

WESTERN Recorder

January 27, 2015

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 189, Issue 2

'Moral cowardice': GOP drops abortion vote

By Tom Strobe

Washington—Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives were guilty of "moral cowardice" when they canceled a scheduled vote on a bill to ban late-term abortions, the Southern Baptist Convention's lead ethicist said.

On the eve of the annual March for Life, House GOP leaders abandoned their plan to vote Jan. 22 on the Pain-capable Unborn Child Protection Act, H.R. 36.

The Jan. 21 reversal by House leadership put off a vote on a bill that would ban abortions on babies 20 weeks or more after fertilization based on scientific evidence that a child in the womb experiences pain by that point in gestation.

House leaders pulled the scheduled vote after about two dozen Republicans, led by female members, expressed concerns about the legislation, according to news reports. The chamber, however, had approved the same measure in the previous congressional session.

Russell Moore did not mince words in his response to the GOP's action.

"I am disgusted by this act of moral cowardice," said Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. "If the House



Russell Moore

"I am disgusted by this act of moral cowardice."

Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission



Russell Moore, ERLC president, posted on Instagram this picture of the crowd that gathered for the March for Life rally last year in Washington. (BP file photo)

Republicans cannot pass something as basic as restricting the abortion of five-month, pain-capable unborn children, what can they get done?

"The Republicans in Congress should come and explain this atrocity to the hundreds of thousands of people gathering here in the nation's capital to march for life," he said in an ERLC news release late Jan. 21. "The congressional

Republicans seem to think that pro-lifers will be satisfied with Ronald Reagan rhetoric and Nancy Pelosi results. They are quite wrong."

Moore continued his criticism of House Republicans Jan. 22 during an event in Washington, D.C., shortly before the March for Life.

Describing the proposal as a "reasonable, moderate bill," he told the pro-life

audience, "This isn't a radical move, and the House Republicans became scared and showed a complete lack of moral conviction and competence."

In place of a vote on the pain-capable abortion ban, House leaders substituted a roll call on the No Taxpayer Funding of Abortion Act, H.R. 7, while people were

□ See Abortion vote ... Page 3

Supreme Court to decide fate of bans on same-sex marriage

By Richard Wolf

Washington—The U.S. Supreme Court agreed Jan. 16 to resolve the national debate over same-sex marriage once and for all.

The justices agreed to consider four cases from Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and Tennessee. They will be consolidated and heard together.

That sets up a schedule under which the court likely will hear oral arguments in April and issue a ruling before its current term ends in late June.

The justices' hands were forced by a split among federal appellate courts after the U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld marriage bans in those four states last November. While gays and lesbians can marry in 36 states, most recently including Florida, the practice is banned in those four states, along with 10 others.

The court had sidestepped the issue in October, when it let stand appeals court rulings striking down gay marriage bans in Virginia, Indiana, Wisconsin, Oklahoma and Utah. Those rulings and a

later appeals court decision affecting Idaho and Nevada drew in neighboring states as well. As a result, more than 70 percent of Americans live in states where gay marriages are legal, and thousands of couples have tied the knot.

The high court's long-awaited decision to intervene pleases both sides in the debate. National gay-rights groups have been pressing for a 50-state solution. The National Organization for Marriage, which opposes gay and lesbian unions, also wanted the court to step in.

The new challenge is destined to

become even more of a landmark case than those decided by the court in 2013 — *United States v. Windsor*, which forced the federal government to recognize gay marriages, and *Hollingsworth v. Perry*, which made California the 13th state to allow them.

Those rulings, while historic, did not resolve the threshold questions in the debate: whether gays and lesbians have a constitutional right to marry, or whether states have the right to ban the practice.

□ See Same-sex marriage ... Page 8

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Western Recorder 1-27-2015

Ky. Baptist leader calls marijuana legalization 'absurd'

Louisville—A proposal to legalize marijuana in Kentucky is a bad idea that should be rejected by the General Assembly, the leader of the state's largest religious organization said Jan. 20.

"The very idea of thwarting the authority of the Food and Drug Administration and allowing Kentuckians to smoke marijuana under the guise that it is somehow medically beneficial is absurd," said Paul Chitwood, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

"Just because other states have taken this step doesn't mean we should legalize another intoxicant, especially one that has been proven to be the first step toward abusing the hard drugs that are claiming so many lives through overdoses."

House Speaker Greg Stumbo has filed a bill that would make it legal for people to smoke marijuana for medical purposes in Kentucky, but only with a doctor's prescription. Already, nearly half of all U.S. states have passed similar legislation.

"I'd like to believe the prescription requirement in the bill would limit its use, but we have

seen in the past how willing wayward doctors have been to hand out prescription narcotics," Chitwood said. "Lawmakers need to see this for what it is: another step in the push by pro-marijuana advocates to legalize marijuana altogether."

Supporters of medical marijuana insist that it can be used effectively to treat symptoms of cancer, AIDS, multiple sclerosis, pain, glaucoma, epilepsy and more. Opponents point out that lots of FDA-approved drugs provide better treatment for all those ailments, and that marijuana use can damage lungs, immune systems and brains of long-term users. Reviews of prescription data in states that have legalized marijuana for medical purposes show that it's not primarily prescribed for people in intense pain or who are terminally ill.

In Colorado, those reviews show only 2 percent of people who have been prescribed marijuana are cancer patients. There, 94 percent of the people who have received marijuana prescriptions cited "unspecified pain."

And in California, reviews have shown that primarily young white men with no life-threatening illnesses are the ones using medical marijuana.

"What we've seen in other states is that people in final stages of terminal illnesses and fighting pain aren't the ones smoking marijuana," Chitwood said.

Chitwood said his opposition isn't because he lacks compassion for the sick, but because he thinks it's wrong to herald marijuana, which has long been known as a gateway drug, as beneficial.

"No one could possibly believe that it's medically beneficial to inhale smoke into the lungs," he said. "We have so many drugs that are better options for the terminally ill." (KBC)

"Lawmakers need to see this for what it is: another step in the push by pro-marijuana advocates to legalize marijuana altogether."

Paul Chitwood,
KBC Executive
Director

Want to strengthen your marriage in 2015?

By Myriah Snyder

Louisville—Are you looking to enrich your marriage in the new year?

Several Kentucky Baptist churches are partnering with the Kentucky Marriage Movement to offer workshops and video-conferences to help do just that.

The "Love and Respect" video conference will be offered at Rosebower Baptist Church in Paducah Feb. 6-7, and the "Art of Marriage" video-conference is slated at First Baptist Church of Lawrenceburg for Feb. 13-14.

New Hope Community Church in Elizabethtown held its "Love and Lordship" workshop this past weekend.

"Our goal in all of these conferences is to elevate and encourage the biblical model of healthy maturing marriages," said Greg Williams, director of the Kentucky Marriage Movement.

"Our goal is to keep that front and center, because we believe in God's

design and order, and that is where He placed emphasis," Williams added. "If we would do the same thing, it would be a real blessing not only to marriages and families but also to the entire church."

Bob Ehr, pastor of Lawrenceburg's First Church finds value in hosting local marriage events.

"We've done marriage retreats for a number of years where we take couples off campus and go to Pigeon Forge or Gatlinburg, Tenn., and those have been a very fruitful time for our couples, but we also realize that not everyone can take the time to get away," Ehr said.

Art of Marriage is a multi-dimensional DVD series by Family Life Ministries, which includes testimonies from speakers such as seminary president Albert Mohler, a number of counselors, pastors and real couples. It is comprised of six sessions, running from Friday night through Saturday morning.

Love and Respect utilizes video

presentations by author Emerson Eggerichs. The conference is split into five sessions and runs from Friday night through Saturday afternoon.

The Love and Lordship workshop, which was presented by Williams, is broken into four to six sessions covering six topics that build off of one another.

"When you can pull families away, it just gives them time to really focus on marriage, hear from God, meet with other couples, and talk about what they're going through.

"That extended time is needed for people to focus on being the husband or being the wife they need to be," said Herb Williams, pastor at New Hope Community Church, which hosted the Love and Lordship workshop.

The Family Foundation and the Kentucky Marriage Movement hold conferences and workshops such as these throughout the year in various churches throughout Kentucky. (WR)

Sunrise encourages church members to "Be the One"

By Myriah Snyder

Mt. Washington—"All it takes is one family per church and we could change what Kentucky looks like forever," says Michelle Chitwood, wife of Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Director Paul Chitwood.

Chitwood along with Sunrise Children's Services began the "Be the One" campaign to encourage every Kentucky Baptist church to rally around one family dedicated to fostering a child and making a difference.

"I can think of no better way to show Kentucky that we are trying to live in obedience to God than by taking care of the children no one else wants to care for," she said.

A free training event will be hosted Feb. 1 at Mt. Tabor Baptist Church in Buffalo.

The event provides practical ways that every church and church member can be an integral part of Be the One.

"We want people to be challenged by the needs of hurting children in our state and discover some way to do something," said Josh Hutchens, pastor of Mt. Tabor. "Not everyone will become foster parents, but every Kentucky Baptist can do something to serve these children."

The event, according to Mt. Tabor's

website, will encourage the church to "surround one family who makes the decision to become foster parents; be the one who surrounds that foster family with prayers and support; be the go-to-one who commits to stand alongside that foster family when emergencies occur; be the respite one who surrounds that foster family, one night a month, so the parents can have a date night; and be one who donates to Sunrise Children's Services so that its statewide ministry can grow and serve more children and youth in ways that honor Christ."

"We hope to help churches recognize that there are opportunities to be His word in action and help Christian individuals and families treat foster care as in-home mission work," Kenneth Williams, Sunrise's vice president for community based services, said.

A similar event will be held at Trace Creek Baptist Church in Mayfield on Jan. 31.

"This training is so much who we are," Williams said. "Sunrise literally is the heartbeat of child welfare in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and has been for over 145 years.

"We have set aside to recognize that there are people who God calls specifically to open their hearts and their

family to children whom are hurting and in need."

"Be the One is a very special initiative allowing Christian families and their church to truly surround a child and then allows the entire church body as a whole to become the church made real in action and not just in word," Williams added.

Bryan Grigg, pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church in Kuttawa, and his wife Krista have answered the call to not only host training events in their church, but also become foster parents themselves through Sunrise.

Four other families have joined them and completed 42 hours of training provided by Sunrise.

"We just wanted to give some hope to these kids that probably don't feel like they have any hope. The true hope is Jesus Christ," Grigg said.

"We want to have a loving environment, a Christian environment, to show them unconditional love and to be the one for them," he added.

Sunrise not only provides training but also hosts commissioning services in churches throughout the state to honor the families that are using their homes as mission fields.

In addition, Chitwood, Tara Melber, wife of Crossings Ministries President David Melber, and Sunrise Children's Services are partnering with KBC's Equip conferences in September to spread this message across the state. (WR)



Michelle Chitwood

Adult Kentucky Changers project to precede WMU meeting

Louisville—Adult Kentucky Changers will work in and around the city of Lawrenceburg April 7-9, doing much needed repairs to the homes of two homeowners and one community center.

The project precedes the 112th Kentucky Women's Missionary Union Annual Meeting slated for April 10-11 at Sand Spring Baptist Church.

Adults are invited to join in the Kentucky Changers team, which will do repairs such as roofing, painting, light

carpentry work, plumbing, landscaping and general cleaning. An experienced Crew Chief will oversee each project.

Lodging will be available at First Baptist Church of Lawrenceburg. Morning and evening meals will be at the church with sack lunches delivered to jobsites. Participants may come on Monday evening, April 6, and stay at the church or arrive at 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, April 7, and be ready to work.

Adult Changers will have a Kentucky Changers experience not only with

working during the day, but also with a time of praise and worship on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings.

The final celebration will be part of the Kentucky WMU Annual Meeting on Friday evening when Kentucky Changers will be featured and homeowners invited to come for the celebration.

The cost to participate is \$35 per person. To register, contact Peggy Murphy at 502-489-3457. Email: peggy.murphy@kybaptist.org. (WMU)

School forced to deal with rising health care costs

By Robin Cornetel

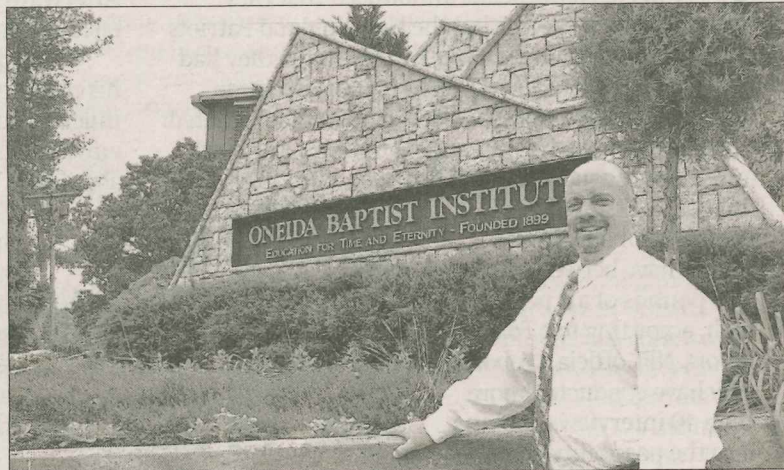
Oneida—A Kentucky Baptist school is facing a hefty price tag to comply with the Affordable Care Act and could be forced to cut programs or delay textbook purchases.

Oneida Baptist Institute President Larry Gritton said the rural Appalachian school is looking at paying \$300,000 more in employee health care costs this year.

"I tried to remind myself over and over that this is a decision about people and not about money, but I've got to look at the bottom line, too," Gritton said.

Oneida, which operates in one of the poorest counties in the United States, spent roughly \$850,000 last year on health care for its employees. Complying with the new health care law means a 35 percent increase in those costs, accounting for 6 percent of the school's overall budget.

Under the Affordable Care Act, a full-time employee is defined as an individual employed on average at least 30 hours per week. Oneida has 20 employees meeting this description



Oneida Baptist Institute President Larry Gritton said the rural Appalachian school is looking at paying \$300,000 more in employee health care costs this year.

who were not covered by the school's health insurance provider.

The U.S. House of Representatives approved legislation last Thursday that would waive fees for businesses not offering health insurance to employees working fewer than 40 hours per week.

With the bill now in the Senate, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has pledged it will see a vote. The White House, however, has promised a veto.

"If this was really going to change the quality of people's lives, I'd be all for

it, but this is not the case," Gritton said. "Most of our employees already qualify for Medicaid, which is better coverage than what the school is going to be able to offer."

Clear Creek Baptist Bible College has experienced its share of challenges, as well while seeking to "render unto Caesar what is Caesar's," said Jeremy Anderson, dean of administrative affairs.

In anticipation of complying with
□ See Health care costs ... Page 7

Allen to direct Gheens Foundation

Louisville—Barry Allen, president and CEO of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation since 1996, has been named as the next executive director of the Gheens Foundation. He is retiring from his current role with the KBF at the end of January.

Allen will join the Gheens Foundation March 2, but will have an orientation and training period led by Carl Thomas through June 30. Thomas has directed the Louisville-based foundation for 10 years.

"I am honored, humbled and thrilled by this unique opportunity to continue to use my head for numbers and my heart for people in perpetuating the legacy of this wonderful and most generous couple," he said.



Barry Allen

During Allen's tenure as KBF president, the foundation's endowments grew to \$180 million.

The Gheens Foundation was established in 1957 by C. Edwin and Mary Jo Gheens to continue their interests in education, religious programs and human services. Gheens, a Louisville native, was the owner of a large candy manufacturing business in Louisville and had significant real estate holdings in Louisiana. He and his wife were members of Broadway Baptist.

The Gheens Foundation had an endowment valued at \$22 million at the time of Mary Jo Gheens' death in 1982, according to the release, and assets have grown to about \$140 million. (WR)

CP contributions from churches top \$2M in December

Louisville—Kentucky Baptist congregations, eager to spread the gospel to all corners of the globe, increased their financial support of the Cooperative Program in December to more than \$2 million.

Total Cooperative Program receipts four months into the fiscal year stand at \$7,235,123. That is \$581,073 ahead of the same point in the previous fiscal year.

"It's invigorating to see our churches so excited about sharing Jesus throughout the world," KBC Executive Director Paul Chitwood said. "When Christians are truly serious about reaching the world for Christ, it always shows in their giving to missions. The Cooperative Program allows all churches, no matter the size, to have a hand in winning souls to Christ in places they'd perhaps never get to visit personally."

The Cooperative Program is the primary means through which nearly 750,000 Kentucky Baptists in 2,400 churches support the work of missionaries in the state and around the world.

Lowell Ashby, leader of the KBC's finance and business services team, said job growth amid an improving economy appears to be strengthening the financial conditions of churches, allowing increased giving to the Cooperative Program.

"We're thankful that the economy has strengthened to allow our churches to up their financial support," he said. "We're hopeful this strong start to our fiscal year will continue as God blesses our congregations." (KBC)

Clear Creek prof sheds light on Tarsus as 'no ordinary city'

By Myriah Snyder

Pineville—Roy Lucas, professor of Bible at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College and pastor of First Baptist Church of Loyall, authored an article titled "Tarsus" that appears in the Spring issue of Biblical Illustrator, a quarterly resource tool produced by LifeWay.

"Tarsus" explains the Apostle Paul's relationship to the city. The article also looks at the geography of Tarsus, its history and culture. And, it focuses on archeological findings in the area.

Lucas' article expounds on Paul's description of Tarsus as "no ordinary city." Although Paul was born in Tarsus, he was not raised there, but returned to the area later in life, Lucas notes.

Tarsus, a city divided by a river, was the capital of the Roman province of Cilicia.

Due to its geography, it was an important land and sea trade route, and the city was known for its education, wealth and linen, he explains in the article.

Today, ancient Tarsus is buried under its modern counterpart. However, archaeologists have discovered such finds as a Western outpost, a Roman theater and St. Paul's well.

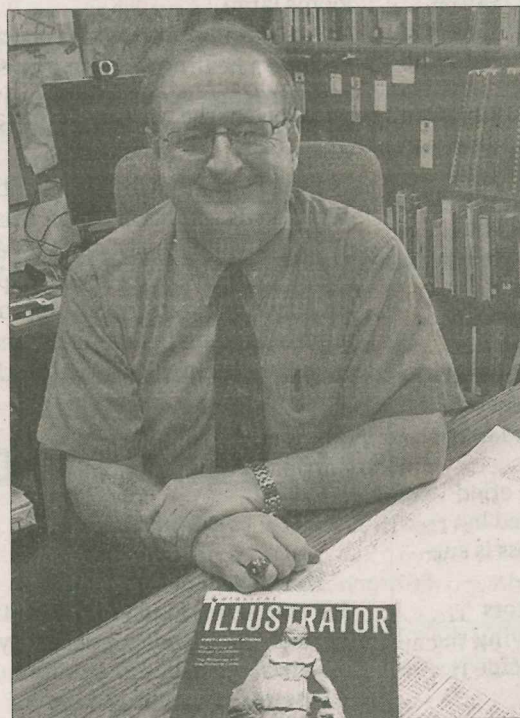
"The desire to train men to be pastors and missionaries" is what brought Lucas to Clear Creek 16 years ago, he said.

He also has been pastor of Loyall First Baptist for 16 years.

Originally from Oklahoma, Lucas received two bachelor's degrees from Oklahoma Baptist University, and a master of divinity, a master of religious education, and his PhD degree from Southwestern Theological Seminary.

Lucas has published seven additional articles with Biblical Illustrator on John's writing style, angels as heralds, Paul's oratorical style, the Decapolis, Cana of Galilee, and a book review on "Bible and the Land."

He is also the author of 10 articles that will appear in the upcoming revised Holman Bible Dictionary. (WR)



Roy Lucas, professor of Bible at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College and pastor of First Baptist Church of Loyall, authored an article titled "Tarsus" that appears in the Spring issue of Biblical Illustrator, a quarterly resource tool produced by LifeWay.

Abortion vote

Continued from page 1

gathered on the National Mall for the March for Life. The House approved the bill with a 242-179 vote.

The measure, which the House also passed last year, would institute a permanent, government-wide prohibition on federal funding of abortion by standardizing bans on such funds that now exist in various federal programs.

It also would halt money for abortion coverage under the 2010 health-care law.

The House approved in June 2013

basically an identical version of the Pain-capable Unborn Child Protection Act that it failed to vote on Jan. 22. The roll call in favor of the bill nearly two years ago was 228-196.

Reps. Renee Ellmers of North Carolina and Jackie Walorski of Indiana led the Republican members who expressed concerns to House leadership about the pain-capable abortion ban, according to news reports.

Ellmers wants to drop a requirement in the rape exception of the bill that the assault be reported to law enforcement authorities, she told reporters Jan. 22, according to the Washington Examiner.

She also said Republicans, who

control both houses of Congress, should be certain their legislation is not perceived as "harsh and judgmental" by women and young adults.

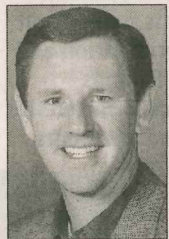
Women and young people both support the ban with the reporting requirement, however, according to a poll in November by Quinnipiac University. That survey showed 60 percent of Americans, 59 percent of women and 57 percent of adults ages 18 to 29 favor the legislation.

Other pro-life leaders joined Moore in expressing their discontent with the House's failure to vote on the pain-capable bill. Meanwhile, they commended its quick action on the funding ban. (BP)

Topping the agenda

In the 2015 Kentucky General Assembly session, several critical issues will be considered, but a few rise to the top of my list of concerns for families in our state.

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

First, and once again, we continue to hope the House of Representatives will work to get pro-life legislation passed. After years of committee leadership deliberately killing ALL pro-life bills, most legislators still believe most such bills would pass the full House with a huge margin of victory.

We know from experience that pro-life bills would easily pass the Senate. This matter is literally one of life and death for unborn children in Kentucky. Please consider calling the legislative message line at (800) 372-

7181 and leaving a message with your legislators encouraging the support of any pro-life bills.

Second, House Speaker Greg Stumbo, a Democrat from Prestonsburg who claims Baptist as his religious affiliation, has filed a bill in this year's legislative session that would allow doctors to prescribe marijuana to patients. While we would like to believe the prescription requirement in the bill would limit its use, we have seen in the past how willing wayward doctors have been able to hand out prescription narcotics. Lawmakers need to see this for what it is: another step in the push by pro-marijuana advocates to legalize marijuana altogether.

As for the medical benefits of marijuana, if such benefits can be proven, any of us would be in favor of the Food and Drug Administration permitting and regulating marijuana as a medicine. We are hopeful that ongoing research will reveal this possibility. For now, the FDA states its position as follows:

The FDA has not approved any product containing or derived from botanical marijuana for any indication. This means that the FDA has not found any such product to be safe or effective for the treatment of any disease or condition. Study of marijuana in clinical trial settings is needed to assess the safety and effectiveness of marijuana for medical use. (<http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/PublicHealthFocus/ucm421168.htm#Q2>)

The FDA has approved one drug containing a synthetic version of a substance that is present in the marijuana plant and another drug containing a synthetic substance that acts similarly to compounds from marijuana but is not present in marijuana.

Extensive testing has proven these drugs are effective and that any risks to patients are outweighed by the potential benefits. That is the way the process is supposed to work.

For Stumbo to suggest that Kentucky legislators should usurp the FDA's ongoing process of studying the effectiveness and safety of marijuana as a medicine is irresponsible at best.

The American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Psychiatric Association, American Society of Addiction Medicine, American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and American Cancer Society have all reviewed the science as it relates to their respective discipline and do not advocate the smoking or ingesting of marijuana as medicine.

Please consider calling the legislative message line at (800) 372-7181 and leaving a message with your legislators encouraging them to let the FDA, not politicians, regulate medical drugs.

A third pressing issue is that of payday lending. In short, payday lending is an easy-to-get, "short-term" loan available at ridiculous interest rates, sometimes nearing 400 percent. Loan sharks use these loans to further entrap the poor. Senate Bill 32, sponsored by Republican Sen. Alice Forgy Kerr and Democrat Sens. Dennis Parrett and Reginald Thomas, would eliminate the \$15 service fee per \$100 loan and set a maximum annual percentage rate of 36 percent. It is good legislation, and I encourage you to encourage our elected representatives to support it.

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

We could use more 'inflators,' not 'deflators'

Last week, NFL officials announced that they would be investigating the New England Patriots to find out how 11 of the 12 game balls they had provided for the recent AFC Championship game against the Indianapolis Colts became under-inflated. The Patriots won 45-7, advancing to the Super Bowl, and the subsequent scandal has been humorously dubbed "Deflate-gate."

Football for NFL games should have between 12.5 and 13.5 pounds of air per square inch, according to a Fox News report. NFL officials reportedly have conducted more than 40 interviews, looking into the possibility that the balls were partially deflated by as much as two pounds.

Why does this matter? Supposedly, a deflated football would be easier for the quarterback to grip and for receivers to catch. One sports commentator compared it to throwing and catching a Nerf football. Obviously, it could give a team an unfair advantage.

So, the question avid football fans are asking is, who let the air out of those footballs? The Patriots' players and coaches are denying any knowledge of tampering with game balls. Quarterback Tom Brady even called the media accusations "ridiculous."

For the record, I have no knowledge of who, if anyone, did it either. But like those footballs, we can easily become deflated in life. It's no mystery, however. Words hurt; plans go awry; circumstances change; fortunes falter, relationships break, discouragement looms large.

An encouraging word is crucial; affirmation can become a healing salve. In Proverbs 25:11, Solomon compares an encouraging word to apples of gold: "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver."

David Jeremiah, in his recently released "Quest" devotionals, expounds upon this verse by sharing about Dr. William Mayo of the Mayo Clinic. "Whenever a younger doctor read a paper at a staff meeting, Dr. Mayo would inevitably approach him afterward, put his hand on his shoulder, and offer a quiet word of encouragement, like "Good work!" Jeremiah writes.



After Thought

By Todd Deaton

Afterward the younger doctor often would receive an encouraging note from the esteemed mentor.

"It's also said that Mayo's smiles and greetings to his patients as he made his daily rounds had almost as much to do with their recovery as his medicine," Jeremiah adds. What a wonderful thing to have said about you: Your words are like medicine.

Words of affirmation, indeed, can be a healing salve to broken spirits. They may be a cure someone desperately needs, and they may be a boost that emboldens one of God's servants. "We can build others up with encouragement and we can ask God to always give us a word fitly spoken," Jeremiah urges.

At the baptism of Jesus, God spoke a fitting word: "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." Think what that affirmation must have meant to Jesus: His Heavenly Father was pleased with Him. The words were no doubt also a blessing to John and the onlookers who heard them that day as well.

How much more do we need some timely words of affirmation and encouragement? What a wonderful prayer for us in 2015: "Lord, give me a word fitly spoken for someone who needs to hear it today."

One Sunday, when my wife and I were keeping the church nursery, one child sat on the floor and began building a tall house of blocks. I sat down beside him to lend a hand. When we were nearly finished, another kid romped over and kicked all the blocks down. He was having a blast! But the child who had built the house? Not so much.

Together, we laughed, picked up the blocks, and rebuilt the house taller than before. Sometimes in life, we all need someone to help us laugh when adversity strikes and pick up our scattered blocks. Be an encourager!

Leadership author John Maxwell urges, "How can we positively impact the life of another person? Through encouragement! I believe it is one of the greatest gifts you or I can give someone else." Look around this week, someone nearby needs to hear a good word: your spouse, son, daughter, neighbor, friend, co-worker, pastor, Sunday School teacher or even a complete stranger. Your words have the power to inflate—or deflate.

Let's sing the old hymns

By Martha Hill

I have thought for a long time that the hymns found in our Baptist Hymnal are an endangered entity and are about to become extinct.

It seems as though the trend today is to sing only praise choruses and maybe a hymn for the invitation. I am not saying that we should not sing choruses, rather I am saying, if we don't sing the hymns how will the young people ever learn or realize that they remind us of the things that God has done and will do for us?

Within the covers of our Baptist

Hymnal are hymns of confession, of petition, of praise, of hope, of comfort, of strife, and of peace.

The hymns reflect the biblical truths that are our heritage. We sing to the glory of God, the love of God, the people of God, and the witness of the people of God.

Hymns like "The Old Rugged Cross" paint a picture in our minds of what Christ did for us. "Just as I Am" assures us that Christ will accept us just as we are. "Love Divine," "All Loves Excelling" and "Great is Thy Faithfulness" tell us how much God loves us and how faithful He is to us. "Because He

Lives" gives us strength and courage to face the adversities of life.

I could go on with example after example, the point being that you can find love, faith, hope, joy and much more in the words of the hymns in our hymnal.

So, before you "poo-poo" the request to sing more of the "old" hymns, pick up a hymnal, turn to page 345, read and meditate on the text of "Now I Belong to Jesus," or page 412, "My Faith Has Found a Resting Place."

Martha Hill is a member of Gilead Baptist Church in Glendale, where Sam Hinkson is pastor.

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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.

When the ABC's are not enough

By Joe Ball

Articulate: The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines it as being "able to express ideas clearly and effectively in speech or writing" or as being "clearly expressed and easily understood."

This should be easy to do with those things that are important to us. We should be able to be clear and concise, and conversations would flow easily when talking about what matters the most to us.

Talk to a University of Kentucky basketball fan, and they are usually clear and concise as to why they believe that the "Big Blue" is the best team in the land: More wins than any other team in the history of college basketball; more SEC championships than the rest of the SEC schools combined; years and years of continually being in the top five in home attendance, while not playing in the largest venue; more players taken in the first round of any one draft than any other school has ever had; on and on and on they will go.

Ask any new grandparent about their grandchild, and they are very articulate about why that child is better than any child that has ever been—or will ever be—born (at least until the next grandchild is born).

They offer scores of pictures of

the new born baby and regale you with minute details of body functions, who the child favors, and how much they ate last night. There is no end to what they can talk about.

Youth Ministry Corner



Joe Ball

We are able on a daily basis to be articulate in a myriad of areas, from our favorite restaurants to our favorite app for our phone or to the best place to stop for gas on the way to Florida. Most of us know when we are right, and we aren't afraid to speak our minds.

That is why Roger Palmer, director of the Crossing Center for Youth Ministry, and I were amazed this year while interviewing potential summer staff. We were at different locations, interviewing different students, but the one thing that stands out is the lack of ability for college-age young adults to articulate the gospel.

We had no doubt that they were believers, and most were in a growing relationship with Christ, but they couldn't articulate the gospel. They knew it, believed it, lived their lives by it, but struggled with how to share it.

Most of these students were the best of the best, the cream of the crop. They had come from stalwart churches all across the Southeast and were leaders in their BCM, CRU and CSF groups on the college campus. But they struggled when

ask to share the gospel.

I was taken aback and was starting to be disappointed in them and in this entire generation. But then it hit me. It wasn't entirely their fault.

If they are—and I believe they are—the best of the best, THEN WE AS CHURCH LEADERS HAVE FAILED THEM.

We have taught them how to study Scripture, how to worship God, exposed them to unreached people groups, put them in leadership positions, and all the while failed to prepare them for the most important task we have been called to do: Share the gospel.

The strange thing was that most of them knew the ABC's of becoming a Christian. They had learned in VBS to "Admit, Believe and Confess." But when asked to admit what, believe what or confess what, some got that "deer in the headlights" look.

Others would mumble something about believing in God or admitting this or that, but very few got it all succinct and clear.

Rest assured, we will teach them the gospel, and equip them to articulate it well.

My prayer is that in 2015 we as leaders of youth ministries across the state will all do a better job of equipping our students to articulate the gospel.

Joe Ball, a former youth minister at Edgewood Baptist Church in Hopkinsville, is youth ministry strategist for Crossings Ministries.

Dealing with abusive mother

By Valerie Vincent

Q: I've always had a difficult relationship with my mother. Growing up, she yelled and sometimes hit. Then she would pretend like nothing ever happened. She says she has changed and tries to guilt me into seeing her. When I do, I feel trapped. She hasn't changed that much. I'm not sure how to have a relationship with her.

A: This is an unsafe relationship. It is your mother's responsibility to seek help to change. When you choose to spend time with her, protect yourself from harm, verbal and physical. You are God's unique creation and not simply your mother's target for her issues and wounded-ness.

Until your mother is able to demonstrate over time changes in her behavior, consider:

1. Set a time and place to meet with your mother in public. Your mother will more likely control her behavior in public, and you have access to help. You also will have the freedom to leave at any time you feel unsafe.

2. Bring a friend with you when you spend time with your mother. Again this can help your mother better control her behavior. You have support and someone outside the family system who can intervene by inviting you to leave the situation if your mother acts inappropriately.

3. Consider topics of conversation that are more manageable. Hot topics should be avoided until communication is respectful.

4. Because you feel trapped at times, be sure to have several options for exiting the meeting. Have an escape plan.

5. After each interaction, engage your support system. Talk with someone that can help you process the experience.

6. When a person is out of control, and their behavior escalates, call the police. Make this part of your crisis plan in order to prompt your mother to make some serious life changes.

Allow God to provide support and guidance through a painful process.



Estate planning review time?

By Laurie Valentine

Keeping up with the details of life and changes in our lives takes more time than most of us give it.

For many of us, we don't take time to consider changes that may be occurring in our day-to-day lives and the impact of those changes on planning we have done.



Estate planning is one area of personal planning that doesn't get a lot of "revisiting." Your estate plan—your will, power of attorney, health care advanced directives, and beneficiary designations—should be reviewed on a regular basis to make sure it continues to accomplish your planning objectives.

Your plan should also be revisited when there are changes in your life and/or that of your family: marriages, births, deaths, divorces, change in state residence, changes in financial status.

Focus on the following as your review your plan:

■ **Fiduciaries.** Are the persons you've named to serve as executor under your will or successor trustee of your living trust still willing and able to serve? Are you and your spouse still comfortable with the persons you have named to serve as guardians for your children? Is the person named to act under your power of attorney still willing and able to do that?

■ **Beneficiaries.** Have there been deaths or births not considered when you had your will or living trust prepared? Have you or one of your beneficiaries married or divorced since then? Do you have an ultimate beneficiary(s) named to receive your estate if all of your family dies before you?

■ **Death Benefits.** Are beneficiary designations of life insurance, retirement or IRA benefits coordinated with the plan of distribution under your will or trust?

■ **Assets.** Has the value of what you own (real estate, investments, bank accounts, business interests, life insurance and retirement accounts) increased or decreased? If you have a living trust, have you funded it? Does the way in which your assets are titled defeat the plan of distribution under your will or trust?

13 things mission-minded people do differently

By Susie Rain

Who are mission-minded people? How do they see the world? While they could be found in your church, place of work or coaching Little League, what do mission-minded people do differently?

International Mission Board missionaries from around the world helped compile a list of 13 things that make up a mission-minded person:

1. They want to meet someone who does not follow Jesus Christ. Mission-minded people follow Jesus' plan in Luke 10 to go work "His harvest." They actively seek out non-believers for conversations and friendship.

2. They continually look for creative ways to share the gospel. Mission-minded people find intentional ways to share so that people understand. It is not a "canned presentation" but relative to that person/group. They do the abnormal, irrational, counter-intuitive, and take risks in an effort to share Christ.

3. They have a different worldview. They think more about the world, culture and languages than they do about the tiny place where they live. They understand the gospel is for all people. They are committed to getting it to the rest of the world.

4. They hear the voice of God and are obedient. Mission-minded people obey when He tells them to go across the street, to another state or country to share His redeeming love.

5. They pray a lot! Praying is a direct link to God. They believe that God will do greater things than we can ever imagine; and they pray for it to happen.

6. They make disciples. They constantly ask themselves if what they are doing will result in disciples. If the strategy is only for people to hear, then the gospel will not spread. Mission-minded people know the importance of discipleship.

7. They meet human needs while sharing the

gospel. Mission-minded people believe it doesn't matter how many wells a person digs or how many orphans they feed if they are not following Christ's mandate to take the gospel to those who have not heard. They contend that if a person is not sharing Jesus, they are wasting time and money.

8. They believe that being mission-minded is not a "task." It's a lifestyle. They live out missions in their everyday life. From the moment they wake up until they go to bed, they impact the world around them.

9. They are relational. They are willing to leave their own "bubble" to make relationships with those considered the "least of these." They have an awareness of people around them and look for ways to build a relationship that will lead to discipleship.

10. They go! It doesn't matter where God tells them to go—Timbuktu or Kalamazoo—they grow where God plants them. And, they are willing to move on when He says, "Go!"

11. They see people with a future. When they look at an unreached people group, they see potential "brothers and sisters" in Christ. They see that eternity and joy are available for everyone and are excited to share it.

12. They send! They know that we are responsible for ALL people groups hearing the gospel. They follow the example from the book of Acts to "send" out other mission-minded people. They support them in any way possible.

13. They understand "the task" is not done. Mission-minded people know that once they have reached their family and friends with Christ, they are not done. There are still billions in the world that have not proclaimed Jesus' name. (BP)

Susie Rain is a missionary writer for the IMB. She lives in Southeast Asia and works with an unreached people group.

Ky. Baptists seek to free residents from 'cycles of debt'

Payday lenders are active pursuers

By Robin Cornetet

Frankfort—Kentucky's poor are trapped in "cycles of debt" and need help breaking free from the allure of the payday lending industry, said Rick Hardison, chairman of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Committee on Public Affairs.

Hardison met with lawmakers recently to discuss a bill that would place limits on payday lending.

He was accompanied by more than 30 religious and nonprofit leaders affiliated with the Kentucky Coalition for Responsible Lending.

Senate Bill 32—sponsored by Republican Senator Alice Forgy Kerr and Democrat Senators Dennis Parrett and Reginald Thomas—would eliminate the \$15 service fee per \$100 loan and set a maximum annual percentage rate of 36 percent.

Payday lenders charge an average of 300 percent for loans typically ranging from \$100 to \$1,000, according to the coalition, and collect more than \$121 million in fees.

Those fees not only drain individuals' wallets, they siphon cash from Kentucky's economy as money flows to nearby states and foreign banks.

"The drain hurts entire communities, sapping people of funds they could use to invest in their futures, and draining disposal income from local stores and small business," a release by the coalition noted.

The Kentucky Coalition for Responsible Lending is made up of 32 faith groups, including African Methodist Episcopal, Catholic, Jewish, Presbyterian and United Methodists, and nearly 60 organizations that primarily serve the poor.

For Kentucky Baptists looking for their responsibilities concerning this issue, KBC Executive Director Paul



Chitwood said Psalm 82 provides clear instruction to "uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed."

"Urging our elected leaders to support Senate Bill 32 is one of the most practical ways of obeying the teachings of Scripture that I can think of," Chitwood said. "This is where faith and citizenship meet."

Hardison, pastor of Great Crossing Baptist Church in Georgetown, said it is good to see people of varying denominations and causes "linking arms on this agenda to try to reduce the harm

that the payday lending industry has had on our state."

He suggested ways that Kentucky Baptists can join the fight.

"As always, it's helpful to contact your representatives," Hardison said, "but on a local-church level, we should realize that the payday lending industry is what we are against. We are for the people who are in need."

Ways to meet those needs are through "robust" benevolence ministries, Hardison suggested, and by actively pursuing payday lending customers by

"Last year, payday lenders showed up to Vacation Bible Schools with promotional goody bags plastered with their company logos... We will not be promoting usury; we will be fighting to end it."

Hershael York, pastor of Buck Run Baptist Church

leaving literature or business cards on the store countertops.

And why not? Payday lenders are active pursuers, a Frankfort pastor says.

"We have seen payday lenders try to get churches to promote their products," said Hershael York, pastor of Buck Run Baptist Church and a member of the KBC public affairs committee.

"Last year, payday lenders showed up to Vacation Bible Schools with promotional goody bags plastered with their company logos," York said.

"We want payday lenders to know that we will not be promoting usury; we will be fighting to end it," he added.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention passed a resolution in 2011 encouraging state and local government to place limits on "exorbitant interest" and protect individuals from lending abuse. (KBC)

Teen admits popular book was fiction: 'I did not go to heaven'

By Jocelyn McClurg

A Christian publisher will stop selling "The Boy Who Came Back from Heaven" now that the young subject paralyzed in a car crash says the story of going to heaven is not true.

Tyndale House told both NPR and The Washington Post that it will withdraw the best-selling 2010 book by Alex Malarkey and his father, Kevin Malarkey.

The publisher made the decision after Alex wrote an "open letter" to the retailer LifeWay Christian Resources which said, "I did not die. I did not go to Heaven." It was posted on the Pulpit and Pen website.

The Malarkey book is one of a spate of best-sellers about and by those who say they have gone to heaven and returned.

The best-known is "Heaven is for Real" by Todd Burpo, a No. 1 USA Today best-seller, which was turned into a movie.



In 2004, Kevin Malarkey and his 6-year-old son, Alex, suffered an horrific car accident. The impact from the crash paralyzed Alex.

"The Boy Who Came Back from Heaven" peaked at No. 46 on USA Today's list.

According to the publisher's

description of the book, "in 2004, Kevin Malarkey and his 6-year-old son, Alex, suffered an horrific car accident.

"The impact from the crash

paralyzed Alex—and medically speaking, it was unlikely that he could survive. 'I think Alex has gone to be with Jesus,' a friend told the stricken dad.

"But two months later, Alex awoke from a coma with an incredible story to share. Of events at the accident scene and in the hospital while he was unconscious. Of the angels that took him through the gates of heaven itself."

But in his open letter, Alex wrote: "I said I went to heaven because I thought it would get me attention. When I made the claims that I did, I had never read the Bible.

"People have profited from lies, and continue to. They should read the Bible, which is enough. The Bible is the only source of truth. Anything written by man cannot be infallible."

He also said: "Please forgive the brevity (of the letter), but because of my (medical) limitations I have to keep this short." (RNS)

Most churchgoers won't skip church for football

By Bob Smietana

Nashville, Tenn.—Most American churchgoers would rather attend church than watch their favorite football team, a LifeWay Research study shows. But a few die-hard fans are willing to miss out on worship to watch a game.

About 1 in 7 churchgoers (15 percent) say they'd skip church in order to watch their favorite football team, according to a survey of 994 churchgoers.

Researchers found most of the faithful balk at skipping church for football.

More than 8 in 10 (83 percent) disagree with the statement: "I would skip a weekly worship service in order to watch my favorite football team."

Many worshipers had particularly strong feelings—nearly 7 in 10 (68 percent) strongly disagree.

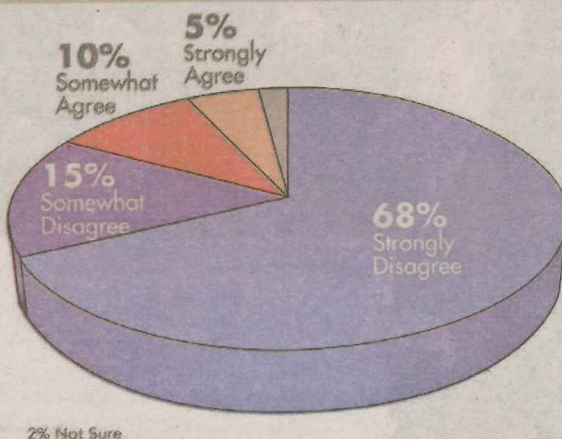
"Most churchgoers put divine revelation ahead of division rivalries," Scott McConnell, vice-president of Nashville-based LifeWay Research, said.

Some churchgoers, though, are more devoted to their team. Especially when the team is doing well.

Two years ago, Daniel Espy, pastor of The Bridge Church in Snohomish, Wash., hosted a special 8 a.m. service to accommodate Seahawks fans, whose team had

Among Churchgoers:

"I would skip a weekly worship service to watch my favorite football team."



found success after years of struggling.

The early service started as a joke on the church's Facebook page.

Espy joked that all churches in Seattle should hold early services, so fans could worship and then watch a playoff game.

The idea took off and eventually landed the church on the front page of the local newspaper.

These days The Bridge has two services, making it easier for church

members to worship before games. Still, attendance goes down when the Seahawks have an early game.

"Attendance can swing about 30 to 40 percent, depending on kickoff," Espy says.

LifeWay Research found faithful football fans in the West (22 percent) are more willing to skip church than those in South (13 percent) or Northeast (13 percent).

About 1 in 4 church-going men (22 percent) say they'd skip church to watch football. That drops to 1 in 10 for women churchgoers. Catholic foot-

ball fans (20 percent) are more willing to skip church than evangelicals (12 percent).

Espy says he's taken a good-natured approach to those who skip church to watch football. He notes that works better than a guilt trip.

"Honestly, we just try to show people that Jesus is better than football," he said. (BP)

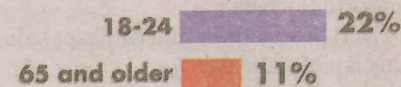
Among Churchgoers:

Percent who agree they would skip a weekly worship service to watch a football game

By gender:



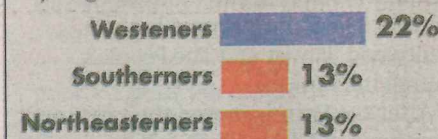
By age:



By religious group:



By region:



LifeWayResearch.com

LifeWay

BAPTIST DIGEST

Golden Gate to open new campus—Following the relocation of its main campus to Southern California, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary will retain a presence in the San Francisco Bay area by opening a new campus in Fremont, Calif., on land donated by a local congregation that is moving to a house church ministry model.

The new campus will be situated just north of San Jose about 50 miles southeast of the present Mill Valley campus.

Mission Bay Baptist Church in Fremont, announced that it will donate to the seminary land valued at \$2.9 million. Golden Gate plans to replace the existing church facilities with academic buildings and has already begun the process of obtaining construction permits.

Golden Gate began its relocation in April with the sale of the Mill Valley Campus. Having finalized the sale for \$85 million in July, the seminary purchased a six-story building in Ontario to serve as the primary campus.

Kentuckians named to ERLC council—The Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission has introduced its new Leadership Network Council. The 40 Southern Baptist pastors and leaders announced Jan. 15 will serve as the advisory council for the entity's Leadership Network in 2015.

Council members—all of whom are serving or have served in pastoral ministry—will receive equipping from the ERLC staff and give guidance to the network.

Fred Luter, immediate pastor SBC president and pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, La., is one of the new council members. Among seven other new members are two from Kentucky: Hershael York, pastor of Buck Run Baptist Church in Frankfort, preaching professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; and Mike Cosper, pastor of worship and arts at Sojourn Community Church in Louisville.

LifeWay moves forward with sale—Based on the positive results of a feasibility study, LifeWay Christian Resources is moving forward with the possible sale of its Nashville property.

Five months ago, LifeWay announced a preliminary study of the feasibility of selling the ministry's 14.5-acre campus in downtown Nashville that would allow the organization to relocate to facilities better suited to LifeWay's future.

LifeWay has had conversations with local, regional and national entities about selling the property and accepted offers through mid-January. Its downtown campus includes nine buildings with more than 1 million square feet of office, warehouse and parking space.

LifeWay currently is looking at several pieces of property in the downtown area as potential sites to build a new building.

Davis pens advice book for ministers' wives

Louisville—Western Recorder columnist Diana Davis' most recent book, "6 Simple Steps: Find Contentment and Joy as a Ministry Wife," was released this month.

"6 Simple Steps" offers tips, advice and stories on being a ministry wife and was published by New Hope Publishers. In it, Davis, whose "Fresh Ideas" column appears frequently in the Western Recorder, relies on her more than 30 years of experience as a minister's wife to provide insight.

"As I've observed and listened to ministry wives across the country, God inspired me to write a book of encouragement and challenge for those important leaders. This is it," Davis said.

The book is described as a "must read for

women whose husbands are in ministry positions—and any woman who wants to maximize her influence in the kingdom," by Dorothy Patterson, wife of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary President Paige Patterson. Additionally, the book received recommendations from other distinguished ministry wives, such as Mary Mohler, Lynette Ezell and Ann Iorg.

Davis, who lives in Pensacola, Fla., with her husband Stephen, has published four additional books. (WR)



Health care costs

Continued from page 3

new health care law, Anderson said student workers were no longer permitted to clock in 30 hours or more.

Still with those changes, the eastern Kentucky school saw about an 8 percent rise in health care costs during each of the past two fiscal years as a result of ACA requirements.

Anderson said Clear Creek managed to mitigate added expenses by reducing retirement benefits and moving to a higher deductible plan.

Employees were also provided access to health care reimbursement and flexible spending accounts to offset their costs.

"Working with a benefits specialist, we believe we have put together a solid plan that's going to provide some benefits for our people, plus possibly reduce our expenses for

our institution," Anderson said, adding that no cuts in staff or programs are planned.

For the Kentucky Baptist Convention, the greatest challenge will be the "soft dollar costs" of complying with the ACA's reporting requirements, according to Jim Donnell, associate executive director for convention operations.

"The government wants to know what kind of coverage KBC provides, how many are enrolled and what type each individual has," Donnell said.

The convention's health insurance premiums increased 2 percent during the 2013-14 fiscal year as a result of the ACA. Like Clear Creek, the KBC has increased deductibles and provided options for health care reimbursements.

Donnell said the KBC has already set its sights on the next ACA hurdle, the so-called "Cadillac tax" organizations could be assessed for providing too much health care insurance. (KBC)

Foster care program receives \$1 million boost

By Lonnie Wilkey

Brentwood, Tenn.—The Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes has received a gift of \$1 million for its foster care program.

Former NBA franchise owner George Shinn and his wife Denise, who now live in Franklin, presented the first installment of the gift to TBCH officials Jan. 15 during a ceremony on the TBCH campus. The gift will be dispersed over several years.

Shinn formerly owned the NBA's Charlotte Hornets.

TBCH president Bryant Millsaps said, "This is a historic day."

While the TBCH has received gifts of \$1 million or more through estates, this is the largest single multi-year commitment that the entity has received, he said.

The Shinn family are Baptists and learned of the TBCH ministry while attending the former West Franklin Baptist Church (now a campus of Brentwood Baptist Church). The Shinn family attend both Brentwood Baptist and The People's Church in Franklin.

After the Shinn family moved their business operations to Nashville, they began to look for ways "to give back" to the community. The couple visited TBCH's Brentwood campus to learn more about the ministry and left impressed with the



Holding a replica check representing a \$1 million multi-year gift to the Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes are, from left, Greg McCoy, president-elect; Randy Davis, executive director, Tennessee Baptist Convention; benefactors Denise and George Shinn; and Bryant Millsaps, TBCH president.

passion the Millsaps had for the children, said Denise Shinn.

George Shinn, a lifelong Baptist, noted he and his wife believe the Lord has led them to help support the work of TBCH.

"We made a business decision and a heart decision to help the Tennessee

Baptist Children's Homes. We know you are serving our master and we are committed. We are happy to make this gift."

Millsaps said the foster care program will be known as the Denise and George Shinn Foster Care Program in their honor.

The TBCH foster care program has begun and is expanding. "There will soon be a comprehensive system of safe homes across the state where children can be cared for," Millsaps said.

"This gift today helps us take a quantum leap in that direction," he noted. (BP)

Supporters rally for fired Atlanta fire chief Kelvin Cochran

Atlanta—Some 600 people gathered at the Georgia Capitol Jan. 13 to support terminated Atlanta fire chief Kelvin Cochran and ask elected officials to preserve religious liberty.

Following the rally, demonstrators delivered 40,000 petitions to Atlanta mayor Kasim Reed requesting Cochran's reinstatement.

Reed fired Cochran Jan. 6 following his publication of a book that calls homosexual behavior immoral.

Cochran's 162-page self-published book, "Who Told You That You Are Naked?" seeks to help Christian men overcome feelings of guilt and condemnation over past sins. It discusses homosexuality for less than half a page,

including a mention of uncleanness as the "opposite of purity; including sodomy, homosexuality, lesbianism, pederasty, bestiality, and all other forms of sexual perversion."

At the rally for Cochran, Georgia Baptist Convention executive director Robert White told Christians, "It is time to stand up for our faith."

"We have been very courteous and quiet, but now we must become courageous and vocal about those things we hold dear as Christians and as Americans," White said.

Cochran is a deacon, Sunday School



Kelvin Cochran

teacher and Bible study leader at Atlanta's Elizabeth Baptist Church, a cooperating church with the Georgia Baptist Convention.

A two-time Atlanta fire chief, Cochran also served as U.S. Fire Administrator under President Obama from 2009-10.

"Mayor Reed," White said, "you have probably fired the most loyal

employee you ever had."

Cochran delivered the final address of the rally, telling supporters that

"freedom of religion and freedom of speech are under attack."

Cochran said his termination served as a warning to all city employees that "if you seek to live out the true meaning of our nation's Pledge and Constitution and have a living faith and believe that sex should be between a man and woman in the bonds of holy matrimony, ... you had better keep your mouth shut or you will be fired."

He continued, "This experience has taught me that there are worldly consequences for publicly standing for righteousness, but I stand before you to tell you that the Kingdom consequences are far greater and more glorious than the earthly consequences." (BP)

Same-sex marriage

Continued from page 1

Justices remain divided

Since the gay marriage movement gained steam in the 1990s from Hawaii to Vermont, 30 states have passed constitutional bans. Eleven states and the District of Columbia legalized same-sex marriage by legislative action or voter initiatives. In 33 more states, judges have made the same call, though some of those decisions were delayed or overruled.

Most of the progress by gay-rights groups has come in the last two years. The number of states where gays and lesbians can marry has nearly doubled since October alone, and tripled since the court's 2013 rulings.

Justice Scalia's dissent in the court's 2013 gay marriage rulings set the stage

for the overturning of bans on same-sex marriage in dozens of states.

The justices appear as split today as they were then, when Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote the 5-4 decision striking down a key part of the federal Defense of Marriage Act. In dissent, Justice Antonin Scalia seethed that it would lead to exactly what has happened since—a flurry of court rulings using the high court's equal protection reasoning to strike down state bans.

But while divided, the justices have made a series of procedural moves that allowed same-sex marriage to proliferate, particularly by refusing to hear five states' appeals in October. They even refused to halt gay and lesbian marriages in Idaho while the state challenges the verdict of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals—something they had done last year in Utah and Virginia.

The swing vote remains Kennedy, who

has authored the last three major rulings advancing the cause of gay rights. On one hand, he has defended voter-approved constitutional amendments, most recently in a Michigan case last year that upheld the state's ban against racial preferences in university admissions. But he struck down the federal same-sex marriage ban as an affront to the constitutional rights of gays and lesbians.

Since then, dozens of federal and state court judges have toppled marriage bans for the same reason the Supreme Court ruled against DOMA, mostly citing gay and lesbian couples' right to equal protection or due process under the Constitution. Since September, however, three federal courts have gone the other way—in Louisiana, Puerto Rico and the four-state 6th Circuit.

Circuit Judge Jeffrey Sutton, once considered a potential Supreme Court

nominee for a Republican president, issued that 42-page appellate decision, with fellow GOP nominee Deborah Cook concurring. He said lower court judges' hands are tied by a one-sentence Supreme Court ruling in 1972 that "upheld the right of the people of a state to define marriage as they see it."

In response, couples in all four states asked the Supreme Court to hear their appeals. State officials in Michigan, Ohio and Kentucky, though victorious, agreed that the justices should weigh in. Gay couples and state officials in Louisiana sought to have their case considered before the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals rules, but the justices denied that request.

Other states where same-sex marriage remains illegal include Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Texas. (RNS)

Floyd on Fox: America must 'return to God'

By David Roach

Nashville, Tenn.—As Americans focus on President Obama's State of the Union address, they should also consider the spiritual state of the Union, Southern Baptist Convention President Ronnie Floyd said during an appearance on the Fox News Channel Jan. 20.

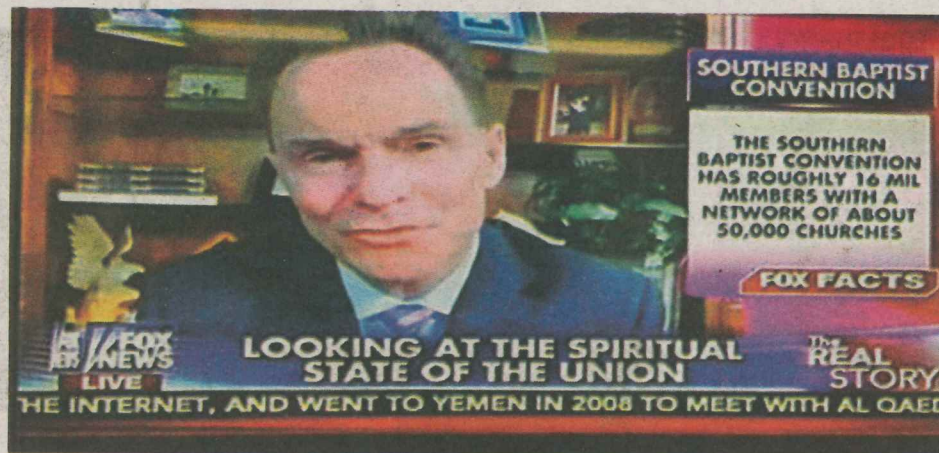
"I believe it's time that the faith leaders of our country stand up and encourage our country to return to God," Floyd said via Skype on Fox's "The Real Story." "This country was based off of a strong Christian faith many, many years ago, and it's time that we understand that no longer can we check our faith at the door like a piece of luggage."

Floyd added, "The greatest need in America today is a spiritual awakening."

In a blog article posted on the Fox website to accompany his television appearance, Floyd, pastor of Cross Church in Northwest Arkansas, outlined four of America's greatest spiritual needs:

- "We need to repent."
- "We need to return to God."
- "We need the church to wake up."
- "We need spiritual awakening."

Followers of Jesus must apply biblical teaching to issues being discussed in the



public square, Floyd told host Gretchen Carlson.

"The church, for some reason, at times refuses to get involved in the process of our nation," Floyd said. "And involvement means that we need to be strong about our faith, but we need to do so with compassion and with hope. But we cannot just sit on the sideline and leave the future of our country to the rest of this world."

Churches in America "must rise up and give the hope and the peace that only the gospel of Jesus Christ can bring people's lives," Floyd said.

When asked by Carlson whether he is

calling politicians to lead America's return to God, Floyd said he wants all Christians to apply their faith to public life—whether they are politicians or private citizens.

"We need to not compartmentalize our faith whether we're a politician or whether we're a Christian out here working in the workplace," Floyd said. "If we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have a relationship with Him and we believe in His Word, then we obviously need to live out our faith."

In his blog, Floyd listed problems that highlight America's need for spiritual awakening.

"The time is now for our nation to recognize that we cannot fix ourselves," Floyd wrote. "The signs of our brokenness are glistening in our dark world. The blatant destruction of the family, the killing of unborn children, the continuing racial tension, the rebellion against authority, the ongoing reality of poverty, the rising threat of our security, the clear attacks against religious liberty and, of all things, the arrogance to believe the highest court in our land can rule on what the Bible says is genuine marriage testify to just how broken we really are."

Because of these and other social ills, "The time is now for churches to rise up and address the spiritual state of our nation. With compassion, we need to tell it like it is. With hope, we need to share it like we believe it. With fervency, we need to pray like God alone is our hope," Floyd wrote.

Following Floyd's appearance on Fox, Carlson urged Christians in America to speak in the public arena.

"As Dr. Floyd says, this may be the greatest hour for the church to rise up and be the church, to lean in more than ever to serve and influence our communities with understanding and hope," Carlson said. (BP)

'One-stop shop' for collegiate ministry launched

By Kristen Camp

Alpharetta, Ga.—There is plenty of information available to collegiate ministry leaders about how to start a college ministry, how to reach freshmen and how to encourage college students to share the gospel.

But it can be difficult—if not impossible—to find these types of resources in one specific place to provide consistent, practical help to collegiate ministry leaders, until now.

The Collegiate Collective website launched recently with the goal of becoming a one-stop shop for the best practices in collegiate ministry.

"Our whole goal with Collegiate Collective is to elevate and advance the gospel on campus," said Rahul Agarwal, the director of Baptist Collegiate Ministries in the Tampa, Fla., area. "We've found that there hasn't been one place to go to for best practices for high impact people. So our goal is to create a resource that helps a lot of people go to one place to learn how to do college ministry and reach their campuses with the gospel."

Agarwal works with a team of collegiate ministry leaders to contribute to and collect content for Collegiate Collective. Some of

these leaders include Brian Frye, national collegiate strategist for the North American Mission Board; Paul Worcester, director of Christian Challenge at Chico State University; and Chase Abner, collegiate evangelism strategist for the Illinois Baptist State Association.

"This really is a team effort," Abner



A coalition of collegiate leaders, including Brian Frye (center), bring direction to the national Collegiate Collective, a website launched in August 2014 with the goal of becoming a one-stop shop for the best practices in collegiate ministry. Frye, National Collegiate Strategist for the North American Mission Board, is among several leaders who contribute content and collaborate on strategy. (Photo by Susan Whitley/NAMB)

said. "No one person is in charge of Collegiate Collective. It's a team of people who are contributing out of their own passions and strengths. We are laboring to represent a variety of collegiate-reaching ministries from

BCMs to church-based ministries, to church plants."

Since the website's launch, the Collegiate Collective team has released two written articles and a podcast each

week, as well as a video every other week. The team has also posted free Bible studies for collegiate ministry leaders to use, as well as a free ebook written by

Worcester entitled "Tips for Starting a College Ministry."

The website content also includes practical tools for leaders and students to use, such as Gospel Appointments, a relational model for sharing the gospel.

"Once we trained our students at Chico State on how to use Gospel Appointments, we saw 58 students come to know Christ in the first four weeks," Worcester said. "It's just been fun to see something simple and reproducible that students can take and use to lead their friends to Christ."

These reproducible resources like Gospel Appointments, along with many others, have been distributed to more than 7,000 Collegiate Collective users in just three months.

In addition, the page has had more

than 50,000 views tracing from Florida to Illinois to California.

The Collegiate Collective team continues to encourage people from across the country to get involved with their efforts to grow and improve collegiate ministry across the country.

"The Collegiate Collective team includes those who are the 'About' page on our website, but it is much broader than that," Abner said. "It includes the individuals who have written articles, were guests on the podcast or appeared in the videos. It includes leaders who have commented on our posts or shared them on social media. All of that plays a part in how we are elevating and advancing the gospel on campuses around North America." (BP)

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Kentucky Baptist Convention



Jesse Connors
Founder of TrueLife.org



Ronnie Floyd
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Alex Himaya
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Gabe Lyons
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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
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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 

Retired teacher plants church, baptizes 60 people in two years

By Tobin Perry

Mike Alexander never attended seminary. He had never pastored a church. He says he didn't even know what a church planter did. That is, until he became one. Now, about two years after arriving in Aurora, Colo., and about 23 months after he began learning what church planters actually do, the church Alexander started has baptized more than 60 people.

The retired Texas teacher visited Aurora on a mission trip in the summer of 2012. During the trip 16 children began a relationship with Christ.

As exciting as that was, Alexander couldn't help but wonder where those children—all from one mobile home community (Foxridge Farm Mobile Home Park) in the town—would be disciplined through a local church.

"There wasn't anyone out here to disciple them, to move them along," Alexander said. "That really touched my heart. I overheard the manager of the (community) talking to someone else on our team, saying 'What we need is an older couple to come here and live here and minister to the people.'"

"My wife and I are ex-school teachers and we could do that," Alexander told the manager.

"Well, come on," the manager told Alexander with a smile.

What started with God gently tugging Alexander's heart and a short exchange with the mobile home community manager soon became a full-fledged missionary call. In the next few

days he told his wife Rosemary, who had stayed behind in Texas, what God was telling him about moving to Colorado. He looked at the house he'd one day purchase. He also found his first ministry partner in the state.

"As I left the house, the first person I met was a guy named Jimmy," Alexander said. "He's a Native American with tattoos all over him."

"What are you doing?" Jimmy asked Alexander.

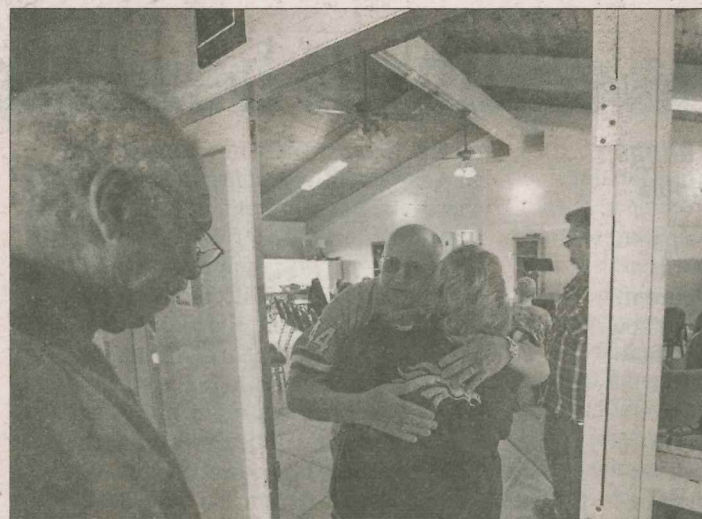
"Well, Jimmy, I think God wants us to move here to minister to this community," Alexander said.

"If you do that, I'll help you," Jimmy said.

Eight weeks later, the Alexanders moved to Colorado. It wasn't until he went to church planters' training through the Colorado Baptist General Convention a few days after arriving in Aurora that he began to understand what it meant to be a church planter.

"I moved here to knock on doors and tell people about Jesus," Alexander said.

Soon Alexander had a vision for building a church among the 481 units in the



Mike Alexander welcomes guests to Living Hope Fellowship, a church he started after seeing the need while on a mission trip. The Aurora, Colo., church plant is a part of Send North America: Denver, the North American Mission Board's strategy to help Southern Baptists plant churches in metro Denver. (Photo by Erik Stenbakken/NAMB)

community. Six people—one family—attended the church's first worship service in the couples' home. Today, Living Hope Fellowship has 35 to 40 people in a typical worship service. Alexander says if everyone came at one time, the church's attendance would be around 100.

"I never know who is going to be there," Alexander said. "Most of the work happens one on one. It's visitation. It's talking to people. It's taking the opportunity to visit."

"And then, you can't just lead people to the Lord and leave them alone. There's discipleship. There's Bible study."

Alexander has learned that ministry never stops.

Sometimes that means giving people rides to work. Sometimes that means buying a bag of groceries for a friend.

The Southern Baptist Global Hunger Relief fund helps buy some of those groceries.

"Physical needs are really important here," Alexander said. "This is not a rich community. This is a pretty low-income place. It's hard to find a job and if they find a job, they don't have

transportation."

During the past two years, Alexander has become so identified with the community that even people not connected to his church come to him to get pastoral needs met, such as weddings.

When one young couple wanted to get married last year, someone recommended they visit Alexander.

As he sat down with them for premarital counseling before the first wedding he had ever performed, he discovered the prospective groom had never committed his life to Christ.

"I'm not a Christian," the young man told Alexander. "I've done terrible, terrible things. God doesn't like me."

"That's not true. God does love you," Alexander said before opening up his Bible and taking him through the gospel. The young man became a follower of Christ and, for a couple of months before moving to San Diego, they were active members of the church.

Two years after answering God's call to Aurora, Alexander knows what a church planter does—because he is doing it. (BP)

A strategic time

Tidal wave of opportunity for securing legacy gifts

Although the Kentucky Baptist Foundation has been serving Kentucky Baptists since 1945, its time has just arrived.

Given the significant challenges of financing in the future the missions and ministries of every component of our larger Baptist family, and given the demographic, economic, social, cultural, technological and denominational trends and their collective impact on charitable giving, the role of the KBF in the future of Kentucky Baptist life will be ever more critical.

It takes money to do missions—and it will take more in the future than in the past. Our churches, the Cooperative Program and other Kentucky Baptist-related ministries, including associations, are where money is transformed into ministry. And, more than any other time in our history there is a tidal wave of opportunity in securing legacy gifts, but the window of opportunity for many will not be open for long.

Therefore, before it's too late, the older generation of Kentucky Baptists must be challenged to leave a legacy through their churches and other Kentucky Baptist and Christian

ministries that have been near and dear to their hearts. The younger generation of Kentucky Baptists must be taught

how to live according to the biblical principles of the Christian discipline of financial stewardship.

We Kentucky Baptists are involved in the greatest business in the world—the Great Commission business. Amen? The late A.M. Vollmer, the first full-time executive of the KBF, said it best upon his retirement in 1964 after 18 years of service: "The Foundation has been in the past and will continue to be in the future my first love among all of

our Kentucky Baptist projects. This is true because it lives to strengthen all the rest."

The KBF believes every adult Kentucky Baptist should have a Christian estate plan—the fruits of which will make a lasting difference in the world for the cause of Christ through one's church, the Cooperative Program and one or more of his/her favorite Baptist cause(s).

Please give us the privilege of assisting you and your church in facilitating your estate stewardship plan. Laurie Valentine, our trust counsel, is awaiting your toll-free call.

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

Ky. Baptist Foundation



Barry Allen

Making the impossible possible

EBO gifts grant paralyzed man's wish to be baptized

Randy McPherson, director of missions for Rockcastle Association, could hardly contain his excitement when he shared Teddy's story with me. Teddy Fulton wanted to give public commitment to his faith in Christ and be baptized in a church. The challenge was that Teddy, age 24 at the time of this story, had been left paralyzed after an accident at 16.

A resident at Rockcastle Regional Hospital and Respiratory Care Center, Teddy told Luther Allen, hospital chaplain, that he wanted to be baptized in a church. A grant from the Eliza Broadus Offering made it possible.

This story actually began in 2010 when the Rockcastle Baptist Association Jail Ministry applied for an EBO grant to help them purchase a portable baptistery. The ministry was featured in our 2012 materials, including a video of B.J. Bradley holding a baptism at the jail.

When Teddy asked to be baptized in a church, Randy asked if the portable baptistery could be used. After several meetings, it was determined that the best option was to set it up at Northside Baptist Church and take Teddy and a medical team there. A maintenance

crew built a special platform that would allow the wheels of a hydraulic lift to fit underneath. A face tent and cover for Teddy's tracheostomy were designed.

On a Sunday afternoon about 50 people gathered at Northside Church to help Teddy experience baptism as his public confession of Christ as Savior. His mother and sister traveled from South Carolina to attend. About three dozen employees from Rockcastle Regional also attended—on their own time—to show support.

Last week, the Kentucky WMU finance committee reviewed 89 applications for grants from the 2014-15 Eliza Broadus Offering. Great prayer and discernment is required in making these decisions as there are always more requests than funds.

Your giving makes it possible for us to provide grants to ministries across Kentucky. EBO is received all year long and we have not yet reached our goal of \$1,250,000 for the 2014-15 offering year. Focus on WMU in February is a great time to receive the offering again to ensure that requests like the one in 2010 from Rockcastle can be filled and keep making an impact for years to come.

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

EBO at Work



Joy Bolton

Bedtime for 300 kids

Living independently brings change in nightly routines

There are many tasks a parent will perform over and over for his or her children. If you are a parent, have you ever thought about how many diapers you changed, how many times you shuttled your child somewhere, how many loads of laundry you did, how many dishes you washed? If we actually knew the answers to these questions, we would probably be shocked.

There are some tasks as parents that we don't necessarily enjoy, and then there are others that bring us great joy. Perhaps some things you do or have done for your child fit into both of those categories.

My oldest son, Trey, is 13 years old and sleeps in our basement. Upon first moving to Kentucky, he was only 11, and it took some time before he was comfortable sleeping in the basement by himself. For a few months, he often found his way up to his little brother's room and crawled into the top bunk.

Now Trey sleeps downstairs pretty willingly, but he likes for me to come downstairs at bedtime to say goodnight and pray with him. Due to being away some nights, I don't always get to do this, and on the nights I am home it sometimes takes some motivation to get up out of my easy chair and go downstairs. I know I should relish this nightly

routine, because there may soon be coming a day when Trey won't want me anywhere near his basement or bedroom.

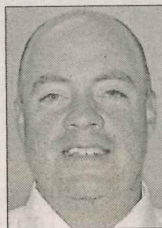
As I sit on the edge of Trey's bed and we sometimes pray for the Oneida students, I sometimes wonder about the kids in our dorm and what their bedtime routines were at home with their parents, and what each of them might be thinking as they turn in for bed each night at Oneida. When you have 200-250 students in the dormitory any given night, each kid won't get the bedtime tuck-in and prayer time with mom or dad. We have many students who are younger than my 13-year-old, and those

young people have to grow up at an accelerated rate when living independently from their parents.

We have about 20 house parents on our staff. I often tell folks it is probably the most difficult job on our campus. Bedtime is 10 p.m. on school nights and 11 p.m. on weekends. Imagine putting 125 boys and 100 girls to bed all at once. Our house parents face challenges in caring for our young people every single day, but they love and care for our kids as if they were their own. Please pray for our house parents as they fill a major role in the lives of so many of God's children.

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

Recognizing academic excellence

Student's academic paper presented at conference

At Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, we strive to recognize and acknowledge academic excellence. We are proud to announce that Lawrence Parker, a sophomore online student at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, will present a paper to an assembly of his peers and a Council of Review at the Student Scholars Forum in conjunction with the annual Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) Conference.

His work investigates the impact of theology on ministry. Whereas students sometimes seem to struggle to find and cite peer-reviewed sources in their research efforts, Mr. Parker has a chance to add to that field of scholarly writing.

The purpose of the Student Scholars Forum is "to facilitate the development of world-class biblical scholars among our students who are effective in the research and apologetic of the dynamic relations between theology and ministry." Students were invited to submit papers, between 2,000-3,000 words, that would "explore, engage and extend our knowledge and understanding of the connection between theology and ministry as found within the various contexts of the Scriptures, ministry, and leadership."

Up to 18 papers will be presented at

the forum, followed by peer review discussion. Students other than presenters are encouraged to attend and participate in the discussions. To participate, students must be either a presenter or recommended by a faculty member of the college where they attend. Clear Creek Baptist Bible College is proud to have a student presenter at that impressive assembly.

The top papers will be selected by the Council for publication in the digital ABHE student scholar's publication, The Journal of Contemporary Theology, beginning in 2015.

Lawrence and his wife Keri live in Hillsboro, Ohio where

they serve as church planters. He was awarded a special scholarship from Clear Creek to provide him lodging in Orlando, where he will present his work.

This student was willing to go the extra mile and accept the challenge to write a paper that was not required for any of his coursework. As a result, he will be spending a couple of days in Orlando in February. Far beyond that little perk, he will have achieved an impressive academic accomplishment. Excellence carries many rewards.

Congratulations, Lawrence!

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

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox



iStock photo

Porn damages, degrades relationships

By David Roach

Nashville, Tenn.—A new study concluding that pornography use leads to decreased enjoyment of sexual intimacy for men illustrates "the detrimental effect" obscene images have on "a male's sexual health," according to a leader of Southern Baptists' anti-pornography campaign.

"The study reinforces the fact that pornography writes a sexual script that leaves out God, unconditional love, respect for each other and honoring each other," Jay Dennis, co-sponsor of the Join One Million Men campaign, told Baptist Press.

"Parents should take heed that the younger a male views pornography the more he will use pornography for sexual stimulation. The study underscores that pornography lessens enjoyment with a real-life partner."

Launched at the 2013 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Houston, Join One Million Men is seeking commitments from 1 million men to live pornography-free lives. The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission and the Woman's Missionary Union sponsored the initiative along with Dennis, pastor of First Baptist Church at the Mall in Lakeland, Fla.

Researchers Chyng Sun, Ana Bridges, Jennifer Johnason and Matt Ezzell wrote in the December issue of "Archives of Sexual Behavior" that "pornography is sometimes dismissed, celebrated, or problematized as fantasy, and many consumers may access pornography explicitly as a form of entertainment, but pornography is also much more. What happens on the screen may implicate life off of it."

The researchers asked a sample of 487 males ages 18-29 a range of questions regarding the frequency of their pornography use, their use of pornography in conjunction with sexual encounters and their enjoyment of sexual intimacy.

The research team found "significant positive association" between pornography use and "reliance on pornography to obtain/maintain sexual excitement."

Use of pornography also made men more likely to "view pornography during sexual activity" with a real-life partner. Porn use correlated with less enjoyment of sexually intimate behavior.

"Our findings are consistent with a theory suggesting that pornography can become a preferred sexual script for men, thus influencing their real-world expectations," the researchers wrote.

Only 10.9 percent of the men surveyed reported that they did not currently use pornography. A mere 1.3 percent of men surveyed said they had never encountered pornography.

The vast majority of study participants (97.9 percent) were unmarried, but 75.4 percent reported having engaged in sexual intercourse.

Participants reported on average that religious faith was only moderately important to them, suggesting that the study results may not apply to men in committed relationships with Christ.

All participants were college students. Donna Rice Hughes, president and CEO of the anti-pornography organization Enough Is Enough, said the study proves that pornography "is not just harmless fun."

"The science proves exactly how harmful porn is to relationships and society," Hughes said in a news release. "Which is why we are fighting so hard to educate the public about how to prevent this toxic material from its devastating harms to children, women, men, marriages and our culture."

"At Enough Is Enough, we bring this research to the public, to Congress, to leaders."

The study also found that 48.7 percent of today's college males were first exposed to pornography prior to age 13.

Researchers claimed that "current sex education models—in the schools and in the home—do not seem well-equipped to assist boys in navigating or critically engaging the messages of pornography."

The study's authors criticized abstinence-only sexual education programs, which teach teens to delay sexual activity until marriage, as "ineffective in helping adolescents make informed and healthy sexual choices."

But Dennis agreed with the principle of sexual abstinence until marriage, noting "the boundaries God has set for our safety and enjoyment."

Pornography ignores those boundaries and depicts as normal "degrading and humiliating acts along with physically aggressive behavior toward women," he said.

Dennis concluded, "Parents must begin educating their children, especially their sons, on why pornography is not God's plan and how it damages and degrades real relationships. Education, information, accountability and biblical truth communicated by a loving parent can help turn the tide." (BP)

Sanctity of Life: Family blessed through adoption

By Jessica Vanderpool

Dumas, Ark.—Those who know Haylee Kirtley would probably describe her as a talkative, sweet 6-year-old with a big heart. She is good at school, enjoys playing soccer and, like so many girls her age, loves Elsa from the movie "Frozen."

And to her parents, she is a gift from God—a gift for whom they waited a long time.

Jada and Allen Kirtley, members of First Baptist Church of Dumas, Ark., tried to have children for a decade before Jada Kirtley underwent a medically necessary procedure that made it impossible for her to bear children.

It might have seemed like the end of a dream for the couple. But Jada Kirtley, who serves as assistant director for First Baptist Church's day care center, knew God could make her a mother if it was His will.

"We'd been praying for a child before this, and so I finally just said, 'Well, God, it's in Your hands like it always has been,'"

Jada Kirtley recalled. "And I said, 'If I'm meant to be a mother, You will make it happen in Your own timing.'"

A couple of months after her medical procedure, Jada Kirtley's cousin told her of a woman who was pregnant and planned to place her child for adoption.

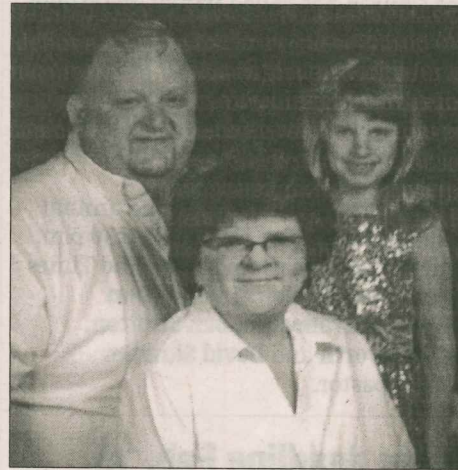
The Kirtleys met with the family; then they waited to hear if they would be chosen as the adoptive parents.

Allen Kirtley said his wife was nervous that they would not be chosen.

"So she and I got in the floor in our living room, held hands and I prayed for our God to give us (this) baby and let us be this baby's mom and dad," Allen Kirtley said. "I can tell you that when we got up, God told me she was ours and I would not believe anything else but what God had told me."

A few days later, they received the news that they had been chosen as the adoptive parents, and a few weeks after that, Haylee was born.

"I was in the delivery room when she was born," Jada Kirtley said. "And so I got



Allen, Jada and Haylee Kirtley

to hold her first.... The nurse put a warm blanket over me and placed her in my arms and said, 'Here.' And so I carried her out of the operating room to the nursery."

Allen Kirtley recalled looking at her in the hospital.

"I can tell you right then and there I knew how much God loves me because that one instant I was in love with that little girl more than anything and to think God loves me more than I could love anything," he said.

Jada Kirtley said the adoption of Haylee brought her story full circle.

Jada Kirtley, herself, was adopted. In fact, it was her aunt—the mother of the cousin who helped the Kirtleys find Haylee—who helped Jada Kirtley's own parents adopt her.

"Adoption to me is the most wonderful thing in the world ... because these ladies could have chosen abortion over adoption, and you know there are so many ... women who can't have children of their own," Jada said. "And that whole adoption process was just wonderful." (BP)

Editor's Note: Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, on the Southern Baptist Convention calendar, was observed Jan. 18 and marked 42 years of legal abortion in the United States.

OBITUARIES

Richard "Dick" Ham, Richmond

Richard Wendell "Dick" Ham, 79, retired minister of music of First Baptist Church of Richmond and the only music minister to serve as a Kentucky Baptist Convention officer, died Jan. 13. He had served as the KBC's 2nd vice president in 2001.

A Louisville native, Ham is a graduate of Campbellsville Junior College, Georgetown College and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He served Walnut Street Baptist in Owensboro, Immanuel Baptist in Lexington and First Baptist of Pine Bluff, Ark.

In 1968, he joined the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn., as consultant of church music, a position he held for 15 years.

Ham loved working with people of all ages, but especially with youth. While in Tennessee, he led the Tennessee Baptist All-State Chorus on numerous occasions. He later established and directed the Kentucky Baptist All-State Chorus.

In 1983, he was called to First Church, Richmond. During his tenure, he continued to be involved in music programs locally and across the country.

Following his retirement in 2000, he served interims at churches in Frankfort, Lexington, Corbin and Williamsburg, and was an ambassador for Georgetown College. He also was a columnist for the Richmond Register.

Ham authored three books and composed several pieces of music. He received the "Musician of Note" award in 2000 from the Kentucky Baptist Music Conference, and he received the conference's Eugene Quinn Lifetime Achievement award in 2014. He also was awarded the Honorary Kentucky Colonel by two governors.

Robert Wayne Moore, Georgetown

Robert Wayne Moore, 81, a former staff member of Cumberland and Georgetown colleges, died Jan. 5.

A native of Piner, Moore most recently served as assistant to the president for church relations at Cumberland College in Williamsburg, now University of the Cumberlands.

He previously taught psychology, served as the dean of men and later alumni director at Georgetown.

Moore earned degrees from Georgetown, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Indiana University and the University of Mississippi.

He also served as minister of recreation at Crescent Hill Church in Louisville and as director of admissions for Mississippi College in Clinton, Miss.

Eldred Taylor, Louisville

Eldred Taylor, a former executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children and a former president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, died Jan. 16 in Louisville. He was 93.

Taylor, a noted Baptist pastor, served most of his ministry at First Church of Somerset, from 1958-1981. He was also pastor at Rosedale Church in Richmond.

He previously had served two Baptist associations as director of missions: Bates Creek and Daviess-McLean. In 1951, the Kentucky Baptist Convention tapped him as director of missions and evangelism. He later served as executive director of KBHC, now Sunrise Children's Services, from 1981-88.

After retirement, he continued to serve as a professor for Boyce Bible School of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, teaching evangelism and Christian interpersonal relations. He also served nine churches as interim pastor and did development work for KBHC.

In addition to serving as KBC



Robert Moore



Richard Ham



Eldred Taylor

president in 1967-68 and his 20 years as convention parliamentarian, his extensive denominational work included service on the KBC Executive Board, as a trustee of Georgetown College, and as a member of the Kentucky Baptist Board of Child Care.

He also served on the SBC Committee on Boards and the Foreign Mission Board (now International Mission Board).

A native of McLean County, Taylor is a

graduate of Eastern Kentucky University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He did post graduate work at Southern and Princeton Seminary and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Divinity by Campbellsville University.

He was a member of St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville, where he was a deacon and taught a Sunday School class. (WR)

Continuing Eldred Taylor's legacy

Making an eternal difference in the lives of children

Our Ministry Support Center (MSC) in Mt. Washington is named for the late Eldred M. Taylor, the dean of Kentucky Baptists who died Jan. 16. I never knew him, but I feel as though I did.

Every day, I see his name in large letters, his portrait or a plaque about his accomplishments, all adorning the exterior and interior walls of the MSC entrance that leads to my office. My joys and challenges as president of Sunrise Children's Services were Taylor's, years ago, while he served as executive director of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, now known as Sunrise.

In those days, Taylor's office was near Spring Meadows on Shelbyville Road. Today, mine is opposite the new Spring Meadows on Hope Street in Mt. Washington.

"He was a man of great intelligence and straightforwardness, peppered with approachability and a sense of humor," said Kenny Williams, vice president of Sunrise Foster Care and Community Based Services. "I smile when I think how nervous I was to meet him the first time."

No wonder. Taylor had been a beloved pastor in Richmond and Somerset. Next he had served as a director of missions, both for Daviess-McLean Baptist Association and for the Kentucky Baptist

Convention, and had been elected KBC president. These statesman-like achievements and other honors were Taylor's before he came to lead our ministry.

Taylor remains with us in the passion we carry for making an eternal difference in the lives of those we serve.

"Our first job is to win people to the Lord," Kenny remembered Taylor telling leaders during a training session.

"When I thanked him afterward, Dr. Taylor instantly changed the subject to the children, asked how I was representing Christ on the campus, and how we were changing the lives of the children in our care," Kenny continued.

That ceaseless shifting of the focus onto the children we serve remains our unapologetic strategy at Sunrise. With God's help,

we are developing plans to extend the arm of care to children who "age out" of state custody. We are introducing the future of foster care, and we are seeking out donors who will help Sunrise guarantee success to more and more young people. We want to break the cycle of failure and institutional dependency among children who are placed with Sunrise by the state.

We will continue Taylor's legacy, with 21st Century methods and innovations. Won't you honor his memory by helping Sunrise today?

Dale Suttles is president of Sunrise Children's Services, and his email is dsuttles@sunrise.org.

Sunrise Children's Services



Dale Suttles



January

29-31 Shepherding 2015,
Griffin Gate Marriott,
Lexington.

February

3 February Power Lunch,
Kentucky Baptist
Building, Louisville.

6-7 Kentucky Baptist
Disaster Relief
Chaplaincy Training,
Second Baptist
Church, Russellville.

7 Kentucky Baptist
Disaster Relief
Training Phases 1
& 2, Second Baptist
Church, Russellville.

12 ReThink Mercy,
Kentucky Baptist
Building, Louisville.

13 ReThink Mercy,
Warren Association
of Baptists, Bowling
Green.

16 Regional Financial
Benefits Conference,
Pleasant Hill Baptist
Church, Somerset.

17 Regional Financial
Benefits Conference,
Crosswoods Church,
Nicholasville; Greenup
Baptist Association,
Ashland.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

BEDFORD—Bedford Church has called **Daniel Wightman** as pastor.

CAMPBELLSVILLE—Saloma Baptist Church is hosting "A Challenge to a New Generation," based on the book of Deuteronomy, at 5 p.m. Feb. 1, 8, and 15. **John Hurtgen**, dean of Campbellsville University's School of Theology, will lead. Call 270-789-0082 for more information.

ELKTON—Bellview Church will host the second annual Southern Kentucky Bible Conference Feb. 15-19, 6:30 p.m. nightly, and 3 p.m. on Feb. 16. The theme is the End Times and Second Coming of Jesus. Speakers include **Don Mathis, James Shutt, James Branscum, Ben Stratton, Curtis McGee, Roger Skipworth** and **David Skinner**. **Rodney Skipworth** is the pastor.

WMU scholarship deadline Feb. 15

Louisville—Through the gifts of generous donors of years past, Kentucky WMU is able to award a limited number of college and seminary scholarships annually.

Scholarships are funded by endowments and the criteria for awards were made by the original donors.

The following scholarships are awarded annually:

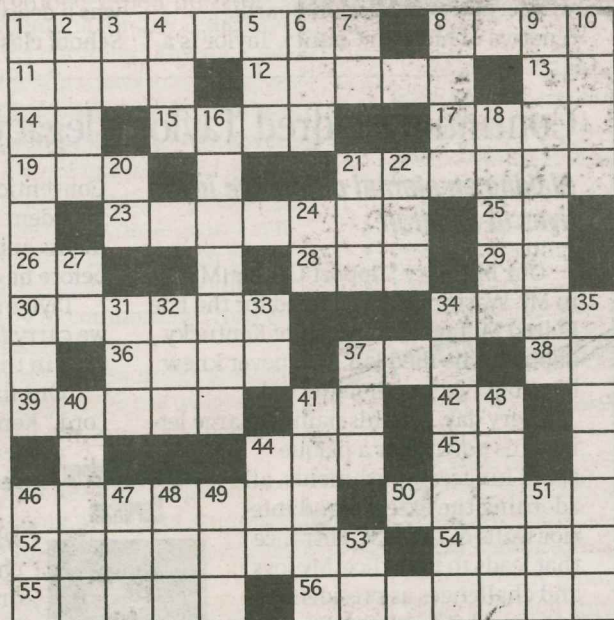
- Ruby D. Wetterer Scholarship
- Janie Cree Bose Anderson Scholarships
- Mrs. George B. Eager Scholarship
- Snider-Creal Scholarships
- State Missionaries Children Scholarships

Kentucky WMU also awards Anniversary Scholarships to students attending Kentucky Baptist colleges and schools. Applications are reviewed by the WMU Scholarship Committee and Kentucky WMU Executive Board. Applications are due Feb. 15 and students must reapply each year. For specific award criteria and an application form, go to www.kywmu.org/scholarships. (WMU)

Bible Crosswords

Across

- 1 "the lilies" (Matthew 6:28)
8 Woody Guthrie's son
11 Ann, Russ.
12 Moses' brother
13 Indianapolis' state, abbr.
14 Roman Catholic, abbr.
15 "They unto them" (Exodus 12:36)
17 Bean curd
19 Apiece
21 Sews quickly
23 Turns away from sin
25 House of Lords, abbr.
26 The writings that contain the new covenant, abbr.
28 "Hole of the" (Isaiah 11:8)
29 Nickel, chem symbol
30 High male voices
34 "Every of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14)
36 "He took ... the out of the house" (2 Chronicles 33:15)
37 Three, prefix
38 More, suffix
39 "Pure of water of life" (Revelation 22:1)
41 Overeaters Anonymous, abbr.
42 New England state, Concord is the capital, abbr.
44 Evergreen
45 Perform
46 Caleb's brother (Joshua 15:17)

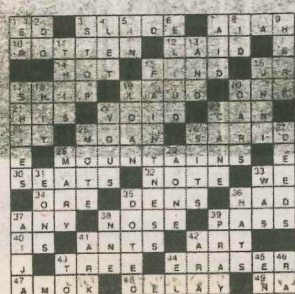


#027

- 50 "He riseth ... and took a" (John 13:4)
52 Grievance
54 Metal thread
55 "Get thee hence," (Matthew 4:10)
56 The meal's last course

Down

- 1 Joseph's profession (Mark 6:3)
2 One time
3 The Empire State, abbr.
4 Girl's name, for short
5 Bilhah's son (Genesis 35:25)
6 "They work, and" (2 Thessalonians 3:12)
7 Railed transportation, abbr.
8 Small insects
9 Throw out the
10 Burden
16 Chinese ruler
18 Son of Shemaiah (1 Chronicles 26:7)
20 Rural route, abbr.
- 21 Noblemen, below a baron and above a knight, abbr.
22 Snake
24 Not applicable, abbr.
27 Tellurium, chem symbol
31 Modern Bible translation, abbr.
32 Poem
33 Sea level, abbr.
34 "of heaven" (Malachi 3:10)
35 Small drip
37 Black sticky substance
40 Within, prefix
41 "Cake of bread" (Exodus 29:23)
43 Howard, for short
44 Womanly, abbr.
46 Officers of the Guard, abbr.
47 Head covering
48 National Vision Associates, abbr.
49 Man's name
51 To make a mistake
53 Born, Fr.



#026

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SEEKING: In search of director of missions, The South Union/Mount Zion Baptist Association, located in southeastern Kentucky is now searching for a new director of missions. If interested in being considered as a candidate, please remit biographical information to: South Union Mount Zion Baptist Association, P.O. Box 432, Williamsburg, KY 40769. All resumes must be postmarked by March 31 for consideration. Phone (606) 549-4497.

SEEKING: Calvary Baptist Church in Danville, Ky., is seeking a part-time minister of music to lead our congregation in blended worship. Send resumes to ashley@calvaryindanville.com by Feb. 15.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Farmington is seeking a full-time associate pastor with an emphasis in worship. Please email inquiries or resumes to fbcfarm@sbcglobal.net, Attn.: Personnel Committee, or mail to Personnel Committee, 210 North A. Street, Farmington, MO 63640.

SEEKING: The Union Baptist Association, located in Bracken, Harrison and Pendleton counties in Kentucky, is seeking a part time director of missions. Resumes may be submitted by mail to Richard Kendall, 8528 Ky Hwy 356, Cynthiana, KY 41031 or emailed to ahkendall@outlook.com.

SEEKING: Crestwood Baptist Church in Frankfort, Ky., is seeking a full-time pastor. Download application at www.crestwoodbaptist.com. Send resume and application to: Pastor Search-CBC, P.O. Box 7010, Frankfort, KY 40602 or email to CrestwoodPastorSearch@yahoo.com. Applications will be accepted until 3/16/15.

SEEKING: An advancing ministry in a strong, growing church in suburban Cincinnati seeks a full-time minister to pre-schoolers and children. Resumes to mtcarmelbc@fuse.net. Visit us at mtcarmelbaptist.org.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of youth and children with emphasis 7th-12th grades at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Louisville, KY. Applicant must possess or be pursuing an accredited college and/or seminary degree. Interested individuals should email their resumes by Feb. 15 to Carol Jean Epley (daughertyinsagcy@aol.com) and also a copy to the Church (pgbconline@bellsouth.net) for consideration.

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

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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: First Baptist Church of Whitesburg is hiring a full-time position for minister of children, youth and family. Send resume to tony.brown@whitesburg-fbc.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 resume to tony.brown@whitesburg-fbc.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 resume 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 resume along with DVD or internet link of you leading worship to glyn@versaillesbaptist.org or 125 East Green Street, Versailles, KY 40383.

SEEKING: Coral Hill Baptist is seeking to fill the full-time staff position of associate pastor. Primary responsibilities will include development of discipleship, leadership and mission strategies. Please forward resumes to jtyoung88@gmail.com or mail to Coral Hill Baptist Church, 3260 Coral Hill Rd., Glasgow, KY 42141, c/o Staff Search Committee.

SEEKING: Clarkson Baptist Church in Clarkson, Ky., is searching for a part-time youth pastor with additional opportunities to work with AWANA Children's ministry. Send resume to: flfeezorj@hotmail.com. For

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Top, An Iraqi Christian woman whose name is translated as "Faithful" sits in her apartment in northern Iraq beneath a portrait of her deceased daughter, Rita. Her daughter was doused with gasoline and set aflame by radical Islamists more than a year ago. Before Rita died in her mother's arms, she asked her mother to forgive her murderers. (Photo by Joseph Rose/IMB)



Top center, In a border town of Turkey, a Syrian family who fled from the civil war struggles to find food and shelter. The mother, Ghufan (name changed), looks at the dying bird her children have brought in and says, "We've become like this bird here, and the bird is better than us. We are living, but we are not living, because we are living like death." (Photo by Jedediah Smith/IMB)



Top right, this man, one of the many victims of profound poverty living in a slum area of a South Asian city, sustained horrific burns when he came home drunk one night, doused himself with kerosene in despair and set himself on fire. (Photo by Hugh Johnson/IMB)



Right, a street corner prayer meeting in Ukraine's eastern town of Donetsk. Ukrainians have been reminded that independence comes at a high price and have come together on their knees as a nation called to prayer. (Photo by Charles Braddix/IMB)

Top international missions images of 2014

Right, Charity Malinao's father, Antonio, sits in the rubble of his family home that was destroyed by Typhoon Haiyan as IMB missionary Kim Cruse comforts Charity. Antonio saved one cooking pot from his home in the Philippines; everything else was destroyed. (Photo by JoAnn Bradberry/IMB)



For many reflecting back on key moments of 2014, there are certain images that are not easily forgotten.

These images are among the top photographs selected from thousands taken by International Mission Board photographers last year.

The world experienced untold suffering during the year. Evil, hatred and lostness spread darkness in many places. But IMB workers and their partners were there, easing pain, bringing light and hope, lifting the name of Jesus and extending His love to the nations.

These images show people being touched by the light—and others who still need touching.



Above, Cuban women embark on a five-hour drive throughout the Cuban countryside on Saturdays to share the gospel in small towns and villages where there is little or no gospel witness. (Photo by Will Stuart/IMB)

Pain. Loss. Fear. Uncertainty. All of these are captured in this image of a young woman as she visited one of the makeshift memorials to the fallen on Kiev's Independence Square. Ukrainians have been reminded that independence comes at a high price and have come together on their knees as a nation called to prayer. (Photo by Marc Ira Hooks/IMB)



This young Syrian girl desires to be a journalist, even as many of her fellow countrymen and women who are risking their lives to tell the stories of the ongoing conflict. (Photo by Joseph Rose/IMB)



Richard Buan eats by candlelight outside the tomb where he sleeps with his family in Cebu, Philippines. Buan's family home was destroyed in Typhoon Haiyan. His family now sleeps in open tombs, where they are protected from the elements, but still fear evil spirits and thieves. (Photo by JoAnn Bradberry/IMB)

RETHINK MERCY



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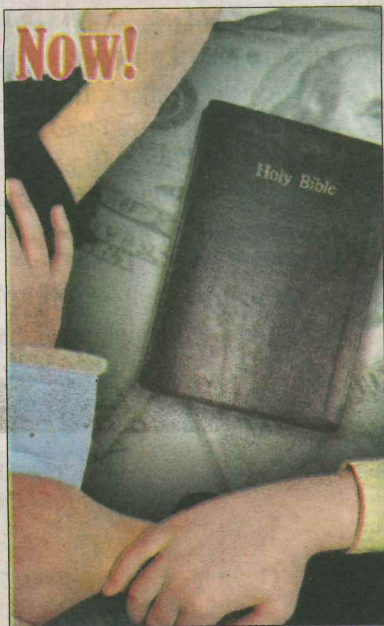
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Frankfort - March
Lancaster - April
Bowling Green - Sept



Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.
- Galatians 6:2



IMAGINE WHAT A WITNESS IT WOULD BE IF KENTUCKY BAPTIST CHURCHES BLITZED THEIR COMMUNITIES AND OUR STATE TO SERVE IN THE NAME OF CHRIST. WHAT AN IMPACT IT MAKES WHEN WE MOVE MEMBERS FROM THEIR SEATS TO THE STREETS.

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LOUISVILLE March 26 LEXINGTON April 18 GLASGOW April 18

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