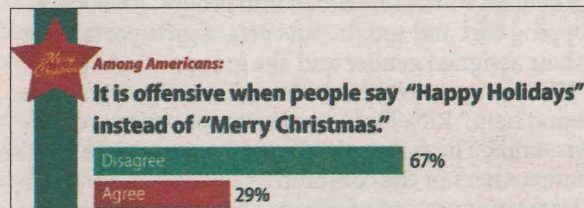


WESTERN Recorder

December 16, 2014

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 188, Issue 46



Church remains key part of Christmas

By Bob Smietana

Nashville, Tenn.—Most Americans believe Christmas goes better with a visit to church, religious Christmas songs in public school concerts, and more focus on Jesus, a LifeWay Research survey shows.

And while there's much banter on cable TV talk programs about a "War on Christmas," most Americans are fine when people wish them "Happy Holidays," according to the study. This year's latest controversy regarding Christmas involves atheist billboards featuring a fictional letter from a little girl who says she's too old for fairy tales. "Dear Santa," the billboard reads, "All I want for Christmas is to skip church."

Scott McConnell, vice-president of Nashville-based LifeWay Research, noted "Christmas traditions that have nothing to do with the Christian faith continue to multiply. Still, most Americans want more of Jesus in their Christmas rather than less."

No thanks, say most Americans, according to the survey. The study asked 1,000 Americans about their views on Christmas in a phone survey Sept. 26 to Oct. 5, 2014. Among the findings:

■ Church remains an essential part of Christmas.

Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of Americans agree Christmas should include a trip to church. A third (32 percent) disagree, while 4 percent are unsure.

Younger Americans are least interested in church at Christmas time. Fewer than four in 10 (38 percent) of those 18 to 24 say church is an essential part of Christmas, followed by 55 percent of those 25 to 34.

Christians (77 percent) are more likely to agree than those from other faiths (44 percent) and the Nones (28 percent).

■ Americans prefer the sacred to the secular at Christmas.

Eight out of 10 Americans (79 percent) agree with the statement: "Christmas should be more about Jesus." About one in five (18 percent) disagree. A few (3 percent) are not sure. Southerners (86 percent) are more likely to agree than Midwesterners (76 percent) and those in the West (69 percent).

Older Americans are more interested in focusing on Jesus at Christmas than younger Americans. Nearly nine in 10 Americans who are over 65 (88 percent) agree. Among those 18 to 24, the number drops to six in 10 (61 percent).

■ Americans want to keep Christ in Christmas. Younger people aren't so sure.

Seven in 10 Americans believe "Christmas would be a better experience if it had a more Christian focus." One in four (26 percent) disagree, while four percent are not sure. Three quarters of women (73 percent) agree and two thirds of men (66 percent) agree. Younger Americans—those 18 to 24 (46 percent), and 25

□ See Key part ... Page 8



Church planting fire burning in South Asia

By Don Graham

South Asia—For Mitch Englehart*, it's a beautiful sight that's taking place in some very dirty water. The South Carolina native watches from the bank of a stagnant canal as six new believers are baptized outside a small village in the South Asian countryside. Dhanwan is one of them.

"I want to follow Jesus!" the young man says, explaining that he became a Christian following a miraculous healing through the prayers of a local pastor. That pastor, Lalbahadur,

is a fifth-generation Christian whose faith can be traced back to Englehart's church planting network. It is mid-January, and Dhanwan shivers as he steps into the canal. Lalbahadur starts the baptism chain, first dunking Dhanwan, as each newly baptized believer baptizes the next. This is discipleship in action, Englehart says, and it's what's brought him to South Asia.

He and his wife Nellie*, from Texas, have spent the past nine years training church leaders like Lalbahadur. For Englehart, 47, that means travel—and lots of it. On

average, he spends 10 to 12 nights a month away from Nellie and their two children, Rachel* and Peyton*, as he disciples national believers. But he says the sacrifice is worthwhile; it's part of the commitment the Texas couple made when God called them as full-time Christian workers.

"When you look back at Paul and Jesus, you can almost spell 'disciple' T-I-M-E," Englehart says. "If we want to see God move in an area, then we need to invest between 60 and 90 days a year into these guys."

"These guys" are Englehart's two □ See Church planting ... Page 7

Mission Board retains CU funds, will sell BCM building

By Todd Deaton



Kris Billiter, pastor of Eastpoint Community Church, which meets at the Kentucky Baptist building, delivers the church plant's first Cooperative Program check to Paul Chitwood, executive director of the KBC.

Louisville—During its Dec. 8-9 meeting, the Mission Board of the Kentucky Baptist Convention approved retaining nearly \$1 million in escrowed funds that had been earmarked for Campbellsville University and placed one of its campus ministry facilities up for sale.

In their organizational meeting for the coming year, they also heard reports from KBC Executive Director-Treasurer Paul Chitwood and from KBC ministry team directors and various agency, institution and auxiliary leaders.

Campbellsville's allocation

The KBC's business and finance committee recommended that allocations for Campbellsville University from the previous two years be retained until a settlement is reached concerning the Kentucky Baptist Building's outer wall repair project, at which time the committee will recommend to the Mission Board how the funds will be distributed.

The action follows the recent move by Campbellsville's trustees to elect 11 of its own board members

□ See Mission Board ... Page 2

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UC's Mountain Outreach hosts shopping spree for kids

By Amanda Kelly

Williamsburg—University of the Cumberlands' Mountain Outreach brought volunteers to the Williamsburg Walmart at midnight for their annual shopping spree. Every year, Mountain Outreach buys thousands of dollars worth of Christmas gifts that are distributed to local children at its annual gift day.

"We want substantial gifts for these kids," Marc Hensley, director of Mountain Outreach, said. "This is the only Christmas these kids may have."

This year, Mountain Outreach had nearly 380 children to shop for, in which they collected 778 gifts. The gifts collected at the shopping spree go to Mountain Outreach's warehouse for the annual gift day, which was Dec. 13.

According to Hensley, Mountain Outreach raised about \$25,000 and spent about \$10,000 to \$15,000 on gifts at Walmart.



More than 85 UC students helped shop for local children at Mountain Outreach's annual Walmart shopping spree.

According to Hensley, Walmart's manager, Stephen Centers, often gives discounts on items which Mountain Outreach buys in bulk, such as bicycles or

certain toys. Most gifts fall into a \$15 to \$25 price range.

"(Centers) is very generous and courteous to us," Hensley said. "We appreciate him and we appreciate the associates who give their times to help us do this."

As midnight neared, Hensley announced to the crowd what they were to do.

About 85 volunteers broke into groups, grabbed a shopping cart and sought out certain gifts pertaining to their assigned gender and age group.

"The best part is the number of students who come out and help," Rick Fleenor, director of church relations, said. "The folks at Walmart do a great job; they're great partners in the community for UC."

Hensley expressed gratitude and appreciation on behalf of Mountain Outreach to those who either helped shop or raise funds.

"The event would not have been possible without those who reached out a helping hand to Mountain Outreach," he said. (UC)

Mission board

Continued from page 1

on Oct. 28, bypassing approval by KBC messengers during their annual meeting. Campbellsville's trustees had voted earlier to unilaterally terminate the covenant agreement and voluntarily surrender its Cooperative Program allocations.

In 2013-14, \$191,918 was escrowed from funds previously allocated for Campbellsville University since the university no longer was adhering to its covenant agreement with the convention, according to the B&F committee's report. An estimated \$765,000 will be escrowed from Campbellsville's allocation in 2014-15.

As a result of legal action filed by the convention in December 2011, a settlement is being sought on the costs and professional fees of repairing defects in the outer wall of the Kentucky Baptist Building in Louisville, committee chair Charles Frazier reported.

In May, the Mission Board approved up to \$1.75 million from the State Mission Reserve Fund to be used to cover reconstruction of the building's outer wall. Any reimbursements resulting from a legal settlement are to be deposited back into the reserve fund, after \$200,000 is returned to a property insurance reserve fund which was drawn upon for the project.

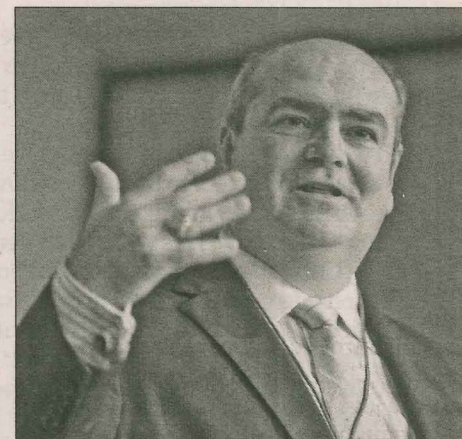
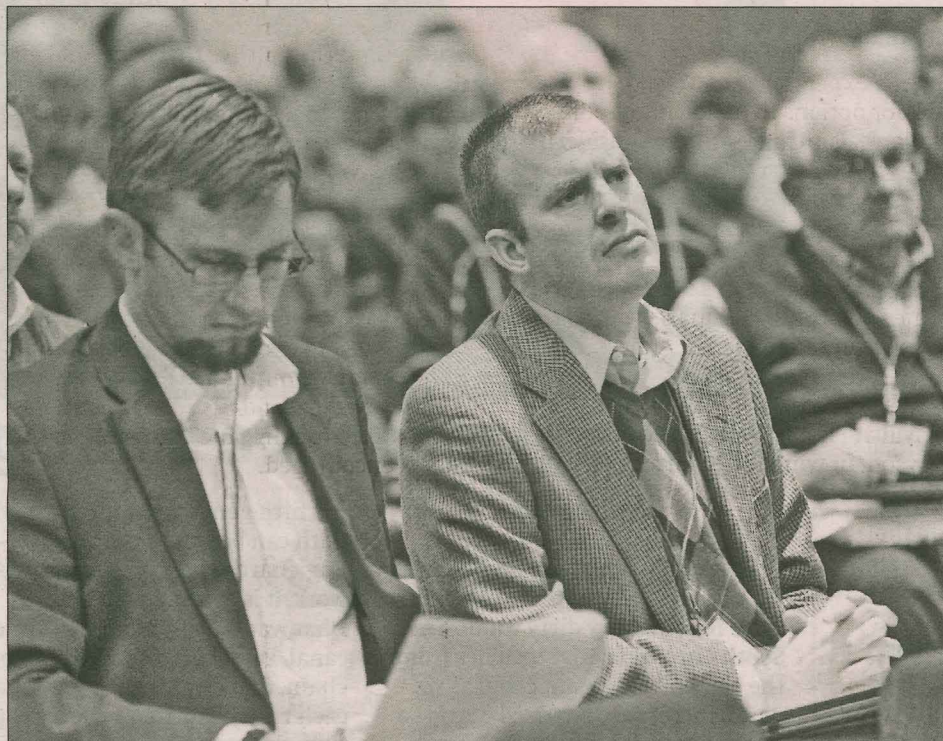
In other action, the Mission Board approved reallocating distribution of the Bethel Memorial Fund, which previously had been directed toward the KBC's three universities. With Georgetown and Campbellsville no longer adhering to their covenant agreements with the KBC, distribution of the Bethel funds needed to be changed, the B&F committee report stated.

Since the Bethel agreement called for funding Christian education at the college level, future distributions will be split between University of the Cumberlands and Clear Creek Bible College, with each receiving approximately \$4,000 annually.

Campus property sale

The Mission Board also approved the sale of a building and property formerly used by Baptist Collegiate Ministry to Somerset Community College for \$125,000.

Proceeds are to be used to further efforts by ministries to college students,



At Left: Mission Board members Bryan Grigg, of Kuttawa, and Andrew Dyer, of London, listen to reports by KBC agency and institution leaders. (Photos by Robin Cornet/KBC)

Above: Charles Frazer, of Benton, chair of the business and finance committee, explains the recommendation to retain Campbellsville University's funds until a settlement is reached regarding the Baptist Building's outer wall project.

KBC Collegiate Evangelism Strategist Brian Combs said. Specifically, funds could help provide more campus missionary interns, he added.

Somerset Community College is one of 16 schools in the Kentucky Community and Technical College System.

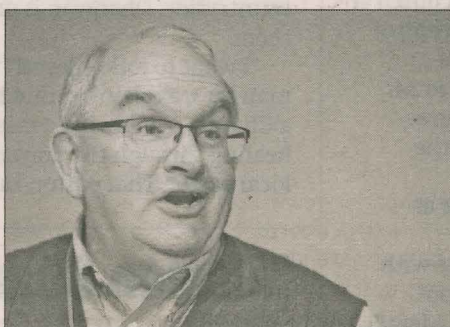
In other action, the Mission Board approved transferring the remainder of \$36,700 in unspent budget funds and short term interest funds of \$47,300, a total of \$84,000, for distribution to various year-end mission board needs in 2014, including:

- \$26,500 for repair and replacement of BCM facilities;
- \$15,000 for computer software and equipment;
- \$11,000 for executive office special projects and interns;
- \$10,000 for ministers in need;
- \$10,000 for HD equipment for KBC communications and media team;
- \$5,000 for Shepherding the Shepherd conference;
- \$5,000 for hosting a SBC church revitalization event in March 2015;
- \$1,500 for staff wellness emphasis.

CP up for quarter

Financial contributions to the Cooperative Program by Kentucky Baptists reached their highest level in four years for the first quarter.

Total receipts for November were \$1,413,958. Added to more than \$1.9



Lower left: Director of Missions Jerry Tooley, of Owensboro, delivers a morning devotion from Joshua 24.

750,000 Kentucky Baptists in 2,400 churches support the work of missionaries throughout the United States and around the world.

In his first address as the new KBC president, Tom James, pastor of Eastwood Baptist Church in Bowling Green, spotlighted the Cooperative Program and what the sacrificial giving of Kentucky Baptists accomplishes all across the commonwealth.

Drawing upon the gospel story of four men laboring together to bring a sick man to Jesus, James said, "I believe the Cooperative Program was adopted to unite us as Southern Baptists in bringing sin-sick people to the Lord."

Quoting Ecclesiastes 4:9, which reads, "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor," he asked, "If that is true, how much more true is it for 16-plus million?" referring to the collective membership of Southern Baptist churches.

"If what the Bible says is true about two, how much more true is it for 47,000-plus SBC churches?" he continued.

The biblical story of the four men who took their friend to Jesus is the story of the CP in Kentucky, he said.

"It is your story and mine," James said. "It's a story of bringing young, old, men, women, boys, girls to Jesus." (WR)

million in September and \$1.86 million in October, CP giving for the quarter was more than \$23,000 ahead of the same period last year.

Lowell Ashby, leader of the KBC's finance and business services team, said he was "very pleased" with CP receipts for the first three months of the fiscal year.

"We're grateful that the economy has finally rebounded to the point that our churches have been able to raise their giving levels," Ashby told members of the KBC administrative committee. "We were heartened by a recent report that shows Kentucky's unemployment rate has dropped some 4.5 percentage points since the height of the recession five years ago."

"This is a strong start to the fiscal year," he said. "We're hopeful these strong levels of giving will continue."

The Cooperative Program is the primary means through which nearly

Dynamic father-son duo serves churches in Eastern Kentucky

There is a ministry team in the East Region that all Kentucky Baptists need to hear about. It is a father and son duo.

Paul Schmidt is pastor of First Baptist Church of Grayson, and his son, Sam, is pastor of First Baptist Church of Inez. Both father and son are experiencing a time of church renewal in a region that has experienced population decline during the past decade.

The story behind these two ministries is interesting, considering the fact that Paul is not only Sam's father, but he is a former pastor of the Inez congregation where Sam now serves. Paul was pastor at Inez for 16 years, from 1993-2009, and was extremely involved in the community. He worked for the local school board and coached an area football team for a couple of years.

Proverbs 22:6 states, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Paul, obviously, has obeyed this Scripture.

As a godly father, Paul led Sam to the Lord, and he began teaching him to do all that the Lord commanded. The result is that Sam has not strayed from the biblical teaching of his father.

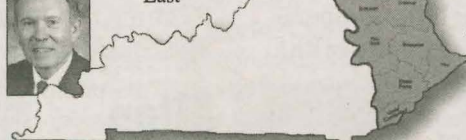
It has been said, "A call to preach the gospel is also a call to prepare to preach the gospel." Sam clearly understood this principle.

Sam enrolled at Clear Creek Bible College in Pineville. While attending, he met the love of his life, Andrea Fox, who is the daughter of Donnie Fox, Clear Creek's president.

Regional SPOTLIGHT



Paul Badgett
East



Sam went on to earn a master's degree at Campbellsville University, and plans to work on a master of divinity degree at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Both Sam and Paul are in the midst of experiencing the problem of "the 80 percent rule."

A church experiences the 80 percent rule when worship attendance reaches 80 percent of available space. When a church is 80 percent full, according to growth experts, the church needs to look for options to make more room available. Paul and Sam are considering either building, starting additional services, or both.

This father and son duo works well together. Paul recently preached at a homecoming service for Sam, and they witnessed six professions of faith and saw a banner attendance. "There were people everywhere!" Paul said.

In turn, Sam was invited to lead a revival at First Baptist Church of Grayson, in which the church



Above, Andrea and Sam Schmidt. Above right, Paul and Jean Schmidt.



experienced seven professions of faith. How did he experience such success?

"Visit, witness, work and pray," Paul replied. "There is no excuse for a church not to grow," he added.

Reflecting on his ministry in Inez, Paul stated, "After being there for several years, it was determined if we are going to reach our region for Christ, we had to understand the culture that surrounded us."

He began to use Elmer Towns' philosophy of ministry: "Using culture to win the culture." The church, following Paul's spiritual leadership, made the necessary changes for growth.

Paul also has implemented the same philosophy of ministry at First Baptist Church of Grayson. His goal is to use the culture to help his church reach the Carter County community.

The worship center is full, Bible study groups are growing, and the congregation is encouraged.

Much more could be said about this dynamic duo. One could talk about what has been purchased, what has been constructed, and what is being planned.

However, the key to their ministries is not found in buildings or lands. The key to their ministry success is found in relationships—their relationships with the Lord and with others.

Kentucky pastors could learn a valuable lesson from these two godly men about the importance of relationships in building thriving worship communities.

As one pastor has observed, "People are not interested in how cool or knowledgeable we are. People are interested in the time we invest in them. If you want to give your congregations something special, give them yourself."

Paul and Sam have truly invested themselves in the people of their congregations, which in turn has renewed their churches and enhanced the kingdom of God. (WR)

Little River camp instills discipleship as youth serve Trigg community

The cost of camp should not be what keeps a child from having a Christian camp experience. That is the conviction of Little River Baptist Association Director of Missions Mike Rust and a team of caring leaders who organize the annual, local missions experience known as Camp Cadiz.

Camp Cadiz started four years ago from a prayer effort to find a more affordable way to do a youth work/camp experience. A former youth leader, Jason Strickland, and Associational Youth Director Carl Heckman worked together with other leaders to produce a local project modeled after the highly successful World Changers and Kentucky Changers events.

Camp Cadiz is a ministry event where students in middle and high school work on local service projects and share in a spiritual, gospel-centered camp experience.

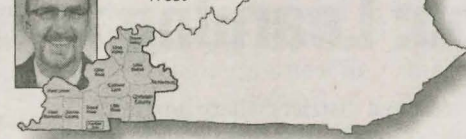
In 2014, 70 youth from 14 churches worked together with 35 adult volunteers. The energetic group completed 56 projects in the area. Projects included wheelchair ramps, porch construction, hot meals prepared and delivered to the elderly, and a bathroom remodeling.

When Camp Cadiz is in full swing, the local community is able to observe an army of student and adult workers dressed in green T-shirts with the logo, "Peculiar for Christ"—a reference to 2 Peter 2:9—as they go about the business of serving Jesus by serving others. The adults and students are supported by area businesses, local churches, and dozens of volunteers who participate in one way or

Regional SPOTLIGHT



Todd Gray
West



another.

The structure for the 2014 Camp Cadiz experience requires participating students to stay in separate quarters for boys and girls in the Christian Life Center of Liberty Point Baptist Church.

They have meals together, and their day starts with a morning devotional. The students and adults put in a full, eight-hour work day. They wrap up with a group worship experience. Local churches provide the meals for all involved.

Organizers of Camp Cadiz understand that a volunteer mission experience can serve to catapult the disciple of Christ to a new level of commitment and obedience to Jesus. Other results of Camp Cadiz have included salvations, deeper commitment to Christ, a greater understanding of the needs that exist in the community, and a greater awareness of the ministries of local Baptist churches.

But above all, DOM Mike Rust said, "Jesus is glorified by the love, participation and compassion shown throughout the week."

Camp Cadiz is led and organized by church leaders. The leadership team consists of Carl Heckman, deacon at Cadiz



Camp Cadiz is a ministry event where students in middle and high school work on local service projects and share in a spiritual, gospel-centered camp experience. In 2014, the group completed 56 projects in the area, including wheelchair ramps, porch construction, hot meals prepared and delivered to the elderly, and a bathroom remodeling.

Baptist; Marc Frye, youth leader at New Hope Baptist; Robert Papajeski, youth minister at Cadiz Baptist, along with the support of Rust and many church volunteers.

DOM Rust said that one of the most fun things for him is to watch the adults teach the youth how to use power tools and practice basic construction skills. When the week is completed, relationships have been built between students, adult volunteers, church leaders and community homeowners that will continue for years to come.

One young lady who was involved in this past summer's event was dissatisfied early in the week because she was "stuck" leading a VBS event, while all of her friends were on construction crews. When the day was done, she would hear of the hard work that the others did, while her VBS effort did not seem as exciting. She



even tried to have herself removed from the VBS team and reassigned to a construction crew.

The next day, at the VBS site, the high school girl led a 14-year-old girl to faith in Christ. She was then able to see God's hand at work in her assignment.

Rust, with tears in his eyes, observed, "If we can make a difference with one person then the hundreds of hours and dollars spent are absolutely worth it." (WR)

Get on TYS bandwagon

On the heels of our annual meeting celebration in Bowling Green, I continue to hear many positive comments and compliments about the "Tell Your Story" theme and the testimonies shared by those who lead Kentucky Baptists and our agencies and institutions. The testi-

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

monies set the tone of the annual meeting and kept us focused on celebrating and sharing God's work in our lives.

We continue to see people get on the TYS bandwagon as a way of sharing the gospel story that those who are lost might be saved.

As an update on this effort, let me share with you that, as of Dec. 10, we had 280 stories posted on the tellyourstory.today website.

From Nov. 10 through Dec. 10, we counted more than 30,000 visitors to the site. Just in the past 10 days, visitors from nine different countries listened to approximately 2,500 stories.

The international witnessing opportunity provided by the TYS website should not be overlooked, especially as a gospel presence is being systematically removed in places like Syria and Iraq.

A recent report on the ongoing brutal slaughter of Christians in Iraq revealed an unimaginable brutality. In one reported incident, four Christian children under the age of 15 were called upon by ISIS to declare their allegiance to Mohammed. Instead, they declared their love for Jesus.

The Jihadists responded by cutting off the heads of those children. In another reported incident, a Christian father was assured that his children would be decapitated if he refused to swear allegiance to Mohammed.

He had every reason to believe the jihadists would do as they promised, so, to save the lives of his children, he declared his allegiance to the false prophet. He then called his pastor to ask if Jesus would forgive him. His pastor assured him of the love and grace of the Savior.

Kentucky Baptists continue to make sacrifices to get more resources to our overseas missionaries. TYS allows us to share not only our resources but our stories with the nations, as well as with our neighbors here at home.

Let me encourage you to go to www.tellyourstory.today and record your story. In 2-3 minutes, share how you came to Christ.

A brief but clear presentation of the gospel will be tagged onto the end of your story so that anyone who listens will not only know how you were saved but also understand how they can be saved.

Within a day or so of recording your story, you will receive a text message letting you know it has been posted. You will also receive the web address so you can share it as you invite people to listen to your story.

If you want to hear my story, go to bit.ly/paulcky1.

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

'Tell your story' ... from a different angle

In his first address to a gathering of Kentucky Baptists, Convention President Tom James looked at the recent annual meeting's theme, "Tell Your Story," from a different angle. Rather than telling how he came to know Christ, James told "your story," celebrating what the sacrificial giving of Kentucky Baptists through the Cooperative Program accomplishes across the Commonwealth. Telling inspiring story after inspiring story, he weaved a beautiful tapestry of how your CP gifts are being used to share Christ.

"Your story through the Crossings Ministries includes a young man named Christian from Whitley County," James began. Christian became active in the student ministry of Main Street Baptist Church, and when his friends started talking about Jonathan Creek, he wanted to go, too. While at camp, Christian consistently heard the gospel, and he was saved and later baptized, James said.

"Your story is the story of Jeff, a young man who was deaf," James continued. At Western Kentucky University, Jeff became active in Baptist Campus Ministry, was elected as president, and later served as an intern. One summer, Jeff decided to share the love of Christ by giving away Gatorade at pickup basketball games. Whenever Jeff was asked why, he explained what a difference Christ made for him. When someone from Philadelphia remarked, "No one would ever do this in Philly," Jeff took it as a challenge.

The next spring, he loaded his car with Gatorade and headed for Philadelphia. There he started an inner-city basketball ministry that turned into a 24-team league. At one of his Bible studies, a young man brought a woman who was on the verge of committing suicide. Jeff shared the hope of Christ with her, and she was saved, James rejoiced.

"Yours is the story of CP dollars helping the ministry of the Louisville Rescue Mission," James said. The Rescue Mission conducted a Vacation Bible School in a mobile home park. When a Frisbee hit a trailer, an elderly man came out, shook his head and frowned. The next day, he sat outside and watched. The day after, he provided snacks for the kids.



After Thought

By Todd Deaton

Through the VBS, the elderly man heard the gospel and was saved, James rejoiced. One of the rescue mission's students, who was a homeless drug addict, also accepted Christ and now is a student at Boyce College, he noted.

"Yours is the story of a regional consultant who helped a church of 10 that lost their pastor," James continued. The consultant helped the church get \$5,000 in revitalization money from the North American Mission Board, and he helped find a new pastor. He led them to restart Sunday School and trained Bible study leaders.

Last August, James recounted, the church held a "Kick off Sunday" with 39 in Sunday School, 75 in worship, and had two baptisms.

"Yours is the story of disaster relief teams going to Colorado after wildfires," James added. The teams helped an elderly woman with "ash-out work." She was bitter after fires had destroyed much of her home.

Through the compassionate witness of disaster relief workers, she accepted Christ, and the next Sunday she attended church for the first time in her life, he rejoiced.

"Yours is the story of ... the Hatfield family that attends Cedar Creek Baptist Church near Bardstown," James shared. "Their son, Riley, learned of Sunrise's kids, and one night asked his dad, 'Who tucks them in at night? Who buys them Christmas presents?'" James recalled. Riley then asked, "Why don't we give Christmas gifts to Sunrise this year?" Friends at their church overheard a what they were doing, and \$1,400 was raised to provide a great Christmas for seven girls and seven boys in Sunrise's care, James noted.

"None of these stories would have been possible were it not for your faithful giving through the Cooperative Program," James said. "As pastors and lay leaders of KBC churches, go back and tell your story to your church," he urged.

With these and more stories, James set a splendid tone for his tenure as our president, leading us in celebrating the shared ministries of Kentucky Baptists.

Your story doesn't end, though. Each time someone gives through the Cooperative Program, it continues ... as Baptists work together to tell others His story.

Inner commission: Learning to be one with Him

By Erich Bridges

Light shines brightest in darkness—even in the murk of a stagnant water canal near a village in South Asia, where six new believers in Christ are baptized.

"I want to follow Jesus!" says Dhanwan, one of the six, who became a Christian through the church-planting network led by Christian worker Mitch Englehart* and his national partners. The local pastor baptizes Dhanwan, who in turn baptizes the next new believer, who baptizes the next.

Mitch has seen more than 3,000 baptisms in the past five years alone—and his team is developing a new wave of church planters focused on the least-

reached districts where he works.

"God is using these guys in mighty ways," Mitch says. "There's already a fire burning. My role is to pour a little gasoline on that fire." (See video at vimeo.com/95749556; see story on page 1).

The fire began in the heart of God. His divine plan to reconcile creation to Himself was fulfilled when He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem us. After His death and resurrection, Jesus sent His disciples to continue God's mission. Today, we're part of His plan, if we obey His call to take the gospel to all nations:

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe

everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20 HCSB).

Before the resurrected Christ said those words, however, verses 16 and 17 record how His followers encountered Him that day: "The 11 disciples traveled to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed them. When they saw Him, they worshiped, but some doubted."

Even after seeing Him risen from the grave, they needed His presence and power before going forth into the world.

"Jesus had some important instructions for his inner circle, but before He offered the outer commission, He simply invited them to be with Him," writes

□ See One with Him ... Page 5

WESTERN Recorder

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Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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'Rope-holders' have vital place in missions

Urgent prayer needed! That was on the subject line of an email from the other side of the world. The baby was coming early and quickly, but they lived many miles from the nearest hospital.

As they frantically drove to the city, they were afraid. A quick plea for prayer went out to anyone on their prayer team checking email at that moment, so I prayed. Then, communication went silent for hours.

I could only imagine how their parents in the U.S. were feeling, knowing their children were in this difficult situation. They were new to the missions field, had few friends there at this point, and everything seemed strange and complicated.

Several hours later, word came they made it to the hospital in time, and a healthy but tiny baby was born. Mother and baby would be fine with rest and care. Their fear had turned to praise and thanksgiving for God's protection and intercession through knowledgeable hospital staff.

The way they handled their situation became a testimony to the staff that assisted them. They were able to

share the story of One who gave His life so they might live.

First Person



Wanda Lee

As I have reflected on their experience in recent weeks, I am reminded of their testimony voiced months earlier in their appointment service. God had placed in their hearts a desire to share His love with people they had never met. They each had experienced the unconditional love and forgiveness that comes from God alone and wanted every person to know that truth as well.

And so they went to this new place with their family to face uncertain days, to learn new ways of living and managing the basic needs of life as a family, to learn a new language and a new culture ... but they went feeling confident of God's call and the promise of His presence, and that was enough.

All around our world, individuals and families like this one are living their faith so vibrantly that people who are just watching from the sidelines take notice and ask, "Why are you different?"

I wonder if those watching us see the same thing. You and I have the privilege of walking alongside our

missionaries in this one sacred effort of sharing Christ with those who have never heard.

We each have a place in God's story of redemption. We have been redeemed and called to help others know they, too, can be a child of God; to know His love and care just as this missionary couple does.

But with this privilege comes responsibility. Those of us remaining at home have been called to hold the ropes.

What does that mean? We are the ones who place our money in the offering plate so they can go; we pray before and after the urgent pleas over email so they can stay; and when they need us to come and help, we go.

What is your place in God's great plan for sharing His story with a world in need of the gospel? Has He called you to leave the place you love and embrace "the new" to tell His story?

Or maybe He has called you to remain as a rope holder and share the love of Jesus right where you are.

Whatever His call, the greatest joy comes from discovering it and following Him each day. (IMB)

Wanda Lee is executive director/treasurer for National Woman's Missionary Union.

How can I help my child prepare for Christmas?

By David Garrard

The days leading up to Dec. 25 are exciting times for boys and girls. As the holy day approaches, let children enjoy the holiday hustle and bustle, but use the following ideas to gently guide them toward the true meaning of Christmas.

Emphasize giving. Shop together for friends or family members, or spend an evening making simple gifts. Bake Christmas cookies and take them to the nearest firehouse or police station. Make or buy cards for the people who deliver your newspaper and mail, or who collect your trash. Be sure the cards carry a distinctively Christian Christmas message.

Get involved in a Christmas ministry. Collect toys, food or clothes for needy families, and if possible, participate in the distribution of these gifts. Make a special monetary gift to missions.

Visit shut-ins. Go caroling. Help your children see these activities as their gift to Jesus—ways of showing and sharing love for Him.

Worship together. Take advantage of special holiday services at your church and in your community. Worship at home as well. Make a simple advent wreath for your kitchen table and light a candle each Sunday in December. Your church or local Christian bookstore can provide resources to guide your advent celebration. Consider purchasing an advent calendar to help children mark the number of days until Christmas. The calendar will remind boys and girls of the many wonderful events that led to the birth of Jesus.

On Christmas day, after all the gifts have been opened, sing "Joy to the World" and "Silent Night." Read the Christmas story from Luke 2. Pray together. Thank God for the greatest gift of all: Jesus.

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

Tips to help pastors beat the holiday stress

The holiday season is one of my favorite times of year. I love the opportunities it brings to spend time with my family and friends, enjoying good fellowship and good food in the process.

And to top it all off, we get to celebrate the birth of our Savior. It's truly an amazing time.

As a pastor for the last 25 years, I am extremely grateful and appreciative of being part of loving church families. But I have to admit the holidays can also be a busy and stressful time for those in ministry leadership.

You have musicals, Christmas parties, dinners, family engagements, ministry outreach efforts, sermons to put together each week and to possibly prepare for a Christmas Eve worship service—one of the highest attended gatherings of your church year.

I've made my share of mistakes during the holiday seasons and I've also learned some things in the process. Here are a few of the practices that have helped me have a more fruitful and rejuvenating holiday season.

■ Give yourself permission not to attend every event. Church members love to invite pastors (and their families) to their holiday gatherings—from Sunday School Christmas parties to family get-togethers to community celebrations. Many of these invitations will come at the last minute. You don't have to accept them all. In fact, it's

perfectly acceptable—and honest—to say you have other plans when you simply need to spend some time with your family.

■ Stay home if you sense your family is stressed. Your family doesn't have to attend every event. Stay sensitive to your family's stress level. When you can't make an event, contact the organizers as early as possible so they can communicate it to the others in attendance.

■ Make your presence felt at musicals and special services. Most churches have special events during the holiday season where larger-than-usual crowds will be expected.

Take the time during those events to connect with as many people as possible. Shake hands, hug necks and write down prayer requests. Show your community you care during those times.

■ Don't schedule extra events during the holiday season. You may be tempted to schedule something new and unique. Think hard before doing so. Your calendar will already be full.

What seems like an amazing holiday ministry event in July will easily turn into one more stress-filled commitment when December comes.

■ Commit to serve at a Christmas Eve service two out of three years.

Most likely you have a retired pastor or director of missions who would love the opportunity to lead your Christmas Eve service every third year. This gives you an opportunity to visit extended family or just be a normal person during the holidays.

■ Keep your walk with Jesus vibrant during this time. Keep up your personal devotional time during the holidays and be prepared to take even more time away for spiritual reflection. The holidays aren't just physically, emotionally and mentally draining. They can be spiritually draining, too! Make sure you keep yourself recharged.

■ Schedule a special date night with your wife. The holidays are a busy time. Take some time to fully communicate to your wife the special place she holds in your life. Use

the time to plan your holiday budget and get your schedules in sync.

Remember that you don't have to go through the stressful holiday

season alone. If you need someone to talk with, please consider calling our new SBC Pastoral Care Line at 844-PASTOR1. It's completely confidential and free.

I hope you have a great holiday season as you celebrate the birth of our Lord. (BP)

Michael Lewis (@pastor4pastors) serves as the North American Mission Board's executive director of pastoral care and development.

First Person



Michael Lewis

What seems like an amazing holiday ministry event in July will easily turn into one more stress-filled commitment when December comes.

One with Him

Continued from page 4

former missionary Randy Rains, IMB leader for spiritual life and formation.

"They needed to understand that their relationship to Him was far more important than anything they would ever do. They worshiped Him, though some doubted, or as some interpretations render it, they hesitated. Within this context of doubt, fear and hesitation, He reassured them of His presence, authority and unconditional love. He knew they would need all of this before embarking upon any fruitful mission endeavor ...

"The Great Commission does not begin with our going out to make disciples. It begins first with our meeting Jesus in the place where He has invited us to come. It is a desolate place where we can spend time with Him in solitude and silence.

"It is a venue where true life transformation takes place. It is the location where we listen in prayer as He reminds us we are His beloved, that He has all authority and will be with us wherever we go and in all that we do. Let's make sure we are fulfilling the inner commission as we seek to fulfill the outer commission of making disciples of all peoples, baptizing them and teaching them to observe all things He has commanded us."

This is the one sacred effort to which He calls us—first to Him, then to His mission.

This year's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions gives us a fresh opportunity to join God in His work. When you pray and give, you become part of God's story around the world.

Erich Bridges is IMB's global correspondent.

WEEK OF PRAYER

Music helps missionaries break barriers

By Tess Rivers

Stockholm, Sweden—Good values weren't enough for Linda Hamfors of Stockholm, Sweden. Hamfors, who grew up in an atheist family, believed Jesus was "a really amazing guy" and learned values from her parents like forgiveness, acceptance and love.

But, good values couldn't sustain the singer/songwriter through the tumultuous years when her parents began drinking more and pursuing materialistic gain.

Feeling "left alone with my good values, I wasn't feeling good," Hamfors said.

Struggling with addiction, Hamfors searched for God. She found a church. She began singing in church, and the Gospel songs moved her to tears.

Then, she heard International Mission Board church planters Eric and Anissa Haney—also musicians—perform at an event in her city. They sang songs Anissa had written about life, hope and love.

"(I write songs) about the value of life," Anissa said. "All the songs I've written in the last few years (are) about the value of life, how valuable you are to God and that He has a purpose for your life."

The second time Hamfors heard the Haney's play during a street performance, the young woman "came over to me in tears," Anissa recalled.

"She had all these questions and she wanted to get together sometime."

Hanfors said, "My mind was going, 'Oh, this is too much about Jesus and God,' but my heart was saying, 'Yes!'"

The answer is 'Yes!'

"Yes!" is an answer the Haney's know all too well. Eric describes the initial calling to international service as "a hurricane in our souls"—a deep stirring that drove them to pray. The young musician told his wife, "Whatever this is, the answer is 'yes' to God."

That "Yes!" eventually led the Haney's and their three children to Stockholm. As the first IMB church planters in Sweden, they help start churches within a culture steeped in secularism and post-modern thought. They are funded through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists' provision for missions and ministry service.

Charles Kridiotis, a church planter with the Simple Church network who partners with the Haney's, estimates that 3.5 percent of Swedes attend church. Of that, he



Left, Eric Haney (right), an IMB church planter in Stockholm, Sweden, uses music and media to connect with Stockholm's artistic community. He frequents local guitar shops in Stockholm to build relationships.

Below, Linda Hamfors (right) and Anissa Haney sing together. Hamfors, a singer/songwriter, is a new believer who came to faith through her friendship with Anissa. Together, the young women wrote and performed a song for Sweden's National Peace Day. (Photos by Chris Carter/IMB)

says approximately 1.5 percent could be considered evangelical Christians.

"We have seen a little bit of growth in some places," Kridiotis said, "but even that little growth is not equivalent to the birth rate in this nation, so in fact, the church is actually going backward."

Because Stockholm is a secular society and Swedes "just don't talk about God," Kridiotis and Eric agree that a small group approach to church planting is necessary.

"The resistance is not (toward) Jesus," Kridiotis said. "The resistance is what church is perceived to be in this nation."

As a result, the strategy is simple: listening that leads to relationships that lead to biblical community and authentic small group worship.

"We really care about their stories," Eric said. "So their story leads to our story, which is God's story."

Music is the key

For the Haney's, music is the key to sharing their story and hearing the stories of those they meet. By recording the songs of local musicians and interviewing them for a website designed to help singers and songwriters share their music, Eric has the opportunity to hear the stories of musicians and artists in Stockholm's creative community.

"I was at a party with one of the artists that we work with," Eric said. "I was sitting on the couch talking with (a guy who is a rapper) ... He asked me specifically, 'Will

you tell me how you came to know Jesus and what He's meant to you?'" Eric responded, "Of course I can!"

Approaching conversations about God through music has the ability to "cut through walls," Anissa said, noting the countless times people have approached them after a song and shared a piece of their story because the music moved them.

"Music has a power ... to bring about healing ... and to bring purpose and hope," Anissa said. "We play a lot of music in pubs and during open mic (events) so a lot of times we are the only believers there, the only little piece of light in the darkness."

The message is hope

The message of hope in Anissa's music is what drew Hamfors to approach Anissa after a street performance.

"I felt like when you're really held by someone ... like a mother who holds you," Hamfors said about the songs Anissa performed. "This was the feeling I had when I was listening and I was just crying."

A few days after they talked and exchanged cell phone numbers, Hamfors invited Anissa for lunch. The two women became friends. A few months later, Hamfors became a follower of Jesus. She now attends a couple of home groups where she says she is learning to forgive.

"I was taught to be forgiving and to understand that (my parents) were doing



their best," Hamfors said. "(They) didn't mean harm, but they were just in pain inside themselves."

After watching a movie in home group about letting go of past traumas, she learned "to heal that part of me that doesn't want to forgive," Hamfors said. "The home group is a safe place to talk about God."

Eric is also encouraging Hamfors to share her story and her beliefs. He recorded one of her songs and interviewed her for the website, offering her another place to share her newfound faith.

"The coolest change I've seen in Linda (is that) now she wants to share with others," Eric said. "She's saying, 'I have to tell my son about Jesus because no one else will.'"

For Hamfors, sharing her story can mean talking with her son about Jesus. It also can mean writing songs with Christian messages. Together, Hamfors and Anissa wrote a song they performed for Sweden's National Peace Day.

"The Peace Song is about relationships," Hamfors said. "It's about what it takes to trust and find peace." (BP)



Sam Moore, Evangelistic Ministries

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Prenatal classes catalyst for new churches

By Susie Rain

Southeast Asia—The young woman gingerly crawls off a motor scooter, grateful for the ride. Last month, Kalliyam Seng* could make the two-mile trek from her home on a bicycle. But now that she's nine months pregnant and could give birth at any moment, it's harder to pedal that distance.

The woman steadies herself, then slowly walks inside for a weekly pregnancy health class. She's greeted by community health workers and IMB missionary Nancy Potter.* Women in various stages of pregnancy or post-pregnancy surround the ensemble chatting.

Potter looks around the crowded room and smiles. If someone had told the missionary nurse from Oklahoma a few years ago that churches in this part of Southeast Asia would start as a result of pregnant women learning to be healthy, she might have scoffed. Most of these women do not even have a third-grade education. Their families live on less than \$1 a day. Some are malnourished and sick. Yet, God uses these women as catalysts for spreading His word.

"I'm not sure if it started with the women because when you are pregnant, it's nine months of uncertainty, or what," Potter says. "But if you look at how most of the new village house churches started, it's through women. One came to faith and then started praying for everyone else. Other women then join her and they pray for their husbands."

The reason Seng came today was really to ask everyone to pray for her husband. She prays that she will deliver a healthy baby and that this will lead her husband to ask questions about her newfound faith.

Like most attending the prenatal classes, Seng did not know anything about Jesus. The former Buddhist came to learn about giving birth and how to take care of her baby. In this poor rural area, death is a common reality when giving birth. Some of the highest maternal

mortality rates are here. Five women die every day during childbirth, according to a 2013 United Nations report. Surviving childbirth isn't even an end to the fears for these young mothers. For every 1,000 births, around 50 children never see their first birthdays.

For years, Potter and her husband William* held malnourished babies, wondering how long the children would survive. They cringed every time they heard of mothers squatting in an unsanitary bamboo home to give birth. Their hearts broke when these women died without hearing the gospel.

So the Potters, who have medical backgrounds, created a simple curriculum to teach about healthy prenatal and post-pregnancy care. Now, they see around 250 healthy births a year.

The Potters can live and work here because of the Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, Southern Baptists' way of coming together to fund missionaries overseas.

Local Christians teach health classes on everything from washing hands to burping babies. Each lesson ends with a biblical truth and prayer. This approach combines aspects of a discipleship and church planting program called Training for Trainers (T4T) with human needs.

"The first time we tried this, I couldn't get anyone interested in going to villages with me," Nancy Potter remembers. "All it took was one time for that first generation of believers to catch the vision. Now, ... we disciple and train the leaders and they go to the next village. They communicate at a deeper heart level. What we are seeing now is a real acceleration of the gospel."

Seng, like most of the new believers, came to faith after the health workers repeatedly visited her home the day after classes as "follow up." When a "house of peace," or a family interested in learning Bible stories and letting others join them, is found, a small group is formed.

Sovaan and Maly Lim* opened their



Nancy Potter checks the blood pressure of a woman at a prenatal clinic in Southeast Asia. Clinics allow believers to build relationships among many local communities and provide opportunities to share the Gospel where it has never been heard. (IMB photo by Hugh Johnson)

tiny home to a small group when Maly was pregnant. Local Christians came each week to pray, sing praises to God and teach a Bible story. Maly came to Christ one year later. Sovaan remained a drunkard and gambled away the family's money ... but he kept watching and listening.

Maly and the other women wanted to bring their husbands to Christ. So, Potter incorporated lessons on "how to be a godly wife." Then, the women gathered every day, praying for their husbands to come to faith.

"Even up to four months ago, I didn't think we'd ever have any men in our small groups," Potter says. "But then, the husbands saw their wives' countenance change. They saw healthy babies where in the past there was only death ... and that provided a natural presentation of the gospel from their wives."

Then, one by one, the men came to Christ—including Sovaan.

William Potter says, "We are seeing baptisms almost every month now. Most (churches) started as a result of the pregnancy health classes and local believers going out and sharing the gospel."

Sovaan breaks out into a big toothy smile. Jesus is now his favorite topic of conversation. In fact, he and Maly just

finished inviting everyone in the village to come to their house for church. At a T4T training, they were challenged to share with neighbors.

"I learned about the Words and Truths of God at the training," Sovaan says. "Now, it's our turn to take this lesson and teach to the people in our village ... then we will go share in the next village." (IMB)

*names changed

This year's Week of Prayer for International Missions theme is "One Sacred Effort—Find your place in God's story" from Matthew 28:19-20 (HCSB). The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions in tandem with Cooperative Program gifts from Southern Baptist churches support about 4,800 international missionaries in seeking to fulfill the Great Commission. Gifts to the Lottie Moon offering are received through local Southern Baptist churches or online at imb.org/offering. This year's goal is \$175 million.



Church planting

Continued from page 1

main church planting partners, Rakesh and Manoj. Between them, they've seen more than 1,200 new churches and 3,000-plus baptisms in the past five years. Trouble is, they work more than 500 miles apart.

Rakesh is six hours away by train; Manoj is much farther (14 hours by train), which is why Englehart opts to fly. The \$140 ticket shaves travel time down to an hour. Both the partners' ministries center around rural villages, which means that after Englehart arrives in their respective cities, there's often hours of driving still ahead to get where they're going.

"One hundred dollars gets us a taxi or jeep to travel around for three days so we can go from village to village," Englehart says. The same amount buys about 35 Bibles, "so we can put the Word in people's hands."

All of these expenses—from trains to taxis to Bibles—represent just a few of the Englehart's needs provided for by Southern Baptists' giving through the



A South Asian believer prays with Christian worker Mitch Englehart. "I wish I could stretch my day into 36 hours. I wish I could have 45 days in a month—that's how much I love what I do," Englehart said of his nine-year ministry. (Photo by Paul W. Lee/IMB)

Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions.

"We can do so much more together than we can by ourselves, and that's the genius of Lottie Moon," Englehart says, speaking of the offering that supports him, his family and their ministry, as well as that of more than 4,800 other Southern Baptist workers overseas. "When we go home (to America) they call

us heroes. But all of us are heroes because we couldn't do it without those folks who are praying and giving. They're our heroes."

The total number of believers in Englehart's church planting network alone tops 10,000, and there are dozens more Christian workers scattered throughout the region. Better still, Englehart says much of the growth is happening among unengaged, unreached people groups (UUPGs) who are hearing the gospel for the first time. But there's still plenty of work to be done.

Englehart's team is busy developing a new wave of church planters focused on the area's least-reached districts—many less than 0.1 percent Christian. Progress can sometimes seem painfully slow, but Englehart notes that's a small price to pay compared with that of the South Asian believers he's training.

He's awed by the sacrifices many are willing to make—like walking nine miles in sweltering heat to attend a training event. "Who wouldn't want to be around a leader like that? It's from those guys I've learned how to give my life for the gospel," Englehart says. "I've seen these guys

suffer and the joy they have in doing it."

Englehart remembers when God first began pulling him toward full-time Christian work. A successful businessman chasing the American dream, he was first introduced to South Asians in Texas. Almost immediately, Englehart knew something was different. He was able to connect with them in a way he couldn't with his American friends—especially when it came to sharing the gospel.

With Americans, "it was like I was pushing a boulder up a hill," Englehart explains. "But when I sat with South Asian friends..., it was like chasing that boulder down a hill—it was that easy."

And today, after helping train dozens of church planters, there's little doubt Englehart is exactly where God wants him to be.

"I wish I could stretch my day into 36 hours, I wish I could have 45 days in a month—that's how much I love what I do," he says.

"God is using these guys in mighty ways," Englehart adds with a grin. "There's already a fire burning. My role is to pour a little gasoline on that fire." (IMB)

*names changed

Old-Time Revival

150 students flood altar on first night, more on second night

I have very vivid memories of campus revivals from my time as an Oneida student. I can remember every-one cramming into Oneida Baptist Church for several nights. I recall the night a couple of students my parents had worked very closely with gave their lives to Jesus. My parents cried tears of joy.

I also recall wanting the preacher to finish up sooner and also standing through many, many verses of an invitational song, which often times was "Just As I Am." What a different perspective I now have!

We only had one revival (in the spring)—or "spiritual emphasis week," as some folks like to call it nowadays—scheduled for the school year. I have made many mistakes in trying to lead our ministry, and only scheduling one revival was one of those mistakes. Fortunately, this mistake was fixable. It became quite obvious as our school year progressed that our campus needed revival, so I scheduled a two-night revival.

The pastor of Oneida Baptist Church did a fantastic job in two evening services, and it was also awesome to see how separate speakers in our daily morning chapel services brought messages that carried a common theme.

One of the chapels was led by The Stand Power Team, who brought a powerful gospel message. I have seen and heard groups like this one before who

rip phone books and bend steel, but had never seen one present the gospel in such a tremendous way.

The other was led by the head football coach from the University of the Cumberlands, who also did a great job.

Night one of our revival was held in our chapel and was mandatory for all dormitory students. You really didn't think very many teenagers would voluntarily attend a revival service, did you? When the pastor gave the invitation, the altar was flooded with nearly 150 students, many of whom gave their lives to Jesus.

Many of the rest made new commitments to Him.

Night two of the revival was held at Oneida Baptist Church and was voluntary for the students. Well over 100 students came that evening, and after some powerful testimonies from some of our staff and some church members, many more kids gave their hearts to Jesus.

It is now our job to disciple these young people as they begin anew. Jesus has now transformed their lives, but we also know that life and Satan will throw some challenges their way. Please pray for these young people who have found Jesus, and thank you for all you do to enable our ministry team to share Jesus with the young people the Lord sends to Oneida.

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

Traveling the world and studying (Part 2)

Online student combines work travel with his studies

"I started talking to my pastor about going back to school," said Tex Lawson. "I talked about it but I never did anything about it. I started teaching Sunday school, became a trustee, preaching and singing with the praise team, but I was not looking for a Bible College to attend. The Lord laid it on my heart that I needed to stop talking about it and go.

"I found out that Clear Creek had started an on-line program and I could get my degree," Lawson continued. "So I made an appointment to visit the campus. In May of 2011 I enrolled as a student.

"I have enjoyed my time greatly at Clear Creek," he said. "The professors are easy to talk to and very helpful. I travel a lot with work in and out of the country and they do their best to help when you can't get internet service. When you contact them, they are quick to reply. If I have any issues, they are there to give me guidance.

"It is great that I am able to travel with work and still take classes," he added. "Clear Creek has been a great place to help me further my ministry. The great thing about the classes at Clear Creek is that all of them help to

prepare you for ministry."

"Not long after I started at Clear Creek, I felt God leading me and preparing me to become a pastor," said Lawson. "I was recently ordained and became a bi-vocational pastor.

"God has blessed my life in so many ways. When you turn your life over to Him completely, He will transform you in ways that you never thought would or could happen," he said.

"If God is calling you into the ministry and you feel God leading you go to school then Clear Creek Baptist Bible College is the place to go," Lawson said. "Clear Creek's foundation is the word of God.

"The thing that stands out most for me is that Clear Creek helps prepare you for ministering to a lost world that does not know Jesus Christ.

"Clear Creek stands firm in Bible doctrine and it does not waver."

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

Donnie Fox is president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, 300 Clear Creek Road, Pineville, KY 40377; toll-free: (866) 340-3196; ccbcb.edu; email: dfox@ccbcb.edu

Fayetteville, Ark., LGBT law repealed

Fayetteville, Ark.—Voters in a Northwest Arkansas city have overturned a pro-homosexual/transgender ordinance that many claimed posed a threat to religious liberty.

In a special election Dec. 9, residents of Fayetteville—home of the University of Arkansas—approved repeal of the measure by fewer than 500 votes, with 52 percent (7,523) of voters in favor of repeal and 48 percent (7,040) opposed. The result rescinded a law passed by the city council in a 6-2 vote in August. Opponents of the ordinance collected enough signatures within a month to place its repeal on a special election ballot.

The Civil Rights Administration ordinance included protections for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people.

Local and national Southern Baptist leaders opposed the ordinance largely because of concerns it would infringe upon the freedoms of religion and conscience for individuals, churches and businesses. The ordinance's repeal "represents a victory for religious freedom," Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist

Ethics & Religious liberty Commission, said. "The city of Fayetteville had previously passed one of the most broadly written and troubling non-discrimination bills I had ever seen... Instead, the people of Fayetteville have insisted that religious freedom will not be brushed aside by city officials."

Ron Lomax, director of missions for the Washington Madison Baptist Association in Fayetteville, said, "Many people came together from the faith community, the business community, the political community and thousands of the concerned public to make the election results happen."

The rejected ordinance included real or perceived "gender identity," "gender expression" and "sexual orientation" among a list of classifications to receive protection from discrimination in employment and housing. It also barred discrimination by establishments that provide "goods, services, accommodations and entertainment to the public," which would include hotels and restaurants. (BP)

Key part

Continued from page 1

to 34 (57 percent)—are less likely to agree than those 35 to 44 (70 percent) and 65 plus (83 percent).

■ Americans want to let school kids sing "Silent Night."

Most Americans (86 percent) say children in public schools should be allowed to sing religious Christmas songs in school-sponsored musicals. About one in 10 (12 percent) disagree. Two percent are not sure.

Nine in 10 women (89 percent) and eight in 10 men (83 percent) agree. So do most Westerners (80 percent) and even more of those in the Northeast (90 percent) and South (88 percent). Most younger Americans—those 18 to 34—(80 percent) agree, as do 9 in 10 of those 35 and older.

Even many Nones—those who claim no religious faith—don't seem to mind religious Christmas songs in school. Three quarters (73 percent) of Nones agree school kids should be allowed to sing religious songs in Christmas concerts. So do most Christians (92 percent), almost all (96 percent) Evangelicals, and even those from other faiths (71 percent).

■ Most are fine with Happy Holidays.

One of the staples of the "War on Christmas" debates is the fact that some store clerks and businesses have substituted "Happy Holidays" for "Merry Christmas." But few Americans seem to mind "Happy Holidays."

Less than a third (29 percent) agree with the statement, "It is offensive when people say Happy Holidays instead of Merry Christmas." Two-thirds (67 percent) disagree. Four in 10 evangelicals (41 percent) and about a third of Christians (35 percent) say the phrase is offensive. That drops to one in five (20 percent) for people of other faiths, and one in 10 (11 percent) for Nones.

■ Some are bothered by "X-mas."

Using the term "X-mas" in place of Christmas bothers Americans more than "Happy Holidays." About four in 10 (39 percent) say using "X-mas" is offensive. More than half (55 percent) disagree, while 6

percent are not sure.

Women (43 percent) are more likely to be offended by X-mas than men (36 percent.) And more than half of Americans age 55 to 64 (52 percent) are offended by X-mas. Younger Americans don't seem to mind X-mas. About one in five (18 percent) of those 18 to 24, and a third (35 percent) of those 25 to 34 find the phrase offensive.

About a quarter (26 percent) of Hispanic Americans say using X-Mas is offensive. Whites (44 percent) are more likely to find the phrase offensive, as are African Americans (39 percent).

About half of Christians (47 percent) say they agree, along with about a third (32 percent) of people of other faiths. Only one in five (19 percent) of Nones are bothered by X-mas. Meanwhile, more Protestants (51 percent) than Catholics (37 percent) take offense.

■ Theology remains a bit shaky.

Traditional Christian theology, based on the Gospel of John, teaches Jesus existed with God the Father at the beginning. "He was with God in the beginning," says John 1:2. But, Americans aren't so clear about the details of the incarnation and the Trinity.

A little more than half (56 percent) agree with the statement, "God's son existed before Jesus was born in Bethlehem." Three in 10 (29 percent) disagree. Fifteen percent are not sure.

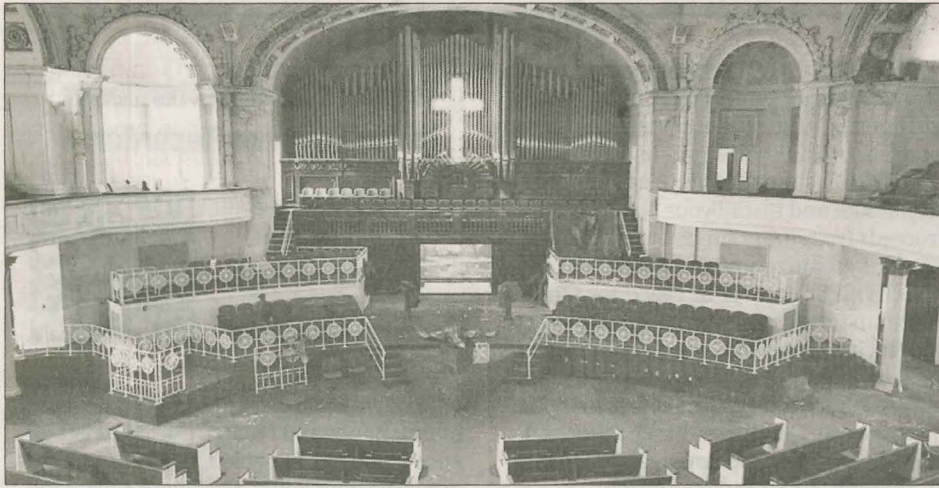
Those living in the Northeast (64 percent) are more likely to agree than those in the Midwest (44 percent) or West (52 percent).

Young Americans are less likely to agree Christ existed prior to His birth. About half (48 percent) of those 18 to 44 agree, but that number jumps to nearly two-thirds (64 percent) for those over 44 years. Evangelicals (70 percent) have the highest agreement. Christians (64 percent) are more likely to agree than those from other faiths (52 percent) and the Nones (31 percent).

"The entire Christian narrative is fulfilled in Jesus further humbling himself to become obedient to the point of death on a cross," McConnell said. "Without Jesus coming to take the punishment for sin men deserved, there would be no point to celebrating His birth." (BP)

It is offensive when people say "X-mas" instead of "Christmas."





TRADING PLACES: Two Louisville congregations consider swapping facilities

By Brenda Smith

Louisville—If all goes well, by this time next year two Baptist families of believers will have successfully traded places and will be settled into their newly-renovated historic homes, just blocks apart near downtown Louisville.

Lampton Baptist and Immanuel Baptist Church are in negotiations for Immanuel to purchase Lampton's facility on 4th Street. As part of the deal, Lampton will receive Immanuel's Shelby Park facilities, located less than a mile away.

It's a providential move for both congregations.

Lampton has called the 60,000-square foot Beaux Arts building at the corner of Fourth and Breckinridge home since 1977.

But the building, which was completed in 1911, has proved difficult for the congregation to maintain over the last several years, and was placed on the "Most Endangered Historic Places" list by Preservation Louisville in 2013.

Last winter's record-breaking cold took its toll on the structure. Pipes froze and burst, causing damage to the area that the congregation was using to worship. The congregation has been meeting on the original campus of Simmons College at the corner of 18th and Dumesnil, said Pastor Robert Lyons, who joined the congregation in February.

Meanwhile, just a few blocks away in the Shelby Park neighborhood, Immanuel Baptist Church is outgrowing their 24,900 square foot, 110-year-old facility on the corner of South Clay and East Oak streets. When Lead Pastor Ryan Fullerton arrived a little over 10 years ago, the congregation numbered fewer than 20. Today more than 600 members squeeze into two worship services every Sunday in a sanctuary which seats somewhere around 375.

Immanuel needs room to grow, and wants to remain centrally located in Louisville. Fullerton and Immanuel have been praying and exploring possible locations for two years.

"For years I have been aware of the Lampton property. For years I have loved it," said Fullerton. The grand limestone building is three times the size of Immanuel's current facility, and features a "beautiful domed roof and ornate plaster moldings throughout the auditorium."

When Lampton decided to put their building on the market in August, Immanuel was eager to talk.



Top: The current Lampton Baptist Church building, a grand Beaux Arts structure completed in 1911, has fallen into disrepair in recent years. Bottom: Immanuel Baptist Church has grown from 20 to 600 over the last decade. The congregations hope to trade their current homes.

As conversations progressed, the idea of including Immanuel's facilities in the deal became part of the possibility.

It was an attractive prospect for Lyons, who lives in the Shelby Park neighborhood and has a strong desire to see the church minister there.

"We are definitely in a neighborhood where a strong church presence is needed, a church people can call their own, and we can minister to the people of that neighborhood," said Lyons.

The deal isn't completely done, however. Immanuel will spend the next 30-60 days assessing the repairs and renovations that will make the building suitable for its purpose.

"We are currently assessing everything from restoring the historic crown molding in the auditorium to replacing the HVAC," said Fullerton. The bones of the building look very strong, but the renovations will be extensive, he noted.

Due to the historic nature of the building, Immanuel's Executive Pastor Ben Hedrick is working with David Heyne, architect and owner of Full Circle Architecture, on the assessment.

After the assessment is complete, Immanuel will then have 30 days to close on the property, according to Lyons. After that, renovations can begin. Lyons is hopeful that Lampton can be settled into their new home by next summer, but he knows that Immanuel's renovations could take longer. Lyons has witnessed God at work in a powerful way throughout the process.

"God saw what they needed on their side, what they had been praying for, and God absolutely answered our prayers," said Lyons.

Anyone who knows real estate knows a commercial building can sit for years, and once it's sold, finding a building can take years, Lyons explained.

"For God to do all that in the stroke of the pen is miraculous," he said. (WR)

EBO at Work

'What we do on this side does make a difference on other side'

WMU started in 1888 with the primary purpose of supporting missions. The first missions offering was taken that year at the encouragement of Lottie Moon who desperately needed help in China. The goal was \$2,000, enough to send two women missionaries. The women raised over \$3,000 and the rest is history.

So here we are over 125 years later. We are part of the story, and the IMB material this year asks us to "imagine joining the Author of all history in One Sacred effort."

Imagine that. You do have a place in God's story. For me, it began when I was a girl growing up in a church that taught and supported missions. Missionaries were my heroes. I often say that I learned missions at the dining room table. My mother was the associational GA director and missionaries often came to our home for a meal before association events. My mother also taught older GAs at our home around our dining room table, and I would hang around listening to everything she taught the older girls.

The first money I remember earning was picking up pecans from a tree on the church property. My dad would take me to a processing plant to sell them and that was the first money I remember giving to the LMCO. I've

given to the offering all of my life, but it became real to me in 1992 on my first overseas missions trip to Rwanda. On our first Sunday there we visited a mud brick church that the people built

themselves. As we were driving up to the church, the missionary said casually, "Oh, by the way, the tin roof on this church was put here by the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering."

Nothing could have touched me more and I cried throughout that service. I came home knowing in a profound new way that what we do on this side of the world does make a

difference on the other side of the world.

Our giving also makes a great difference across our state. The Eliza Broadus Offering touches many different ministries and makes an impact in every Kentucky Baptist Association. Boys and girls, moms and dads will hear the gospel this Christmas because of your gifts to missions. Thank you!

As you wrap up the year, consider a year end gift to missions. The eternal benefits far outweigh the tax benefits but the possible tax adjustment may help you make an even larger gift. Gifts to EBO and our other missions offerings are received year round. Make your gift today!

Joy Bolton is executive director-treasurer of Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union, P.O. Box 436569, Louisville, KY 40253; (502) 489-3534; kywmu.org

EBO at Work



Joy Bolton

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January

- 6 January Power Lunch, Kentucky Baptist Building, Louisville.
- 16-17 Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief Chaplaincy Training, Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah.
- 17 Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief Training Phases 1 & 2, Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah.
- 29-31 Shepherding 2015, Griffin Gate Marriott Resort & Spa, Lexington.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

LOUISVILLE—The worship choir of Woodland Baptist Church will present the Christmas musical, "We're Glad You Came," on Dec. 21 at 6 p.m. **John Abel** is pastor.

A reunion for former members of 23rd & Broadway Baptist Church is being planned in June 2015. Contact **Brenda (Hornback) Fields**, (502) 969-9161, or **Joyce (Hornback) Lewis**, (502) 968-5223, for more details.

SHELBYVILLE—Celebrate the Christmas season as the adult choir of Highland Baptist Church presents "Once You've Seen the Star" on Dec. 31 at 6 p.m. **Chris Platt** is pastor.

What's happening?

Send your church news and association events to:

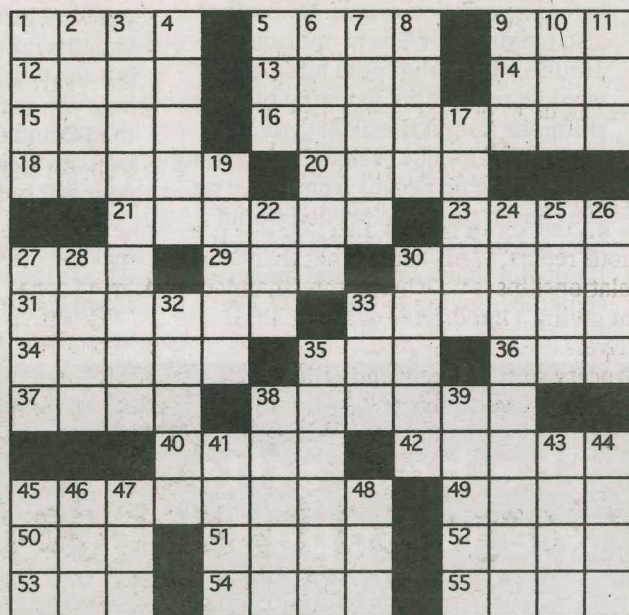
Mountains to the Mississippi

karen.martin@westernrecorder.org

Bible Crosswords

Across

- 1 Fiddling emperor
- 5 New Testament book
- 9 Noah's vessel
- 12 Dismounted
- 13 "For many ____ false witness against him" (Mark 14:56)
- 14 Gardening tool
- 15 "He shall not come ____ to offer the bread of his God" (Leviticus 21:21)
- 16 "Every beast, every ____ thing, and every fowl" (Genesis 8:19)
- 18 Leah's second son (Genesis 30:12-13)
- 20 Actor James ____ Jones
- 21 "Then he that had received the five talents went and ____ with the same" (Matthew 25:16)
- 23 "There met him ten men that were lepers, which stood ____ off" (Luke 17:12)
- 27 Get a perfect score on a test
- 29 Result of sunbathing
- 30 "And Jacob ____ away unawares to Laban" (Genesis 31:20)
- 31 ____-man, scary childhood character
- 33 Son of Dishon (Genesis 36:26)
- 34 Rhythm and ____
- 35 "T" in PTL
- 36 Newsman Koppel
- 37 "My couch shall ____ my complaint" (Job 7:13)
- 38 Height of Noah's ark in cubits (Genesis 6:15)
- 40 Eastern garment
- 42 "And over the course of the second month was ____ an

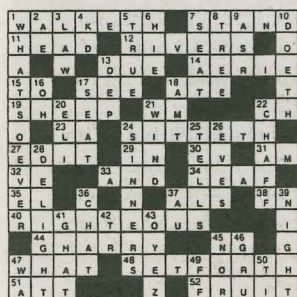


#023

- Ahohite" (1 Chronicles 27:4)
- 45 "This is the token of the ____ which I have established" (Genesis 9:17)
- 49 Sudden attack
- 50 "And all went to be taxed, every ____ into his own city" (Luke 2:3)
- 51 Popular brand of sneakers
- 52 Biblical city
- 53 "But ____ unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" (Matthew 23:13)
- 54 "I am the Lord, and there is none ____" (Isaiah 45:5)
- 55 Being, Lat.
- 9 Son of Abdiel (1 Chronicles 5:15)
- 10 Actor/director Howard
- 11 Small cask
- 17 "And thou shalt make a ____ of pure gold" (Exodus 28:36)
- 19 Gives a grade
- 22 "For this is the ____ of the Lord God of hosts" (Jeremiah 46:10)
- 24 "I will cause it to rain upon the earth ____" (Genesis 7:4) (2 words)
- 25 Wings
- 26 "A time to ____ , and a time to sew" (Ecclesiastes 3:7)
- 27 Abbot, Fr.
- 28 Soft drink
- 30 Scarp of pottery
- 32 "Silly" birds
- 33 Greek letter
- 35 Calls to mind
- 38 Pathway
- 39 Rich cake
- 41 Actress Bancroft
- 43 Haughty conduct
- 44 Thought, Fr.
- 45 Milk provider
- 46 Biblical plain (Nehemiah 6:2)
- 47 Type of neckline
- 48 Golf peg

Down

- 1 Common nickname for Grandmother
- 2 Belonging to inventor Whitney
- 3 "I am not come to call the ____, but sinners" (Matthew 9:13)
- 4 "The name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the ____ Ruth" (Ruth 1:4)
- 5 Beginning of the alphabet
- 6 To sway wildly
- 7 "Every place that the sole of your foot shall ____ upon" (Joshua 1:3)
- 8 Prophet



#022

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SEEKING: Gano Baptist Church, Georgetown, Ky., is seeking a pastor, called by God, to lead our congregation. Resumes may be submitted by mail to Gloria Prater, Secretary, Gano Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 1778, Georgetown, KY 40324 or by email to gbcresumes@bellsouth.net.

SEEKING: Salvisa Baptist Church in Salvisa, Ky., is prayerfully accepting resumes for the position of senior pastor. A minimum of 10 years experience and seminary degree is preferred. Please send resume and CD/DVD or internet link for sermons to: Salvisa Baptist Church, P.O. Box 75, Salvisa, KY 40372, Attn.: Pastor Search Committee or email salvisa@bellsouth.net.

SEEKING: Beacon Hill Baptist Church of Somerset, Ky., is seeking a worship pastor to lead our congregation of 500 in blended worship. Weekly responsibilities include arrangement, practice and oversight of adult, student and children's choirs, orchestra, praise band and soloists. Compensation to be negotiated by education and experience using SBC and Richard Hammar surveys. Formal music education and training required. Please send resume (no electronic submissions) and DVD to Beacon Hill Baptist Church, P.O. Box 3061, West Somerset, KY 42564. Questions may be addressed to pastor@beaconhillbaptist.com.

SEEKING: McDowell First Baptist Church of McDowell, Ky. is seeking resumes for a full-time position of pastor. Please send resumes with references, CD/DVD, or internet link for sermons to: McDowell First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 241, McDowell, KY 41646.

SEEKING: Pleasant View Baptist Church (Lincoln County, Ky) is searching for a part time worship leader to lead music and direct the choir. Send resume to pvbsearchteam@gmail.com or the church at 13571 Kentucky Highway 1247, Waynesburg, KY 40489.

SEEKING: Full-time maintenance supervisor. Sets up for church events, cleans

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church building, performs and coordinates maintenance and repairs. Custodial experience preferred. Flexible schedule, some evening/weekend hours. Must have a pleasant attitude and the ability to give attention to detail. Email resume to holm@hurstbournebc.org or mail Hurstbourne Baptist Church, Attn: Carolyn Holm, 8800 Shelbyville Road, Louisville, KY 40222.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Whitesburg is hiring a full-time position for minister of children, youth and family. Send to tony.brown@whitesburgfbc.org. For more info, call 606-633-2277.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Whitesburg is hiring a part-time director of church music. 20 hours per week. Send to tony.brown@whitesburgfbc.org. For more info, call 606-633-2277.

SEEKING: Okalona Missionary Baptist Church located in Nancy, Ky. is seeking a full-time pastor, called by God, to lead the congregation according to God's will. Send resume to 757 Hwy. 2993, Nancy, KY 42544. Deadline for resumes is Jan. 15, 2015.

SEEKING: Sand Spring Baptist Church in Lawrenceburg is presently searching for a minister to students (grades 6-12). Please email resumes to Pastor Mike Hamrick at mhamrick@sandspring.org.

SEEKING: Spottsville Missionary Baptist Church in Spottsville, Ky., is in search of a full-time pastor. Please send resume to Jeanette Roedel, Pastor Search Chairperson 8442 Old U.S. Hwy. 60 Spottsville, KY 42458

SEEKING: Bi-vocational pastor for Macedonia Baptist Church, located 7 miles from Rough River State Park. Please send resumes to tmarevans1@gmail.com or mail to Macedonia Church, 11927 Hwy. 629, Falls of Rough, KY 40119, Attn.: Search Committee.

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'Ebola fighters' are TIME's Person of the Year

Nashville, Tenn.—"The Ebola Fighters," many of whom were motivated by their Christian faith to risk their lives in battling the deadly disease in West Africa, have been named TIME's "Person of the Year," the magazine announced Dec. 10.

The magazine's special issue recognized the group for doing the most to influence the events of 2014. TIME editor Nancy Gibbs wrote in announcing the decision that medical workers in West Africa "fought side by side with local doctors and nurses, ambulance drivers and burial teams" while much of the world was still "in denial and snarled in red tape" concerning the Ebola outbreak.

"Ebola is a war, and a warning. The global health system is nowhere close to strong enough to keep us safe from infectious disease, and 'us' means everyone, not just those in faraway places where this is one threat among many that claim lives every day," Gibbs wrote.

"The rest of the world can sleep at night because a group of men and women are willing to stand and fight. For tireless acts of courage and mercy, for buying the world time to boost its defenses, for risking, for persisting, for sacrificing and saving, the Ebola fighters are TIME's 2014 Person of the Year," she wrote.

To date about 6,300 people have died in the Ebola outbreak, mainly in the

West African nations of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, according to the World Health Organization. There are more than 11,000 confirmed cases of the disease in the area with more than 6,000 additional suspected cases.

Among the five people to be featured on the cover of the Dec. 22/Dec. 29 issue of the magazine is Kent Brantly, an American medical doctor with the missions organization Samaritan's Purse who contracted Ebola while running a treatment center in Monrovia, Liberia.

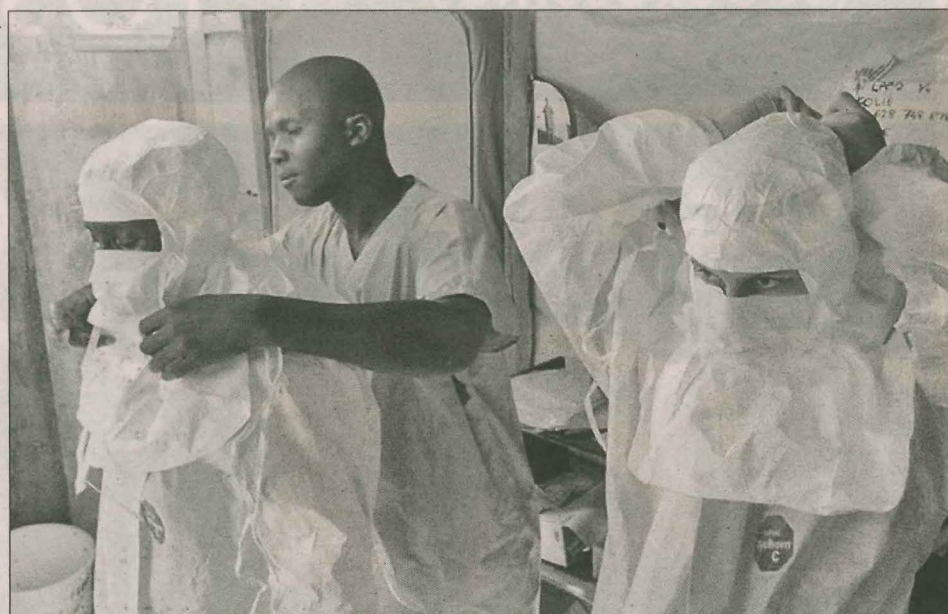
"I chose a career in medicine because I wanted a tangible skill with which to serve people," Brantly told TIME. "And so my role as a physician is my attempt to do that. I'll probably get tired

of talking about my experience some day, but I went to Liberia because I long felt it was my vocation to spend my career as a medical missionary. Deep in the core of my heart, I still think that's my calling. I don't want to go on with life and forget this."

Though TIME does not recognize most Ebola fighters by name, Southern Baptists have been on the front lines. Among them:

- Trevor Yoakum, an International Mission Board missionary, formulated a campaign in conjunction with Baptist Global Response to distribute 15,000 Ebola brochures in Togo.

- A worker in Guinea used storytelling



At left: Kent Brantly, an American medical doctor who contracted Ebola while running a treatment center in Liberia, was one of several medical workers featured as TIME Magazine's Person of the Year. Above: The European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department works to contain the epidemic that has killed thousands in West Africa. (BP file photo)

and role-playing to teach Africans about Ebola prevention.

"We are able to share what Ebola is, how it is transmitted, simple things people can do to protect themselves from being infected and how to stop the spread of the disease," the worker reported.

■ A worker in Liberia also said in a previous report, "This nation that thrives on relationships is now being reprimanded for giving a handshake or a hug. Taxi drivers are wearing gloves and masks. Grocery store workers and others are wearing gloves. Tonight we went to the

grocery store and before entering, we had to wash our hands with bleach water. A few restaurants and other businesses have shut down until Ebola comes under control.

"Borders to Liberia have been closed except for the three major borders and two airports. And tonight, I read that one of our major West Africa airlines has cancelled all flights between Liberia and Sierra Leone.

"This invisible enemy must be stopped and there is only One who is able to stop it—the Prince of Peace, Jehovah Rapha," she said. (BP)

Duggar family's reality TV show is targeted by pro-gay petition

By David Roach and Art Toalston

Nashville—Nearly 100,000 people have signed an online petition asking the TLC network to cancel the popular reality show "19 Kids and Counting," contending that its stars, Jim Bob and Michelle Duggar, use their fame "to promote discrimination, hate, and fear-mongering against gays and transgendered people."

The Duggars have 19 children and are outspoken advocates of their Christian faith as well as pro-family public policies. Their television show debuted in 2008 as "17 Kids and Counting," since which time they have had two more children.

Speaking at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary last year, the Duggars said they stopped using birth control pills after the drugs caused Michelle to experience a miscarriage years ago.

The petition to cancel the Duggars' show was launched by Jim Wissick of San Jose, Calif., at the website change.org and apparently stems from the Duggars' opposition to a Fayetteville, Ark., ordinance that provides civil rights protections for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender individuals.

Fayetteville's city council approved the ordinance in August, but opponents gathered enough signatures from city residents to place the ordinance before voters during a special election Dec. 9.

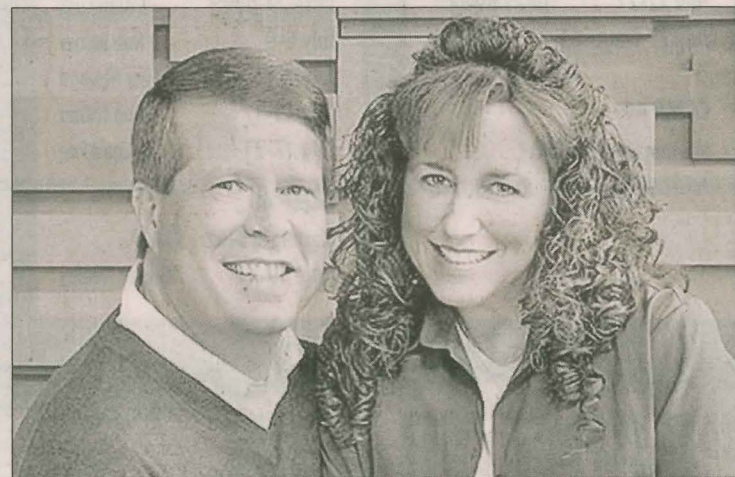
A counter-petition in support of the Duggars was launched Nov. 20 at LifeSiteNews.com. According to that petition, "We need to launch a counter-attack, letting TLC know that the American people stand by the Duggars and their defense of traditional family values. Rather than being extreme, the Duggars represent the majority of people in state after state who have stood up for the traditional family.

"The real extremists are those who are demanding that a TV network penalize America's beloved family because they support the truth about family, which they have always expressed in a loving, compassionate fashion."

Prior to the city council's approval of the ordinance, Michelle Duggar placed a robocall to northwest Arkansas residents warning, as quoted by Wissick, "The Fayetteville City Council is voting on an ordinance this Tuesday night that would allow men—yes, I said men—to use women's and girls' restrooms, locker rooms, showers, sleeping areas and other areas that are designated for females only.

"I don't believe the citizens of Fayetteville would want males with past child predator convictions that claim they are female to have a legal right to enter private areas that are reserved for women and girls."

Duggar's words "reek of ignorance and fear mongering," Wissick wrote.



Nearly 100,000 people have signed an online petition asking the TLC network to cancel the popular reality show "19 Kids and Counting," featuring Jim Bob and Michelle Duggar's family.

"Just because someone is transgendered doesn't mean they are a child predator or a rapist."

Wissick added, "The Duggars have thrown massive amounts of money to repeal this law so business owners and land lords can evict and fire people solely over gender identity and sexual orientation! They need to be taken off the air!"

The Duggars' oldest son Josh, who is executive director of the Family Research Council's legislative group, drew criticism from Wissick for being employed by "a hate-filled, anti-gay organization."

The Duggars' Facebook page also has been the subject of criticism from gay activists, according to CBS News. Earlier

this month Jim Bob and Michelle posted a photo of themselves kissing along with the caption, "God designed marriage to be a loving, dynamic relationship between a husband and wife for a lifetime.

"God loves marriage and it is supposed to be full of love, joy, fun and romance. We challenge all married couples to take a happily married picture and post it here."

John Becker, of the LGBT blog The Bilerico Project, posted a photo of himself kissing his homosexual partner along with a message advocating gay marriage. The Duggars removed the photo and banned Becker from their Facebook page, CBS News reported. (BP)



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