

WESTERN Recorder

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Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 188, Issue 47

A home for Christmas: Couple adopts four siblings

By Robin Cornetet

Louisville—Sam and Stephanie Patterson's 13-year pursuit of parenthood was finally realized last Thursday when the Louisville couple welcomed, not one, but four siblings into their family.

"It feels like the greatest Christmas present we could have ever received," said Stephanie, music minister at Little Flock Baptist Church in Shepherdsville.

With the flourish of a judge's pen, Carrie, 11, Carissa, 7, Austin, 4, and Kali, 2, were legally folded into the Patterson clan. They were surrounded at the adoption proceeding by new uncles, grandmas and cousins.

On Sunday, members of Little Flock Baptist Church gathered to continue the celebration and pray for the family they have supported since the children were placed with the Pattersons on Oct. 15, 2013.

"We couldn't have gone through this past year without a lot of help from our church, our family and friends," said Sam.

The journey to parenthood was a rocky one for the couple. Stephanie said she and



Stephanie Patterson holds the photograph she received from the social worker last year of four foster care siblings in need of a home. "I would just sit and stare at it," she said. "They were the most beautiful children I had ever seen."

her husband struggled through the highs and lows of infertility for a decade before considering adoption. Feeling God's urgent pull toward giving older children a home, the Pattersons said they took the "fast track" approach to foster training.

Most recent statistics by the Kentucky's Cabinet for Health and Family Services cite that more than 7,700 children are in the care of the state. Of that number, about 3,000 children live in foster homes and

only 2.3 percent of those children are living with families who intend to adopt.

"We told the social worker, 'Two kids, that's it,'" Stephanie recalled. "Then they showed us the picture."

Sitting in front of a quaint, two-dimensional Christmas scene were four siblings dressed in red and green pajamas. Their angelic faces instantly captured the couple's hearts and imaginations.

"I would just sit and stare at it,"

Stephanie said, "They were the most beautiful children I had ever seen. Who would neglect these children?"

Yet, parental neglect was the reason the children were in foster care.

Within days of formalizing their status as foster parents, Sam and Stephanie were introduced to the four siblings—each at their own stage of development and understanding of what was going on around them.

Then, one-year-old Kali and Austin, 3, were very much babies. The older girls, however, were fully aware that this was the third home in which they would have lived in as many years.

"I can't imagine the heartbreak," Stephanie said, of knowing their birth parents had abandoned them. "All we could say was, 'We're so glad you are here in our home,' and 'we're going to take care of you.'"

The couple said they have consciously encouraged Carrie to let the adults in the house care for her younger sisters and brother and give up the mantle of being

□ See Home for Christmas ... Page 5



NAMB staff members assist Peace Baptist Church's food ministry. (NAMB photo by Susan Whitley)

Day of Service: NAMB gives back to its community

Alpharetta, Ga.—The phrase "Whatever it takes" is one of the North American Mission Board's operating values. Giving back to the community in service was a tangible demonstration of this value as the mission agency's staff participated Dec. 12 in the annual NAMB Day of Service.

Staff from the NAMB's Alpharetta, Ga., office joined local ministries in a variety of service activities at Peace Baptist Church of Decatur, Clarkston International Bible Church in Clarkston and No Longer Bound of Cumming.

Nearly 300 cars pulled into the parking lot at Peace Baptist Church, some as many as four hours early, to receive food from the Peace on the Move ministry. But as they were waiting in line, it became apparent to some of the volunteers that many of those gathered had much greater needs than just a meal.

"As I was talking to the families, I could see looks of hopelessness on their faces," said Lebron Pinkerton,

□ See Day of Service ... Page 5

UC's Mountain Outreach hosts gift day at elementary schools

Williamsburg—Classes upon classes of wide-eyed elementary students poured into the gymnasiums of Boston, Whitley East and Pleasant View elementary schools. The students were awe struck as they eagerly shopped for a Christmas gift for mom, dad, grandma, or grandpa.

The gifts were provided by University of the Cumberlands' Mountain Outreach program to help the young people to understand the true meaning of giving.

Mountain Outreach Director Marc Hensley; Assistant Director Jonathan Bowman; team members Dirk Berta, of Williamsburg, and Tracy Taphouse, of Dacula, Ga.; and UC student-athletes from the baseball and football teams volunteered their time to help the youngsters to choose just the right gift.

After the gifts were carefully selected, the UC volunteers wrapped the gifts and helped the children write their name on the gift and well as the recipient's name.

"We want the children to have the opportunity to experience the joy of giving. It makes the children



just as happy to give the gifts as to receive them and that alone is magical," Hensley said. The MO program raises funds throughout the year with which to purchase the gifts for the 775 elementary students to give to their loved ones for Christmas. (UC)

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Western Recorder 12-23-2014

Discipleship, prayer advocate T.W. Hunt dies at age 85

By Alex Sibley

Spring, Texas—Thomas W. ("T.W.") Hunt, widely recognized in Christian circles as an authority on prayer, died Dec. 11 at the age of 85.

Hunt was the author of such books as "The Mind of Christ" and "Disciple's Prayer Life" and a former professor of music and missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Hunt's granddaughter, Katherine Fruge, a doctor of philosophy student at Southwestern, characterized his passing as "successfully finishing his race," noting that he died peacefully with family by his side "cheering him on to victory."

"T.W. Hunt met Jesus yesterday," Southwestern President Paige Patterson said in a Dec. 12 statement. "It was a meeting of a faithful servant and his Lord, to be sure. But in a sense, it was just a reunion of old friends, because few men ever walked with God like Enoch and T.W. Hunt."

"As a faculty member, as a pastor and as a friend, Dr. Hunt was the champion of prayer and devotional walk with the

Master. His family, his friends, his church and his seminary will miss him profoundly. Now, my friend, enjoy all that God has now richly provided for you," Patterson said.

Born in 1929, Hunt grew up in a Christian home and accepted Christ at age 10, although it would be many years before he fully surrendered to God's plan for his life. Hunt earned bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in musicology and piano and taught music classes at the University of North Texas and, later, at Oklahoma College for Women.



T.W. Hunt

The trajectory of Hunt's life changed, however, when he received a special gift in 1959—a copy of the Martin Luther translation of the Bible—from a student who knew that he spoke German, which Hunt learned while serving overseas in the Army and as a missionary.

The day he received the Bible was one of the most memorable of his life. "It just seemed to be kind of ... me," he recalled in a Baptist Press article many years later. "Luther had linguistic skill and spiritual insight. (I made) the decision to commit all my life to Christ in 1959, reading that German Bible."

Four years later, Hunt followed God's call to teach in Southwestern's school of church music. Within a few years, he had transformed the way music was used for missions. Specifically, he developed the Music in Missions class that is still in the school's catalogue today.

The new course, for which Hunt wrote the textbook, offered students techniques for using music to communicate the message of the gospel by focusing on the indigenous music of the particular mission field. This concept would later prove to have played an integral role in revolutionizing music evangelism.

In 1987, LifeWay Christian Resources (then-Baptist Sunday School Board), which had previously published Hunt's Disciple's Prayer Life and "The Doctrine of Prayer," asked Hunt to move to Nashville to serve as the board's first prayer consultant.

Although the decision was difficult due to Hunt's fondness for teaching, after much prayer and Bible study, it became clear he had finished what God wanted him to do at Southwestern and it was time to move on. So, confident in God's will, Hunt accepted the position.

From that position, Hunt became recognized as an earnest prayer warrior and often was asked to speak on prayer at conferences and state conventions, sparking

several thousand churches to begin or undergird their prayer ministries. He retired from LifeWay in 1994.

After leaving LifeWay, Hunt remained an active author and speaker over the next two decades.

In 1994, LifeWay published what would be Hunt's most popular work, "The Mind of Christ," a Bible study co-authored with Claude V. King on Philippians 2:5-11.

Throughout more than five decades of ministry, Hunt always asked people not to focus on him. Instead, as he once said to Baptist Press, "I'd rather they know about God."

Mark Estep, pastor of Spring Baptist Church in Spring, Texas, where Hunt was a longtime member, said Hunt was the most godly person he ever met.

"He truly walked with the Lord and demonstrated that walk each and every day," Estep said. "He was my friend, mentor and encourager. There is no one on this earth for whom I or my church has more respect than T.W. Hunt. T.W. taught in our church many times, usually on the subject of prayer or the work of the Holy Spirit."

"Our people always were blessed by his deep insight and his ability to communicate what God had taught him. He will be missed more than words can say." (BP)

Gay marriage test ahead in 2015

By Ken Walker

Bowling Green—With Kentucky voters' support of traditional marriage facing a possible U.S. Supreme Court test, Kentucky Baptist leaders are expressing hope the court will rule in their favor.

Lawyers for Gov. Steve Beshear recently joined six gay and lesbian couples in asking the court to clarify a dispute over the state's traditional marriage statute.

The move came after a federal appeals court upheld Kentucky's 2004 constitutional amendment that defined marriage as one man and one woman. The measure passed by a 3-1 margin.

Since the governor swore he would uphold the commonwealth's constitution, Beshear was obligated to take this stand, said Tom James, the newly-elected president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

"Given this promise to those who elected him, I think he had an obligation to appeal the (lower court) ruling that (struck) down Kentucky's constitutional definition of marriage," said James, pastor of Eastwood Baptist Church in Bowling Green.

With a majority of states now issuing licenses to same-sex couples, James said only time will tell whether traditional marriage supporters are swimming against an inevitable tide.

However, James believes we serve a great God, referring to a statement by founding father Benjamin Franklin about God governing the affairs of men.

"As a minister of the gospel my calling is to speak the truth in love, truth founded on the principles of the word of God, but only God can turn a heart toward Himself," said the KBC leader.

Still, asking the Supreme Court to settle this issue subtly implies the court even has the right to define marriage, commented Rick Hardison, pastor of Great Crossing

Baptist Church in Georgetown.

Although the high court plays a vital role in clarifying the legitimacy of state-wide gay marriage bans, it has no more right to redefine marriage than it has the right to redefine a turkey, Hardison said.

"Marriage is between a man and woman, regardless what any court says," said Hardison, chair of the state convention's public affairs committee. "The effort to legalize gay marriage in our land is marching full-speed ahead, but I would not say that it is inevitable."

However, that prospect is still likely, Hardison acknowledged. He said he wants to prepare his children and congregation to live in a nation that accepts the legality of a man having a husband and a woman having a wife.

"This position is attractive to many, so proponents of traditional marriage should make no assumptions about the person sitting next to them in the pew," Hardison said.

"Kentucky Baptists can support traditional marriage by talking about this issue with other church members," Hardison said. "Youth retreats, college groups, Sunday School classes, deacons meetings—these are all places where we should discuss a theology of and political position on marriage."

KBC Executive Director Paul Chitwood said the trajectory of American culture on sexual mores is not in keeping with biblical teaching. Yet, as people of faith we can always be optimistic about what God can do in calling a nation back to Himself, he added.

"Thus, we will continue to speak the truth in love and trust God with the outcome," Chitwood said.

Disagreement over gay marriage surfaced at November's state convention when KBC messengers voted to withdraw fellowship from Crescent Hill Baptist Church.

Crescent Hill holds same-sex wedding

Louisville—A Southern Baptist Theological Seminary alumna who went on to become the first openly gay elected official in Louisville walked the aisle Nov. 29 with her partner of more than 15 years in a wedding ceremony at Crescent Hill Baptist Church, a Louisville congregation recently kicked out of the Kentucky Baptist Convention for welcoming and affirming LGBT members.

Tina Ward-Pugh, a 1991 master of social work graduate who has served 12 years on the Louisville Metro Council, wed Laura Ryan, who attended Louisville Presbyterian Seminary.

She shared news of her nuptials in a Louisville Courier-Journal op-ed Dec. 7.

"As people of faith, we longed for the day when our faith community would fully affirm our love through the ceremony of marriage," she wrote. "And though the legal right to marry has come to dozens of states in our country, it has not made its way to our commonwealth."

The pair legally married in Maryland last year, "but like most people of faith, we longed to be blessed in the church before God." Ward-Pugh said her "awakening" occurred after

The vote followed the Louisville church's decision to ordain homosexuals and perform same-sex marriages.

James said he hopes not many other Kentucky Baptist churches follow Crescent Hill, saying that those who decide to "go along" with society do so in spite of biblical standards.

"When the word of God is removed as the standard for our faith, then we are simply left with the opinion of man," James said. "I think the vast majority of preachers and churches seek to honor God by walking in obedience to His word and His will."

she graduated from Belmont University and enrolled in graduate school in 1987.

Crescent Hill Baptist Church clarified its relationship with LGBT individuals in 2013, voting overwhelmingly to disregard sexual identity or orientation in decisions about ordination, hiring or performing wedding ceremonies. Crescent Hill joined the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists, a group of like-minded Baptist congregations.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention responded by withdrawing fellowship from the church, finding Crescent Hill's "affirmation of the sin of homosexuality" inconsistent with the convention's purpose of missions and evangelism.

Ward-Pugh, a Democrat, served on the old city Board of Aldermen before being elected to the inaugural Louisville Metro Council in 2002 and re-elected in 2006 and 2010. She did not seek re-election and completes her final term this month.

Ward-Pugh has been an advocate for social-justice issues, including the passage of a Fairness Ordinance guaranteeing equal rights to employment, housing and public accommodations for all Louisville residents regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. (BNG)

The convention president suggested that all Christians pray for godly wisdom for judges, speak the truth in love to judges and legislators, and elect leaders who promise to defend Kentucky's constitution.

Chitwood called for prayer for spiritual awakening across the nation to stem the tide of sinners (gay and straight) who are headed to a Christ-less eternity in hell.

"Practically, we can best support traditional marriage by keeping our marriage vows," he said. "We can also speak out on this issue, and love and share the gospel with those who are enslaved by sin." (WR)

The Cross of Christmas

Guest article by Tom James, Kentucky Baptist Convention president and pastor of Eastwood Baptist Church in Bowling Green.

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

This time of year causes us to think of cradles, mangers and babies. We are celebrating Jesus' first coming, knowing He came to give His life for us (Luke 19:10). Pondering His coming, I find it interesting to read Jesus' genealogy in Matthew 1.

There are 42 different names either stated or implied (Bathsheba). Many of them we'd liken to "Cousin Eddie" in

Christmas Vacation; family members who leave you scratching your head, wondering how they came from the same gene pool.

Reading the genealogy and knowing some of the stories, I can't believe they, of all people, would be in the lineage of the Messiah. If you know the stories, would you want these folks in your family tree?

There's Tamar, from Genesis 38, who dresses up as a harlot and seduces Judah, her father-in-law, in order to have a child.

There's Rahab of Jericho. Outside of Matthew 1, she is only mentioned two other places in the New Testament—and both places add the descriptor "harlot": "Rahab the harlot." Yet there she is in Jesus' family.

We also read of a woman named Ruth. She was a Moabite, meaning her ancestors were direct descendants from Lot's incestuous relationship with one of his daughters. Deuteronomy 23 stated that Moabites were not allowed in the Temple, even to the 10th generation, and yet here's a Moabite in Jesus' family tree.

Bathsheba is there implicitly, as the text states, "her who was the wife of Uriah the Hittite." We know her from her affair with David.

So, in these few names, we have seduction, harlotry, incest, and others who might think themselves among those "unwelcome at the church house."

So, why are they in our Lord's family tree?

Tamar teaches us that God's grace is greater than all our sin and that when we sin and lose our "name" (testimony), God can give it back. Jesus is referred to as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Tamar's father-in-law). In the book of Ruth, Tamar is spoken of with great respect.

Rahab teaches us that when we repent of a lifestyle and confess our sins—asking the Lord to save us—He does.

Ruth teaches us that we have a "Kinsman Redeemer" in Jesus. Ruth also teaches us that no matter our background, we are welcome in the family of God.

David and Bathsheba teach us that there is mercy and grace at the foot of the cross.

In thinking about Jesus' family tree, I imagine I'd probably be voted 'least likely' to be part of His family—yet my name is written in the Book of Life. Being numbered among the redeemed, Christmas, for me, is more about a cross than a cradle.

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Every-other-week schedule starting in January

Most of you have probably heard the big news coming in January for Western Recorder. Just in case you missed it: We are moving to an every-other-week schedule in 2015.

We are grateful for the many churches who understand the importance of providing the state Baptist newspaper for all of their active families, and for those who partner with us by publishing their newsletters on the Western Recorder's back pages.

We know churches face tight times, too, and rather than raising subscription prices significantly, we trust they will understand and be willing to move to this new publishing schedule with us.

The decision to go biweekly is primarily due to rising costs for printing and postage and to recent reductions in Cooperative Program allocations for KBC agencies and ministries.

We regret that the move has become necessary, but we believe this is the right decision from an economic stand-

point, and it reflects better stewardship of our CP resources.

To supplement the every-other-week schedule, we have upgraded our WR website, which will carry more Kentucky Baptist news and provide a true e-edition that features hot-links and customized church newsletters. Technology allows the website to recognize readers and then automatically tailor their e-edition to include their church's newsletter. Check it out at www.westernrecorder.org!

Despite publishing less frequently, our desire is to make more Kentucky Baptist news available more quickly. We anticipate most biweekly issues will consist of 16 to 20 pages, as compared to the current 12-page format. They also will contain more color

photos and Kentucky Baptist content. The enhancements should make for a more appealing, more effective publication.

Our next issue will be dated Jan. 13. Merry Christmas! See you in 2015!

After Thought

By Todd Deaton



Missions: The relevant call of Lottie Moon

By Randy Davis

A diminutive woman named Lottie Moon sat down at a table in China on Sept. 15, 1887, and penned a letter that would transform the Southern Baptist Convention forever.

Lottie called for prayer and financial resources to ensure that the gospel would be effectively preached, linking them to the example found in Christmas. She wrote:

"Need it be said, why the week before Christmas is chosen? Is not the festive season when families and friends exchange gifts in memory of The Gift laid on the altar of the world for the redemption of the human race, the most appropriate time to consecrate a portion from abounding riches and scant poverty to send forth the good tidings of great joy into all the earth?"

Fortunately, Southern Baptists were wise to follow her lead and formalize two significant giving opportunities to accomplish her goal of gospel proclamation: the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

The Cooperative Program is how Southern Baptists decided 90 years ago that we as a network of churches could most consistently and effectively give financially to ensure the advancement of the gospel within our states, across our nation and around the globe. I've often wondered if our forefathers could have ever imagined the impact that single decision would make in Southern Baptists staying the course as a Great Commission people.

The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions goes beyond Cooperative Program support for our missionaries and is also a lifeline for funding and sustaining missions overseas. Our 4,800 overseas personnel depend on the

Lottie Moon offering for ministry support that includes vehicles, housing, equipment and ministry budget among other needs. It means everything to them financially. As a result of generous giving by Southern Baptists, our missionaries can spend their time preaching the gospel rather than raising support.

There are some who believe we must rob one of these giving opportunities to pay the other, that if we give more or less to the Cooperative Program then it is either to the benefit or detriment of the Lottie

Moon offering.

That simply is not the case. In fact, I've found the opposite to be true: The more we give to one, the more we give to the other. "Why is that?" you ask. I've not done a formal analysis of it, but I can offer an informed opinion after nearly four decades in ministry:

■ Increased giving comes from a correct biblical worldview.

The Bible is distinctively clear: Jesus' expectation of us is that we will go into all the world and reach the nations with the gospel. If that truly is our passion as well as our mandate, we will do whatever it takes, and that includes joyfully giving. A correct biblical worldview reorders how we spend our money. We'll see missions as an eternal investment rather than a budget line item.

■ Increased giving comes because missions is a priority of the pastor.

In virtually every case, the church whose pastor leads it into the community and around that globe sees an increase in generous giving and a desire to see souls saved. I've seen pastors for years protect their budgets and worry that missions will bleed off valuable resources. This is a lie I'm convinced Satan has perpetrated on pastoral ministry because it is the antithesis of what the Bible calls us to as

shepherds of our local flocks. Pastor, lead your people into the harvest fields at home and around the world and watch how the Holy Spirit will set hearts afire for the advance of the gospel.

■ Increased giving comes because pastors preach and teach biblical stewardship. Yes, I know money is a sensitive subject, but it is like any other doctrine we teach from the pulpit. If we don't teach what the Bible says about financial stewardship, then the majority of our people will never learn biblical stewardship from any other source.

Make it a priority, teach so they'll grow to maturity, challenge them in light of the Great Commission, teach giving on a regular basis above tithes and offerings, and set big goals to accomplish over a period of time.

■ Increased giving comes as a matter of prayer. This is actually where a pastor should begin and then lead the church to pray for its giving. The world is a never-ending source of need. There is no way even cooperatively we can alleviate all that is spiritually and physically wrong with nearly 8 billion people. However, the Holy Spirit has mightily used both the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon offering.

But even within these two giving opportunities the place to start is with people. Ask, how can God use you, your resources, your church and your church's resources to impact the lives of specific people in your community, nation and the world. See the people, go meet them, know the challenges they face in life. Then pray. I honestly believe you'll see a marked change in your generosity.

This holiday season, Lottie Moon's call for international missions is as relevant today as it was 130 years ago. (BP)

Randy Davis is executive director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

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Letters to the editor:

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

Missionaries blow past LMC0 goal

By Tess Rivers

Punta Cana, Dominican Republic—Facing what some called a "God-sized" challenge, a group of IMB missionaries far exceeded their offering goal of \$100,000 for international missions.

More than a quarter of a million dollars—\$277,217.92—was collected at a gathering of 240 IMB families serving among American people groups around the world. Of the total, \$125,000 came from outside donations while \$152,217.92 came from IMB missionaries.

The amount, given to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for international missions is unprecedented, said David Steverson, IMB vice president for finance. He described it as the largest offering ever received from a single gathering of IMB missionaries in the organization's history. The gift exceeded the goal of \$100,000 set by Terry Lassiter, strategy leader for IMB's American peoples affinity group.

Understanding that discretionary income for missionaries is limited, Lassiter said such a lofty goal might generate some doubt. Reaching the \$100,000 goal meant each family would need to give an average of \$416, nearly 20 percent of one month's base salary for an IMB career couple.

"That way," Lassiter said, "if (the goal) was met, people would know God moved."

Although Lassiter expected skepticism, he became concerned that the goal would not be met when he received little response to the monthly podcast in which he presented the goal.

"I started doubting a bit," Lassiter admitted.

Some of the missionaries under Lassiter's leadership did, too. "How can a group of ordinary missionaries collect this much money in a time of budget cuts?" some asked. Others applauded Lassiter's vision and considered \$100,000

to be an attainable goal.

A few weeks before the July meeting, a few missionaries began donating, but amounts were small. Elliott Baze, IMB director of finance for the Americas, described the giving as "an initial flurry of donations followed by a slow but steady march upward." Lassiter was getting worried.

Then came the conference—and daily messages about how God accomplished his purposes through ordinary people.

"You could feel the energy of the group build on itself," Baze recalled. "The offering gained momentum as the meeting unfolded."

That momentum only continued to grow when the group learned that an anonymous donor was willing to match the goal with a \$100,000 gift, if it was reached. Another outside donor committed an additional \$25,000.

Then, Baze said, the group "blew past the goal," and excitement grew.

'We want to reach our people'

To fuel the missionaries' enthusiasm, John Brady, IMB vice president for global strategy, offered to shave his head if the offering reached \$225,000. Steverson followed suit, also offering to shave his head if the offering reached \$250,000.

"I figure my hair is worth a quarter of a million dollars," Steverson said with a grin.

The missionaries said while the head-shaving stunts were fun and increased excitement, the offering was really about getting the gospel to every language, people, tribe and nation.

At the conference, missionaries had the opportunity to give their money with the same "heartfelt passion" with which they had given their lives for this cause years before, Baze said.

For Marty Childers, who serves in Mexico, an experience three weeks before



John Brady, IMB vice president for global strategy, laughs as his head is shaved in response to \$225,000 in gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for international missions at a gathering in the Dominican Republic of IMB missionaries serving among American people groups. (Photo by Wilson Hunter/IMB)

the gathering cemented his desire to give 20 percent beyond the amount he initially planned to give.

"I had the privilege of being among a people group of about 100,000 people with less than 75 Christ followers," Childers said. "I met with a group of five of them, and we talked about sharing their faith."

With tears in his eyes, one of the leaders of the small house group said to Childers, "We want to reach our people, but we don't know how. Can you teach us?"

Childers said he realized his gifts could send more teachers and trainers to the more than 3,000 unengaged, unreached people groups around the world. Firsthand awareness prompted him to give more.

Reachable goal

Missionaries also saw their opportunity to give as a model of sacrificial giving for another reachable goal: this year's international missions offering.

"If field workers do not give sacrificially, how can we expect our SBC

constituency to do the same?" Tim Kunkel, who serves in Paraguay, said.

IMB's 2014 goal for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is \$175 million.

In 2013, Southern Baptists gave an unprecedented \$154 million, breaking the record for the largest total in the offering's 125-year history. While this was good news for the more than 4,800 IMB missionaries worldwide who depend on the offering to fund their work, an additional \$21 million will still be needed to reach this year's goal.

If the 16 million people purported to make up the Southern Baptist Convention will give just \$10.93 each, the \$175 million goal can easily be reached, Kunkel said. While American families spend about \$750 on Christmas, most Southern Baptist churches base their missions giving goal on an average gift of \$10 per person.

"If we can show that missionaries are leading the way in sacrificial giving, might this not spark a change?" Kunkel asked. "This is what we are hoping for."

(BP)

*Name changed.

On a ship at sea

Student surrenders to God's call during tour of duty

First year student Mike Raftery is excited to be on our campus preparing for the ministry that God has placed on his life. He didn't imagine himself and his family here just a few years ago.

"After 36 years of running from the Lord, I had just left a port visit in Crete, Greece," Raftery said. "I was attending a class called 'Purpose Driven Life' for all the wrong reasons, but the Lord allowed me to have a moment of clarity in my life, and I heard the gospel preached by our chaplain.

"That night, in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, I hit my knees and begged the Lord to forgive me, and now I just can't keep my mouth closed about it," he said.

"I am so excited to be here as a student to be equipped as a preacher of the gospel.

"I have a heart for those who do not know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. I evangelize as often as I can.

"I love this college, and I am blessed to be able to study here," Raftery continued. "I am daily awakened with the

thoughts that I have the best calling and am blessed way more than I deserve.

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

"The classes at Clear Creek are all challenging. I did not grow up with a Bible, the music of Christianity, or the many stories that many other Christians know, so this is all new to me. The teachings of the professors are thought-provoking and interactive.

"I enjoy the Bible classes very much because they are helping me to be more secure in my knowledge of the Bible and better prepared in the mission field."

"I can't think of a better place for anyone to be to learn the Bible than Clear Creek," said Raftery. "I would highly recommend taking at least one class here and paying us a visit. I love this place and it's more than a college.

"I call Clear Creek home because my Christian family is here, and so is my mission field of Pineville. God is moving here and there is plenty of learning, teaching, and mission work available."

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

Merry Christmas

From our table to yours!



Thank you, Kentucky Baptists, for your support throughout the year. You make our ministry possible!



Oneida Baptist Institute
P.O. 67 Oneida, Kentucky 40972
606-847-4111 www.oneidaschool.org

Home for Christmas

Continued from page 1
the "little momma."

With so little time to prepare for their arrival last year, the Pattersons had only what the state requires: A bed and a dresser in each room for two kids.

Stephanie said because of the members at Little Flock, the children's rooms were quickly filled with everything they could need or want—clothes, toys, diapers and a crib. There was even a double stroller.

"It was unbelievable how much was provided," Stephanie said. "My house was like a revolving door. People would call and ask if they could drop off dinner on our porch."

The initial chaos has been filled with morning, after-school and bedtime routines, Stephanie said.

"This has been the most wonderfully exhausting thing we have ever done," Stephanie said, "but the rewards are beyond compare."

To learn more about becoming a foster



Sam and Stephanie Patterson grew their family by four Dec. 18 when the Louisville couple adopted four siblings. Pictured are Carrie (top left), 11, Carissa, 7, and Austin, 4. Two-year-old Kali was asleep at the time.

parent or how your church can develop a ministry to support foster families in your church, go to www.sunrise.org/surroundtheone. (KBC)



NAMB staff member Samuel Romero loads food into a visitor's vehicle at Peace Baptist Church's food distribution Dec. 12 in metro Atlanta. (NAMB photo by Susan Whitley)

Day of Service

Continued from page 1

NAMB's wellness consultant, who volunteered as a greeter. "But as I stood and watched them leave the church, their whole demeanor changed. They looked hopeful again."

Justin Woelk, an events consultant at NAMB, also served with Peace on the Move and helped distribute food to the families that drove to the church.

"I think the biggest thing I took away from the day of service is that God is always present ... whether it is in a warm house, a filled church or a parking lot on a freezing Friday morning," Woelk said. "I was reminded on Friday that we weren't taking Jesus to Decatur, but we were getting involved with what He is already doing in Decatur."

Scott Blair, a videographer with NAMB, who served with staff at the addiction recovery ministry, No Longer Bound, said the service project cast light on the needs that exist in the community.

"It was an eye-opening experience—in part because many of the clients were really young," Blair said. "I was blessed to not face the kinds of challenges some of these young men and women face with life issues and drug addiction. It was a good experience to meet them and see the priceless opportunity they have, not only from the recovery standpoint, but to have the ability to receive job skill train-

ing to help them find meaningful work.

"Another thing that surprised me is that many of the clients are there by choice. More than one made the point to say they were not there because of some court order, but because they chose to be," he said.

Cathy Palmer, director of the Refugee Sewing Society, was overwhelmed by the transformation of the sewing rooms and retail store housed at Clarkston International Bible Church. NAMB staff replaced lighting units, ceiling tiles, painted and sorted buttons and other sewing supplies.

"It may not seem like a big thing," said Palmer, a NAMB missionary, "but it makes a huge difference in what our women can accomplish because they will be able to see their work. It will make a difference in our store where people will be able to better see the crafts our women make. It was wonderful to feel the presence and support of the staff and to make connections with people who will volunteer to help us meet other needs. It was awesome."

Palmer said the women and staff were so impressed with the change that they planned a picnic lunch in the sewing room on Monday to celebrate.

NAMB president Kevin Ezell said, "As we help churches conduct mercy ministries, experiences like this are very valuable. We want our staff to get out of the building and onto the ministry field—especially at this time of year." (BP)

Christmas reflections

Family changes, another record year for Crossings, joy of salvation

December is certainly one of my most favorite times of the year. We have several unique traditions that we practice at the Melbers that are an annual highlight.

While the month seems hectic, we do feel a sense of slow down as Christmas approaches, and who doesn't enjoy slowing down? I also am one of those obnoxious people who start playing Christmas music in my car and at home—well, actually I start playing the music even before Thanksgiving. All that said, this is a great time of year.

During December I do a great deal of reflection on the past year. We saw many changes in our family: Alex, our oldest son, got married and moved to Atlanta; Kelly, our oldest daughter, moved out for college; and Maritess, our next in line by age, is now a licensed driver. Not that the other three kids have not changed, but this article can only be so long.

In the life of Crossings, it was again another record year in attendance and, more importantly, salvation decisions by

campers. God has continued to guard and protect this ministry in ways more numerous than we can count. God has also set before us some very exciting opportunities for the coming year.

All said, we are very blessed indeed, as we look back in 2014. In spite of all the earthly related blessings, Christmas is about the reality of our Savior Jesus Christ. He is our source of life. Christ came to earth; He lived a perfect life; in obedience to the Father, Jesus went to the cross to die in our place, taking on the Father's wrath to sin; Jesus died, was buried, and rose again, defeating sin and death.

The Bible says, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." He is the greatest gift in all eternity.

If you do not know Him as Lord and Savior, believe today! If you do know Him, proclaim Him to the world—it is obvious the world needs a Savior.

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

Crossings Ministries



David Melber

A labor of love

Kobi 'rescues' stuffed animals, delivers to Sunrise's children

Last week Kobi Hart provided a glimpse of how God works, and it was beautiful to see.

She and husband, Scott, delivered 130 stuffed animals to our Ministry Support Center in Mt. Washington. When the Louisville couple left our campus, a row of large bags bulged from all of the stuffed heads and feet and backs of special toys stored inside.

This is the third Christmas that the Harts have delivered Kobi's labor of love for children at Sunrise.

She buys used stuffed animals at thrift stores like Goodwill and The Salvation Army. Then she "rescues" the toys by taking them home, emptying out their old stuffing, washing the toys, and skillfully repairing by hand each damaged part.

Build-a-Bear Workshop, where she is a part-time associate, donates the new stuffing. But the purchases, labor, repairs and prayers are all Kobi's.

Her final gift is to pray over red silk hearts, one of which she lovingly sews inside each refurbished animal.

"God, you know the particular child at Sunrise who will get this rescued companion," Kobi cites.

"Let this one be a real blessing, Lord, carrying huge hugs from the Father's heart to each child who needs the healing only You can give."

Yes, Kobi really knows about kids who need healing. Her parents were Buford "Chief Mac" and Lois Ray McKenzie.

In 1949, Chief Mac worked with Campbell "Chief Lock" Loughmiller to develop therapeutic camping for boys at risk. During the next half century, Chief



Kobi Hart of Louisville lovingly "rescues" stuffed animals and donates to children at Sunrise Children's Services.

Mac helped develop 14 therapeutic camps in Texas, Colorado, Florida, North and South Carolina and Pennsylvania.

In this century, therapeutic camping is one of the many concepts Sunrise studied in its development of the Cumberland Adventure Program in Bronston.

At the CAP acreage in rural Pulaski County, 56 boys live in log cabins, learn about team building, and experience therapeutic healing.

Isn't it beautiful to see how God works, from one generation to the next, helping children in crisis shine?

At Sunrise, it is a legacy dating back to 1869—indeed, even deeper in history—to a holy babe in a wilderness, in Bethlehem long ago.

Randy Greene is Vice President for Marketing and Advancement at Sunrise Children's Services. To support Sunrise, call him at (502) 538-1014.



KBC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

CRESTWOOD—The Closet of Crestwood Baptist Church saw 18 people accept Christ in 2014. Crestwood will baptize 15 of them on Jan. 4.

FRANKLIN—Wyman Copass, pastor for 11 years of Calvary Baptist Church in Franklin has announced plans to retire. His last Sunday at Calvary will be Jan. 4. Copass spent 58 years serving churches in Kentucky, Nebraska and Florida. He served as president of the state pastors' conference and was a member of the KBC Executive Committee; served on the SBC Radio & Television Commission's Board of Trustees and was its chairman for two years. He will continue to reside in Bowling Green and will be available for supply preaching.

LOUISVILLE—At its quarterly meeting Dec. 11, the Kentucky Baptist Foundation's board elected officers: chair, **Charles Barnes**, Louisville; vice chair, **Dave Nunery**, Campbellsville; secretary, **Sky Tudor**, Lancaster; assistant secretary, **Laurie Valentine**, Louisville; treasurer: **Barry Allen**, Louisville.

Pavy retiring as KBC campus minister

Campbellsville—With everything there is a "beginning and an end," said Ed Pavy, announcing that after 20 years he is retiring as the Kentucky Baptist Convention's campus missionary to Campbellsville University.

"From the time I sensed God calling me into ministry, He was leading me to campus ministry," Pavy said. "I will be forever grateful to the convention for the chance

to serve in this capacity."

Pavy's last day with the convention will be Dec. 31, but he will remain with Campbellsville, working directly for the university as its campus minister.

"On behalf of our 2,400 Kentucky Baptist Convention churches, I express gratitude to Ed for his service to our churches and to our Christ," said KBC President Tom James. (KBC)

UC students spending Christmas in E. Asia

By Abbey Cherry

Williamsburg—Over Christmas break, University of the Cumberlands students, Sarah England, of Versailles, and Bethany Yonts, of Lexington, are giving up their time with friends and family to serve a greater calling. From Dec. 18-Jan. 3, the two students will be overseas observing Christmas in East Asia.

Rather than catching up on hours of sleep and enjoying freedom from tests and papers, England and Yonts will be intentionally investing in the lives of collegiate students from East Asia. Though neither of them is certain as to what all they will be doing, they are confident in knowing that they are called by God to give up their Christmas break from Him.

"The night that 'The Traveling Team' came to UC Worship and talked about the 80-40 window was the night that really left me feeling burdened for that region of the world," said England, a member of Versailles Baptist Church.

After much time in prayer and countless divine appointments where East Asia was brought up, England knew without a doubt that it is what God was calling her to do.

Yonts, a member of Immanuel Baptist Church in Corbin, heard about this opportunity while serving on the mission field in Macedonia with staff and students from the University of the Cumberlands.

"At Centrikid, there were people on my team who had been to East Asia, and I became very interested in that culture and people," Yonts said. "When I got home from camp, I knew I had to go."

Responding to a call from God is nothing new for England and Yonts. In their time at UC, both have served on campus, in the community, and internationally.

England has served with UC's Appalachian Ministries throughout the school year, as well as during the summer; has been on an Acts 1:8 Team that



Above, UC student Sarah England, of Versailles, and below, Bethany Yonts, of Lexington, are spending Christmas in East Asia.

served in Murray, Ky., and Zimbabwe; recently served on medical mission trip to Nicaragua; served at an orphanage in Mexico; and attended several mission trips with her church.

Yonts has served across Kentucky through UC's Baptist Campus Ministries, working with children and women; has been faithfully leading the International Student Ministry at UC; worked for Centrikid camps at Campbellsville University; and has served internationally, going to Guatemala, Macedonia and Greece.

Both intend to serve overseas one day.

"I'm going to be attending the University of Louisville School of Medicine and hope to do full-time medical mission work abroad wherever The Lord calls me to go," said England.

Likewise, Yonts said, "After graduation I plan on being obedient to wherever God will have me go. I feel called to foreign missions work, and the Journeyman program looks like a great first step. Following it, I would like to spend some time at a seminary." (UC)



Bethany Yonts

Giving and receiving

Three giving options to help make it more blessed than to receive

In his farewell to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:35, the Apostle Paul reminded them of these words of the Lord Jesus himself: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Every serious Christian steward has confirmed this truth in his or her life.

However, many Christian stewards are not aware of giving options today, which did not exist in Jesus and Paul's days. These options provide an intangible spiritual benefit and a tangible financial benefit. By utilizing one or more of these options, you can receive income for your lifetime, and the lifetime of someone you love, and at the same time leave a legacy for the future ministry of the charitable cause(s) you want to benefit.

The three giving options to which I refer are (a) a charitable gift annuity, (b) a charitable remainder trust and (c) a charitable lead trust. All provide some favorable tax advantages, and you can establish them with gifts of cash or appreciated securities. In some instances appreciated real estate can be used. Charitable gift annuities are particularly attractive at this time. Examples of our payout rates are: 4.7 percent at age 65; 5.8 percent at

age 75; 7.8 percent at age 85 and 9.0 percent at age 90 and older. On a \$10,000 charitable gift annuity the annual payout amount would be \$470 for a person doing it at age 65; \$580 at age 75; \$780 at age 85; and \$900 at age 90 or older.

Ky. Baptist Foundation



Barry Allen

Married couples or parents of children 50 or older may choose two-life annuities. At the death of the surviving annuitant the funds not paid to the annuitants will be used to support the charitable cause(s) the annuitants selected at the time of the gift. A charitable gift annuity is an ideal way to provide income for yourself and someone you

love without the burden of managing the assets you exchange for the annuity. It is income that cannot shrink and you cannot outlive. If you do not need the income now, you have the option of a deferred gift annuity. This is particularly attractive if you have maxed-out the contributions to your retirement plan.

Call Laurie Valentine or me for information about any of these giving and receiving ideas.

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

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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 resumé (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 resumé for a full-time position of pastor. Please send resumé 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 resumé to pvcsearchteam@gmail.com or the church at 13571 Kentucky Highway 1247, Waynesburg, KY 40489.

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

To place an advertisement in the Western Recorder:

Rates are available upon request

Call (502) 489-3428 or visit westernrecorder.org



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

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

SEEKING: Part-time minister of youth for Fern Creek Baptist Church. According to the applicant's gifts and skills, this position could also include the position of children's minister or associate pastor. Applicant must exemplify a growing relationship with God, spiritual maturity, responsible authority, fervent evangelism, and effective communication skills. Send resumé to: Fern Creek Baptist Church, Attn.: Personnel Committee, 5920 Bardstown Rd., Louisville, KY 40291, or email to linda@ferncreekbaptist.org. Resumé will be received through Jan. 31. Questions? Call 239-0316 ext. 103 (Linda Barnes Popham).

SEEKING: Macedonia Baptist Church, Mt. Sterling, Ky., is seeking a bi-vocational pastor, called by God, to lead our congregation. Resumé may be submitted by mail to Ronnie Smith, Macedonia Search Committee, 100 Four Wind Estates, Mount Sterling, KY 40353 or by email to macedonia-search1@gmail.com.

FOR RENT: Destin, Fla./Crystal Shores. 6 bed, 4 bath, 3,000-sf spacious family beach house. Sleeps 18. 2 minute walk to beach. Fully upgraded with fresh paint, flat screen TV's, new hardwood floors. 502-727-7426. www.vrbo.com/454133.

Are Bible's two Christmas accounts complementary?

By David Roach

Nashville, Tenn.—A historian named Julius Africanus was among the first Christians to wonder why the stories of Jesus' birth in Matthew and Luke differ slightly.

Around the year 200, Julius apparently sought Jesus' living relatives to ask them why the genealogies of Christ in the two gospels aren't exactly the same. Was one of the accounts in error?

Jesus' ancient relatives explained, according to the third-century church historian Eusebius, that the lineage of Joseph, Jesus' adoptive father, included a Levirate marriage—the Old Testament practice by which the brother of a man who died childless would marry the widow and father a child who was legally considered the descendant of the deceased man. One of the gospel genealogies apparently follows the biological line and the other the legal line, Eusebius reported.

Though the Levirate marriage explanation has been debated by scholars, at least one thing is certain: for the nearly 1,800 years since Julius' inquiry, disciples and skeptics alike have continued to wonder why the Bible's two accounts of Jesus' birth report the story in slightly different ways. In response, three seminary professors have explained that the narratives do not contradict one another at any point and tell the story in different ways to highlight different aspects of Jesus' person and work.

Matthew and Luke "are complementary and make different points," Bill Warren, director of New Orleans Seminary's Center for New Testament Textual Studies, told Baptist Press in written comments.

"For example, in Matthew we can see the temptation of feeling threatened by Jesus and wanting to retain control even at the cost of doing ungodly things like Herod did. And we can see how we need to be sensitive to God's leadership as the magi were, offering their best based on God's message to them," Warren said. In Luke's account God first reveals His Son's birth to "common folks, the shepherds. And God still uses common folks to carry His message forward."

All professors at Southern Baptist seminaries pledge their agreement with the Baptist Faith and Message, which states that the Bible has "truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter" and "is totally true and trustworthy."

Conflicting stories

Matthew's account of Jesus' birth is famous for its presentation of the wise men, or magi in Greek; King Herod's murderous extermination of male children in Bethlehem; and the flight of Jesus and His parents to Egypt. Luke omits those details but reports the visit of shepherds following Jesus' birth; Mary's song of praise known as the "Magnificat," named for the first word in the song's Latin translation; and angels proclaiming, "Glory to God in the highest."

Theologically, Matthew highlights Jesus' status as King of the Jews while Luke depicts Him as the Savior of all people regardless of their social standing.

"If we focus on the different details the gospel writers report, we may miss the amazing similarities," Rob Plummer, chairman of Southern Seminary's New Testament department, told BP. "Both report that Jesus' mother was named Mary

and His adoptive father was named Joseph, both report Jesus was supernaturally born of a virgin, both identify Jesus as a descendent of David, both say Jesus was born in Bethlehem, both report that He eventually ended up in Nazareth."

Plummer used an example from his own life to explain why it is unreasonable for skeptics to conclude that Matthew and Luke contradict.

"When my students get hung up on different details in the gospel accounts, I encourage them to consider the complexity of their own lives," Plummer said. "Life is full of surprising coincidences and unexpected turns. My senior year in college, I roomed with a young man also named Rob who went on to study at seminary (like me)—but he went to Princeton, while I went to Southern. A skeptical later historian might wrongly conclude that there was only one original Rob, whom some later followers attached to a 'Princetonian' tradition and other followers connected to a 'Southern Seminary' tradition."

Plummer continued, "But wait! Imagine that after you read this article you run into someone I knew in college. He says, 'Rob Plummer roomed with a guy named Eric his senior year in college.' Or you meet another former acquaintance who says, 'Rob Plummer had a single dorm room his senior year in college.' Am I a liar? In fact, all of those statements are true. I roomed in a single dorm room half of my senior year, and then switched to co-renting a house with two roommates—one named Eric and one named Rob."

Analogous to the various accounts of his college days that are all true but may seem conflicting, Plummer noted, "The biblical authors often choose to focus on part of this historical account and do not give exhaustive details."

The gospels are not "exhaustive raw footage of events," Plummer wrote, but "inspired documentaries" that are "historical and accurate" yet "are also written from the vantage point of the inspired human authors."

Why different characters?

The different characters included in the birth narratives of Matthew and Luke align with the two authors' doctrinal emphases, Thor Madsen, professor of New Testament, ethics and philosophy at Midwestern Seminary, told BP.

"Matthew wants us to notice how, by the grace of God, the 'wrong' people can understand who Jesus is, while the 'right' ones do not," Madsen said. The magi were "pagan star-gazers from the east who see the supernatural star and come a great distance to worship Jesus," but "the locals in Jerusalem" did not recognize the Savior's birth.

Matthew's genealogy of Jesus further demonstrates God's willingness to accept the "wrong" people as His own by including three women—Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba—whose sinful pasts would have caused Jews to regard them as outsiders.

"Sometimes wicked characters and



their evil deeds play a role in Matthew's narrative, as we find with Herod," Madsen said. "His rage against the boys in Bethlehem causes the weeping in Ramah (Jeremiah 31:15) that gives way to the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34)."

In Luke "God is the Ultimate Promise-Keeper whose Word never fails," Madsen said. "Accordingly, John the Baptist becomes everything predicted by Gabriel, being filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb.... Even the census in 2:1-4 highlights God's promise-keeping power: He will move the whole earth, so to speak, in order to put Mary in Bethlehem on schedule for the birth of her Son. Angels tell shepherds that a time of peace has come,

the sign of which is a baby in a manger—a sign which they eventually see, as God had promised.

"The Holy Spirit revealed to Simeon that he would see the Messiah before his death; and he does, just as God had promised. We gather that something similar occurred in Anna's case. Thus, the importance of Luke's characters is their availability to show God's faithfulness to His promises."

Warren said the wise men's appearance in Matthew authenticates "the kingly role of Jesus."

The magi were "king-makers, almost certainly from the ... Parthian Empire," he said. "Prior to Herod the Great claiming the throne, he had to battle the Parthians, who were trying to put their own choice of a person in as the King of the Jews. So they are now coming to do so again it appears, with Herod well aware of the threat as seen in the text's mention of the fear that arose when the magi came to Jerusalem: 'oh no, here we go with another war again' would have been the feeling, only this time it would be a different type of king."

For Warren's proposed timeline of how the birth narratives in Matthew and Luke might fit together, see www.westernrecorder.org.

However believers think the two accounts fit together, it is illogical to say they contradict, Madsen said. (BP)

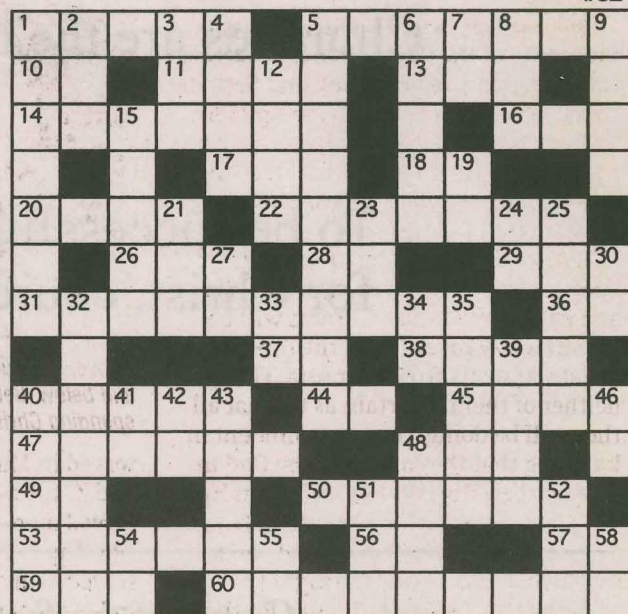
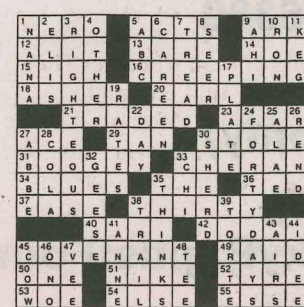
Bible Crosswords

#024

Across

- 1 "The gold of ____" (1 Chronicles 29:4)
- 5 "Four men ... in the ... fire" (Daniel 3:25)
- 10 Sweaty class, abbr.
- 11 Shining circle indicating holiness
- 13 "What ye hear in the ____" (Matthew 10:27)
- 14 "He shewed himself alive after his ____" (Acts 1:3)
- 16 Period of time
- 17 Land where Cain lived after he killed Abel (Genesis 4:16)
- 18 South American language, abbr.
- 20 ____ sold his birthright (Hebrews 12:16)
- 22 "I will ____ the loving kindnesses of the Lord" (Isaiah 63:7)
- 26 It is, contr.
- 28 Do again, prefix
- 29 Pimple
- 31 "____ by the Holy Ghost" (Romans 15:16)
- 36 "To whom shall we ____?" (John 6:68)
- 37 Astronomical unit, abbr.
- 38 Adam and Eve's third son (Genesis 4:25)
- 40 "I ... will ____ thee with my hand while I pass by" (Exodus 33:22)
- 44 Third gospel, abbr.
- 45 "The ____ of the just is as the shining light" (Proverbs 4:18)
- 47 Parentless child
- 48 Standard temperature and pressure, abbr.
- 49 Myself
- 50 "The ____ of all them that believe" (Romans 4:11)

#023



- 53 "It pleased the Lord to ____ him" (Isaiah 53:10)
- 56 Continent in the southern hemisphere, abbr.
- 57 Executive order, abbr.
- 59 Soviet Socialist Republic, abbr.
- 60 "Thy faithfulness shalt thou ____ in the very heavens" (Psalms 89:2)
- 19 Preachy, Brit.
- 21 Universal time, coordinated, abbr.
- 23 Not elsewhere indicated, abbr.
- 24 Dorothy's imaginary land
- 25 "If a man walk in the ____, he stumbleth" (John 11:10)
- 27 Address abbreviation
- 30 Preposition
- 32 People who love and worship
- 33 Des Moines is the capital of this state, abbr.
- 34 Einsteinium, chem. symbol
- 35 "The ____ saith, It is not in me" (Job 28:14)
- 39 Adhesive strip
- 40 Used for grooming the hair
- 41 Replaces the president in case of sickness or death, abbr.
- 42 Questioning word
- 43 "In the third day he will ____ us up" (Hosea 6:2)
- 46 Greeting
- 48 Thrust a knife
- 51 A king (1 Kings 15:8)
- 52 Dweller, abbr.
- 54 Abram's birth place (Genesis 11:28)
- 55 Plural suffix
- 58 Exclamation

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