam (1 Chronicles 2:43)
38 Consumed
40 United Airlines, abbr.
42 Ahab served this god (1 Kings 16:31)
43 Supported Moses' hands in battle (Exodus 17:8-13)
45 "A ____ word stirs up anger" (Proverbs 15:1NIV)
49 King Darius threw Daniel here (Daniel 6:16)
52 The youngest son of Hiel of Bethel, who lost his life when the gates of Jericho were set up (1 Kings 16:34)
55 The man to whom God gave the Ten Commandments
56 American Football Conference, abbr.
58 Fifth month of the Jewish year
59 Decays
60 Chemical symbol for thorium
62 Lending library, abbr.
63 "I will make you fishers of ____" (Matthew 4:19)
65 Joseph for short
66 The opposite of down
67 To trouble, afflict
69 Chemical symbol for beryllium
71 Estimated position, abbr.
72 Video jockey, abbr.

Down

- 1 In bed
2 The mercenary prophet (Numbers 22:5-7)
3 "I will ____ bread from heaven" (Exodus 16:4)
4 Prophet who married Gomer
5 Killed by his brother
6 Last book of the Old Testament, abbr.
7 Joshua sent men there from Jericho (Joshua 7:2)
8 King of Judah at 22 years old who reigned for only a year (2 Kings 8:26)
9 Opposite of out
10 He was 8 years old when he became king and he reigned for 31 years (2 Kings 22:1)
11 Preposition
12 State of everlasting separation from God
15 Israel's poet king
16 Did perfectly on a test
21 Eastern seaboard state
24 "The ____ of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)
26 Son of Boaz (Ruth 4:21)
27 Appeared to Abraham when he was 99 years old (Genesis 17:1)
29 Ezekiel's father (Ezekiel 1:3)

Contribution, not acquisition

Pay greater attention to eternal matters than those of this world

Someone has said, "Success comes not by acquisition, but by contribution." Winston Churchill said, "We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give." Jesus said in Matthew 16:26, "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

The Scriptures teach us if we are wise, we shall pay more attention to eternal values than to the things of the world. In 1 Timothy 6:7 we find this, "For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it." Therefore, we ought to put godliness above everything else. In so doing we shall gain what is lasting. Everything else is temporal. Verse 9 warns us of the temptation trap into which we fall by our love of money. Sometimes those who have the least love money the most. We need to ask ourselves from time to time: Do we have things or do they have us?

In verses 17-19, the Apostle Paul told

Timothy to charge those who were affluent not to be arrogant or proud, nor to put their trust in their wealth. Instead they (we) should put their (our) trust in the living God who gives us all things richly to enjoy. All things come from God and are to be enjoyed, but they are not to be worshipped.

Not only are we to trust the Lord, but we are also to be worthy of His trust. The Lord is seeking trustworthy men and women. If you are one of those, He is more likely to give you something, which you can use for His glory. Here is what Jesus said about trust: "Whoever can

be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?" (Matthew 16:10-12).

To the extent we can assist you to have success in your stewardship, please give us that privilege.

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

Ky. Baptist
Foundation

Barry Allen

Sena is new SBC Hispanic relations consultant

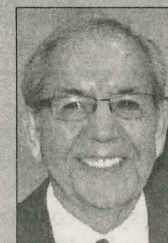
Longtime evangelist and leader Bob Sena has been named Hispanic relations consultant to the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, Frank Page has announced.

Page appointed Sena in response to the final report of the Hispanic Advisory Council the Executive Committee president appointed in 2011. The report, presented to Page in March, highlighted and detailed the rapid growth of Hispanics in North America.

In his new position, Sena will work as a consultant in the office of convention advancement to represent Hispanic churches and promote the Cooperative Program.

Sena "has a wealth of experiences and relationships in the SBC," said Ken Weathersby, the Executive Committee's vice president for convention advancement. "It is our hope and desire that the kingdom of God will be expanded because of his appointment. Please join me in prayer for him and his family."

Sena will continue as director of the Hispanic doctorate at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He retired in 2011 as director of the church planting group of the Hispanic resource development and equipping team for the North American Mission Board, and he has served as a NAMB national Hispanic missionary. (BP)



Bob Sena

Bridger to lead Southern's Islam center

Scott Bridger, an evangelical scholar of Islam, will serve as director of the Jenkins Center for the Christian Understanding of Islam and the Bill and Connie Jenkins assistant professor of Islamic studies at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, school officials announced.

"I think Scott Bridger is the singular individual God has prepared to take on the leadership of the Jenkins Center at this time," SBTS President Albert Mohler said. "His academic preparation; his knowledge of Arabic language and Arabic culture; his deep knowledge of Islam, not only as a structure of thought but as a way of life; his experience in the Middle East—all of these serve him singularly well as the one to take on this responsibility."

Bridger and his family spent 12 years in the Middle East. He began studying Islam during his undergraduate years at the University of Tennessee. He earned a master's degree in Arabic and Islamic studies from the University of Haifa in Israel.

Bridger previously served as an assistant professor of world Christianity and Islamic studies at Criswell College.

"As Christians, we are committed to truth and excellence in all we do, and this commitment extends to our investigations into and descriptions of what Muslims believe and practice," he said. "For us, any truly Christian understanding of Islam must be accurate in its description of what Muslims themselves believe about Islam." (SBTS)



Scott Bridger

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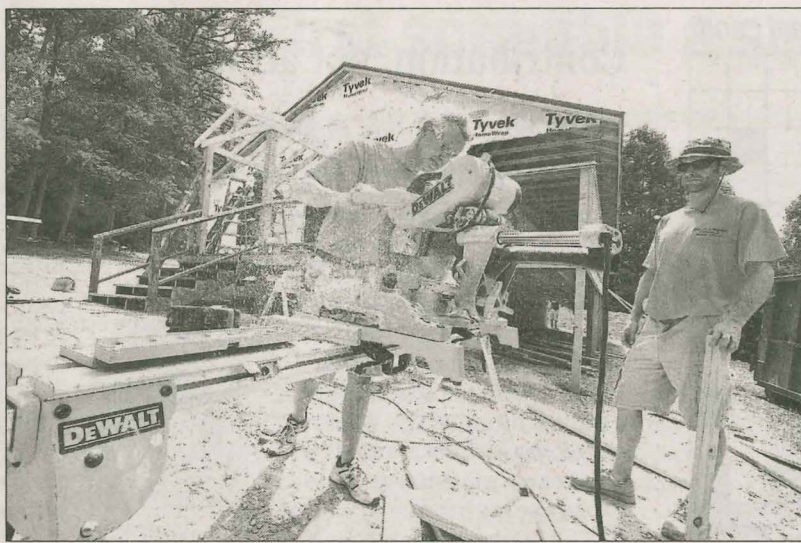
KBC KENTUCKY BAPTIST CONVENTION CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July

- 1 July Power Lunch, Kentucky Baptist Building, Louisville.
- 5-11 Kentucky Changers 2014, Richmond.
- 11-12 Acteens Splash, Jonathan Creek Camp and Conference Center, Hardin.
- 11-12 Girls in Action Camp, Jonathan Creek Camp and Conference Center, Hardin.
- 11-12 Mother/Daughter Overnight Camp, Jonathan Creek Camp and Conference Center, Hardin.
- 13-18 Kentucky Changers 2014, Louisville.
- 19 Excel, First Baptist Church, Richmond.
- 19-24 Eastern Kentucky FamilyFest 2014, Boone's Creek Baptist Association, Winchester.
- 19-25 Kentucky Changers 2014, Henderson.

August

- 1-2 Camp Courage, Laurel Lake Baptist Camp, Corbin.
- 5 August Power Lunch, Kentucky Baptist Building, Louisville.



Volunteers from Coral Hill Baptist Church in Glasgow and Celebration Baptist Church in Tallahassee, Fla., teamed up June 15-20 to complete a home construction project with University of the Cumberland's Mountain Outreach ministry. The groups helped build a home for the Rhoades family of Williamsburg on the same land where their previous home burned down. The family has been renting a barely affordable home since then. The home should be ready to move in to by mid-August. **Above:** Volunteers from Celebration Baptist cut two-by-fours. **Below:** Home recipient Joe Rhoades works alongside the crew building his family's new home. (UC photos)



MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

LOUISVILLE—St. Matthews Church will host the **River Cities Concert Band** in concert as part of the church's "Concert and Ice Cream" service July 6,

6:30 p.m. **Greg Barr** is pastor. **MAYSVILLE**—Central Church will hold a hymn sing service and ice cream social July 6. **Mark Powell** is pastor.

UC's online Christian studies program among nation's most affordable

Kirkland, Wash.—The University of the Cumberlands has been ranked by OnlineU as one the most affordable online religious studies degrees nationally. The school's master's degree program came in at No. 3 on the website's list.

"With the average price of college skyrocketing, forcing many students to rely on student loans to fund their education, we were impressed with UC's ability to continue to offer affordable online degrees," said Kimberly Wetter, marketing manager for OnlineU. "We are excited to feature University of the Cumberlands as offering some of the most affordable degree programs available online."

OnlineU recently released its top 25 most affordable online degrees by subject. This research and database company said its mission is to help prospective students obtain a college degree

without the massive debt burden upon graduation.

There are 141 colleges on the lists with an annual tuition cost of less than \$10,000; seven of those are less than \$5,000 per year. University of the Cumberlands is among that seven, offering its online Christian studies master's degree at less than \$4,500 annually.

"It is very nice to have University of the Cumberlands honored and recognized for its ability to provide its students with an incredible education that doesn't break the bank and put them too far into debt," said UC's Vice President of Academic Affairs Larry Cockrum. "Our online programs have continued to grow because they are affordable, accessible, and the quality of the material taught truly provides the students with the proper tools and knowledge to be ready for a successful career." (UC)

CLASSIFIED ADS

SEEKING: Pinckard Baptist Church, located in Woodford County, is in search of the man that God has chosen to be our full-time pastor. Forward resumé to Pastor Search Committee, 3401 Pinckard Pike, Versailles, KY 40383, or email to pbcpastorsearch@windstream.net.

SEEKING: Bivocational pastor for a small, rural church located in Trimble/Carroll County, Ky. Beautiful building and facility; congregation desires to grow, needs leadership. Send resumé to rdstan1959@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Bloomfield Baptist Church in Bloomfield, Ky., is seeking a full-time associate pastor of worship and family ministry. A job description is available at www.bloomfieldbaptist.org. Resumés should be submitted by July 15 to: Associate Pastor Search Committee, Bloomfield Baptist Church, P.O. Box 217, Bloomfield, KY 40008, or emailed to bfdabc@bardstown.com.

SEEKING: Full-time executive pastor to serve in the fast-growing northern Kentucky area at Hickory Grove Baptist Church, a church that is driven to serve its community and impact the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The executive pastor will report directly to the senior pastor and be responsible for executing the day-to-day operations of the church. This would include ensuring the management and upkeep of the campus plant, as well as researching and planning for future improvements and expansion; managing the budget and cash flow of the church; overseeing administrative and custodial staff; working directly with the ministry team to discover talents and spiritual gifts of

members to properly place volunteers in needed roles; and ensuring all administrative tasks of the ministry team are completed efficiently. The executive pastor needs to be a born-again Christ follower of like faith with church/business management experience. Please send your resumé electronically to personnel@hickorygrove.net or via mail to Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Attn: Personnel Committee, 11969 Taylor Mill Road, Independence, KY 41051.

SEEKING: Bivocational pastor, parsonage available. Send resumé to Glens Creek Baptist Church, 4678 Steele Road, Versailles, KY 40383.

SEEKING: Brownsville Missionary Baptist Church in Brownsville, Ky., is prayerfully accepting resumés for the full-time position of pastor. Please send resumé with references and a CD/DVD/Internet link of a sermon to: Pulpit Committee, Attn: Scottie Woodcock, P.O. Box 310, Brownsville, KY 42210.

SEEKING: Campground Baptist in Somerset, Ky., is prayerfully seeking a full-time pastor. Please send resumé (references, tape/CD/VHS/DVD or Internet link of sermons, if available) to: Campground Baptist, Attn: Pulpit Committee, 3500 N. Hwy. 1247, Somerset, KY 42503. Resumés may also be sent to sksatravis@gmail.com.

SEEKING: The board of trustees of the Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes, Inc. announce the formation of a committee to select the ministry president/treasurer elect. The Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes, Inc. cares for children in crisis in residential care at five locations across Tennessee and a statewide foster care program. The president/treasurer

provides leadership and general supervision to this 123-year-old ministry as approved and directed by the board of trustees. Applications and nominations are being accepted during June and July 2014. To be considered, all applications and nominations must be received by the close of business Thursday, July 31. For detailed information regarding qualifications, skills and position duties, as well as the TBCH employment application, please see www.tbch4kids.org/presidentialsearch.html. Interested candidates are requested to complete the TBCH employment application and forward it to president@tbch4kids.org or by mail to: President/Treasurer Search, P.O. Box 2206, Brentwood, TN 37024.

SEEKING: Sherman Baptist Church is seeking a full-time pastor. Please send resumé to P.O. Box 617, Dry Ridge, KY 41035.

SEEKING: FBC, Cookeville, Tenn., is seeking a senior pastor; a multi-generational Southern Baptist church with an average attendance of 650. Position requires an experienced pastor with at least a master's degree from an accredited Southern Baptist seminary. Please submit resumé before July 31 to: FBC Cookeville, 18 S. Walnut Ave., Cookeville, TN 38501; email: searchcommittee@fbccookeville.org; website: www.fbccookeville.org.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of youth for Fern Creek Baptist Church. According to the applicant's gifts and skills, this position could include the position of children's minister or associate pastor. Applicant must exemplify a growing relationship with God, spiritual maturity, responsible authority, fervent

To place an advertisement in the Western Recorder:

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evangelism and effective communication skills. Send resumés to: Fern Creek Baptist Church, Attn: Personnel Committee, 5920 Bardstown Road, Louisville, KY 40291, or by email to linda@ferncreekbaptist.org. Resumés will be received through Aug. 7. Questions? Call 239-0316, ext. 103 (Linda Barnes Popham, pastor).

SEEKING: Gap Creek Baptist Church, a conservative Southern Baptist church located near the Cumberland Gap in northeast Tennessee, is looking for the man God has called to be our next pastor. Gap Creek is an outreach-minded growing congregation with a 216-year history. Please send resumé, CD or preferably a DVD of a sermon to: Gap Creek Baptist Church, Attn: Pastoral Search Committee, P.O. Box 177, Arthur, TN 37707. Please visit gapcreek.org for more information about our church, or email gapcreekbaptist@gmail.com with any questions.

Former thief finds forgiveness, new life as ordained pastor

By Dana Williamson

Broken Arrow, Okla.—When George Aguilar broke into and vandalized a Baptist church, the last thing he expected to find was love and forgiveness. But that November night in 2004 changed the 20-year-old man's life forever.

That year, Aguilar, a native of El Salvador—who at age 10 came to live with his father in the U.S. as a legal resident—found himself without a place to live. He moved in with some young men in Tulsa who were involved in stealing items and converting them to cash.

An impressionable young man who lost his job and needed to send money to help support his mother and younger brother back in El Salvador, Aguilar said he thought the only thing he could do under his circumstances was to steal.

Aguilar and two other men robbed and vandalized 11 churches in the Broken Arrow/Tulsa, Okla., area during a span of four months. They took cameras, computer modems, guitars, amps and other electronic equipment. They damaged approximately \$250,000 worth of church property. At First Baptist Church of Broken Arrow, the men caused about \$25,000 in damages to the building and trashed what they didn't take.

The church had just completed a debt-free multi-purpose building that included the worship center.

"All of us were angry that anyone would do that to a church," Pastor Nick Garland said. "It was especially painful for us because we had worked so long to see the completed structure so soon damaged senselessly. I wanted the person(s) caught who did that and wanted them punished."

After the thieves were apprehended, Aguilar wrote a letter of apology to each of the churches he had vandalized.

"His letter broke my heart," Garland said. "He conveyed a genuine repentant spirit and requested that he be forgiven. I felt ashamed that I had been quick to want to condemn him without knowing anything about him. When I read his letter, God moved my heart to show me how poorly I had responded to George's actions."

Through the help of a police officer who was a member of the church, Aguilar was brought to Garland's office to meet with him.

"When I walked in, he was seated at a conference table with his head in his hands," Garland said. "He impressed me with his demeanor and decorum."

Garland said Aguilar stated in his letter that he did not think the pastor could forgive him, that the church could forgive him or that God could forgive him for what he had done.

Garland began the conversation by asking Aguilar to look at him. Then the pastor asked the young man to forgive him for the harsh feelings he had against Aguilar without even knowing him.

"George, I forgave you when I read your letter," Garland told him. He added, "And I know God can forgive you for He has forgiven me, not only for what I felt toward you, but a long time ago. He forgave me for what I was and gave me a new life in Christ."

Garland shared about redemption in Jesus, and Aguilar prayed and confessed



his need of being forgiven. That day, Aguilar asked the Lord to come into his life and transform him.

Garland told Aguilar the only thing remaining on his list was to ask the church for forgiveness.

The pastor said he could not speak for the church, but he arranged for a day release for Aguilar to attend a worship service.

"On that morning, I told the congregation that the young man who had broken into our church had been apprehended and had written a letter asking for forgiveness," Garland said. "I read his letter, told them George and I had met, that I had forgiven him and that George had asked God to forgive him, but I did not know if the church would."

Garland asked Aguilar to come to the platform and stand with him. Then he told the church they would have to let him know if they forgave him.

"Suddenly, it looked like a stampede of folks coming to hug his neck, weep tears of joy with him, express their love for him and to truly embrace him," Garland said. "He got offers for lunch, money given to him to help his mother, three job offers and a host of other clear affirmations."

Back to El Salvador

Although Aguilar had the forgiveness of God, Garland and the Broken Arrow congregation, he still faced charges for his actions. Per his attorney's counsel, Aguilar pleaded guilty to two felony second-degree burglary charges and received a deferred sentence. This meant if he stayed out of trouble for five years

and paid the court-ordered fines and restitution, the charges would be expunged. He met all the conditions, and his criminal record was cleared. He was adopted by a family in the church, given a room

in their home, a job, help to buy a car and begin a new life.

Garland said Aguilar "became the best of what we love to tell when we boast of the greatness of America."

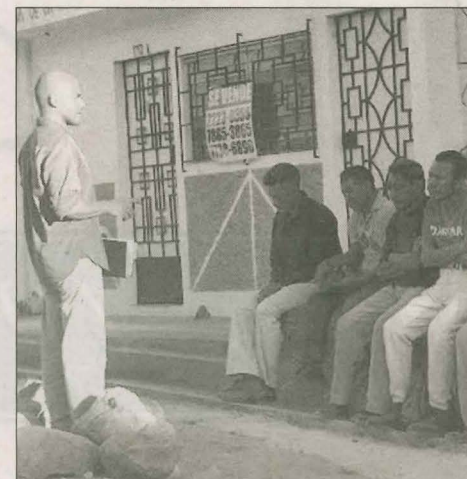
"He became responsible, earned a living, did not look for handouts, never again was involved in any misconduct, became active in church, worked with students, went on mission trips, taught English to internationals and gave his testimony many times."

However, despite having a clean state record,

the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement does not recognize deferred sentences and expungements. Aguilar's guilty plea meant he could have his legal residency stripped and be deported from the U.S. ICE sent a notice to Aguilar in 2009 for him to appear in immigration court for possible deportation. A prosecutor in an administrative court based in Dallas exercised discretion and terminated the case without prejudice in March, 2010. However, a new prosecutor reversed that decision a month later. On Feb. 14, 2011, an immigration judge ordered Aguilar be removed from the U.S., and he was held in custody until his deportation Dec. 9.

Although Aguilar said he was happy to be out of prison, when he arrived in El Salvador, he felt defeated.

"Being in El Salvador was hard, because everything was taken away from



Above: George Aguilar takes the gospel to the streets, sharing Jesus with homeless people and others in need.

Left: Nick Garland (left), pastor at First Baptist Church of Broken Arrow, Okla., took part in an ordination service in El Salvador for George Aguilar in May.

(Oklahoma Baptist Messenger photos)

me, and I had to start over in a country where I did not grow up," he said. "Even though it was my native country, I did not know how to fit into the culture."

Things began to turn around for Aguilar when he received an unexpected email from a ministry that works in Central and South America, which had heard about Aguilar's story and his deportation. He was invited to go on a mission with them in Honduras, and while there, he received additional training in evangelism. And he had the opportunity to tell his story on television and radio, and then he was invited to do the same type of ministry in Colombia.

"When I got back to El Salvador, I knew I wanted to be an independent missionary, a pastor, sent by my church to minister here," Aguilar said.

His mother operated a small bar in the back of her home to make a living. When Aguilar moved in to live with her, she realized that his preaching would conflict with an open bar in her home. A few months after Aguilar prayed for God to close the bar, his mother agreed to shut it down and allowed Aguilar's church to meet in that space. The church attracts between 60-70 people each week for worship and helps provide food for the poor.

Although Aguilar said he has hopes of returning to the United States one day with a testimony of God's goodness in his life, it would be hard for him to leave. "I am falling in love with the people that I am ministering to, and I have adjusted again to a new lifestyle," he said. "One long-term goal I have is to graduate from seminary and be an ordained pastor."

Part of that dream came true May 21 when pastor Garland and Kevin Cottrell, First Baptist of Broken Arrow's mission pastor, traveled to a chapel in San Marcos to lead in the ordination of George Aguilar to the gospel ministry.

"What a night that was," Garland said. "To ordain a young man who broke into our church and found Jesus 10 years ago and today is a missionary of the gospel that changed his life forever." (BP)

Celebrating



The Kentucky League on Alcohol and Gambling Problems

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