

WESTERN Recorder

January 13, 2015

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 189, Issue 1

Looking back: Ky. Baptists review top news stories

By Todd Deaton

Louisville—While Ebola's spread across West Africa, the election of a new president of the International Mission Board, and racial unrest in Ferguson, Mo., were grabbing Southern Baptists' attention, Kentucky Baptists also dealt with one of their schools that moved to elect its own trustees, parted ways with a church that decided to perform same-sex marriages, and collected more than 3,400 Buckets of Hope to send to Africa.

Among 14 top newsmakers for Kentucky Baptists in 2014 were:

Marriage definition 'in jeopardy'—Kentucky's definition of marriage is on a "slippery slope" after a federal judge's decision, warned Baptist leaders. U.S. District Court Judge John Heyburn ruled in February in Louisville that the state must recognize same-sex marriages performed out-of-state and to do otherwise would violate the Constitution.

KBC Executive Director Paul Chitwood described the development as tragic and disappointing, charging that Heyburn had "usurped the will of Kentucky voters." In October, however, a three-judge panel from the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati upheld gay marriage bans in Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee.



Kentucky Baptists target gun enthusiasts—An initiative to draw unchurched men to worship gained national attention after the Louisville



Courier-Journal featured a wild-game dinner at Lone Oak First Baptist Church in Paducah. The church was one of a number of congregations employing the state convention's new emphasis on affinity evangelism focusing on hunters that often offers door prizes such as shotguns and rifles.

Mid-Continent University to close doors—A financial crisis at Mid-Continent University in Mayfield reached the breaking point with nearly all faculty and staff laid off and the school scheduled to close June 30.

Though not officially tied to the state convention, the school—birthed by First Baptist Church of Clinton—has deep roots in western Kentucky Baptist soil. KBC universities rallied around MCU's students who were displaced by the closure.

La Grange pastor to lead SBC mental health council—SBC Executive Committee President Frank Page named a 23-member volunteer advisory body of local church leaders and professionals in the mental health field to advise him on ministry needs in churches and communities. Tony Rose of La Grange Baptist Church was appointed as its chair.



Conference explores response to same-sex marriage debate—A Protecting Biblical Marriage Conference held at Crestwood Baptist Church featured a panel discussion of state and national leaders. Among the participants were KBC Executive Director Paul Chitwood; Southern Seminary President Albert Mohler; Andrew Walker, director of public policy for the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission; and August Boto, general counsel for the SBC Executive Committee.

Luter rallies Severns Valley Association to persevere in 'ultimate battle'—In what was his final visit to the Bluegrass State before the SBC's annual meeting in Baltimore, President Fred Luter fanned the flames of revival. Hundreds packed the worship



center of Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown to hear the SBC's first African-American president.

Crossings campers reach \$1 million in missions giving—Since its inception, Crossings Ministries has challenged summer campers each week to sacrifice \$20 for their own wants—T-shirts, snacks, sodas—to help share the gospel. The campers have responded, surpassing the \$1 million mark in total missions giving this summer. In other related news, Jonathan Creek dedicated the A.M. Johnson Worship Center.

Campbellsville University elects its own trustees—Campbellsville University informed Kentucky Baptist Convention leaders that the school intended to create a self-perpetuating board of trustees, prompting the KBC to escrow its Cooperative Program allocation. After the board elected 11 members in October, violating the university's covenant agreement, convention officials declared that Campbellsville had "clearly chosen to remove itself" from partnership with the KBC.



EngageKY bus tour 'breaks' hearts for city's lost—Nearly three dozen Kentucky Baptists took in the sites of Louisville, but instead of hitting tourism spots, they rode through rundown areas, past strip clubs, even a Sikh temple. The tour was part of EngageKY designed to show a reality facing Kentucky Baptists: Christians no



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Ky. Baptists see hundreds of college students come to Christ in 2014

By Roger Alford

Louisville—A shift in the way Kentucky Baptists take the gospel to colleges and universities has led to an explosion in the number of new Christians on campuses across the state.

Kentucky Baptist Convention Collegiate Ministry Strategist Brian Combs said nearly 1,000 students made professions of faith in Christ over the past year. Of those decisions, Combs said, 876 were made on campuses and 110 were off campus, primarily in nearby churches.

Numbers began to rise when the KBC's

campus missionaries, who are assigned to nearly every college and university in the state, shifted their strategies to equip and empower churches to engage the colleges and universities.

"We also shifted from a general approach to the campus to an affinity approach that seeks to gather groups according to affinity and present the gospel in a contextually relevant manner," Combs said.

Combs said the KBC has made



Brian Combs

intentional evangelism on campuses a major focus under the leadership of Executive Director Paul Chitwood, who is in his third year of leading Kentucky's largest religious organization with some 750,000 members.

"No longer are college ministry workers the group that no one knows what to do with," Combs said. "We are increasingly being recognized as missionaries on the front lines of one of the darkest and most strategic mission fields in the world."

Some studies have shown that up to 95 percent of college students in Kentucky don't have a relationship with Jesus.

"This is an environment where people are literally like sheep without a shepherd," Combs said. "They are wandering, jumping from one thing to another in search of peace. Their definition of truth is based on whatever the most socially popular view is at the time."

Often, Combs said, college students see Christianity as outdated, and they reject Christian principles. Yet, research also points to as much as 85 percent of students, faculty, staff and administrators wanting to develop spiritually.

"This is an open door for us," he said.

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Cumberlands' Lifelong Learning helps student follow her dreams

By Abbey Cherry

Williamsburg—On Oct. 31, 2012, Naomi Hetrick, of Richmond, was making a routine morning commute to Bluegrass Technical and Community College in Lexington, where she was studying social work. What seemed like an average day quickly turned awry as Hetrick pulled out of the parking lot and was blindsided by another vehicle.

With a severely mangled car and her life on the line, it was divine intervention that saved Hetrick's life.

"They said I died at the scene of the accident," Hetrick said. "But thankfully, I was resuscitated by an ambulance nearby carrying a cancer patient."

After being aided by the nearby ambulance, they awaited the arrival of another ambulance that rushed her to intensive care at University of Kentucky's Medical Center. Months passed by while Hetrick lay in a comatose state. While the future of her physical body seemed bleak, family and friends held on to what they knew was true spiritually, and that was that God was in control.

In April of 2013, she was relocated to Cardinal Hill to begin her therapy process in the Disorders of Consciousness Program. With a team of therapists, Hetrick was able to receive mental and

physical stimulation to aid her recovery process.

"By summer I was using a walker and in late fall, I was only using a cane," she said.

With the drive, grit and determination to get stronger each day, Hetrick not only wanted to improve her physical state, but she wanted to challenge herself mentally as well. Last spring, she enrolled in the School of Life Long Learning Program at University of the Cumberlands.

Steven Halsted of the Human Services Department said, "It was a dream of hers to be a social worker and help people. Now with the online program, she can continue following that dream."

Hetrick acknowledged the impact that Halsted has had on her educationally. Through challenging his class with real life application scenarios, she stated, "He has been patient with me, given me so many pointers, and has taught me so much."

Following her extended stay in the hospital, Hetrick still has plans to go into social work, but more specifically working in a hospital.

As much influence that Halsted has had on Hetrick, the same can be said about the influence that she has had on Halsted. Halsted noted the difference



Naomi works on her walking after her accident. Through Cumberlands' School of Life Long Learning program, she is pursuing her dream of becoming a social worker.

that Hetrick has made in the classroom as a whole.

From students praising her for being a source of encouragement in the classroom discussion boards, all the way to Halsted seeing classmates challenge themselves more because of her work ethic, Hetrick has been a light.

"She is a survivor and overcomer. I am humbled by her," said Halsted. "I know she will do fantastic in whatever she decides to do."

Although her physical and mental accomplishments could be credited to the EMTs in the ambulance on the

accident scene, the therapists at Cardinal Hill, or Halsted in the classroom, it was Hetrick's heart, determination and faith that allowed her to be the overcomer that she is.

"I know that God is going to accomplish His plan and His plan is perfect. I may not understand it but Romans 8:28 tells me that it's for my good," stated Hetrick, who attends Tates Creek Baptist Church in Lexington.

"I know that one day I will be thanking Him for an eternity, and I figure I might as well be thanking Him now," she said. (UC)

Now cancer-free and adopted, 11-year-old can't help grinning

By John Shindlebower

Richmond—When you see Brian smile, you know it's genuine. The 11-year-old has been through so much in the past few years. He and his 13-year-old sister, Sarah, have been in and out of several foster homes. Last summer, Brian was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma and endured five months of chemotherapy.

But still he smiles, and for good reason. In October, he and his sister were legally adopted by Justin and Ashley Padgett of Richmond. A few weeks ago, he was told he is cancer-free. Life is good for Brian and his sister as the family begins the new year.

Justin and Ashley began inquiring about foster care in 2012. About four years ago they were told they would never have biological children and they were unsuccessful in one adoption attempt.

Ashley had heard on the radio about the need for foster parents and the couple were soon signed up at a church event for those interested. "We were so ignorant about foster care," said Ashley. "I didn't realize you could adopt kids through foster care," she said.

Sunrise's flexible training schedule and faith-based focus fit their needs and the couple completed training. Justin, a seminary student, said Sunrise's connection to the Kentucky Baptist Convention was also a key factor for him. Ashley said the agency's support was also key.

"They have been so supportive of our family from day one," she said. "They've gone above and beyond to make sure we had everything we needed to be successful."

Their first placements were a sibling group of four, all under the age of five.



The Padgett family, Brian, Sarah, Ashley and Justin are eagerly looking forward to the arrival of baby Naomi in April.

They had the children for about three months and were initially told the children may eventually be eligible for adoption. However, the children were ultimately placed back in their biological home after about three months.

Ashley wasn't sure she could go through such a disappointment again. "I told Justin I couldn't do it again," said Ashley. "He said he just felt this is what God really wanted us to do."

So the couple opened their home to another sibling group, this time Sarah and Brian.

"We were open to whatever God had for us," said Justin.

Brian and Sarah came into the home with an understanding they could be adopted. Their first stay with the Padgetts was a three-day visit which would allow all parties to determine whether this was something each wanted to pursue. The children had been in foster care about three years prior, but quickly grew comfortable with the Padgetts. At the end of that first visit, young Sarah sat at the table and proclaimed, "I think this is going to be a good fit for us."

Her judgment proved correct.

In the summer of 2013, the children came to live with the Padgetts and the adoption process was begun. However, those proceedings don't also move along quickly and by the next summer, things were still toiling. That was about to change.

Brian was rollerblading and hurt his foot. The initial diagnosis was a sprain, but the swelling didn't ease.

A couple of more trips to the doctor finally led to a visit to a specialist and a tumor was discovered. More tests revealed that Brian was suffering from lymphoma.

The news came at a busy time for the Padgetts. Justin had made the decision to resign as youth minister at a church he had been serving so he could complete his seminary training. The couple moved to Madison County where Ashley worked as a teacher. They also found out that despite the earlier doctors' pronouncements, Ashley was pregnant.

It was a whirlwind of events that had Justin questioning whether he'd made the right decision about going back to school.

"Man, I really messed up," he recalls thinking. "We've left our church and I've lost a paycheck." But God provided, and looking back, the timing proved perfect. Justin says Brian's chemo treatments required week-long stays in the hospital and two weeks of rest at home.

"What I thought had been a foolish move, turned out to be great. I got to be with him during the whole process and care for him."

Through it all, the Padgetts had never lost faith that God would see Brian through.

His sickness also spurred on the state to expedite the adoption process. It was

trying early on because the state had to approve all of Brian's medical treatments, but when the adoption was made official in October, those decisions could be made directly by the Padgetts.

A few weeks before Christmas, Brian had completed his treatments and the doctors gave them the good news that the cancer was in remission.

The family had much to celebrate during the holiday season and so much to look forward to in the coming year. Their baby girl, Naomi, is due in April.

"God has taught us so much through this process," said Justin. "So much about himself and the gospel and it's great to be part of that."

Sarah came to Christ with a previous foster family and Justin had the thrill of baptizing Brian.

"We're doing what the Lord has commanded us to do," said Justin. "We are to care for the orphans," he said.

"It's so essential that we show these kids a little glimpse of what God's love does for us. Christ comes to us when we're needy and desperate for love and desperate for salvation."

The Padgetts have encouraged others to pursue foster parenting as well, but said it's a decision that should be entered into with prayer.

"It's one of the most challenging but rewarding things we've done," said Ashley.

Justin encourages those who are being led to fostering to follow through. "I think it's a matter of obedience to those of us who are believers."

It will also bring a smile to the children who most desperately need one. (Sunrise)

John Shindlebower is associate director of communications for Sunrise Children's Services.

Newsweek's slam of the Bible called 'irresponsible'

By David Roach

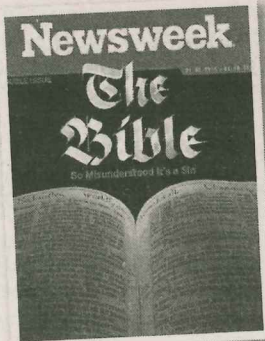
Nashville, Tenn.—A Newsweek cover article calling conservative evangelicals "God's frauds" and characterizing the Bible as full of errors has drawn a range of corrective responses from Baptist commentators.

"When Newsweek, now back in print under new ownership, let loose its first issue of the New Year on the Bible, I held out the hope that the article would be fair, journalistically credible, and interesting, even if written from a more liberal perspective," Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, wrote in a Dec. 29 blog post. "But Newsweek's cover story is nothing of the sort. It is an irresponsible screed of post-Christian invective leveled against the Bible and, even more to the point, against evangelical Christianity. It is one of the most irresponsible articles ever to appear in a journalistic guise."

Appearing on the Fox News Channel's "Fox & Friends" Dec. 30, Mohler said the article demonstrates "ignorance of the facts" regarding Scripture.

"When you have someone in the media give a balanced view and talk about the great truths of the faith in an honest and balanced and journalistic way, that's fair game," Mohler told host Elizabeth Hasselbeck and guest host Scott Brown, a former Massachusetts senator. "But that's not what we're dealing with here. From the opening shot, this (article) is an open attack upon Christianity."

Written by veteran business and financial reporter Kurt Eichenwald, Newsweek's article is titled "The Bible: So Misunderstood It's a Sin" and appears in the magazine's Jan. 2 issue. Eichenwald does not cite conservative evangelicals as sources but quotes Bart Ehrman, a New Testament professor who has gained a reputation for attacking historic Christianity.



The 8,500-word essay begins, "They wave their Bibles at passersby, screaming their condemnations of homosexuals. They fall on their knees, worshipping at the base of granite monuments to the Ten Commandments while demanding prayer in school. They appeal to God to save America from their political opponents, mostly Democrats. They gather in football stadiums by the thousands to pray for the country's salvation. They are God's frauds, cafeteria Christians who pick and choose which Bible verses they heed with less care than they exercise in selecting side orders for lunch."

Rebuttals of Newsweek

The Newsweek article presents as fact a list of supposed errors, contradictions and problems in the Bible. Though all of Eichenwald's assertions have been addressed by conservative biblical scholars, he does not mention that in the essay. In his blog post, Mohler countered some of Eichenwald's claims, including:

■ "No television preacher has ever read the Bible. Neither has any evangelical politician. Neither has the pope. Neither have I. And neither have you. At best, we've all read a bad translation—a translation of translations of translations of hand-copied copies of copies of copies of copies, and on and on, hundreds of times."

Mohler responded, "No knowledgeable evangelical claims that the Bibles we read in English are anything other than translations. But it is just wrong and reckless to claim that today's best translations are merely 'a translation of translations of translations.'"

Charles Quarles, professor of New Testament and biblical theology at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, added in written comments to Baptist Press, "Several excellent translations of the Bible are available today. Many evangelical scholars read the Bible in the original languages, prepare their lectures and sermons from the Hebrew and Greek texts, and constantly consult ancient manuscripts of these texts. I frequently read

directly from facsimiles of ancient biblical texts like Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and p46. The author of this article is clearly unaware of the outstanding biblical research conducted by Christian scholars or conveniently chose to ignore it."

■ "About 400 years passed between the writing of the first Christian manuscripts and their compilation into the New Testament," Eichenwald writes. "(That's the same amount of time between the arrival of the Pilgrims on the Mayflower and today.) The first books of the Old Testament were written 1,000 years before that. In other words, some 1,500 years passed between the day the first biblical author put stick to clay and when the books that would become the New Testament were chosen."

Mohler responded that Eichenwald "grossly exaggerates the time between the writing of the New Testament documents and the establishment of a functional canon." The apostle Peter referred to Paul's writings as already regarded among the "Scriptures" (2 Peter 3:16), and an ancient document written by Papias of Hierapolis reveals that the canonical Gospels existed as a collection by A.D. 110, according to Christian History Magazine.

■ The Koiné Greek of the New Testament "was written in what is known as scriptio continua—meaning no spaces between words and no punctuation," Eichenwald said. "A sentence like weshouldgoeatmom could be interpreted as 'We should go eat, Mom,' or 'We should go eat Mom.' Sentences have different meaning depending on where the spaces are placed."

Mohler acknowledged that the New

Testament was indeed written without spaces or punctuation. But he observed, "There is no text in the Bible in which this is truly a problem. Context determines the meaning, and no mom is in any danger of being eaten due to confused punctuation."

Eichenwald suggests the Bible does not teach the doctrine of the Trinity, and he criticizes Christians who believe it condemns homosexuality.

Mohler countered that while there is not an isolated proof text that says God is one essence and three persons, "the doctrine of the Trinity (is) drawn from the totality of the New Testament." Mohler noted that Eichenwald "appears unable to deny ... that Romans 1:27 identifies men lusting after other men as sinful."

Various Christian scholars have countered additional claims of error presented as fact in the Newsweek article. For example, Eichenwald writes that "contradictions abound" between the accounts of Jesus' birth in Matthew and Luke.

But Thor Madsen, professor of New Testament, ethics and philosophy at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, said in a Dec. 23 BP article, "Matthew's infancy narrative would contradict Luke's only if, in some respect, Matthew says 'A' and Luke says 'not A.' ... What we see, rather, are differences arising from the standards by which Matthew chooses to include information not given by Luke, and vice versa."

In the end, "this article is likely to do far more damage to Newsweek" than Christianity," Mohler wrote. "...To take advantage of Newsweek's title—it so misrepresents the truth, it's a sin." (BP)

Crouch kindled 'new dimension' of worship

Nashville, Tenn.—Legendary gospel songwriter and performer Andraé Crouch has died at the age of 72.

Crouch's songs—among them: "My Tribute," "The Blood Will Never Lose Its Power," "Soon and Very Soon," "Bless the Lord" and "Through It All"—have become standards and are included in the hymnals of both African American and Anglo churches.

He was a major figure in the "Jesus Movement" of the 1960s and 1970s, which led to the rise in popularity of contemporary Christian and gospel music. He is credited with pioneering the urban gospel sound, blending elements of traditional gospel, R&B, jazz and pop.

Crouch's sound became so synonymous with gospel music that anytime a mainstream artist or movie studio needed a gospel song, he was their first call. His work in writing, arranging and directing can be heard on recordings by Elvis Presley, Elton John, Michael Jackson, Madonna, Paul Simon and others, as well as on soundtracks for movies like "The Lion King" and "The Color Purple," for which Crouch was nominated for an

Academy Award. He is one of only a handful of gospel musicians with a star on Hollywood's Walk of Fame.

Crouch could craft an innovative melody and heartfelt lyric while unabashedly proclaiming the gospel in his songs—man's sin; God's love and faithfulness; Jesus' death, resurrection and imminent return. Crouch's songs were transparent and honest about the struggles of the Christian life, yet full of hope.

In 1965, he founded The Disciples, the group that became an outlet for his compositions and launched him to gospel music fame. Before disbanding in 1979, The Disciples had performed in front of nationwide audiences, including "The Tonight Show" with Johnny Carson, and in 68 countries. Crouch continued to perform as a solo artist, with a team of background musicians and singers. In the 1990s, he also took over as senior pastor of the church his parents helped build.

Crouch had dealt with multiple illnesses, including cancer and diabetes. He died Jan. 8 at Northridge Hospital Medical Center near Los Angeles from complications following a heart attack. (BP)

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College ministry strategy reaps 10-fold increase

In his book, "Surprising Insights from the Unchurched," Thom Rainer claims today's generation of college students are,

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

for the most part, unreached with the gospel. Rainer indicates that only 4 percent of those who are college age profess to be born-again followers of Jesus Christ. That being true, of the 250,000 college students in Kentucky, more than 200,000 will spend eternity in hell if they should die before they hear the gospel and believe.

The churches of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, working together, are addressing this need more effectively today than ever before. For decades, churches have given to the Cooperative Program to provide Baptist Campus Ministry directors on our major college and university campuses. In the past, about 10 full-time directors, accompanied by part-time workers and a host of volunteers from committed churches, sought to disciple believers and evangelize unbelievers on their campuses. This ministry served to bless and equip many who now serve as ministers and laypersons across Kentucky and around the world. In 2011, our BCM directors reported 96 people had come to faith through BCM work on and off the campuses.

We praised God for each soul saved, but grieved over the hundreds of thousands who remained lost. In 2013, Brian Combs, who serves as the KBC's collegiate evangelism strategist, enlisted the help of several KBC staff members and church leaders from across the state in an effort to recast our vision for reaching university campuses. Realizing there are now more than 100 campuses across Kentucky, the group began to explore ways to grow our witness.

One of the most noticeable changes resulting from the effort was the elimination of the role of the BCM director. The new position is that of the campus missionary. While some of the names and faces of those leading the work on our campuses are the same, the new title reflects the prioritization of evangelism.

Another change is the addition of the campus ministry intern program that allows people to serve in part-time ministry roles under our campus missionaries. Interns are connected directly to local churches and associations. They meet specified qualifications, commit to a period of service, raise their own support, and multiply the ministry of the campus missionaries. While we could never employ enough campus missionaries to reach 250,000 students, we believe the CMI strategy will greatly increase our gospel witness.

We are already seeing results from these and other changes. In 2014, our campus missionaries reported 876 professions of faith on the campuses and an additional 110 professions of faith from ministry work done off campus. We still have a long way to go in order to be able to say that every college student in Kentucky has heard the gospel, but a tenfold increase in the number of persons who have professed faith through the work of Baptist Campus Ministry is a cause for celebration. Might God be glorified!

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Looking for a 'payday someday' that never quite comes

Would you borrow \$1 from someone if you knew you could have to pay back \$4? It depends on how desperate you are.

That's what some payday lenders are counting on.

The Kentucky Coalition for Responsible Lending estimates the average interest rate on payday loans in Kentucky exceeds 300 percent. While a loan typically involves a low balance—say \$300 to \$500—and has a two-week term coinciding with one's pay cycle, according to a recent news story by Baptist News Global, the problem is a typical user can't pay back the full amount in two weeks and unwisely opts to take out another loan. In essence, borrowers are always looking for a payday someday, which seldom comes.

What if we are talking about thousands of dollars? Will one ever escape the debt trap? The coalition's data shows a typical payday borrower in Kentucky took out 10 loans in the past year. In that time, the BNG article noted, an original \$300 loan charging a \$45 fee may amass a whopping \$450 in interest. Ouch! If one loan is impossible to pay off, amplify that burden 5- or 10-fold.

"Payday lenders market their products as a one-time quick fix, but they are a debt trap by design, and the legislature should act to protect Kentucky's families and Kentucky's economy," Marian Taylor, executive director of the Kentucky Council of Churches, urged in an editorial in the Kentucky New Era.

A broad faith-based coalition of Kentucky churches and organizations joined together last week to call for a bill to protect families from loan practices that lure them into inescapable debt. Hershael York, pastor of Buck Run Baptist Church in Frankfort, appealed through social media for Kentucky Baptists to join him and other religious leaders and concerned citizens in a meeting at the Capitol. They met with Alice Forgy Kerr, who sponsored a

Senate bill to cap the interest rate at 36 percent, and Sen. Tom Buford, chairman of the banking and insurance committee.

"This issue is important to me because it allows someone to legally abuse the poor," said York. "People who are drowning in debt need to get legitimate help, not deeper in trouble."

"Any church that is reaching out to the poor, to immigrants, to single moms, and to other vulnerable groups MUST care about this issue," the Southern Seminary professor told the Western Recorder. "We can't build the kingdom if our people are being pulled under in a vortex of debt."

Rick Hardison, pastor of Great Crossroads Baptist Church in Georgetown and chair of the KBC Committee on Public Affairs, was among those who attended.

"This industry needs reforming because payday loans normally hurt borrowers. If that seems like an overstatement, just ask a handful of people who got these loans at exorbitant interest rates if they were glad they got them," Hardison said. "The industry pitches itself as if it helps the consumer get out of a tight spot," he added. "In reality, these loans make the tight spot tighter" and often lead borrowers to make unwise decisions.

"Most poor choices are the result of a lack of knowledge," the New Era editorial observes. Maintaining legislation is only part of the solution, the writer suggests that "a better long-term approach might be to educate people before they take out loans that are almost impossible to pay off." Excellent point! In addition to calling our legislators and urging support of a bill, education is a key area in which our churches can step up. By teaching sound Christian principles of personal finance, our churches can help safeguard more families from falling prey to unfair lending practices.

The list could go on, but you get the point. Each pastor's wife is truly unique. She loves her God and His church. In fact, she's given her life to serving alongside your pastor. God hasn't called her to meet expectations of church members, but to live for Him and serve exactly as He's gifted and called her.

There are only two requirements for an ideal pastor's wife. First, she's a child of God—an imperfect sinner saved by His grace. Like you and me, her life is dedicated to the Savior. Second, she's married to the pastor. She's the only woman in the entire world who's qualified to be that pastor's wife.

How can you, personally, encourage your pastor's wife? Try one of these ideas:

- Notice and compliment how she encourages her husband in ministry.
- Be her great cheerleader. Always have a good word to say about her.
- Be aware that a great deal of her ministry work may be behind the scenes.
- Show interest and encouragement in her outside-the-church involvements.
- Say "thanks" occasionally. She joyfully carries many extra responsibilities and burdens.

You can uplift your church and pastor's ministry by loving and accepting his wife. Will you encourage your pastor's wife today?

A revised excerpt from Diana's newly released book, "Six Simple Steps—Finding Contentment and Joy as a Minister's Wife."

Fresh Ideas



Diana Davis

The ideal pastor's wife

What does the ideal pastor's wife look like?

Every pastor's wife is one-of-a-kind. She's definitely not a clone of your previous pastor's wife, or any other pastor's wife you know.

Don't fall for the rumor that there's a cookie-cutter mold for the ideal pastor's wife. God created her uniquely—her personality, giftedness, style, strengths and weaknesses. I've observed hundreds of effective pastors' wives, and no two are alike.

There are awesome pastor's wives who are tall, short, old, young, introverted and extroverted. She may wear a ponytail, pixie cut or dreadlocks. There are pastors' wives who run marathons, barrel race, coach, hunt, garden, golf, and raise goats. Some are factory workers, homemakers, teachers, doctors, antique dealers. They're salespeople, office workers, RN's, CPAs, CEOs, and EMTs. Some have a GED; others a PhD. They're on city councils, PTO boards, neighborhood watch teams and bowling leagues.

They live on farms, in condos, mobile homes, parsonages and neighborhoods. They're childless, foster or adoptive parents, parents, great-grandparents. They're vegans, foodies, volunteers, drummers, soccer moms, and artists. They're biscuit burners and gourmet chefs. Some even play the piano.

Each has a distinct background and Christian testimony. Their ministries within God's church vary from behind-the-scenes to upfront leadership.

WESTERN Recorder

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Louisville, KY 40253

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Western Recorder is published bi-weekly by Western Recorder Inc., an agency of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253. Periodicals postage paid at Louisville, Ky. (USPS 679-380)

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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.

Four resolutions for every small town church

By Jonathan Davis

Most people make New Year's resolutions and end up breaking them quickly. Whether kept or not, the habit of New Year's resolutions in our culture speaks to humanity's desire for new beginnings. Lucky for us, our God is a God of new beginnings.

What would a new beginning look like in your small town church in 2015? Here are four resolutions:

Obedience over activity

Like many churches, small town churches face great temptation to pad the calendar with activities for the sake of "doing ministry," "giving people opportunities," and perhaps worst of all—"filling out the calendar."

What if in 2015, our need to busy ourselves gives way to listening to God's "still, small voice?"

The prophet Ezekiel's final vision of a restored temple, a restored priesthood, and a restored Israel came at the beginning of a new year (Ezek. 40:1). A vision from the Lord is rarely a regularly calendared event.

In 2015, let's not become so busy with business as usual that we don't have room for a fresh vision from God. Obedience over activity is not about doing nothing. Rather, it's a call to do what God is calling us to and not what makes us comfortable.

Take advantage of the fact that small-town life often moves at a slower pace than urban life. The Lord might lead you and your congrega-

tion to a season of renewal.

Contentment over worry

Many small-town churches focus on survival, and understandably so.

■ Rural populations suffer brain drain; the best and the brightest leave for college and never come back because there are no jobs in their field at home.

■ Young adults are not magically flocking back to church when they have kids anymore.

■ Manufacturing and industry sometimes leave small-towns in the U.S. for major cities or even developing markets overseas.

■ Climate change threatens agriculture as weather becomes less predictable and more severe.

Small-town people and churches seemingly have much to worry about.

One small-town clergy couple recently shared in an online forum about taking a pay cut, nearly their entire salary, to stay in a county impaired by rural poverty. Instead of being gripped by fear, the couple is working to find contentment, even though they both work outside of church to pay bills. I'm inspired by their commitment to God's call.

If small-town churches and clergy embraced contentment over worry, we might find incredible freedom to live into God's unique calling.

Risk-taking over playing-it-safe.

Like obedience, contentment is not the same as inaction. If we find

contentment in our calling as small-town churches, embracing the unique mission field God has given us, and if we are obedient to God's call, we will likely take bold ministry risks. What if, in being closer to creation and the earth than our urban counterparts, small-town church began bold new initiatives to live God's call to stewardship of the earth?

How might God call your church in 2015 to embrace risk-taking mission and service? The needs are urgent. The time for bold mission and fresh expressions is now.

Prayer over everything

Finally, we should cover our ministry efforts in prayer. Obedience to God, finding contentment, and taking bold missional risks will certainly not come without a sincere commitment to prayer. Too often we turn to the latest poll, the hottest new program from a best-selling book, or congregational consultants/coaches to tell us what we're doing wrong. When we want to grow, we are quick to chase everything but God.

I like a saying attributed to John Wesley: "Prayer is where the action is." Theories are helpful. Best practices for stewardship are great. Making sure your campus is welcoming and has enough parking is ideal. But none of those things trump prayer.

How will you embrace these principles in 2015? (BNG)

Jonathan Davis is pastor of Urbanna Baptist Church, in Urbanna, Va.

Children still being hurried in 2015

By David Garrard

In 1982, David Elkind wrote "The Hurried Child"—a book he is still famous for. As a professor of child development at Tufts University, Elkind warned that children were being pushed into activities and environments that they were not ready for developmentally.

"The Hurried Child" was part of a trilogy of books that included "Miseducation: Preschoolers at Risk" and "All Grown Up and No Place to Go: Teenagers in Crisis."

Elkind says that the hurrying began about the time the federal government created the Head Start early child education, somewhere in the mid-1960s. Although intended to provide help for disadvantaged children, the program gave birth to the idea that education was a race, and that the sooner you got started the better. Middle- and upper-class parents wanted their kids to have every advantage in what was a race to achieve, and so they jumped onboard and began the push to have children reading, doing math, learning foreign languages, etc., earlier and earlier.

As Elkind's books documented and demonstrated, this approach put preschoolers at risk in many ways, forcing them into structured learning environments and experiences that were simply inappropriate for their age. Hurried or pushed children ultimately produced adolescents who had done it all by the time they were 12 and 13. With nowhere to go, nothing much to accomplish and nothing to look forward to, boredom set in, which often led to the wrong kinds of things.

As a minister to children, I saw it all the time ... and I am seeing it again today. For this reason, I have decided to devote my 2015 Family Forum columns to revisiting Elkind's themes, introducing his ideas to a new generation of parents. I hope you will find them challenging.

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



8 common financial planning myths

By Don Spencer

1. Financial planning is just investment advice.

While investing is important in financial planning, there are many other issues, including goals, budgets, insurance, taxes, retirement plans and estate plans.

2. **Save 10 percent of your salary.** Is this enough? For some, it is not. Much depends on the purpose of the savings and your total financial picture. Determine the purpose of your savings and calculate the amount you need to save.

3. **Keep an amount equal to 3-5 months of spendable income in an emergency checking account.** You do need an emergency fund, but NOT in a checking account. Consider other options, still keeping the money safe and accessible.

4. **You will need 75 percent of your pre-retirement income in retirement.** You may need less or more, depending on many financial variables.

5. **Life insurance should equal 5 times your salary.** Have an insurance professional assess your needs. For some, unique personal issues dictate a need for significantly more insurance. Needs for others are less, and they may be paying for more insurance than needed.

6. **Put a percentage of your savings equal to 100 minus your age into stocks.** Many planners use this as a general guide. This may be too conservative for some.

7. **I'm too young for a financial plan.** The earlier, the better. Every decade you delay saving for retirement, you'll have to save about three times as much money per month to accumulate the same sum.

8. **I'll retire at 65.** This is false: 65 was an arbitrary number chosen in the 1940s for Social Security. Full retirement is now 66 and rising to 67.

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



Four considerations for Southern Baptist churches

By Ronnie Floyd

As we near the coming of the Lord, we should be more focused than ever before. As our congregations partner together in gospel causes, I ask you to consider these things in 2015:

1. Personally, collectively and cooperatively, we need to own the Great Commission.

As Southern Baptists, our mission vision is to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world and to make disciples of all the nations. There is not one of us that can escape this vision, not because it is our vision as Southern Baptists, but because it is the vision of Jesus Christ for each of us as His disciples.

When I challenge us to own the Great Commission, I mean we must own this responsibility personally. This means that my church and your church must own the responsibility of presenting the Gospel of Jesus Christ to every person and make disciples of every people group in our own region. It also means we must work cooperatively to reach the world for Jesus Christ.

Our church cannot do it by ourselves. Your church cannot do it by yourselves. Our 50,000 plus churches and congregations must cooperate like never before through our 1,100 associations, 42 state conventions, and 12 Southern Baptist entities. As Southern Baptists, we must own the

Great Commission.

2. Increase your financial support of our Great Commission work together.

Unashamedly and unapologetically, I humbly request that each local church increase their giving through our Cooperative Program. I have never been more convinced that each church must give more than we have ever given before through our Cooperative Program. Whether your practice is to give by percentage or dollar amount, I call upon each of our churches to increase giving. This is imperative if we are going to see all of our Great Commission ministries advanced.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' unified plan of giving through which churches give to reach the world for Jesus Christ. As Southern Baptists, I have heard us talk about our great commitment to the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

We must renew and increase our financial commitment to seeing the gospel advanced throughout the world. Tell the story. Trust your people. I believe they will step up in an unprecedented manner.

3. Plan now to be represented at our upcoming Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting on June 16-17 in Columbus, Ohio.

Since the moment I was elected as SBC president, I have extended a clear calling to Columbus, Ohio, for our

annual gathering in 2015. Regardless of the size of your church, we need your church represented. We need our Southern Baptist family in one place, praying, worshipping, and working together to see the Great Commission completed in our generation. Soon, I will begin to talk about many more specifics of our upcoming gathering, but right now, do all you can to be in Columbus, Ohio. If you have questions, go online to our annual meeting website or call 615-244-2355 to have your questions answered.

We would like to see every church represented in Columbus. Join me. I believe this will be one of the great spiritual highlights for each of us this year.

4. Join many of us that are praying and seeking the face of God daily for the next Great Awakening and to reach the world for Christ.

Our beloved nation and world needs the next great move of God to come upon us more than anything. Spiritual awakening is our greatest need in America. We need to see places, regions, and prayerfully even nationally, a sweeping, God-sized moving of God. It has happened before. It can happen again.

Take these four considerations to the Lord in prayer, then take them to your church. The need is now. (BP)

Ronnie Floyd is president of the SBC and pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas.

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Guest Speakers



Paul Chitwood
Kentucky Baptist Convention



Jesse Connors
Founder of TrueLife.org



Ronnie Floyd
Cross Church



Alex Himaya
theChurch.at



Gabe Lyons
Q|Jeans



Chuck McAlister
Kentucky Baptist Convention



Brian Mills
Englewood Baptist Church



Al Mohler
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary



Russell Moore
Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission



Trillia Newbell
Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission



Frank Page
Southern Baptist Convention



Vic Sholar
Main Street Baptist Church



Ed Stetzer
LifeWay Christian Resources



TC Taylor
New Breed Church



Isaac Frasure
Highview Baptist Church



Jason Stewart
Kentucky Baptist Convention

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QUESTIONS?
Contact DeAnna Terry
502-489-3418

SCHEDULE

MONDAY, FEB. 23

- 7:00 p.m. Worship led by Isaac Frasure & Jason Stewart
PreRISK Service with Ronnie Floyd, Jesse Connors, Ed Stetzer
- 9:00 p.m. Dessert Fellowship & Networking

TUESDAY, FEB. 24

- 8:45 a.m. Worship led by Isaac Frasure & Jason Stewart
- 9:00 a.m. RISK Session 1 - **Church is... Challenging. I didn't sign up for this.**
Featured Speakers: Gabe Lyons, Ed Stetzer, Al Mohler
- 10:30 a.m. RISK Session 2 - **Culture is... Resistant. I wasn't prepared for this.**
Featured Speakers: TC Taylor, Russell Moore, Trillia Newbell
- 11:35 a.m. Lunch
- 1:00 p.m. RISK Session 3 - **Change is... Hard. I'm overwhelmed.**
Featured Speakers: Brian Mills, Frank Page, Alex Himaya
- 2:30 p.m. RISK Session 4 - **Courage is... Required. I'm determined!**
Featured Speakers: Paul Chitwood, Victor Sholar
- 3:30 p.m. Worship & Panel Discussion with All Featured Speakers
- 4:30 p.m. What am I going to do? Led by Chuck McAlister
- 5:00 p.m. Close

This event powered by gifts through the EP

Top BP news stories for Baptists in 2014

'Pastor David Platt succeeds Tom Elliff as IMB president'

In August, Baptist Press reported the election of David Platt as president of the International Mission Board. Platt, 36, pastor of The Church at Brook Hills, succeeded former missionary, pastor and Southern Baptist Convention president Tom Elliff, 70. Platt's election drew praise for his youth and passion for international missions and concerns from others questioning his commitment to the Cooperative Program.



Platt

Platt wrote the New York Times bestseller "Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream."

'Baptists work to educate West Africa about Ebola'

In October, the deadly Ebola virus continued to claim lives in West Africa. Baptists in the region were implementing strategies to provide basic education about the virus. Trevor Yoakum, an International Mission Board missionary, said false beliefs about the virus continued to spread in West Africa. "Some people believe that if they bathe with water and salt then they will be cured of Ebola," Yoakum said. To confront some of these beliefs, Yoakum, in conjunction with Baptist Global Response, helped formulate a campaign in Togo to distribute 15,000 Ebola information brochures across the country.

In December, "The Ebola Fighters," many of whom were motivated by their Christian faith to risk their lives in battling the deadly disease in West Africa, were named TIME's "Person of the Year." Kent Brantly, an American medical doctor with the missions organization Samaritan's Purse who contracted Ebola while running a treatment center in Monrovia, Liberia, was one of several medical workers featured on a TIME Magazine cover as part of the magazine's recognition of "Ebola Fighters" as the 2014 Person of the Year.



'GOP gain Senate, Southern Baptists win' seats

Baptist Press reported in November that voters gave the Republican Party a majority in the U.S. Senate in November's mid-term election, leaving President Obama without a Democratic-controlled chamber in Congress for the first time since he took residence in the White House nearly six years ago. Southern Baptist candidates, meanwhile, won first-time seats in Congress as part of the Republican blitz, but social conservatives did not fare as well on some state initiatives.

Several states made decisions on two divisive social issues: abortion and marijuana. Pro-life advocates gained an important win in one state but lost in two others. Tennessee voters approved an amendment affirming that nothing in the state constitution can be construed to support an unfettered right to abortion, thereby giving legislators more authority to regulate abortion. Voters in Colorado and North Dakota, however, defeated pro-life amendments. Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said the election illustrates that "the pro-life issue persists and can win," which he deemed the "most important aspect" of Election Day 2014.

'Ferguson crisis calls churches to 'unify & pray'

In November, Baptist Press reported on riots in Ferguson, Mo., that broke out after a grand jury reported its decision not to indict a white Missouri police officer in the Aug. 9 shooting death of Michael Brown, an 18-year-old African American. Baptist churches responded by calling Christians to unify and pray for the nation.

"We need to be both an empathetic listening ear for the community and herald forth a prophetic voice for justice and compassion in a spirit of humility," Marshall Williams, senior pastor of Nazarene Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Pa., said in a statement to Baptist Press. Williams is also the president of Southern Baptists' National African American Fellowship. Since then, protestors throughout the country have continued to voice opposition to the grand jury decision.

Black and white Southern Baptists also voiced reaction to the

case involving a grand jury's decision not to indict a white police officer in the chokehold death of New York City man Eric Garner. And most recently, in what police and media were reporting as a revenge killing, two New York City police officers were gunned down Dec. 20 in broad daylight by a man who later committed suicide in a subway station. On Dec. 15, SBC President Ronnie Floyd launched a racial reconciliation initiative, calling for Southern Baptists to repent of racism and unite in love.



'Baptists called on to provide aid to Iraqi Christians, Yazidi Kurds'

In August, Baptist Press ran a story reporting that the International Mission Board and ministry partner Baptist Global Response were turning to Southern Baptists to help provide humanitarian relief for tens of thousands of Iraqi Christians and Yazidi Kurds forced from their homes by Islamic terrorists.

The White House called the situation a "looming humanitarian catastrophe." On Aug. 3, Sunni extremists known as ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) seized the Iraqi city of Sinjar, forcing Yazidi Kurds to flee fearing massacre. Many Iraqis without transportation escaped to the nearby Sinjar Mountains.

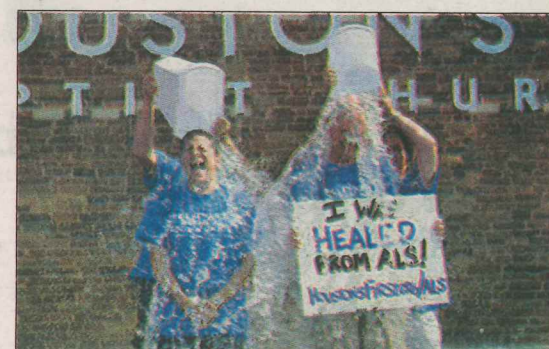
While the U.S. has airdropped water, food and other supplies to Yazidi refugees in the mountains, BGR representatives continue ongoing efforts in helping displaced Iraqi refugees who have fled ISIS militants' rapid advance.

'Ice Bucket Challenge hits stem cell snag'

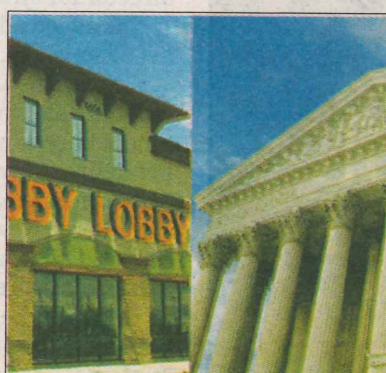
In August, Baptist Press reported participants in the popular, social media-driven Ice Bucket Challenge, which raised millions to combat ALS, may have unwittingly supported embryonic stem cell research.

Fueled by online videos of friends, high-profile athletes, politicians and celebrities participating in the challenge, the summer craze involved participants dousing themselves with ice water to create awareness and help generate funding for ALS research while challenging others to do the same.

Pro-life advocates warned the ALS Association, the principal charity benefitting from the challenge, said in a statement that it sponsors one study using embryonic stem cells, though donors can "stipulate that their funds not be invested in this study or any stem cell project." The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission cautioned



participants to "consider whether their contributions are unwittingly undergirding a philosophical worldview at odds with Christian ethics. ... Fostering a culture of life predicated on the destruction of life is contradictory." The article noted "pathways to participation" in the Ice Bucket Challenge "that don't require moral compromise." The ERLC's website lists ALS charities that only fund adult stem cell research.



'Supreme Court finds in favor of Hobby Lobby'

In June the Supreme Court ruled to strike down a key mandate of the Affordable Care Act, ruling that "closely held" companies may exercise religious opinions and conscientiously object to providing contraceptives through health insurance.

Hobby Lobby filed suit against the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2010. Under the law, the company was required to provide insurance coverage for nearly 20 forms of contraception, including four that result in abortion.

Hobby Lobby owners believe life begins at conception and objected on religious grounds. They faced massive fines for non-compliance with the ACA.

Students share, continue revival

'James' and 'John' share stories with classmates during chapel service

A few weeks ago, I shared about the recent revival the Lord brought to our campus. Within a few hours of the writing of that article, the Lord continued the revival in our next chapel service. I had known for some time that a couple of our students were going to share in an upcoming chapel service.

Students sharing in chapel can be a little worrisome because you just don't know what might be said or done.

The two young men who were chosen to share on this particular day are two of our best, so I didn't worry a whole lot.

Sharing first was a young man who we will call "John." John is a staff child and has spent his entire life at Oneida. His parents have faithfully served in our ministry for nearly 20 years.

John did an excellent job in challenging our students to spread the fire the Lord has placed within them. John is a leader on our campus, and I am sure his parents are very proud of him.

Sharing second was young man who we will call "James," who has not had the same Christian foundation and support at home that John has had.

James was raised in a broken home. His mother worked two jobs to support the family, and wasn't home very often. His father was physically, sexually and emotionally abusive.

Eventually, James was removed from

the home and spent many years in different homes and foster care. James spoke of his father's funeral and how he could not remember any good times in his home, but he also spoke about some men on our campus who have been like a father to him.

It will not shock me if James becomes a pastor. Near the end of his message, he came down among the students and challenged them. He told them life would not be easy, but that God has them in His hands just like he had him in His hands when things were so difficult in his own life.

When James closed in prayer, he prayed the following: "Lord, I am thankful for the difficult times in my life."

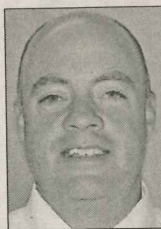
I asked James to travel with our choir the following Sunday and share his testimony with that church. He agreed and did an excellent job there as well.

While I am sure both John and James were nervous about sharing in front of their classmates, they both did a fine job. I am also sure it was a nice change of pace for our students to hear from a fellow student rather than from the usual adult.

Come visit us someday for chapel (Monday-Friday) at 10:35 a.m. We'd love to have you, and you might even hear a powerful message from kids like John and James!

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

Snyder joins Western Recorder staff

Louisville—Myriah Snyder has joined the staff of the Western Recorder as a news and features writer. She began duties Jan. 7.

A native of Murray, Snyder is a December graduate of the University of Cumberlands, where she was a staff writer for The Patriot, the school newspaper.

She also attended Mid-Continent University in Mayfield and was managing editor of the Mid-Continent Review and a research assistant.

This past summer, Snyder served as a student intern for Baptist Press, the news service of the Southern Baptist Convention, headquartered in Nashville, Tenn.

She also has written several freelance articles for the Western Recorder this past year.

In recommending Snyder for the

news writer position, BP Editor Art Toalston wrote, "Myriah's spiritual awareness, her walk with Christ, her regard for the local church certainly have been vibrant and refreshing as a young adult."

"It is impressive to me that, in Myriah, we may see someone emerging who is highly talented as a journalist yet possessing a tremendously edifying spiritual side of her life," Toalston added.

The daughter of Marlyn Snyder, of Murray, she is a member of Grace Baptist Church.

"The opportunity to be a part of something so focused on spreading the gospel and serving God's people as the KBC and Western Recorder is humbling to me," Snyder said.

"My prayer is the Lord multiples whatever small contribution I make here for His glory." (WR)



Myriah Snyder

WMU leader, Crumpler, dies at 84

Birmingham, Ala.—Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler's desire to dedicate herself to Christian service is one that lasted until the day of her death on Jan. 2.

Her joyful spirit and cheerful attitude will be sorely missed by those who knew her. She served as executive director of national WMU from 1974 to 1989.

Mattie Carolyn Weatherford was born to farmers Rufus Clark and Doris Elizabeth Sansing Weatherford on Jan. 17, 1930. The Weatherfords made their home in Frostproof, Fla., but were in House, Miss., when their daughter was born.

Crumpler grew up in a household devoted to missions, as her mother involved Crumpler and her siblings in as many activities as their Baptist church offered.

She professed Christ when she was 12, and following the example of her mother, a GA (Girls in Action) leader, Crumpler became a GA counselor by the time she was 14.

Her service at such a young age did not go unnoticed by visiting WMU leaders, and at the age of 16, with the invitation of a Florida WMU state officer, Crumpler and a friend were off to Ridgecrest, N.C., for a young women's conference.

Crumpler taught her community's first Vacation Bible School, and, as a junior in high school, she became the associational officer for Baptist Training Union, later serving as her church's BTU director for all age groups.

She added adult choir director to her list of activities.

Crumpler studied library science at Florida State University, and was a high school librarian for five years. However, her desire to commit to Christian service on a full-time basis would not subside, so she entered New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary where she earned a master's degree in religious education.

Crumpler began her career with WMU in 1958 after being denied foreign missionary candidacy because of

hypertension. Crumpler did not let that stop her from serving in WMU.

From 1961 to 1963, she worked with GAs through Florida WMU, and from 1963 to 1967, she served in Alabama as WMU promotion director.

Next, she took on the position of executive director of Florida WMU.

After representing Southern Baptists in the Women's Continental Assembly of 1972, Crumpler became chief executive of national WMU.

Wanda Lee, executive director of national WMU, said Crumpler's love for missions and missionaries "will continue to inspire all of us who lead today to stay faithful to the purpose of WMU."

During the years she led national WMU, the organization experienced growth in church missions organizations; began several initiatives including Acteens Activators, Baptist Nursing Fellowship, and New Hope Publishers; and moved from downtown Birmingham to its current location at 100

Missionary Ridge.

She had an intense desire to help children of missionaries, and invited many of them to dinner at her house when they were in Birmingham for school.

Starting in 1980, she served on the Baptist World Alliance's General Council and was the first woman to chair the North American Baptist Fellowship.

She was awarded honorary doctorates from William Carey College, Mobile College, Campbell University, Georgetown College, and Houston Baptist University.

In 1989, Crumpler retired from WMU and married James Joseph Crumpler, a widower who was then pastor of Mt. Carmel Baptist Church in Cincinnati.

After her retirement, Crumpler became involved with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, serving as moderator in 1995-96.

Despite health problems in recent years, Crumpler remained active in missions and sharing the love of Christ. (BP)



Crumpler

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Bonus check from General Mills aids Ky. Baptist school

By Myriah Snyder

Oneida—A \$9,600 bonus check was a “Christmas surprise” for Oneida Baptist Institute, a Kentucky Baptist boarding and day school in the mountains of southeastern Kentucky.

The check from General Mills Box Tops was a result of the many box tops and Campbell’s Soup labels collected by the school over the past six months.

Oneida’s donations coordinator, Keshia Woods, and her husband Mark are instrumental in the donation process each year.

After the box tops are donated, they and other volunteers prepare them to be sent to General Mills.

The money awarded by General Mills is used for various student-related projects. Last year’s collections were used for the high school classrooms. This year, Oneida plans to use the funds for its science and drama departments.

“The money goes to buy things for (students) that they would need for their programs,” Woods said.

Oneida has been collecting box tops for at least the 12 years that Woods has been

employed there. The school collects box tops year round and submits them twice a year.

The school has no set goal for each year, but every box top is worth 10 cents.

“One person can send \$5 or \$6 worth of box tops, and one can send \$500 or \$600 worth through certificates,” Woods said. A church sent several thousand dollars’ worth of certificates to Oneida this year, she added.

One donor said, “I’m glad my few joined with so many others to make this (check) happen!” (WR)



Keshia Woods displays the \$9,600 check from General Mills that Oneida Baptist Institute received through collecting box tops.

2014 Top Stories

Continued from page 1

longer claim the majority in Louisville. About 650,000 people are religiously unaffiliated or are part of another world religion or cult.



Paducah church mourns youth pastor, family—Michael Cruce, youth pastor at Rosebower Church for more than a decade,

along with his wife Monica and their teenage sons, Joshua and Caleb, were killed Oct. 3 in a six-car pileup near Nashville, Tenn. Cruce was a student at Southern Seminary.

Cockrum is next UC president—During the University of the Cumberlands’ October trustee meeting, President Jim Taylor recommended the election of Larry Cockrum as the school’s next president. Since 2007, Cockrum has been vice president for academic affairs at UC.

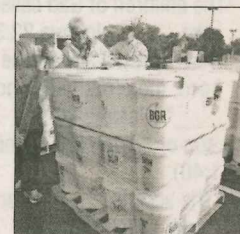
KBC severs ties with Louisville church—The KBC’s Committee on Credentials recommended severing ties with a Louisville congregation that voted

to order people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender and to perform same-sex marriages. Messengers to the KBC annual meeting in Bowling Green in November approved taking the action regarding Crescent Hill Baptist Church.

Kentuckian is new chair of SBC Committee on Nominations—Princeton editor Chip Hutcheson, the outgoing KBC president, was elected to lead the SBC’s Committee on Nominations. The panel selects individuals to serve on SBC boards, commissions and committees.

Bucket project surpasses all expectations—Kentucky Baptists are helping

AIDS victims by sending more than \$125,000 in hospice supplies to Sub-Saharan Africa, an area heavily affected by the virus. Responding to a challenge to pack 800 buckets as part of a Baptist Global Response initiative, Kentucky churches brought 1,458 buckets to their annual meeting in Bowling Green, adding to the more than 2,000 buckets that were shipped earlier this year. (WR)



College Students

Continued from page 1

“Higher education realizes that the spiritual component to education is missing. This component is what helps students connect what they are learning to their lives.

“Christians in all spheres of influence within higher education and any business or entity that is connected to higher education have a tremendous opportunity to engage and teach Christian principles.”

More churches engaged

Combs said people are drawn to the light of Jesus when biblical principles are

presented in a relevant manner.

“We have a tremendous resource among us in the young adults of Christ’s body,” Combs said. “When we equip them and empower them to be light in dark places, they are willing to respond—and God uses them to help people encounter Jesus.”

The KBC is emphasizing the need for

local churches to get engaged on campus.

“The support from churches, in unison with a mission strategy provided by our campus missionaries, is a powerful combination,” he said. “It’s the same method we have used for years on the international mission field. We are merely bringing it home and empowering God’s people to work together for His greater glory.” (KBC)

It’s inventory time

Evaluating our spiritual values, our goals and our commitments

As 2014 has ended and 2015 begins, each of us should take an inventory of our lives. The Apostle Paul offers some helpful guidance in Philippians 3:12-16.

Much like the Philippian church of Paul’s day, we find ourselves in a world that does not place a premium on spiritual values. Instead, contemporary society invites participation without restraint in various kinds of immorality.

By some modern-day standards, there is no “right” or “wrong.” Seemingly, every individual has the privilege of doing what is right according to his or her standards. As a result, our society is “slouching toward Gomorrah.” Regretfully, we are living in a world bent on decay.

In contrast to our contemporary American scene are the Apostle Paul’s words, which specify the values and goals of a Christian.

Instead of seeking to satisfy self-desires and carnal pleasure, Paul encountered self-denial and commitment to Christ as his life’s purpose.

His values were spiritual, and his goal was Christ.

The intensity of his desire was expressed in such vivid language as

“press on,” “straining for” and “seize.” The most important aspect of his life was his relationship to Jesus Christ. Christ, instead of self, was at the center of his being.

Ky. Baptist Foundation



Barry Allen

If we, then, honestly evaluate Paul’s perspective, these questions arise: Are our values in the right place? Is Jesus Christ the goal of our lives? Has our spiritual progress been deterred because of self-centeredness? Do we have the courage to struggle with our sin and the sin of the world?

As Christians in today’s world, we are challenged prayerfully to consider our values, our goals and our commitments.

Let these words of Paul help you meet the challenge: “Not that I have already attained all of this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

“Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

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

Arm ‘immobilizer’

Surgery breaking self-reliance, teaching limitations & dependence

Writing has never been my gift or passion and now it is even a little more difficult than normal. I am currently in an arm sling—let me correct that, an arm “immobilizer.”

Recently I have undergone surgery to correct a torn rotator cuff and to repair a bicep tendon.

As you would expect, this is not something that I would have chosen to experience and the healing process is quite lengthy.

As of now, I am prepared to not drive for eight weeks due to my arm being in the immobilizer, and then the physical therapy begins. A statement I heard at one of the appointments was, “In 12 months you will be recovered.”

“Twelve months?” I thought. My word, how long can this take?

To be honest, I have not accepted these circumstances, as I should being a Christ follower.

The fact is, as a believer we should always realize that what God allows in our lives is ultimately for our good. He uses these “issues” in life to break us of self-reliance and teach us to fully depend on Him.

Throughout my life, God has granted great health and endurance

that I certainly have taken for granted.

Even with the shoulder issue now, in light of what I could be experiencing, this is a minor issue. I am thankfully anticipating what God is teaching me during this time.

Already I am so thankful for the numerous people who have been praying for me and for those around me, as I may not be the easiest to live with during these circumstances. I am so thankful for Tera and the kids as they have been so patient.

I have no idea what the future holds for any of us, but we know that God loves us beyond our comprehension and the difficulties in life serve to reveal to us His love.

Being thankful to have our limitations revealed is never fun, but in our weakness His strength is perfected.

Turn your concerns over to Him today and rest in His power to work in and through you to accomplish His purposes.

Crossings Ministries



David Melber

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



January

- 17 Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief Training, Phases 1 & 2, Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah.
- 29-31 Shepherdling 2015, Griffin Gate Marriott Resort & Spa, Lexington.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

BARBOURVILLE—Callihan Church has called **Steve Mayle** as interim pastor

BIMBLE—Walker Church has called **Ben Harr** as interim pastor.

CORBIN—Lynn Camp Church has called **Justin Morris** as pastor.

MAYFIELD—High Point Baptist Church will hold revival Jan. 18-21. Services are 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. Sunday; and 6:30 p.m. Monday through Wednesday. Speakers are **Todd Gray**, KBC regional consultant; **Kyle Reeder**, evangelist; **Brad White**, pastor, Lakeview Church; **Russ Davidson**, pastor, First Church, Princeton; and **Darrell Crawford**, pastor, Living Hope Church.

SANDER—Jordan Church has called **Charles Miles** as pastor.

Cumberlands confers 561 degrees

Williamsburg—In December, 561 students completed their studies and graduated from University of the Cumberlands.

A combination of undergraduate as well as graduate degrees were awarded based on completion of requirements.

One hundred and forty-three students earned a bachelor's of science/arts degree; 21 earned a master's in business administration; and 28 received master's degrees as education specialists.

Three-hundred and forty-five students completed master's degrees in education/teaching. Four students earned a master

of science degree and 11 students earned a master of arts degree.

Eight students finished UC with doctorate degrees in education, while one earned a doctorate in philosophy.

Undergraduate students at UC are required to complete at least 40 hours of community service before graduation, and those who complete 200 or more are named Hutton Scholars.

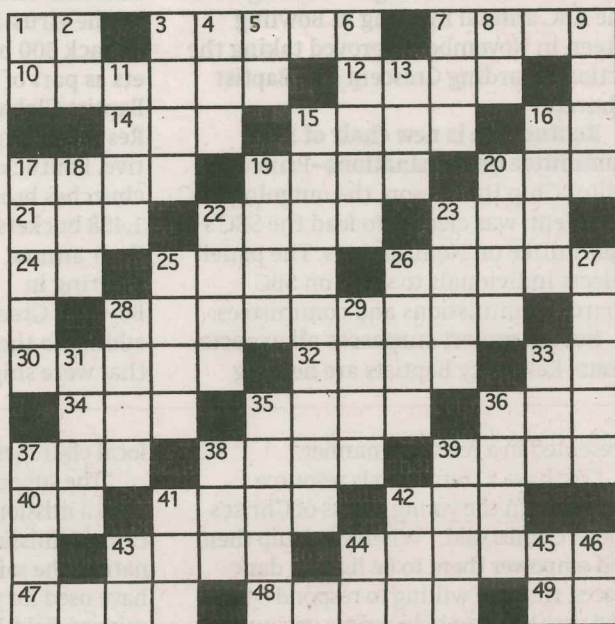
Twenty-one undergraduate students graduated with honors: eight Summa Cum Laude, six Magna Cum Laude, and seven Cum Laude. (UC)

Bible Crosswords

By Evelyn M. Boyington

Across

- 1 "The children of Gad called the altar ____" (Joshua 22:34)
- 3 "I have trusted also in the Lord; therefore I shall not ____" (Psalms 26:1)
- 7 A son of Zibeon (1 Chronicles 1:40)
- 10 "The seed is ____ under their clods" (Joel 1:17)
- 12 "They ____ hands on them" (Acts 4:3)
- 14 "They are all ____ as an oven" (Hosea 7:7)
- 15 "Few there be that ____ it" (Matthew 7:14)
- 16 "Broughtest [Abram] forth out of ____ of the Chaldees" (Nehemiah 9:7)
- 17 "They left their father Zebedee in the ____" (Mark 1:20)
- 19 "Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and ____ him" (Romans 15:11)
- 20 "This man, after he had offered ____ sacrifice for sins for ever" (Hebrews 10:12)
- 21 "I am as one mocked of ____ neighbour" (Job 12:4)
- 22 "The earth was without form, and ____" (Genesis 1:2)
- 23 "How ____ a man then understand?" (Proverbs 20:24)
- 24 "He said, ____ is finished" (John 19:30)
- 25 Wail
- 26 "Turned from ____ eastward toward the sunrising" (Joshua 19:12)
- 28 "____, and all hills, fruitful trees, and all cedars" (Psalms 148:9)
- 30 "Round about the throne were four and twenty ____" (Revelation 4:4)
- 32 "____ it in a book" (Isaiah 30:8)
- 33 "So ____ being many, are one body in Christ" (Romans 12:5)
- 34 Metal
- 35 "In ____ and caves of the earth" (Hebrews 11:38)
- 36 "When Jesus ____ finished these parables, he departed" (Matthew 13:53)



#026

- 37 "Is ____ sick among you?" (James 5:14)
- 38 "I will put my hook in thy ____" (2 Kings 19:28)
- 39 "Let me ____ through thy land" (Deuteronomy 2:27)
- 40 "Where ____ God my Maker?" (Job 35:10)
- 41 "The ____ are a people not strong" (Proverbs 30:25)
- 42 "Rabbi, thou ____ the Son of God" (John 1:49)
- 43 "I saw, and behold a ____ in the midst of the earth" (Daniel 4:10)
- 44 Something that wipes away
- 47 "Sallu, ____ Hilkiah, Jedaiah" (Nehemiah 12:7)
- 48 "Thou shall not ____ to offer the first of thy ripe fruits" (Exodus 22:29)
- 49 Sodium, chem symbol

Down

- 1 A son of Judah (1 Chronicles 2:3)
- 2 "If thou ____ these things" (John 7:4)
- 3 "All iniquity shall ____ her mouth" (Psalms 107:42)
- 4 "And God said, ____ there be light" (Genesis 1:3)
- 5 "I shall never be ____ adversity" (Psalms 10:6)
- 6 "Achim begat ____" (Matthew 1:14)
- 7 Help
- 8 According to Freud, the selfish part of the self
- 9 "Turn aside, sit down ____" (Ruth 4:1)
- 11 "Lo ____, we have searched it" (Job 5:27)
- 13 "Rejoice ____ be glad in thee" (Psalms 70:4)
- 15 "I will send a ____ into their hearts" (Leviticus 26:36)
- 16 "Bakbukiah and ____, their brethren" (Nehemiah 12:9)
- 17 Recoils
- 18 "The archers ____ him" (1 Samuel 31:3)
- 19 "The ____ which is lent to the Lord" (1 Samuel 2:20)
- 20 "Wherein shall go no galley with ____" (Isaiah 33:21)
- 22 You, Fr
- 23 "The sweet ____ from a far country" (Jeremiah 6:20)
- 25 "Why beholdest thou the ____ that is in thy brother's eye?" (Luke 6:41)
- 26 Takes a chair
- 27 "To every man according to his ____" (Romans 2:6)
- 28 Joseph's wife
- 29 Perfect excellence
- 31 Long periods of time
- 33 "The Lord ____ not in the wind" (1 Kings 19:11)
- 35 "She ____ on her lovers" (Ezekiel 23:5)
- 36 Head coverings
- 37 "The children of Benjamin ... dwelt at Michmash and ____" (Nehemiah 11:31)
- 38 Compass point
- 39 "____ for the peace of Jerusalem" (Psalms 122:6)
- 41 "The ____ of the covenant" (Hebrews 9:4)
- 42 "The sons of Jether, Jephunneh, and Pispah, and ____" (1 Chronicles 7:38)
- 43 "I will be ____ him a Father" (Hebrews 1:5)
- 44 Letter that precedes em
- 45 Letter that follows em
- 46 Egyptian sun god

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FOR SALE: 1996 International school/church bus. 52 passenger. Low mileage, and in great condition. \$5,500. Call Mike at 606-437-7642. Located in Pikeville, Ky.

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: 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 resumé to 757 Hwy. 2993, Nancy, KY 42544. Deadline for resúmes is Jan. 15, 2015.

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 resúmes to: Fern Creek Baptist Church, Attn.: Personnel Committee, 5920 Bardstown Rd., Louisville, KY 40291, or email to linda@ferncreekbaptist.org. Resúmes will be received through Jan. 31. Questions? Call 239-0316 ext. 103 (Linda Barnes Popham).

SEEKING: Bi-vocational pastor for

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

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

SEEKING: Summersville Baptist Church located in Summersville, Ky., is accepting resumes for a full-time, God-called, God-lead, Spirit-filled pastor. Please send your resumé to Summersville Baptist Church, Pulpit Search Committee, P.O. Box 68, Summersville, KY 42782

SEEKING: Bardwell Baptist Church is seeking a P/T minister of music to lead a blended style of worship and to work with the adult choir, praise team and all instrumentalists. If interested contact pastor Rodney Bice at 270-628-3645 or bbcpastor1@windstream.net.

SEEKING: Versailles Baptist Church seeks a minister of worship to join a great staff team in leading our growing church of 425 in worship. We currently experience a blended style of worship utilizing a praise band and choir. Send resumé along with DVD or internet link of you leading worship to glyn@versaillesbaptist.org or 125 East Green Street, Versailles, KY 40383

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Survey: Race relations improve, long way to go

By Bob Smietana

Nashville, Tenn.—Race relations in America are better than they used to be. And most Americans see diversity as a good thing, a new LifeWay Research study shows.

But there's still a long way to go, according to two new surveys from Nashville-based LifeWay Research.

Researchers asked 1,000 Americans and 1,000 Protestant pastors about their views on race relations. They found many Americans have mixed feelings about the state of racial diversity in the United States.

Scott McConnell, vice president of LifeWay Research, says Americans are still adapting to the nation's demographic shifts.

In 1960, 89 percent of Americans were white, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Today, America is much more diverse. Fewer than two-thirds of Americans—and just over half of school-children—are Non-Hispanic whites. By 2050, no one group will be a majority.

That's a big change that Americans are still trying to sort through, McConnell says. The fallout from the deaths of Mike Brown in Missouri and Eric Garner in New York has increased tension about racial relations.

"Recent high profile cases highlight the lack of understanding, respect, and trust that remains between races," he said.

Among the research findings:

Eight in 10 Americans (82 percent) say racial diversity is good for the country. One in 7 (14 percent) disagree.

Three quarters of Americans (74 percent) agree with the statement, "We have come so far on racial relations." About a quarter disagree (23 percent).

But few are satisfied with the state of race relations. Eight in 10 (81 percent) agree with the statement, "We've got so far to go on racial relations." One in 6 (16 percent) disagree.

LifeWay Research found support across ethnic groups for the statement, "We've come so far on racial relations." Three quarters of whites (74 percent), African-Americans (74 percent) and Hispanic-Americans (73 percent) all agree.

However, McConnell says, some African-Americans take issue with that statement. One in 6 (17 percent) strongly disagree, compared to 11 percent of whites and 5 percent of Hispanics.

There are similar differences in intensity of responses to the statement, "We've got so far to go on racial relations."

Fifty-seven percent of African-Americans strongly agree. That drops to 39 percent of whites and 42 percent of Hispanics.

Ed Stetzer, executive director of LifeWay Research, said, "On the surface, most Americans agree that racial reconciliation matters. But we're divided about how important this issue is. For many white Americans, progress on issues of race is a good thing but not urgent. For many African-Americans, it's front and center."

Younger Americans—those 18 to 24—are the most optimistic about race relations. Almost 9 in 10 (88 percent) say diversity is good for the country. And most (84 percent) agree with the statement, "We've come so far on racial relations."

Older Americans are a bit more

AMONG PROTESTANT PASTORS:

"Racial reconciliation is mandated by the Gospel."



Note: Percents may not total 100% due to rounding.

skeptical. About three quarters (76 percent) of those over 65 say diversity is good for the country. Seven out of 10 (71 percent) of those 45 to 54 say the nation has come far on racial relations.

Whites (85 percent) are more likely to agree that diversity is good for the country than African-Americans (75 percent) or Hispanic-Americans (74 percent). Christians (80 percent) are less likely than the Nones (89 percent) to see diversity as a good thing.

As other polls have shown, LifeWay Research found few Americans believe race relations have improved since the election of President Barack Obama.

About half (49 percent) say race relations have stayed the same. Three in 10 (29 percent) believe relations are more strained. About 1 of 7 (15 percent) say things have improved.

About a quarter of African Americans (23 percent) say relations have improved since Obama's election. That drops to 1 in 7 (14 percent) for whites.

Faith still matters in race relations

Christian pastors and other religious leaders took a leading role during the Civil Rights era of the 1960s. Many Americans say those leaders still fill an important role today.

"Christian leaders have the opportunity to influence millions of Americans to value each and every person no matter their race," McConnell said.

ERLC turns to race issue for March summit

Nashville, Tenn.—The Southern Baptist Convention's ethics entity has announced a summit on race relations in the wake of grand jury decisions regarding police killings of black men that have provoked widespread protests and a nationwide discussion.

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission will hold a leadership summit with the theme "The Gospel and Racial Reconciliation" March 26-27 in Nashville. The ERLC previously had announced the topic of its second summit on the same dates would be developing a pro-life ethic but changed the topic in response to recent events.

On Dec. 3, a Staten Island grand jury declined to indict a white police officer in the chokehold death of Eric Garner despite a widely viewed video of the incident. The failure to indict also occurred in spite of a ruling by the New York City medical examiner's office that Garner's death was a homicide.

That decision in a New York City borough followed by only nine days a St. Louis County grand jury's refusal to indict

Two-thirds (65 percent) of U.S. adults say religious leaders play a positive role in race relations in the United States. About 3 in 10 (30 percent) disagree, while 5 percent are not sure.

Evangelicals (74 percent) and Christians (71 percent) are most likely to say religious leaders have a positive role in race relations. Those of other faiths (56 percent) and the Nones (46 percent) are more skeptical.

Hispanic-Americans (57 percent) are less likely to agree than whites (67 percent) or African-Americans (72 percent).

For their part, Protestant senior pastors see a close connection between diversity and the central message of Christianity.

Nine out of 10 pastors (90 percent) agree with the statement: "Racial reconciliation is mandated by the gospel." Only six percent disagree.

LifeWay Research found this connection between the gospel and racial reconciliation has widespread support among pastors.

Most evangelical (90 percent) and Mainline (93 percent) pastors agree.

Pastors of smaller churches (83 percent) and those from larger congregations (95 percent) also agree. About 3 out of 4 (76 percent) African American pastors and 9 in 10 (91 percent) white pastors say racial reconcilia-

tion is mandated by the gospel.

Many pastors have hands-on experience working on diversity. About 3 out of 4 (72 percent) say their church is "personally involved at the local level in addressing racial reconciliation." A quarter disagree (23 percent). Four percent are not sure.

Pastors of larger congregations—those with more than 250 attendees—are more likely to agree (79 percent) than pastors whose churches have less than 50 in attendance (66 percent).

African American pastors (93 percent) are more likely to agree their church is involved in racial reconciliation than white pastors (71 percent).

Previous LifeWay Research studies found most pastors say their congregations should reflect the racial makeup of their community. But few have diverse flocks.

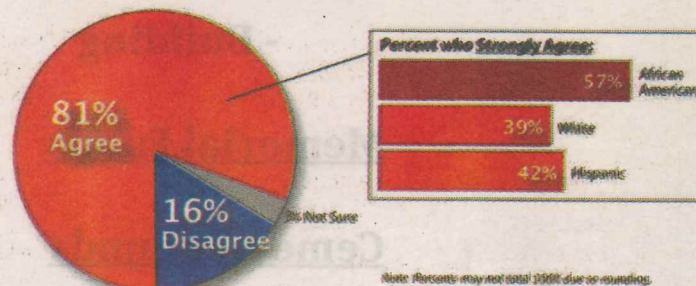
More than 8 in 10 (86 percent) say their congregation is made up of one predominant racial or ethnic group, according to a LifeWay Research study released in January 2014.

The latest wave of the National Congregations Study found similar results.

"If pastors want to lead a movement of racial reconciliation, they need to make sure their members are following," McConnell said. "If church members are not inviting and welcoming people of other ethnic groups, their reconciliation efforts are not taking root." (BP)

AMONG AMERICANS:

"We've got so far to go on racial relations."



Note: Percents may not total 100% due to rounding.

a white police officer in the shooting death of 18-year-old Michael Brown. No incriminating video existed of Brown's August death in Ferguson, Mo., and witnesses provided conflicting accounts.

Extensive criticism and protests—as well as discussion about the different perspectives by many blacks and whites on the decisions—continue in response to both incidents.

ERLC President Russell Moore explained why relations between people of different ethnicities are a gospel issue.

"The New Testament is clear that the gospel reconciles us not only to God but also to each other," Moore said in a written release. "Racism and injustice are not just social ills; they are sins against God. Racial reconciliation is a matter of what gospel we believe and to what mission we've been called."

"This summit will help equip us to tear down carnal divisions, to bring about peace, so that churches reflect the kingdom of God," he said.

Joining Moore as speakers at the summit will be such African American leaders as John Perkins, Fred Luter and H.B. Charles as well as Hispanic pastor Juan Sanchez. Speakers include:

■ Perkins, author and leading evangeli-

cal voice in the civil rights movement.

■ Luter, first African American president of the SBC and senior pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist in New Orleans.

■ Charles, pastor of Shiloh Metropolitan Baptist in Jacksonville, Fla.

■ Sanchez, preaching pastor of High Pointe Baptist Church in Austin, Texas.

■ Robert George, professor of jurisprudence at Princeton University.

■ Daniel Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

■ Kevin Smith, assistant professor of preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and teaching pastor at Highview Baptist in Louisville.

■ D.A. Horton, national coordinator for urban student missions at the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.

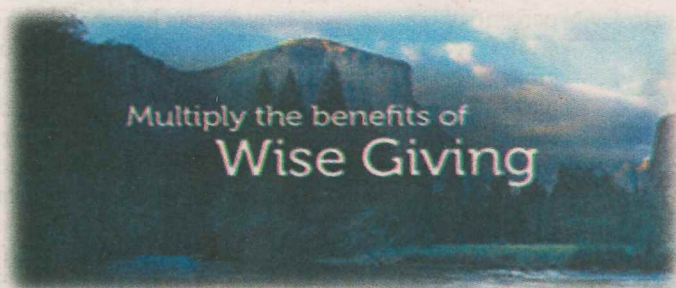
■ Trillia Newbell, an author and the ERLC's consultant for women's initiatives.

■ David Prince, pastor of preaching at Ashland Avenue Baptist in Lexington, and associate preaching professor at Southern Seminary.

■ Josh Smith, lead pastor of MacArthur Boulevard Baptist in Irving, Texas.

Information on the March racial reconciliation summit is available at <http://erlc.com/summit2015>. (BP)

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