

WESTERN Recorder

June 16, 2015

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 189, Issue 12

'RIDE & SHINE'



Bikers raise \$4,100 for Sunrise

By Todd Deaton

Mt. Washington—What's more exciting for a biker than joining up with 55 motorcycles and rumbling across the Bluegrass State on a 120-mile ride? When that bike rally also helps raise nearly \$4,100 for some of the state's neediest kids.

More than 100 riders in all participated in the second annual "Ride & Shine" bike rally on June 7 to benefit Sunrise Children's Services, co-sponsored by Choe Sergent, pastor of Junction City First Baptist Church in Danville, and Jamie Lawrence, pastor of Parksville Baptist Church, also in Danville.

The route included stops at two of Sunrise's campuses, Cumberland Adventure Program in Bronston and Woodlawn in Danville, before ending with a supper at Parksville.

The bikers, Corvette Club members and a special offering at Junction City First combined to contribute \$4,095 for abused, abandoned and neglected children being cared for by Kentucky Baptists' childcare agency.

Sunrise currently cares for more than 650

children—83 of whom are at the Bronston and Danville facilities.

"The turnout was great," Sergeant reported. "Our sanctuary seats a little over 350 and there was not an empty seat in the house" for a service at Junction City that featured Sunrise's president, Dale Suttles.

"We used our creative ministry team to do a painting during the service that sold in a silent auction afterward for \$500," he added.

While the turnout was good and the amount raised was great, the most impactful event of the ride was when the motorcycles thundered onto the Sunrise campuses and the riders saw the faces of the children looking on in amazement, Sergeant said. "To be able to go to the campus and spend time with the children, to let them look at the bikes and sit in the Corvettes, is an action of love that communicates to these kids that they are cared about, valued and loved," he added.

Lawrence agreed, "The heart of these bikers, joined with two churches, were shining examples of God's amazing love for

□ See Ride & Shine ... Page 3

More than 100 participants riding 55 bikes rolled into the Woodlawn campus of Sunrise Children's Services, June 7. These bikers, Corvette Club members and donors at the Junction City First Baptist Church contributed nearly \$4,000 to Sunrise. A half a dozen boys waved signs welcoming "Ride & Shine" participants to the Danville facility, see photo page 3. (Photo by Cindy Young)



Boys living at the Navaisha Children's Shelter in Kenya are rescued from life on the streets and reoriented into family life during their time at the shelter. (Navaisha Children's Shelter photo)

Ky. churches called to help homeless kids in Kenya

By Robin Cornet

Naivasha, Kenya—At first glance, the little shop looks like many others that line the streets of Naivasha, Kenya. Once a shipping container, it has since been transformed into a small business. It is unique not for what is inside, but for what lies underneath.

Just a few months ago, 10 boys were seen emerging from the tiny gap between the shop and the ground each morning. They were living in a burrow under the container, sleeping on old cardboard boxes and working by collecting and

selling charcoal.

Today, the boys are living in the Naivasha Children's Shelter near Nairobi, transitioning from life on the streets to life as part of a family again.

"Connecting this with the right churches could make a significant kingdom impact, as well as offer the compassion of Christ to those orphaned or abandoned on the streets of Nairobi."

KBC Disaster Relief Director
Coy Webb

The situation the children face is common in Kenya. They struggle to survive on the streets. They may be beaten, abused, become addicted to drugs, and sometimes go days without food.

The Naivasha Children's

Shelter seeks to reach out to homeless children with the light of the gospel. Director Kristen Sayres said the facility

□ See Homeless kids... Page 3

Are 'Nones' really open to variety of denominations?

By Ken Walker

Nashville, Tenn.—Americans have a surprising openness to Christian churches, even those who are supposedly turned off to religion, a new survey from LifeWay Research shows.

No matter which denomination is in the name of a church, fewer than half the nonreligious say "it's not for

me." Their views are more favorable than unfavorable toward a wide range of faiths—Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Assemblies of God, and non-denominational.

These findings, based on a new survey of denominational opinions by LifeWay Research, may come as a surprise to those who've seen recent headlines.

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Bob Downs Invitational partners with Habitat for Humanity Baptist houses

By Myriah Snyder

Louisville—Five years ago, the Habitat for Humanity "Baptist House" was in jeopardy. With the economic downturn, some Baptist churches had to dial back their budget, decreasing donations to Habitat for Humanity. At the same time, the Bob Downs Golf Invitational, part of St. Matthew's Baptist Church of Louisville's golf ministry, was "looking for somebody to partner with."

"We had tried some different things, but we just weren't happy," David Garrard, St. Matthew's minister to children and Bob Downs Invitational coordinator, said.

The team at Habitat was discussing the fate of the Baptist house project in light of the funding shortfall, Garrard said. "Then we walked through the door and asked, 'You guys interested in a partnership with us?'"

He continued, "It was really an answer to prayer on both ends, because we were looking for a worthy partner in a faith-based ministry, and Habitat was at a crossroads in terms of what they were going to do."

"Without the Bob Downs Invitational, we would not have the Baptist Habitat House right now," Conway Stone, a member of Broadway Baptist Church in Louisville and Baptist House sponsor and project leader, said.

"In 1998, I got tired of talking about my faith. I decided I was going to do something," Stone said. "I called up Habitat and asked, 'What does it take to be an official sponsor of a Habitat house?'"

At that time, if someone raised \$18,000, Habitat for Humanity would match it, and one could be an official

sponsor of a Habitat house, he recalled.

"I got my church, the Kentucky Baptist Convention, and another small group to give \$2,000, and that got me started," Stone recounted.

He continued to secure donations from Louisville-area churches and eventually raised funding for the Baptist House.

Today, it takes a \$47,000 donation, with a matching contribution by Habitat for Humanity, to build a house. In July, Habitat will hold a dedication service for its 22nd Baptist House.

"This year Bob Downs contributed \$20,000 to the Baptist Habitat house. Our churches have donated about \$20,000, and we had \$7,000 left over from the previous year," Stone said.

"My goal in the future is to get four churches who can give \$5,000 a year to Habitat, eight churches who can give \$3,000 a year to Habitat, and I'm counting on the Bob Downs Invitational to give \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year," he added.

Stone hopes to be able to build 30 total Baptist Habitat houses.

Over the last five years, the Bob Downs Invitational has contributed approximately \$100,000 to the Baptist Habitat house. The Bob Downs Invitational is played on the Monday after Derby at the Big Spring Country Club each year.

Garrard said that he hopes that other churches across the state will join in the Habitat House initiative and begin Bob Downs Invitational golf tournaments. Stone's vision is also for Baptist churches in other Kentucky cities to see the opportunity to start their own Baptist houses.

"It's certainly not the only thing that Habitat does, but it is one of the cool things they do," Garrard commented. "It

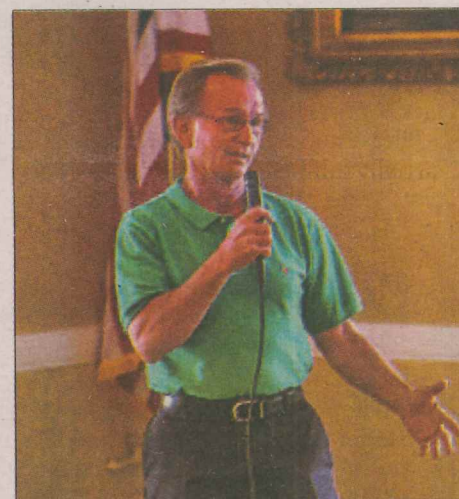


is an example of cooperation. None of us could build that house by ourselves, but with a lot of people giving, it happens."

"What we've discovered is that Habitat has an excellent reputation, so as we go out into the community and ask for people to sponsor our tournament, even though we're faith based and even though Habitat is faith based, people say yes," Garrard said.

Those interested in donating to or participating in the next Bob Downs Invitational can contact Garrard at david@smbclouisville.org. (WR)

Top, Charlie Edmiston lines up a putt. Right, legendary jockey Pat Day spoke at dinner.



WMU leader: 'Kids deserve better than garbage bags'



Eighty-two representatives from 12 churches in the Shelby Baptist Association attended a May 21 mission event featuring Sunrise Children's Services. Highland Baptist in Shelbyville hosted the mission supper, where Women's Missionary Union attendees contributed 95 suitcases, duffel bags, travel bags or totes, plus \$130—all to help children served by the nonprofit ministry to abused, abandoned and victimized children. Sunrise has been affiliated with Kentucky Baptists since 1869 (Photo by Jacinta Newsome).

Shelbyville—Foster kids deserve better than carrying their belongings in plastic bags, said a women's missions leader.

"They already feel like garbage being forced out of their homes, but then to put all their stuff in a garbage bag—I'm sure it affects their self-esteem," said Sharon Cissell, missions consultant with Shelby Baptist Association Woman's Missionary Union.

The Shelby WMU collected nearly 100 suitcases, travel bags and totes at an annual missions celebration held May 21. The items were donated as part of the "Give a Duffel Bag" campaign at Sunrise Children's Services.

The women also gave Sunrise a \$130 gift to help even more at-risk children.

Eighty-two leaders of the Women's Missionary Union in Kentucky attended the mission supper that featured Sunrise's ministry to abused, abandoned and victimized children across Kentucky.

Nearly half of the churches in the Shelby

Baptist Association sent representatives to the event, at which seven Kentucky Baptist leaders spoke: Joy Bolton, executive director/treasurer of Kentucky WMU; Susan Bryant, president of Kentucky WMU; Betty Montfort, WMU director for Shelby Baptist Association; Tony Hough, director of missions for Shelby Association; Sharon Cissell, WMU consultant for Shelby Association; and Chris Platt, pastor of Highland Baptist Church.

"Last night, more than 600 children slept in a Sunrise bed, and most came to us carrying everything they own in plastic bags," said Randy Greene, Sunrise's vice president for marketing and advancement.

Greene said the gifts will help children have "more personal dignity as they travel."

Only about 12 percent of Sunrise's 1,200 duffel bag goal has been met. To participate in the ongoing campaign, visit online at https://www.sunrise.org/cs_cause/give-a-duffel-bag.



Smith to be nominated for KBC president

By Todd Deaton

Louisville—Kevin Smith, teaching pastor of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, will be nominated as president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention when the KBC annual meeting convenes Nov. 10 in Elizabethtown.

Smith, who became the first African-American elected as first vice president of the KBC in 2006, will be nominated by Lincoln Bingham, senior pastor of St. Paul Baptist Church at Shively Heights. If elected, Smith would make history again as the first African-American to hold the office of KBC president.

"Kevin Smith is a Baptist statesman on a national and statewide level. He is a tested leader who loves the bride of Christ," Bingham said, in announcing his nomination. "Smith is a champion for holistic reconciliation, church revitalization, evangelism and missions.

"I believe our convention is ready for an African-American president," he said.

In 2006, when Kevin Smith was elected as first vice president, "my joy was partially fulfilled," said Bingham, who in the 1970s joined the KBC's newly formed department of interracial cooperation, tasked with promoting close and more effective cooperation between white and black Baptists in Kentucky.

"Please notice my words, I said, 'Partially fulfilled,'" he continued. "Now, I pray, in the spirit of the apostle Paul, that the Lord fulfills my joy with this nomination (for KBC president)," said the race-relations pioneer who for more than three decades has traveled to the state with a message of racial unity and biblical equality.

Smith has served on Highview's staff since 2013, and he has been assistant professor of Christian preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary since 2006.

"Pastor Kevin Smith is clearly an outstanding preacher, engaging the entire congregation as he teaches the Word," said his colleague Jeff Goodyear, adult discipleship pastor at Highview.

"His love and respect for the local church are rivaled only by his passion to reach into the community," Goodyear added. "He leads his church by example, personally investing his time to mentor

young people in our local schools and seeking out ways to connect with men who do not yet know Christ."

Previously, Smith was pastor of Watson Memorial Baptist Church, also in Louisville.

During his tenure, he led that congregation into the Kentucky Baptist Convention, and he since has been active on various KBC committees and task forces. He also has served on various SBC committees and as a conference speaker.

"I am honored to be nominated for KBC president by Dr. Lincoln Bingham. He has been a personal inspiration in his efforts for Christ's people to be united across lines of division," Smith said.

"Also, he was my family's pastor before I began to pastor in Kentucky," Smith added. Smith said his desire as KBC president would be to encourage pastors and other Christian workers across the commonwealth.

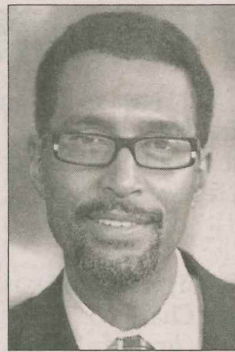
"I think Kentucky Baptists are blessed with a wonderful Mission Board staff and some enthusiastic directors of missions, and other pastors in our associations," he said. "If elected, I would like to spend my time encouraging pastors to make sure they have healthy relationships to strengthen them as they deal with the challenges of ministry.

"Specifically, I want to make sure they are aware of resources God has provided for them, in our Mission Board, our associations, and other pastors," he said.

Smith, who is working toward a Ph.D. from Southern Seminary, is a graduate Hampton University and the Church of God Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Pat, have three adult children.

Highview Baptist Church in Louisville gave \$65,000 to the Kentucky Baptist Convention in 2014 through the Cooperative Program and \$55,000 to the Indiana Baptist Convention through the Cooperative Program from its undesignated receipts of \$5,474,903, or a total of 2.19 percent. The church also reported 67 baptisms on the 2014 ACP.

The KBC annual meeting will be held Nov. 10 at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown. (WR)



Kevin Smith

Daviess-McLean DOM to be nominated as KBC president

By Todd Deaton

Owensboro—Jerry Tooley, first vice president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, will be nominated for KBC president when Kentucky Baptists gather at Elizabethtown's Severns Valley Baptist Church on Nov. 10.

Tooley will be nominated by a fellow director of missions, Rick Hatley of Pulaski Baptist Association. He is the second announced candidate for the office.

"Jerry (Tooley) is a member of First Baptist Church of Owensboro, a strong giver to the Cooperative Program, and a strong supporter of Annie Armstrong, Lottie Moon, and Eliza Broadus missions offerings," Hatley said in announcing his nomination.

"He is a longtime Kentucky Baptist, and he is doing a great job as director of missions in Daviess-McLean Baptist Association," Hatley said, also noting that Tooley served on the search committee that brought Paul Chitwood to the KBC's executive director position.

In addition to serving Daviess-McLean Baptists since 1999, Tooley has been a trustee of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, two-time chairman of the KBC's business and finance committee, and a member of the KBC administrative committee.

A graduate of Cumberland College and Southern Baptist Theological

Seminary, he also served as executive team pastor leader for the Ohio Valley Will Graham Celebration in April.

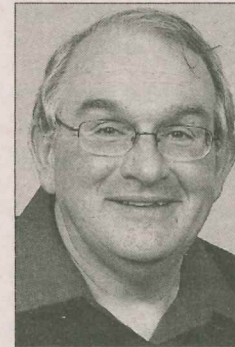
Prior to becoming director of missions, Tooley held several Kentucky pastorates, including Woodbine Baptist Church, Round Top Baptist Church in Elizabethtown, Millville Baptist Church in Frankfort, and Bellfield Baptist Church in Henderson.

"Through my personal ministry and service to the convention, I have learned to love and appreciate the convention, and I would be honored to serve, if Kentucky Baptists were to elect me as president," Tooley said.

Tooley said his focus as president would be to help Chitwood and the convention staff to connect with and engage Kentucky Baptist churches.

"We are making progress in this area, and I would like to help that continue and flourish," he said. "I would like to be a listening ear and a clear voice for those who don't always get to serve on the Mission Board or come to the annual meetings, but who continue their great support of the Cooperative Program."

Total Cooperative Program receipts in 2013-14 for First Baptist Church of Owensboro were \$207,817 of its undesignated receipts of \$2,375,602, or 8.75 percent. The church reported 19 baptisms in 2014 on the Annual Church Profile. (WR)



Jerry Tooley



Ride & Shine

Continued from page 1

children. What a blessing to work together as a fellowship of believers for the good of those boys and young men."

The event also turned out to be a unique affinity evangelism opportunity as a large portion of the bikers were from secular motorcycle clubs, the two pastors noted.

"The evangelism aspect of Ride and Shine communicated the gospel louder and more effective than any Sunday morning sermon," Sergeant said. "The community sees the motorcycles and hears them roaring out of the church

parking lot, and they know that God is doing something there, and they come wanting to be a part of it."

During the Junction City worship service, Suttles shared Sunrise's story with about 250 church members and bikers.

"What a wonderful day it was and what a beautiful picture to paint, having two churches come together, having bikers and car enthusiasts all participate in something very special for very special children," Suttles said. "What a successful day!"

To sponsor an event supporting Sunrise, contact Randy Greene, Sunrise's vice president for marketing and advancement. (WR)

Homeless kids

Continued from page 1

houses about 40 boys at a time, allowing them to stay for about one year while they prepare to return to a family setting. In that year, they're engaged in sports programs, skills training, education and counseling.

"Our mission is to rescue children from the streets and provide them with the love, care, guidance and support they need to become productive and responsible members of society," Sayres said. To help with that, Sayres is reaching out to churches in Kentucky, asking them to consider a partnership that could allow the shelter to help more children.

Kentucky Baptist Convention Disaster Relief Director Coy Webb supports Sayres'

outreach to churches.

"I think that connecting this with the right churches could make a significant kingdom impact, as well as offer the compassion of Christ to those orphaned or abandoned on the streets of Nairobi," Webb said.

Specifically, mission teams are needed to direct sports and discipleship camps, provide mentoring sessions and skills training and, more importantly, to share the gospel with the boys and their families. Churches also can get involved in sponsoring a boy to ensure his education and care in the home. It costs about \$100 per month to provide care for a child at the home. Contact the KBC's Missions Mobilization Team at (502) 489-3399 for more information about how churches can join in this Great Commission task in Kenya. (KBC)

Why go to Columbus?

As Southern Baptists gather in Columbus, Ohio, for this year's annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, I'll be in attendance. With plenty else to do, why use the time and money for a trip to Columbus?

First, I go to the SBC because I believe in the Great Commission work of Southern Baptists, and the annual meeting provides an opportunity to learn about that work and show my support for it. Hearing reports from our convention leaders and the heads of our agencies and institutions allows us to be more connected to and supportive of cooperative mission efforts.

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

Second, I go to the SBC because I still believe in the Cooperative Program, and the annual gathering of Southern Baptists to celebrate CP-funded ministries is essential to its future. Some tend to undervalue the CP because they believe they can have a greater impact by supporting missionaries directly or they believe that every penny of our missions offerings should be used exclusively overseas.

In my estimation, that is a shortsighted and immature understanding of the missionary enterprise. Overseas missionaries not only need a salary and housing allowance, they also need the logistical support of a home office, the advantage of a theological education, the benefit of dedicated servants working on their behalf back at home to promote their ministry and raise the funds necessary to keep them on the field, accountants to process the funds, ministries that strengthen their sending churches, etc.

Moreover, the Great Commission isn't exclusively an assignment for a plane trip to another continent. For example, college and university campuses in Kentucky include 8,500 students from other countries. And, in Louisville alone, there are 109 language groups among students in the public schools. Across the state, there are 116 language groups from among the nations and over 200,000 Kentucky residents who speak a language other than English in their homes.

Are the Kentucky Baptist Convention's CP-supported Baptist Campus Ministries, international church planting efforts, and evangelistic initiatives targeting the various ethnic groups in Kentucky authentic Great Commission ministries? Absolutely! And the hundreds upon hundreds of churches that sacrificially invest in cooperative mission work through the Kentucky Baptist Convention know that to be the case.

Third, I go to the SBC because I still believe in Southern Baptist doctrine and value being part of a denomination with doctrinal standards in place. The annual meeting is where those doctrinal standards are affirmed and championed.

Paul warned Timothy, "The time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine" (2 Tim 4:3). That time has surely come. Threats to sound doctrine are more numerous than can be counted but some threats are obviously more pressing than others. Today, the Bible's teaching on gender, homosexuality and marriage are under intense attack in the world and, sadly, in some of the more liberal segments of the church. The prosperity gospel and the charismatic movement, often one and the same, pose another potentially lethal attack on Bible doctrine as they confuse the good news either with worldly success or emotional exuberance and ecstatic utterances. These doctrinal distortions typically mitigate God's grace as they gravitate toward a works-based salvation that is always in jeopardy of being lost.

For the most part, Southern Baptists fit within the broad framework of the evangelical movement. But while I thank God for other evangelicals who share a commitment to the Great Commission, I am first and foremost a Baptist, rather than an evangelical. If I had only one gathering to attend besides the annual family reunion of Kentucky Baptists, it would always be the assembly of our Southern Baptist family.

Paul Chitwood is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

'Faith of our fathers' on display here

Sunday we honor our fathers, and I have something of a Father's Day story to share. Not only did my family celebrate two graduations and the start of our daughter's career in the past few weeks, but I finally discovered who I am. And it's only taken 50 years!

Up until now, my family could only trace our Deaton roots back to my great-grandfather, Charlie C. Deaton, who grew up in Mooresville, N.C. My grandfather died when my Dad was 13 years old, and Dad had visited just a handful of his uncles and aunts long ago. After that, the trail went cold.

Then, I found a genealogical document online that mentioned my great-grandfather's name and that of his father. Suddenly, a path was lit all the way back to the first Deaton to set foot on American soil in 1701 in Virginia—75 years before the birth of our country.

I was surprised to learn that there was a town called Deatonville. Though little more than a crossroads today, it once played a role in General Lee's retreat before the Confederates surrendered at Appomattox. And, we have distant ties to some of the Deatons of East Kentucky and to the early pioneer families of Texas.

My curiosity sparked, I began also researching my mother's Watts lineage. Some of our Watts and Deaton family members had fought on both sides in the Revolutionary War—one was a notorious Tory—and some of the epic battles of the Civil War, such as Manassas. I learned that Papa Watts fought in some horrific confrontations against Nazi forces in the Italian Campaign during World War II, though he'd never speak of it.

I now have a sense of my family heritage and a growing appreciation for how we got to where we are



After Thought

By Todd Deaton

today. Why do I share all this with you? Knowing our heritage—both familial and spiritual—and having an understanding of the events, cultural forces, beliefs and values which shaped our fathers' lives and, in turn, our own—are important in keeping us anchored for the future.

This December, the Western Recorder will observe its 190th year of service, tracing its denominational heritage back to 1825—a decade before the birth of the Kentucky Baptist Convention itself. And, it occurred to me that along with telling the news of Kentucky

Baptists today, an important function of the Western Recorder is writing our Baptist story for future generations of Kentuckians.

On the Western Recorder's pages, we are reminded of who we are as Kentucky Baptists; we meet our leaders and forefathers in the faith and see how their beliefs of cooperation and missions have shaped our lives; and we gain an appreciation for how we got to where we are

today. We discover our on-mission stories, our dreams, our hopes, our goals, our struggles, and see how God has been faithfully at work among us, blessing the work of Kentucky Baptist churches through the years. And, these all serve to anchor us today and chart a course for tomorrow.

Let me invite you to discover and be a part of Kentucky Baptists' ongoing story—His story. See how God is at work in and through Kentucky Baptists. Gain a deeper appreciation of our rich heritage of being on mission together, taking the gospel to the nations. Subscribe to the Western Recorder. Provide the Baptist state newspaper for your church members, and help them understand and appreciate who we are as Southern Baptists, and tell your story of how God is working among our churches today and continuing to bless Kentucky Baptists.

Father's Day ideas for your child

"The glory of children is their fathers"—and words like hero and dad. Print the puzzle and tie with ribbon.

Billy Graham said, "A good father is one of the most unsung, unpraised, unnoticed, and yet one of the most valuable assets in our society." Help your children show love with these ideas:

High school or college age

■ Write a heartfelt, handwritten letter to Dad, listing things you admire about him. Be very specific.

■ Find photos of you and Dad—one as a baby or young child, and one of you two this year and frame together.

■ Take Dad to lunch—just the two of you—your treat! Be intentional about sharing your heart and goals. Take a selfie with him, and proudly post it on Instagram or Facebook.

Middle school age

■ Use a free word search websites to personalize a word search about your dad. List traits you admire, nicknames, hobbies, favorite things,

Fresh Ideas



Diana Davis

and words like hero and dad. Print the puzzle and tie with ribbon.

■ Take a great photo with your dad. Make a 2x3 print for his billfold, with a "love you" note on the back.

■ Kidnap Dad and take him out for breakfast. Ask questions about his childhood and his work. Ask him about how he came to know God. Tell Dad things you love about him.

Elementary age

■ Blow up balloons and write one thing you love and appreciate about Dad on each. Fill a small room, such as dad's closet, with balloons. Or tape them around his workbench or desk.

■ Ask Mom to help plan a special outing—just for Dad and you—such as go-cart racing, fishing or a ball game.

■ Write a simple poem about Dad. Add a Scripture, such as 1 Corinthians 16:13, Joshua 24:15b, Ephesians 6:2a.

Preschool age

■ Mom, make a list of questions, ranging from silly to serious, to ask your child about Daddy, such as "Cooper, what do you love most about dad," "how much does dad weigh" or "what does daddy do that makes you laugh?" Make a little booklet of the answers.

■ Simple handmade coupons make a sweet gift. Be creative with promises, such as grilling assistant, foot massage, a race down the sidewalk and back.

■ An older preschooler might enjoy setting up a simple treasure hunt for Dad, with a small gift at the end.

■ Make it a meal to remember. Prepare a fabulous meal of Dad's very favorite foods on Father's Day. Whether it's a cookout or an indoor feast, involve the kids in its preparation. Before the meal, allow each child to pray, thanking God for one specific thing about their dad.

Mother's Day is often celebrated well, but since God's word instructs us to honor our father and mother, why not go all out to help your kids celebrate God's gift of a dad?

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Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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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.

In leadership, character trumps everything—Part 1

By Jeff Christopherson

When it comes to leading a church, especially a new church, character trumps everything.

A careful observation through the history of almost any city demonstrates that the single greatest source of a catastrophic implosion by a church plant (and the further emanations over the landscape) comes not from imperfect theology but from deficient character.

Our most lofty public preaching does not have sufficient long-term lift to overcome the enormous gravitational pull found in our personal brokenness. Sin, however carefully concealed, will more accurately describe the dark nature of our real theology than will our well-rehearsed creeds and confessions. And worse, the swath of casualties hemorrhaging from deficient character broadens as one's leadership's influence grows.

It should be instructive to realize that the word "belief" in the New Testament is not a noun, but a verb. We can never own a belief—we only can live a belief. Our best theology is never truly believed until it is first integrated into our daily lifestyle. However we slice it, our character reveals the true nature of our

theology.

Implicit in Jesus' call to discipleship is a call to personally take on His character. When Jesus issued a fresh charge to His pre-disciples with these celebrated words, "follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17), He was with one breath describing both His kingdom assignment and the only process that makes that assignment possible: "Follow me" always precedes "fishers of men."

FIRST PERSON

Taking on the responsibility of leading the charge for disciple-making without first allowing the character of Christ to transform our personal brokenness can only lead to an unhappy ending. Conversely, the character necessary for multiplying true disciples of Jesus grows directly in proportion to our personal follow-ship of Jesus.

This pattern of "following me" and newly derived "character" is revealed when Jesus declared, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

This "light of life" is the very authentication of our character as we follow and therefore resemble our King. The process of following Jesus is the only spiritual discipline that can transform the darkness of our broken

character into the very image of Christ Himself.

So what does the character of Christ actually look like?

Reflecting on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount we see a three-dimensional picture of kingdom character that warrants a lifetime of study and personal application. John observed firsthand that kingdom character and the glory of God were displayed in Jesus through the perfect blending of two spiritual realities—"grace" and "truth."

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

Grace and truth eternally and inextricably fused together. In Jesus, grace and truth were not a balanced duo nor one moderated by the other, but both dished out lavishly and unreservedly toward an undeserving humanity.

It was as extraordinary a sight in the first century as it is in the 21st—the very character of our eternal Father fleshed out before us in the person of Jesus Christ. All grace. All truth. (BP)

Jeff Christopherson is vice president for the North American Mission Board's Canada region and its Send City Network.

Real estate gifts

By Laurie Valentine

Do you own a vacation home or other real estate you no longer want to use or manage? And, have you been thinking about making a legacy gift to your church or other charitable cause? If your answer to both questions is "yes," consider using that real estate to accomplish your legacy giving objectives.

An outright charitable gift of real estate that has appreciated in value can provide double benefits—an immediate income tax deduction equal to the current market value of the property and avoidance of the capital gains tax you would owe if you sold the property.

If the property's value has depreciated, a sale of it by you followed by a gift of all or a portion of the sale proceeds to charity may provide both a charitable contribution tax deduction and a capital loss deduction on your income tax return.

If you are not comfortable with giving up the full value of the real estate, a bargain sale to charity may be the answer. With a bargain sale you agree to sell the real estate to the charity for less than its current market value. The transaction is part charitable gift (the difference between the market value and the sale price) and part sale (the difference between the sale price and your cost basis in the property). You recognize capital gains on the sale portion of the transaction, but only for the difference between your cost basis in the property and the actual sale price. A charitable deduction is allowed for the value of the gift portion of the transaction.



Advice for newly-weds

By James Stillwell

Q: My nephew is getting married this month. Any words of advice I should pass along?

A: A generation ago, the Bee Gees sang, "It's only words, and words are all I have to take your heart away." You could paraphrase that from scripture to say to all marrying couples: be careful of your words. Here are words of advice for couples, along with scriptural support:

1) Don't set up cycles of negativity by complaining about your spouse to others. "He who guards his mouth and tongue keeps himself from troubles"—Proverbs 21:23.

2) The grass is greener on the side of the fence where you water it. "Rejoice with the wife of your youth."—Proverbs 5:18.

3) Own your reactions and feelings. There are no winners in the "blame game." "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others more significant than yourselves."—Philippians 2:3.

4) Make fun experiences a priority. "Count it all joy"—James 1:2.

5) Use "I messages" instead of "You messages." "Encourage and build up one another."—1 Thessalonians 5:11.

6) Get on the same page financially. "Count the cost."—Luke 14:28.

7) Question your assumptions. "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt."—Colossians 4:6.

8) If necessary to speak difficult words, ask for permission to share first. "Consider how to provoke unto love."—Hebrews 10:24.

9) Patience and flexibility go a long way. "The fruit of the Spirit is patience."—Galatians 5:22.

10) Bend over backwards to love and support one another. "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ."—Philippians 2:5.



'And To Think That I Saw It...'

By Terri Stovall

Theodore Geisel, better known as Dr. Seuss, penned the lines of his first book, "And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street," 75 years ago:

*When I leave home to walk to school,
Dad always says to me, "Marco, Keep your eyelids up and see what you can see."*

In 1940, the world, presumably, did not have as many distractions as we do today. There was no television, Internet, emails, smartphones or texting. But many years ago, Dr. Seuss gave us a reminder not to go through life with eyes focused down, but to look up and "see what you can see."

On a trip to a Florida amusement park, I watched as parents missed their children's eyes light up over the wonder because their heads were down, checking their phones. I saw preteens and teens go through entire attractions with heads down, texting, playing games, Instagramming and Snapchatting, dulling the memories their families hoped to create.

Children were placated while standing in line, playing games and watching videos. "Dad, can I see your phone?" they would say. "Mom, give me your iPad!"

I watched hundreds of people stand shoulder-to-shoulder and watch a fireworks display through the screens of their iPhones. Meanwhile, children's squeals of delight went unacknowledged. We have become a culture—a people—who keep our eyes focused more on our devices than those near us. Marketers have

recognized the phenomenon that technology has overtaken our lives. On Apple's website, the new iWatch is promoted as a representation of "a new chapter in the relationship people have with technology."

Have we bought into the belief that we can build "relationship" through technology? Do we validate our worth based on the number of "likes" we get on a Facebook post?

Do we go through withdrawals if we don't always have our phones with us and get frustrated if the Internet connection is slow?

Do we keep our eyes focused downward more than upward, missing what is right in front of us?

I am an avid user of technology. It is helpful to me in my work. I like staying connected to my family and, yes, I do check Facebook daily. But as I watch what is happening around me, I have become convicted that I need to "keep my eyelids up and see what (and who) I can see." And because this is a daily battle for me, living and working in a technologically driven world, I keep reminders constantly before me. Among them:

1. Being willing to disconnect for a time. I turn off email, choose not to check Facebook, and essentially disconnect for periods of time. Disconnecting periodically helps keep in perspective the role technology should have in my life.

2. Pondering in my heart more than instant sharing with the world. Mary, Jesus' mother, experienced and saw so much, especially in the first

years of motherhood. But, we read that she pondered all this in her heart. There are experiences we will have and memories created that should be cherished and held close to ourselves and those we love.

3. Keeping people first and technology second. Technology is wonderful and extremely helpful in our lives today. But, when I am with family or friends, I want to be careful not to communicate that my phone or device is more important than they are. That text message or email will be there later.

4. Relationships are best built through face-to-face communication. Look up. Who do you see? Yes, I can use technology to communicate facts and information, but I do not see a tear, hear excitement in a voice or give a reassuring touch through a device. That only comes by talking to, being with, and seeing a person in the moment.

At the end of Mulberry Street, Dr. Seuss writes:

Dad looked at me sharply and pulled at his chin. He frowned at me sternly from there in his seat, "Was there nothing to look at... no people to greet? Did nothing excite you or make your heart beat?"

When I one day meet God face to face, I wonder if He will ask the same thing. Will He look at me and point out the people that I missed, the opportunities that marched past me, the relationships that are still too shallow, and a passion never discovered all because I had my head down and never saw what there was to see? (BP)

FIRST PERSON

Heard it through the 'Grapevine': Revitalization in progress at Madisonville church

Madisonville—Grapevine Baptist Church, near Madisonville is showing early signs of revitalization.

Known as a strong Kentucky Baptist congregation in the West Region, Grapevine is 82 years old. In 1995 the average worship attendance was 225, with 149 people in Sunday School. Ten years later the church was experiencing growth under the leadership of Pastor Jeff Hendricks.

Grapevine grew to an average Sunday worship attendance of 400. According to current Pastor Bob Morrison, then director of missions for Little Bethel Association, "Jeff was their anchor pastor to help the church move forward."

But after Jeff left for another ministry, the church did not continue to grow but became plateaued. By 2012 worship attendance was back down to around 300. By the fall of 2013, it had dropped even further to around 250 worshippers.

Today, however, things are looking better. Average worship attendance for the first quarter of 2015 has been 550 people, with attendance reaching a peak of 600.

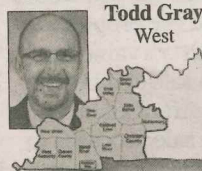
Sunday School, however, is not keeping pace with worship attendance because of a lack of classroom space. Giving is keeping pace with worship, and the church has plans to build a new worship center.

So why are things looking up at Grapevine? How can a church that was statistically stagnant for the previous 10 years be experiencing signs of new life?

Ultimately, the reason for growth and high morale in the congregation is that God appears to be at work at Grapevine, and its staff and membership are working along with Him.

Following are some things that the church has done differently in the past 16 months:

Regional SPOTLIGHT



Todd Gray
West

1. They called a new pastor. Bob Morrison, former director of missions for Little Bethel Baptist Association, became pastor of Grapevine in October 2013. He was familiar with the church after serving as DOM for 21 years. He could see the church's potential and had relationships with many members. He came with a vision of what the church could become.

2. They dealt with potential conflict. Morrison's call as pastor followed a pastor who left after a disappointing ministry.

Morrison, after accepting the call to pastor Grapevine Church, addressed the potential for conflict following the ministry of the former pastor by telling the congregation: "You have stories, I don't want to hear them, and you don't need to tell them, let's move on."

It seems that this clear leadership was all that was needed to unite the congregation toward forward momentum and unified vision. They have moved on.

3. They strengthened staff relations. Morrison maintains a positive atmosphere in the office complex with the staff. They eat lunch together almost daily and bring in food and treats to share with one another. Morale is way up in the office and the staff members are developing an even greater trust.

4. They sought the presence of God. Recently Morrison led the church through a two part series of sermons to seek the presence of God in a worship service and come to church the next week having prayed earnestly for God's presence in the service.

The visible evidence of God's presence was that the next Sunday they had 48 professions of faith in the morning service and 21 more in an evening service, with others being saved in the following week. The church celebrated this movement of God with a mass baptism.



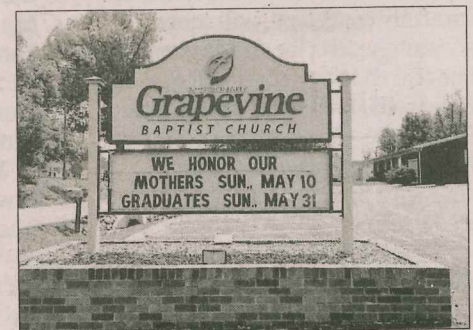
The result of improving the worship service has been that members are bringing family and friends. Pastor Bob Morrison says, "Our church is growing right now because our church members are proud to bring people with them." They are bringing six to eight new families each Sunday.

5. They improved their worship service. Worship at Grapevine is a 75-minute celebration, start to finish. Worship services at Grapevine have become even more worshipful and intentional. They worship from the minute the service begins until the invitation ends. Announcements and offering collection happen after all else is completed.

The result of improving the worship service has been that members are bringing family and friends. Morrison says, "Our church is growing right now because our church members are proud to bring people with them." They are bringing six to eight new families each Sunday.

6. They developed a men's prayer ministry. There are 20 men from Grapevine involved in an organized prayer effort. Two take responsibility for praying over the Sunday service each week. They pray over every pew, every Sunday School room, the pulpit, and during the service. Before the service begins they find Morrison and pray over him.

7. They practice intentional evangelism. The church practices event evangelism with events such as wild game suppers, women and children's events, and



special holiday programs. Guests who participate become prospects for the church's outreach and follow-up ministry.

Members also do a great job with side-door ministries, such as Upward Basketball, with all the staff being heavily involved in the success of these ministries.

8. They have a new vision. Grapevine is responding to God's activity by promoting plans for a 1,000-seat sanctuary. Plans have been drawn up, and the church is now seeking funding.

Grapevine is clearly showing early signs of church revitalization. Pastor Morrison, the church staff, and its members give all credit and glory to God for recent events in the life of the church and the desire to stay unified and moving forward as God blesses their ministry. (WR)

'Love the Grind:' Calipari quote becomes Allen church's theme

By Paul Badgett

Allen—An Eastern Kentucky church is taking a page out of University of Kentucky's Coach John Calipari's book. Members of the growing congregation of Allen Baptist Church have adopted as their theme, "Love the Grind," a phrase borrowed from "Players First."

Allen Baptists' strategic plan calls for a team approach as they move toward the beginning of a new church calendar year.

"The plan's design is not everybody doing everything, but that everybody does something," said Pastor Timothy Searcy.

Church leadership describes the plan as "Christ-centered and financially stable." The plan involves leadership teams for all areas of church life that are accountable to the church, reporting on

a monthly basis at business meetings.

The mission statement of the church is to carry out the Great Commandments and the Great Commission.

Objectives to be accomplished include the following:

■ **Worship:** Lead people to love God with all their heart, mind, soul and strength.

■ **Ministry:** Lead people to love their neighbor as themselves

■ **Evangelism:** Lead people to make disciples.

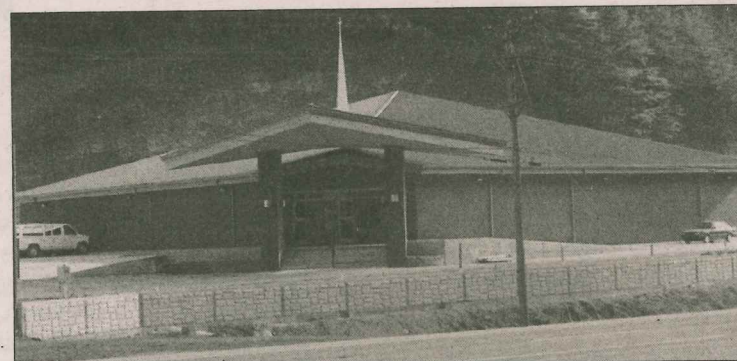
■ **Missions:** Lead people to make

disciples of all nations

■ **Discipleship:** Lead people to do all things that Christ has commanded.

■ **Fellowship:** Lead people to identify with Christ and His church through baptism.

During this past year, the church has experienced growth. Jody Conley, worship team leader, reported that



During this past year, the church has experienced growth. Jody Conley, worship team leader, reported that church attendance was up over 50 percent, and giving has increased by nearly 20 percent.

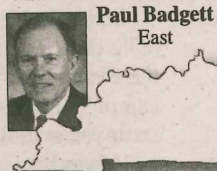
church attendance was up over 50 percent, and giving has increased by nearly 20 percent.

"We have seen the addition of 43 members lately, and we have two more on the way," Searcy added.

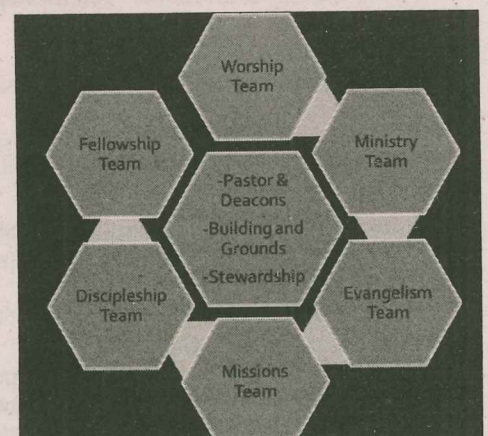
Located in a convenient location, near an intersection of U.S. 23 and Highway 80, the current worship center was constructed under the leadership of long term pastor, Arnold Turner.

Allen Baptist is having a "fresh encounter" with the Lord, as they accept His invitation to be a church on mission with Him. (WR)

Regional SPOTLIGHT



Paul Badgett
East





Education for Time
and Eternity

What is OBI?

Oneida Baptist Institute is a fully accredited Christian boarding school for grades 6-12.

OBI was founded in 1899 by James Anderson Burns.

Oneida is a mission field

OBI began as a school for children of the Eastern Kentucky mountains. We still welcome commuting students, many of whom carry on a family tradition by coming to Oneida.

Approximately one-third of our students are from Kentucky. About 47% come from other states and another 20% are internationals.

Oneida is a place where local, state, North American and international missions are happening—all at the same time.

Annual offering

This is the 20th year for Kentucky Baptist churches to observe the Father's Day Offering for Oneida Baptist Institute.

Would you like to contact us?

Oneida Baptist Institute
P.O. Box 67
Oneida, KY 40972

(606) 847-4111
Tours available; call to schedule a visit.

Visit our website at:
www.oneidaschool.org

2015 Father's Day Offering for...

Oneida Baptist Institute

Meet some of OBI's graduating Class of 2015

Luke grew mentally, socially, physically, spiritually



Smaller classes helped Luke excel. Daily chapel services and a Christian environment led to his decision for Christ.

Luke grew up in central Kentucky and enrolled at OBI the summer after eighth grade. His mother heard about OBI from a friend who had sent her son here. "My parents figured the way I was going, I wouldn't do well at the high school I would have been attending. There were [negative] influences, and I have ADD, so they figured I wouldn't be able to concentrate in larger classes," Luke said.

Luke agreed to come and try Oneida just for the summer but noted, "I really wasn't a fan of it at first, because they were taking away all my friends and everything. After I got here I enjoyed it." Luke liked the diversity of OBI's students, and he became good friends with several Korean boys. "My mom saw the good effect they had on me. ... They've been a really big part of my time at OBI."

After his freshman year, Luke said, "I had fallen in love with the staff and all the friends

I made here, and I didn't want to leave OBI. Academically, I did so much better, and the sports really got me hooked—especially tennis."

Luke worked on cleaning crews and received an Outstanding Worker award his first year at OBI. "I had chores and stuff at home, but this was different," he said. A friend invited him to join the tennis team in the spring. After that, Luke played year-round varsity sports including soccer and swimming and earned varsity letters plus the Best Long Distance Swimmer award.

Luke went to state in tennis three years in a row. His sophomore year, the OBI boys' tennis team became regional champions, and last year he was the regional singles runner up. Luke's tennis awards include the Fiercest Singles award and the Best Record award. Luke received a tennis scholarship at Eastern Kentucky University and will be

playing with their team this fall. He plans to enroll in the pre-med program to become an anesthesiologist. "A lot of people in my family have gone into the medical field. I just love the subject," he said.

To prepare for college, Luke took advantage of the AP classes offered at OBI starting his junior year. He also decided to utilize his senior year wisely by enrolling in four AP classes, including AP biology, plus microbiology. "A lot of seniors slack off their senior year. I decided to really go for it and push it my senior year instead. It's a workload, but it keeps me busy and that's what I need," he said.

Besides sports and work awards, Luke received the Cleanest Room award the last two years and a Battle of the Arts award from his art teacher. He said, "Oneida makes you feel pretty special. You stand out more than you would in a big high school. You're not just a number."

Attending daily chapel services was a "really big change for me," Luke said. "My mom and I had started going to church, but it hadn't really made a big impact until I came to OBI. I got saved in January of my sophomore year," he added. Luke made his decision during an evening chapel service and recalled, "It was a big deal in my family. I got baptized at Oneida Baptist Church and at my grandparents' home church. My mom knew that's what was missing in my life. We had a big celebration."

Addison learned to balance school, activities



Addison got to be a "normal teenager" at Oneida.

Addison enrolled at OBI the summer before her sophomore year. At home in central Kentucky, her parents had learned about Oneida from a friend whose child attended. Addison recalled, "Struggling is not the right word, but I was not putting in the amount of effort in school that I knew I was capable of, so my GPA was low, like a 2.8."

Part of what was holding Addison back academically was her over-commitment to her favorite after school activity, swimming. She practiced two hours a day, five days a week. "I was consumed by swimming. I had no time to hang out and be a normal teenager. I wanted to

experience high school where I could be around my friends and go to everything, like home basketball games," she said.

Addison described herself as having an independent personality and added, "I grew up in a great family, but it wasn't possible for me to be as independent as I wanted to be. At OBI, I could make my own decisions and be involved, but I had guidance. I've always loved being at summer camp. I've always loved change and new opportunities. ... I'd always liked the idea of boarding school for the culture and the college-like experience. I thought OBI was a

(Addison continued p. 2)

Grace blessed OBI with her musical gift



Grace was a first-violin player at All State for four years.

Grace was born in Texas, where her father was a seminary student. She was seven when her family returned to South Korea. Grace and her older brother, Barnabas, enrolled at OBI in 2010 looking for a chance to learn English and to have a better education. Grace said, "In Korea, it's a different school culture. There is punishment if you fail. Here, they encourage you by saying, 'You can do it!'"

Grace noticed that her relationship with her parents improved. She said, "Before I came to America, I was immature. I would argue with my parents. [Here,] I learned how to do things by myself. I learned how to depend on God. It helped me to grow up. Now, our relationship is better."

Grace is very talented musically but noted, "In Korea, only the best can play. I came here, and they gave me lots of opportunities. People said, 'You have a gift from God.' Now, I know [that] my talent is from God."

Grace made the first violin section of the Kentucky Music Educator's Association All State Symphony Orchestra the last three years. She was the Concert Master in the 2012 All State Commonwealth String Orchestra. She served OBI by accompanying the high school choir and playing the keyboard in the pep band for four years. She also played with the Friday chapel band and accompanied students who performed in campus events like the talent show.

Grace is happy she attended OBI. She said, "I had more friends and more chances at music. My personality changed—I'm more outgoing." Grace plans to study music at a college in Kentucky next fall.

Oneida Baptist Institute

(Addison continued)

good place for me, and it was my choice to be here."

Though she got involved in a variety of sports at OBI—volleyball, soccer, swimming, softball and cheerleading, Addison was able to maintain top grades. She explained, "I've really learned time management at OBI, and the student-teacher ratio makes a huge difference. Back home, there were 25 kids in class. The teachers didn't really ask for your attention."

Addison's awards earned at OBI include being named to the All Region and All District teams in soccer and the All District team in volleyball. The faculty and staff voted her the Most Outstanding sophomore and junior girl.

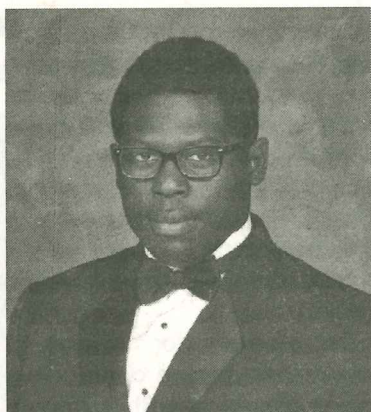
Addison was selected to be a student representative at the 2014 Kentucky Baptist Convention, where she enjoyed meeting visitors to the OBI booth. Addison recounted, "Ninety-five percent of everyone who came by said they had volunteered at OBI! I just kept saying, 'Thank you!' Oneida wouldn't be what it is without our volunteers! Last summer, some volunteers painted the gazebo by the girls' dorm, and it looked so much better!"

Besides academic improvement and her independence in the dorm, Addison likes Oneida for its "overall uplifting spirit." She noted, "Being in a Christian school versus a public school is a lot different. Being able to take that 30 minutes to go to chapel is one more thing to keep me on my feet with God; it's just a little reminder each day. I think it's great that we have that freedom and opportunity."

Though she had accepted Christ at a summer camp before her freshman year, Addison chose to be baptized her junior year at the Oneida Baptist Church. She explained, "It wasn't until I came to OBI that I realized ... it takes actions to show others the love of Christ. When I came here, God opened my eyes to what I had back home and it helped me to be nurturing to people who don't have good homes."

Addison was the Head Photographer on the yearbook staff and a member of the National Honor Society this year. She took advanced placement classes to help prepare herself for college, where she would like to study sports medicine, photography or psychology. She said, "There's a ton of stuff I want to do! It makes me sad to close this chapter of my life but it makes me smile to know how awesome it is to move on and start something new and better!"

Keon was a positive example and witness for Christ in the dorm



Keon benefited from "even mix of church and school."

Keon arrived at OBI from Maryland in time to begin his senior year. He has attended a variety of schools including a boarding school in middle school, public school for two years in high school, a Catholic school where

he played football and most recently, a military academy. Keon said, "I wanted to get away from the military side of things and really stay focused on what I needed to do academically. I wanted to find a new environment."

He did an internet search for boarding schools and said OBI topped the results. Keon noted, "My parents allow me to make these types of decisions on my own, because they want me to learn. It has helped me to grow as a young man to learn to make life decisions." He told his parents about OBI, and they did their own research. "Mom thought it was unusual of me to pick a smaller school. My dad prayed about it and had a good feeling about it. Everything went well," Keon said.

Keon was made the supervisor of his after school clean-

ing crew at OBI his first day. He recalled, "I brought some of the things I learned at my old school to the job. I got to know that group of guys really well for the time I worked with them." Keon joined the basketball team once the season began last semester.

Growing up in a Christian home as the son of a pastor, Keon said, "I feel that I've grown in my faith in the few months that I've been here, because God's word has been presented to me, not forced on me. I like the way Mr. Scull speaks in chapel and how Mr. Parkhouse uses technology when he speaks. I like that I get to minister to younger boys in the dorm and let them see Jesus in me to help them choose the way they want to be."

Keon finds it easier to learn at OBI because of the environment. He explained, "They want

us to be here. It's much easier to learn here, because it's a warm environment. Also, the classes are not rushed. You have time to complete work and to fully understand what's being taught. My grades have always been 'iffy,' but now that I have an even mix of church and school, they are working to build each other instead of one trying to take over the other."

After graduation, Keon plans to attend a law school. He would like to have a career in politics and one day hold an elected position.

Kayla had given up, Oneida gave her a fresh start



Caring teachers helped Kayla make up failed classes and graduate on time.

Kayla is a senior from Ohio in her third year at OBI. She was having problems getting along with her family, and she had failing grades. Her mother believed that Kayla's problems would be

helped once she developed a relationship with God. Kayla agreed that she needed a fresh start. She said, "I hung out with all the wrong people ... [who] thought failing classes was cool. My life was falling apart. Being on my own was what I needed."

One of the first things Kayla noticed at OBI was how her teachers took time to make sure she understood what was being taught in class. Her grades showed improvement almost immediately. Kayla added, "If you made honor roll at my old school, you were a nerd. Here, you see other people make honor roll, and they are happy about it. It gives you motivation."

Kayla was able to make up previously failed classes during the school year and by taking one quarter of English during summer school. She said, "If it wasn't for this school, I would be nowhere. I was failing every-

thing, and I had given up. This school has really pushed me, and the teachers have worked with me. It's like a big family that loves and cares about me."

Kayla believes that she has grown closer to God and is more focused on her relationship with Him. She added, "Chapel has helped me a lot. Every time they talk about something in chapel, it seems like it's a problem I'm going through. Just talking to other Christians helps a lot. I've realized that God really does have a plan for my life."

Kayla earned four varsity letters in volleyball in addition to participating in the FFA, cheerleading and track. She was also a cleaning crew supervisor in the dining hall. "I love helping people and being involved in a lot of stuff," she said.

As part of the Career Placement program, Kayla became the assistant manager in the

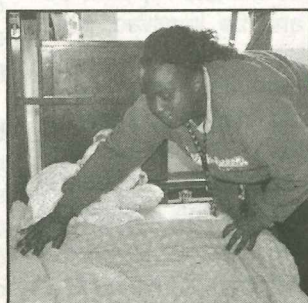
campus grill this year. She enjoyed getting "real-world" job experience.

Kayla appreciates her time at OBI and said, "OBI has changed my life. I'm glad I came here. This is a huge blessing to me, and I've cherished every moment."

Kayla lost her mother to cancer in October, 2013. She said that she chose to remain at OBI and graduate to fulfill her mother's wishes and to stay in God's will. "God has a plan for me," she said. Kayla would like to follow in her mother's footsteps and become a nurse.

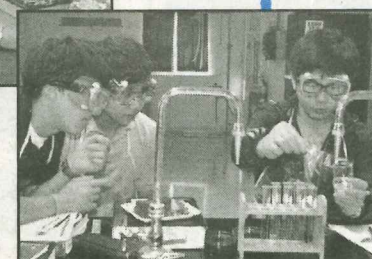
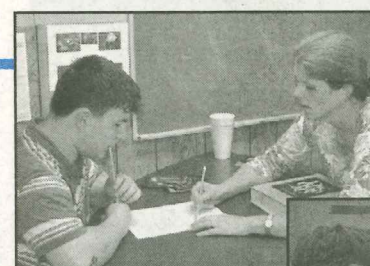
A day in the life of an Oneida student . . .

Before going to school, beds must be made and dormitory rooms cleaned. Breakfast is served in the dining hall at 7:00 AM.



Classes begin at 7:50 AM. Students attend seven, 50-minute periods.

Our fully-accredited academic program has a wide range of classes and electives to meet the needs and interests of our diverse student body. We offer advanced placement and honors courses, one-on-one tutoring and English as a Second Language class.



Oneida Baptist Institute

Hallelujah gained work experience



From basic chores to Career Placement jobs, Hallelujah became an Outstanding Worker.

Hallelujah enrolled as a junior from Ethiopia, though she grew up visiting the United States with her family each summer. One of Hallelujah's cousins and her brother attended OBI. Hallelujah said, "My junior year I decided to come to school here, because I saw how this school benefited my brother for college."

When she arrived, she was surprised to find students from her former school. She said, "We became friends at Oneida!" Hallelujah is fluent in three languages, and she enjoys the opportunity to speak Amharic and French with her friends.

Though her mother had warned her that life in boarding school "was not glamorous," Hallelujah still had a difficult adjustment at first. At home in Ethiopia, Hallelujah had not had to do basic chores. At OBI, she said, "It was hard for me to adapt to certain things, like doing your own laundry and making your own bed. Everyone was so

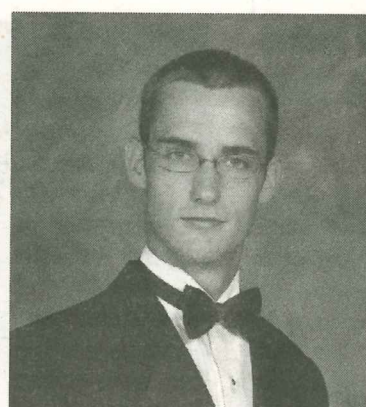
welcoming, but I still missed home." For her after school job, Hallelujah chose to work in the campus grill. "It wasn't that bad compared to doing dishes in the kitchen! Plus, I learned things about food and food handling that I never knew before," she said. She earned two Outstanding Worker awards.

Hallelujah earned her Career Placement certificate this year working as a receptionist in the main office, in the campus grill and in the school's thrift shop.

Having grown up attending church, Hallelujah experienced growth in her faith in OBI's Christian environment. Daily chapel services gave her more exposure to biblical teaching, plus the speakers plan their messages with teenagers in mind. "You learn more, because they talk directly to you, and you understand what they mean," Hallelujah explained.

Hallelujah is graduating in the top ten of her class and plans to major in international business with hopes of opening a business with her brother.

Aaron overcame physical limitations



Aaron was named "Mr. Oneida," OBI's most outstanding award for a senior boy.

When Aaron came to Oneida as a seventh grader from central Kentucky, his older brother, Adam, had already completed two years at OBI. Aaron said, "I came here for a new start. I wouldn't get along with anybody. I was unresponsive to my family. I wanted to be alone."

Being alone in a blended family with nine children can be a challenge. Aaron felt like he did not fit in because of his disabilities—cerebral palsy and asthma. He also struggled academically. "I'm a slow learner. In home-school, everyone else would be done, and I would still be sitting there. It was hard," he said.

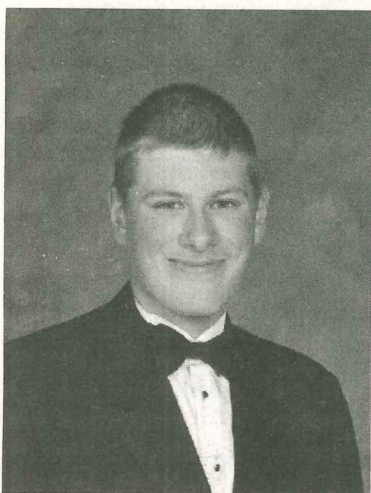
At OBI, he said, "I had a lot more freedom here." One of the freedoms Aaron enjoyed was being outdoors. He said, "There is a track and a baseball

field where I can exercise. ... If I don't use my muscles, they get atrophied. Running is a big stress reliever for me. It hurts a lot, but I push through it."

For his after school jobs, Aaron worked on cleaning and lawn mowing crews and managed sports teams. "Managing sports taught me the art of humility. It was being willing to do other people's laundry, fill water bottles and even take care of injuries. It taught me to care about others first," he said. Aaron competed for one season on the cross country team and played tennis for four seasons. He worked on the farm and became the president of the FFA chapter. "I like what the FFA stands for ... respect and serving," he said.

In the Career Placement program this year, Aaron was an assistant in OBI's computer lab. After graduation, he plans to complete an on-line computer degree and go to work for his dad. He said, "I want to give back to my family, because they have given so much for me to be here."

Kurtis saw God's hand in his family's move to Oneida



Smaller classes helped Kurtis achieve his academic best.

Kurtis moved to Oneida in the eighth grade after his parents joined the OBI faculty. Kurtis grew up not far from Oneida and had difficulty accepting the news about their move. He recalled, "It was definitely a shock. All my family lived in Whitley county. I was leaving the place I'd lived my whole entire life to go to a completely different school. I thought, 'This is going to be a complete mess!'"

Once Kurtis arrived in Oneida, he began to appreciate advantages to the move. Before, his family had lived in a very rural location. "We lived in isolation," Kurtis stated. "We came here and it was a community.

They were so excited to have us here. I was able to make friends. Before, I hadn't had friends who came over to my house. It was a new experience! ... After I got here, I was a lot more excited about it."

Kurtis had been an average student earning B's and C's and noted, "My parents had to push me to get my homework done." At Oneida, he was on the A honor roll every year and believes the smaller class sizes made the difference. "Here, I was able to connect with the teachers more. That helped me a whole lot. In the smaller classes, I could ask questions."

Kurtis competed with the ac-

ademic team and the golf team. He earned the "Tenacity" award and an athletic letter from his golf coach.

During each summer of high school, Kurtis volunteered to work as an office aid in the high school office for the duration of summer school. He joked, "I was called the 'go-fer.' Anybody that needed me on campus, I was sent there to help."

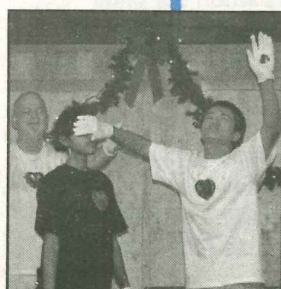
In the Career Placement program this year, Kurtis worked as an assistant to the chemistry teacher. "I've always been interested in science. It's what I'm planning to study in college," he said.

Kurtis received faculty-voted

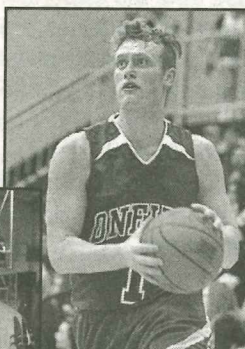
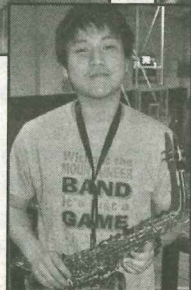
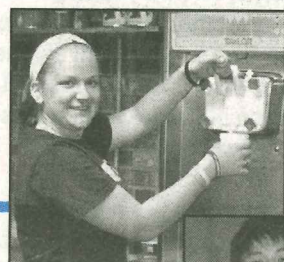
awards including the Most Studious and Most Outstanding junior boy awards and a President's Award given on graduation day.

The timing of his family's move to Oneida now seems Providential to Kurtis, who had accepted Christ and been baptized just before their move. "I think God wanted me to come here. It seemed like He already had planned all this out for me," he reflected.

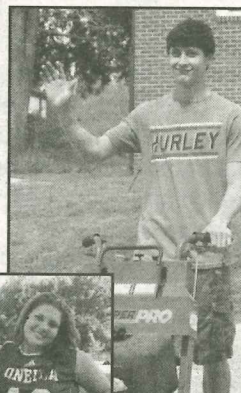
Each school day, students attend a 25-minute **chapel service** which often includes guest speakers, special music and skits.



In the afternoon and evening, most students are busy at their **daily jobs** and **cocurriculars**.



There are a wide variety of activities to choose from including sports, the campus grill, pep band, the farm, lawn mowing and many cleaning jobs!



During evening **free time**, students attend campus events or club meetings, catch up on homework or hang out with friends.



Teens may pick up mail, prepare a snack or make a phone call at the dorm office before "**lights out**" at 10:00 PM on school nights and 11:00 PM on weekends.

Oneida Baptist Institute

For Time and Eternity

Unlike many Christian schools, OBI welcomes teens who do not know Jesus.

At OBI they hear the Gospel message daily. If we reach them for Christ, they can take the good news around the world.

Our funding

Approximately 7% of Oneida's funding comes from the KBC Cooperative Program.

Another 33% comes from student fees.

The remaining 60% of our support comes from churches and individuals as well as income from our modest investments.

Our ongoing tradition of affordable student fees and need-based scholarships keeps the door open to any young person who needs to be at Oneida.

More about Oneida

OBI's average enrollment is 300.

Approximately 125 Ministry Team members serve for a modest salary or are full-time volunteers.

OBI's 850-acre campus includes a 200-acre farm.

Students may apply throughout the year.

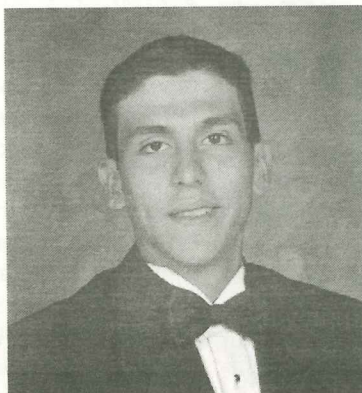
Our curriculum is designed to serve students at all academic levels.

OBI has an 11:1 student/teacher ratio.

We offer a wide variety of cocurricular activities plus a unique student work program.

Meet some of the Class of 2015

OBI helped missionary son finish school



Sam explored interests in sports, music, computers.

Sam grew up in Brazil, but for the last six years, his family has lived in Senegal, where his parents serve as missionaries. Sam had reached a point in his education where he would have to leave home in order to attend school. The closest school to his home in Senegal was too expensive. A fellow missionary who had attended OBI told Sam's family about it. "He told us that this was a good, Christian school. ... OBI has a good atmosphere, and I enjoyed it from day one," Sam said. He enrolled as a sophomore.

Sam adapted quickly to living in a dormitory and said, "My roommates made it easier. I liked being together with my friends. When you live with friends, you get to know them better." Sam's younger brother, Daniel, joined him at OBI last year. They were roommates Sam's junior year, and he recalled, "It created a stronger bond between us."

Sam became eligible to play sports his junior year. He played soccer and earned the Coach's Award in track and field. His senior year he joined the swim team. Sam also enjoyed the chance to develop his musical skills in guitar class. This year, in addition to sports, Sam is a hall monitor in the dorm.

Because he plans to pursue a career in the computer field, he chose to work in OBI's Information Technology department two class periods a day as part of the Career Placement program this year. "I fix computers and make sure things are running. I have learned new concepts and how to get around easier. I also learned how to install software updates and how the computer lab is run from the server," Sam said. He intends to major in computer science in college.



In FFA, Olivia excelled in livestock showing and developed leadership skills.

It was the summer before she began the sixth grade when Olivia's parents felt called to join the OBI ministry and move their family of six to Oneida from Ohio county, Kentucky. Olivia recalled, "I was really angry and upset about it. My whole entire family was there, and we were really close to them and our church family. At first, I told them I wasn't going, but of course, I had to come. I really think it was the hardest thing I've ever had to do."

Olivia knew that her mother had always had a heart for missions, especially foreign missions. Her dad came to Oneida with a volunteer group from their church. She remembered, "Dad came home and told mom he felt like this is where God wanted them."

Once she arrived, Olivia saw some positives to her new environment. She said, "I love the

Olivia embraced new life in Oneida, lived out her faith on campus

people here. It was not 'home,' but I realized that it was an opportunity I would never have had at home. I've met people from all over the world." Another benefit Olivia noted was having more family time. "We had six chicken houses with 25,000 chickens in each house. My dad had two jobs, actually. He was always gone. Now, we see my dad way more than we ever did before, so that's good."

Olivia became a leader on the farm and in the FFA organization at OBI, and not just because her parents were on the farm staff. "There were times my parents needed help, but I was always interested in the farm." She joined the FFA in the seventh grade and later served as an officer. "In FFA, I like the fact that you're like a family, and I like all the different leadership skills it teaches you. I'm a shy person, and it helped me a lot to be confident," she said.

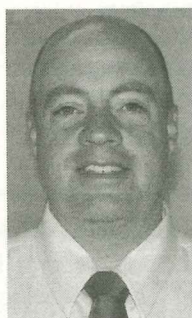
Olivia has earned numerous awards through the FFA including the Greenhand Degree, Chapter Farmer Degree and Discovery Degree. She won the Grand Champion award for showing a steer at a regional livestock competition. Though she showed a variety of animals, Olivia is most proud of showing steers. "My favorite is the big cows. I feel more accomplished. It's a big animal that could kill you any second, but you know you've worked hard, and you can make them do what you want them to do."

Olivia also participated in choir, softball, swimming and volleyball.

Back home, Olivia and her three younger sisters attended a private Christian school. Because OBI allows non-Christian students, she noted, "It was definitely a new experience. This was the closest to a public school environment I had ever been. ... My parents told us that we know the difference between right and wrong and to just be a positive influence. I haven't always, but as I've gotten older, I feel like it's more important. I used to think, 'Who am I?' Now, I realize that one person can have a bigger influence than they think they can."

Despite missing home and being shy, Olivia never had a shortage of friends at OBI, and they were mostly dorm kids. She recalled, "In the seventh grade, I wanted to move into the dorm, because all of my friends lived there, but my parents wouldn't let me, of course." Going into her senior year, she revisited the topic with her parents. "I wanted to get that experience before I left OBI," she said. Her parents were convinced, and Olivia moved into the dorm at the start of her senior year. "At first I didn't like it at all. It was different, but once I got the hang of things, I liked it a lot—the independence of it," she said.

Olivia graduated in the top ten of her class. She plans to attend community college and live with family in western Kentucky.



Dear Kentucky Baptists,

Your church may have recently received a box of materials from us. While it may look like any old U. S. Postal Service box, it is a box that is vitally important to the Lord's ongoing work here at Oneida. That box contains several items about the KBC's Father's Day Offering for Oneida Baptist Institute and includes a letter written by my wife, Angie. Angie wrote about her Oneida experience and how one of our houseparents, Mr. Gary Garrett, became her Oneida father. Please take the opportunity to read that letter if you haven't already done so. The box also includes a poster, flyers, return envelopes, and a two-minute DVD that we hope will be played on Father's Day Sunday. If you love Oneida, and I know so many of you do, please help make sure these materials are made

available to your church family. Our ministry relies heavily upon giving from Kentucky Baptist churches and we are forever grateful to each of you.

One of my favorite parts of the job the past two years has been traveling with our choir to visit you, the Kentucky Baptist churches that partner with our ministry. On the Sundays when our choir is not scheduled to be somewhere, I have visited some of you folks on my own, and I have enjoyed each and every visit. I have loved meeting many of you who love and support us in so many different ways.

Luke 18:27 says, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." The theme of the materials in the box you received is "I'm Possible." Your love, prayers, and support enables our ministry to make knowing Jesus and having a home away from home possible for many lost and hurting young people. Your generosity helps us educate students for time and eternity. I simply ask that each church and individual gives as the Lord leads you. Thank you for helping us offer hope and a future to young people across our county, state, country, and world.

— Larry Allen Gritton, Jr., OBI President

Luter named NAMB ambassador

By Tobin Perry

Alpharetta, Ga.—The North American Mission Board has named former Southern Baptist Convention President Fred Luter as its new national African American ambassador.

Luter will focus on involving more African American churches in the SBC and in church planting.

"We still have a lot of lost souls out there who aren't in anyone's church," Luter said. "One of the primary messages I'll have for pastors is to encourage them to have compassion for the lost. If we're going to be successful in church planting, that has to happen."

Luter will speak on behalf of NAMB throughout the year and represent the mission board at SBC events, sharing NAMB's goal to increase the number of African American churches in the convention from 4,000 to more than 5,000 in the next five years.

Luter will continue to serve as senior pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans. In 2012, he became the first African American to be elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention in its 167-year history.

"I am overjoyed to learn of Dr. Fred Luter's appointment," said Marshall Williams, pastor of Nazarene Baptist in Philadelphia, Pa., and president of the National African American Fellowship in the SBC. "I am sure that God will use him to assist our churches in realizing that we can do more for the Lord as unified Kingdom citizens of the Southern Baptist Convention," Marshall said. "The National African American Fellowship, SBC, will pray for Dr. Luter as he embarks on this great ministry and mandate from the Master."

Luter noted that Southern Baptists have made progress involving African American churches since his early days as a pastor in New Orleans. NAMB has reported African American church plants increased by 82.7 percent from 1998 to 2011.

"We've had a lot of African Americans plant churches and a lot of African American churches to join the SBC," Luter said. "We've made progress; however, it's not where we think it should be. Hopefully, this is something that will kick start that and get it to where it needs to be." (BP)



Fred Luter

Black Hawk Down's Struecker graduates from Southeastern

Wake Forest, N.C.—Jeff Struecker, one of the heroes of the 1993 conflict in Mogadishu that inspired the movie "Black Hawk Down," graduated this spring from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary with a doctor of philosophy degree in Christian leadership.

The former Ranger and retired chaplain for the United States Army is now lead pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Columbus, Ga.

During his military career, he was decorated for bravery above and beyond the call of duty for any Ranger, a special operations warrior, or soldier that resulted in saved lives.

He retired from active military duty in 2011 after 22 years of service and received several awards, commendations and decorations throughout his military career.

Struecker said he was drawn to SEBTS because of President Daniel Akin's passion for the gospel and desire to train spiritual warriors to go to dangerous places.

"I am convinced that Jesus' church is desperate for great leadership today," Struecker said. "I'm equally convinced that SBC seminaries do a great job of educating people to be effective theologians, preachers and church historians, but I think more emphasis should be placed on leadership at the same time."

Akin noted, "Jeff's skills as a leader have been on full display in his superb work in our Ph.D. in leadership program. It is an honor to have him as one of our graduates."

As he excelled as an Army Ranger, he has continued to excel as a pastor and a student at Southeastern.

"I first met Jeff as a M.Div. student in my preaching class," Akin noted. "I was immediately impressed with his love for the word and faithful expository preaching. Since then I have watched him continue to serve our country, our Lord and Christ's church with passion and excellence."

Struecker views Christ as the ultimate leader. "The study of God is the study of leadership," he said. "In order for Jesus' church to confront sin and spread the gospel to the ends of the earth it will require men and women who are courageous leaders with a bold vision for God's glory. God alone can make a man or woman into the leader the church needs them to be."

Larry Purcell, associate professor of leadership and discipleship and associate dean of ministry studies, also shares Struecker's passion for leadership. "I was honored when he came to me and asked that I be his major professor," Purcell said.

"We both share the experience of the military and combat."

At Purcell's request, Struecker shared his testimony of the conflict in Mogadishu during class. After washing away the blood of comrades, Struecker told fellow students, he went back into the "kill-zone" numerous times.

"He seemed fearless," Purcell noted. "This opened the door to many Army Rangers hearing the gospel and coming to salvation after the fire fight."

Struecker finished his modified residency Ph.D. in three-and-a-half years while transitioning from the military to leading a church congregation and serving his family of five.

He has a master of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville and undergraduate degrees from Troy University in Alabama.

He was born in Fort Dodge, Iowa, and he enlisted in the United States Army as an infantryman when he was 18. In addition to Mogadishu, Struecker's combat experience includes participation in the invasion of Panama, Operation Desert Storm, and more than a dozen combat tours in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Struecker has been awarded medals for valor in combat and has received many medals as recognition for his service in the U.S. Army.

Struecker retired after serving for 10 years in the 75th Ranger Regiment in positions from private to platoon sergeant and spent his last 10 years as a chaplain, in both Airborne and Ranger units. (BP)



Jeff Struecker

Denominations

Continued from page 1

Growing numbers of people who don't identify with any church have gathered considerable media attention.

But LifeWay Research vice president Scott McConnell said many of these "nones" aren't as closed to church as some may assume.

"Just because someone has no religious preference does not mean they have closed the door to the Christian church or a denomination as being something that can meet needs in their lives," McConnell said.

The recent nationwide telephone survey of 1,000 adults of varying ages, backgrounds, and beliefs posed two types of questions. In addition to asking whether nine denominations or faiths are for them, researchers sought to determine whether Americans' image of each group is favorable or unfavorable. Among the overall findings:

■ No denomination is ruled out by a majority. People are most skeptical about Pentecostal churches, but even then only 45 percent declare, "it's not for me."

■ Impressions of each denomination are more favorable than unfavorable.

■ However, many people don't understand denominational differences. For each faith, 20 percent to 35 percent say they are not familiar enough to form an opinion. This group almost always outranks those with unfavorable views.

Many non-Christians open

Though they may be puzzled about what a denomination teaches, many Americans are receptive to church, the survey shows. While 40 percent to 48 percent of the nonreligious—atheists, agnostics and those with no religious preference—assume such groups as Catholics, Baptists and Pentecostals are "not for me," a majority don't automatically exclude them.

In addition, anywhere from one-third to half of those from non-Christian religions do not assume the nine denominations named in the study are "not for me."

"One might assume that when someone makes a conscious decision in favor of a certain religious preference, that means 'no' to everything else," McConnell said. "While many are not open, to see half of the 'nones' and a third of those in other religions indicate they are not closed to Christian churches makes us re-think that."

Name may do no harm

In addition, the research shows that a trend in recent years to omit denominational identity from a church's name may not help attract non-members.

"It would depend on who you're trying to reach," McConnell said. "But some denominational groups have as much 'brand equity' as non-denominational churches, which have been growing the fastest."

The best-known faiths garner the most approval. Baptist and Catholic—which have the highest rate of familiarity (and the highest number of adherents)—top the survey for favorable impressions, with 61 percent for Baptist and 57 percent for Catholic. Most respondents also look favorably on non-denominational churches (53 percent) and Methodists (52 percent).

Few rule out Baptists

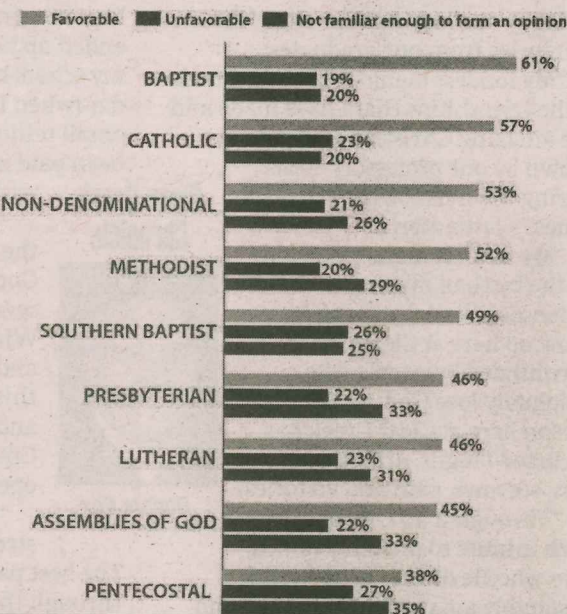
People are most open to Baptist and non-denominational churches, the study found, with "it's not for me" chosen by only 36 percent for Baptist churches, 37 percent for non-denominational churches and 39 percent for Southern Baptists.

No faith group is ruled out by more than half of those surveyed, but 41 percent say the Lutheran church is not for them, and 40 percent feel that way about the Assemblies of God, Methodists and Presbyterians.

Though most Americans report favorable opinions of Catholicism, 42 percent say the Catholic faith is not for

AMONG AMERICANS:

What is your impression of the following faith groups?



them. An even higher share, 45 percent, feels that way about the Pentecostal church.

When it comes to the church's future, McConnell points to one finding that should concern each denominational group tested. More than 4 in 10 young adults age 18-24 indicate various denominations are not for them.

"While young adults are often testing their views as they enter their 20s, about half do not perceive Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, Lutheran or non-denominational churches as places for them as they explore," McConnell says. (BP)

Our friends at New Friendship

Thoroughly enjoyed visit at 'booming' country church

I often tell you about the events, staff and students of Oneida. In this article, I'd like to tell you about a trip I recently made to visit some great friends of Oneida.

New Friendship Baptist Church in Auburn, Ky., recently volunteered on our campus. I was so blessed by their visit, but the blessings didn't stop when they left campus. This church, like so many of you, blesses us in so many ways. They volunteer and support us in prayer and financially by sending proceeds from quilt sales.

They also came last summer and provided a wonderful lunch for our entire campus. Before their visit, they had requested that I come speak at their church sometime after their visit to Oneida. Within a few short days of their visit, I headed for Auburn to be with them. Angie and I fell in love with this church and her people. As a matter of fact, we are sending our oldest son to youth camp with them later this summer.

One of their church members owns Federal Grove Bed and Breakfast. Federal Grove is a beautiful, quaint and historic place in Auburn. My family rolled into town on a Friday evening and was quickly treated to some fudge pie that was heavenly. Terry and her staff spoiled my family rotten for two days, and it was some of the best Southern-style cooking you will find anywhere.

These generous accommodations enabled me to travel down to Franklin and Nashville, Tenn., on Saturday to look at some buses. I am in search of a bus that can meet the needs of our

choir that travels 20-25 Sundays each school year. The owner of one of the companies I visited had briefly attended Oneida as a student over 20 years ago.

On Sunday I spoke at the 8:30 and 11 a.m. services. This little, country church is booming and the Lord is blessing, and I believe it is because they are so missions-minded. I made great contacts

and friends, and thoroughly enjoyed our visit and the opportunity to share what the Lord is doing here at Oneida. I was the guest speaker, but I was the one who was blessed this day.

After church, the pastor and a family member of some of our current staff treated us to lunch. We arrived back home Sunday evening encouraged and energized to continue to do the Lord's work here.

You wouldn't have to house and feed me fudge pie the way New Friendship did, but I would love the opportunity to come and visit your church one day. Give me a call any time and we'll see if we can arrange a date.

Thank you to New Friendship and all of our Kentucky Baptist friends.

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

Memories (Part 3)

Graduates share more favorite memories from the "Creek"

Enjoy one last installment of favorite memories from our graduates:

"My fondest memory of Clear Creek is the friendships that I have made and the amazing Christian leadership shown by our professors even during the most difficult times."—Justin Morris

"My fondest memory would be the birth of my son, Nehemiah, and watching him grow up here at Clear Creek surrounded by people who absolutely love God. My family's season here at Clear Creek has included laughs, difficulties, joys, sorrows, pain and victories.

"Through it all God has used each minute to mold my family into who He desires us to be. It is absolutely amazing to look back and see His hand in everything. He is faithful."—Amanda Lilly Payne

"My fondest memories would be just watching God work things out; from money to food to live on when we didn't have jobs; to money to fly around the world on mission trips to share the gospel.

"Friends to talk to, ones that would share just the right thing at the right time, willing to pray with us when we needed it and getting to pay all that

forward to others who came in after us."—Stephen Andrew Thomas

"After a surgery that should have kept me out of work for a week or two ended up keeping me out for six weeks, my school bill was looming. The last day (when it was due) I received an email telling me that my balance had been paid in full by someone who

wished to remain unknown.

"This is only one example of the multitude of times that God provided when there seemed no way for provision. When new students come in and praise God the first time this happens, I simply smile and say, 'Welcome to Clear Creek ... this is how God operates.'"—Amy Wells

"I will never forget how stressed I was my first semester.

The best part was how God brought me through that and seeing Him work in my life the past four years has been unfathomable.

"I am more than grateful for the friendships that I've made and am so thankful for the faculty and staff who have taught me what it looks like to truly be servants of the Lord."—Ni Iang Zi

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

Vogel retires after 12 years as seminary prof

Louisville—Veteran preaching professor Robert Vogel enters retirement after 12 years of faithful service to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and 37 years of teaching in the classroom.

Faculty and administrators gathered to celebrate Vogel's retirement from Southern Seminary on May 12. Attendees included Southern Seminary President Albert Mohler Jr., Vogel's fellow members at Highview Baptist Church, colleagues, friends and family.

Mohler recalled when he first heard about Vogel: "The more I looked at what Bob Vogel had already done and already accomplished, and what I came to know that Bob Vogel believed and taught, that's was exactly what we needed."

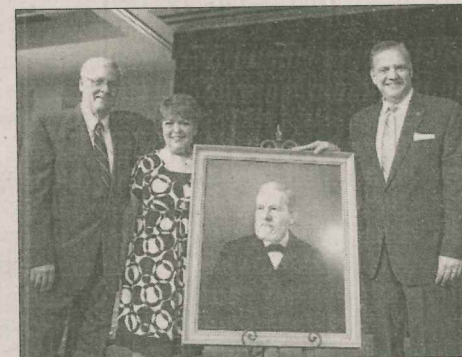
The first book Vogel ever read on preaching was John Broadus' "A Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons," and he later completed a master's-level thesis on the Southern Seminary co-founder.

In honor of his historical mentor, the seminary presented Vogel with a portrait of Broadus at the retirement luncheon.

He also received from his wife a replica of the Abstract of Principles—the seminary's confession of faith which all elected faculty sign—including his signature.

"Looking back on these 12 years God has given us here, it was absolutely the right decision," his wife, Kathy, explained at the retirement luncheon.

"It has been a very big honor for us to be here and I know that Bob has tremendously appreciated being able to serve students, to fellowship with his colleagues and most of all to serve under



Southern Seminary president Albert Mohler Jr. (right) presents Robert Vogel and his wife, Kathy, with a portrait of seminary co-founder John Broadus. (SBTS photo)

Dr. Mohler."

Vogel has cultivated a love for preaching for more than 60 years.

He cannot remember a time when he did not know God had called him into ministry.

"As a first grader, I can remember coming home from church and I would go in my bedroom and I would preach my heart out," he said. "It probably wasn't too substantive, but it was passionate."

After 25 years at Western, Vogel was offered a full-time teaching position at Southern and his family moved to Louisville, where he has served as the Carl E. Bates Professor of Christian Preaching since 2003.

Vogel will continue serving as long as he has the capability: "To preach is to proclaim Christ," he said, referencing Colossians 1:28, "admonishing every man and teaching them with all wisdom that all would be presented complete in him." (SBTS)

'Share the love of Jesus' with Kentucky Changers

Louisville—There is still room for students and chaperones to serve on mission this summer through Kentucky Changers, said the ministry's coordinator.

Spots are open June 20-26 in Marshall County and July 11-18 in Henderson.

"Kentucky Changers is a great way to share the love of Jesus in a tangible way," said Coordinator Peggy Murphy.

Teams from all over Kentucky join together each year to make much needed repairs to homes for homeowners who can't complete the repairs alone.

This summer, students will repair roofs, paint, build wheelchair ramps and much more through Kentucky Changers. After a rewarding day of manual labor, teams will end each evening with a time of worship.

"Our desire is to teach students that missions is a lifestyle, not a location," Murphy said.

Other Kentucky Changers locations are in the Richmond area, June 13-19, and Maysville, June 27-July 3. This marks the second year Kentucky Changers has operated under the sponsorship of Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union.

Students and chaperones interested in participating with Kentucky Changers are encouraged to call Peggy Murphy at (502) 489-3457, or go to www.kywmu.org changers to register online. (KBC)

Download Our Free Church Bus Buyers Guide.



Follow Jesus with Gerald & June McNeely to Spain

After serving churches in Ewing, Mt. Zion and Carlisle Kentucky, their family went in 1957 to a country recovering from a brutal civil war. A dictatorship persecuted Baptists. Emeritus IMB Missionary June tells the story of God's grace during their 33 years in Spain. The reader is inspired and encouraged to follow His call, too.

Published May 2015

Called! Step by Step

By June McNeely with Joyce Sweeney Martin

Available from the author at CalledStepbyStep@gmail.com (\$15.95*) or www.AuthorHouse.com (\$16.95*)

*plus shipping cost

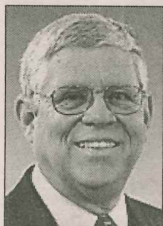
For more information, go to our facebook page: [Called Step by Step](https://www.facebook.com/CalledStepbyStep) or email above.

Campbellsville to host Witherington as January Bible Study lecturer

Campbellsville—Bible scholar Ben Witherington, who is Amos Professor of New Testament for Doctoral Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary and on the doctoral faculty at St. Andrews University in Scotland, will be the guest lecturer for the January Bible Study Preview at Campbellsville University Thursday, Aug. 6.

Witherington is now considered one of the top evangelical scholars in the world, and is an elected member of the prestigious SNTS, a society dedicated to New Testament studies. He will lead the study of "Second Corinthians: The Church's Ministry Handbook."

Witherington will speak from 1:15 p.m. until 8 p.m. at The Gheens Recital Hall in the Gosser Fine Arts Center. Registration and fellowship begin at 12:30 p.m. Dinner will be from 5:45 p.m. until 6:45 p.m.



Ben Witherington

The cost is \$15, which includes a meal catered by Brothers BBQ of Campbellsville.

A graduate of UNC, Chapel Hill, Witherington went on to receive the M.Div. degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. from the University of Durham in England.

Witherington has also taught at Ashland Theological Seminary, Vanderbilt University, Duke Divinity School and Gordon-Conwell.

Witherington has written over 40 books, including "The Jesus Quest" and "The Paul Quest," both of which were selected as top biblical studies works by Christianity Today.

To register, go to campbellsville.edu/jbs. For more information contact Sherry Bowen, secretary in the School of Theology, at slbowen@campbellsville.edu or (270) 789-5029. (CU)

All-State Youth Choir & Orchestra kicks off season

Campbellsville—The Kentucky All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra kicks off its 2015 season June 24 at Campbellsville Church with nearly 80 young vocalists and musicians from across the state.

The five-stop tour will be led by guest conductors Mickey Ballard, minister of music and worship at Central Baptist Church in Paris, and Scott Bersaglia, founder of Sacred Winds Ministries and Ensemble.

Ballard has conducted both the Kentucky Convention Men's Chorale and

the All-State Youth Choir in recent years, as well as serving Kentucky churches as a minister or clinician. His wife, Sue Ellen, will serve as the youth choir's accompanist. See WesternRecorder.org for a list of participants.

Performance schedule

- June 24, 6:30 p.m., at Campbellsville Church.
- June 26, 7 p.m., at Allen Church, Prestonsburg.
- June 27, 11 a.m., Eastern Kentucky Veterans Center, Hazard.
- June 27, 7 p.m., First Church, London.
- June 28, 10:30 a.m. & 3 p.m., Grace Church, Somerset.

EBO at Work

Summer ministries for families and children beginning

EBO is at work this summer! We just finished our first Mission Adventure for Kentucky Kids in Princeton, June 11-13 with 90 children, leaders and volunteers participating. The three days included worship, Bible study, mission projects and recreation. Prayerwalking laid the foundation for the ministries and helped the children see community needs. They also sorted thrift store donations, sang at a nursing home and helped with Backyard Bible Clubs.

We are in our first week of Kentucky Changers with 423 participants working on 28 houses in Richmond. Work this week includes roofing, siding, painting, decks and handicap ramps. Three more Changers projects will take place in Marshall County, Maysville, and Henderson. Pray for Peggy Murphy, all the adult volunteers, student participants and homeowners who will be helped this summer. Pray for the witness of students and all participants during each week of Kentucky Changers.

There is still time to register for Mother/Daughter and Girls in Action Overnights at Jonathan Creek (July 10-11) and Cedarcrest (July 17-18). Overnights at camp are a great time for girls and moms

or leaders to bond together, enjoy God's creation, learn about missions, and just have fun.

Boys, dads and leaders are invited to join us for Camp Courage at Laurel Lake Baptist Camp, July 31-Aug. 1. Missionaries, knot tying, sawbucks, RA racers, campfire, Bible-telling pow-wow, archery, and a rope bridge are all part of the fun. Participants can stay in the dorm or camp outdoors.

Because of your generous gifts to the Eliza Broadus Offering, we receive many thank you notes from ministries across Kentucky that receive grants provided by the offering. Terri Sheldon, director Curbside Ministries in Bowling Green, wrote:

"Once more I am extremely overwhelmed by your generous gift toward our ministry.... This will be used to help fulfill our ultimate goal of sharing the gospel and saturating the streets of Bowling Green."

Curbside Ministries has a customized van/ice cream truck/activity center built for fun and spreading the gospel.

Many other ministries are at work this summer putting EBO dollars to work to share the gospel. Pray for all of our efforts to reach out to children and families during the summer.

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

Family connections

Some relatives of Sunrise kids just may be in your church

Foster children, troubled teens, abandoned youth, children whose aggressive behaviors exceed what the average adult can handle—these are just a few of the types among young people served by Sunrise Children's Services.

If you are thinking, "I don't know anybody like that"—think again.

Sunrise just hired a young woman who graduated with highest honors from a Kentucky high school, then completed specialty training in the military—again with honors. Before all of those accomplishments, however, she was a foster child.

Years ago, I graduated from Georgetown College with an outstanding young woman who excelled on campus in academics and athletics.

She grew up at Glen Dale, the former Kentucky Baptist residential center whose 2014 sale now secures the treatment and care of current and future Sunrise kids.

Every time I speak in a Kentucky Baptist church on Sunrise's behalf, someone comes up afterward and says, "I grew up at Spring Meadows," "My granddaughter is in foster care," "We

adopted a child who came out of foster care," or they ask, "How can I get involved?"

Last night, 659 young people received some type of care from Sunrise.

They represent 1,318 biological parents. Most also have step parents or other caregivers.

As a result, many have biological relatives and family-type relationships of other types. So 659 Sunrise kids may actually represent about 4,000 Kentuckians.

Among the 2,400 Baptist churches in this state, it is very possible that one of those children, or one of their relatives, is in your congregation.

So, "I don't know anybody like that" may be an answer that should add the word, "yet."

One of the joys of my job at Sunrise is that I get to witness how people's answers grow. I get to see Acts 1:8 in action.

I get to appreciate what it means for people to be witnesses unto Christ through the dollars, time and service they provide to the children we serve. And I am humbled by it.

Randy Greene is vice president for marketing and advancement at Sunrise Children's Services, P.O. Box 1429, Mount Washington, KY 40047-1429; (502) 538-1000; www.sunrise.org.



WESTERN Recorder + Your church newsletter
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Beginning the journey

Sharing the Foundation's message with churches and individuals

It is with great excitement and a tremendous sense of responsibility that I begin my journey with the Kentucky Baptist Foundation.

First, I want to express humble gratitude to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for entrusting this kingdom work assignment to me. I ask for your prayers that I will daily commit my energies to His work with all persons He brings into my path as I travel the Commonwealth of Kentucky, sharing the message of the Foundation and its legacy giving services.

Second, I wish to express appreciation to the Foundation's search committee and its chairman Willis Henson, the Foundation's Board of Directors and its chairman, Charles Barnes, for their vote of confidence in offering me the opportunity to serve alongside them in leading the legacy stewardship ministry of the Foundation. The professionalism and thoroughness of their search process is a model that all organizations, both nonprofit and corporate businesses would be well served to emulate.

Also, I am honored to serve with an incredibly talented and committed

group of Foundation staff, Janet McIntosh, Barbara Spencer, Katrina Umphrey and Laurie Valentine. Each of these ladies is dedicated to helping

individual Kentucky Baptists who are seeking to live out their stewardship obedience to Jesus Christ through their legacy gift decisions.

I want to express my sincere thanks to all the current Kentucky Baptist Foundation clients, including individuals, churches, Baptist institutions and the KBC Mission Board that have entrusted the Foundation with the management and administration of funds to benefit the wide array of

ministries being conducted by Southern Baptists across Kentucky, the United States and around the world.

As so ably stated many times by Dr. Barry Allen, the former president of the Foundation, "we look forward to extending to you the services of Kentucky Baptist Foundation, to facilitate the stewardship of that which the Lord has entrusted to you to use for His purposes." What a great way to begin the "Journey"!

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

Ky. Baptist Foundation



Richard Carnes



June

- 20-26** Kentucky Changers, Marshall County
- 21-28** All-State Youth Choir & Orchestra, Campbellsville University
- 25** All-State Youth Choir & Orchestra Mini-Concert, Baptist Building, Louisville.
- 25-27** Mission Adventure for Kentucky Kids, Haven of Rest, Inez.
- 27** Nursing Fellowship Summer Meeting, Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown.
- 27-7/3** Kentucky Changers, Maysville.
- 30** Operation Inasmuch: Kentucky Training, First Baptist Church, Clinton.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

CENTRAL CITY—Travis Fox has been called as pastor of New Hope Church.

GREENVILLE—Chad Clark has been called as pastor of Cave Springs Church.

LOUISVILLE—Green Acres Church will celebrate 60 years of ministry Sunday, July 12, by paying tribute to its first pastor, **Donald Randolph**. The congregation invites all past and present members to share their memories of Randolph, who died Feb. 26, by writing anecdotes that will be compiled into a scrapbook for his surviving wife and family. Anecdotes may be mailed to GABC at 5189 Poplar Level Road, Louisville, KY 40219, or sent by email to greenacresbaptist@bellsouth.net.

PADUCAH—Grace Church will hold homecoming services on Sunday, June 28, starting at 10:30 a.m. The Joy Trio will be singing, and a luncheon will follow.

What's happening?

Send your church news & events to:
Mountains to the Mississippi
karen.martin@westernrecorder.org

Southern librarian honored for lifetime service

By Charissa Crotts

Louisville—The Association of Librarians and Archivists for Baptist Institutions recently honored a librarian at Southern Baptist Seminary who retired after 45 years at the institution.

Martha Powell, director of technical services at the seminary's James P. Boyce Centennial Library, received the Betty Hurtt Meritorious Service Award during the ALABI annual meeting, April 22-24, at the Southern Baptist Convention building in Nashville. Powell served at the library for 45 years under three different seminary presidents and in multiple roles: music librarian for 26 years, catalog librarian for 11 years and director of technical services for eight years.

"Martha Powell's contributions to the Southern Seminary library, and to theological and music librarianship are



Martha Powell

exceptional," said Taffey Hall, past president of ALABI and incoming executive secretary-treasurer. "Martha has been a valued friend, mentor and

encourager to me since I began service at the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives in 2003. She is a treasure."

Powell's love for students and desire to interact with them first drew her to a position at Southern's library in 1969, and she says she still remembers the first reference question she answered on the first day of the job: locating

the collection of Johann Sebastian Bach's complete works. She is known for a high standard of professionalism, as well as a cheerful, generous spirit, according to those who nominated her for the award.

Powell retired May 15. She lives in Louisville and is a member of the Baptist Tabernacle, where she has served as pianist and organist for more than 30 years. (SBTS)

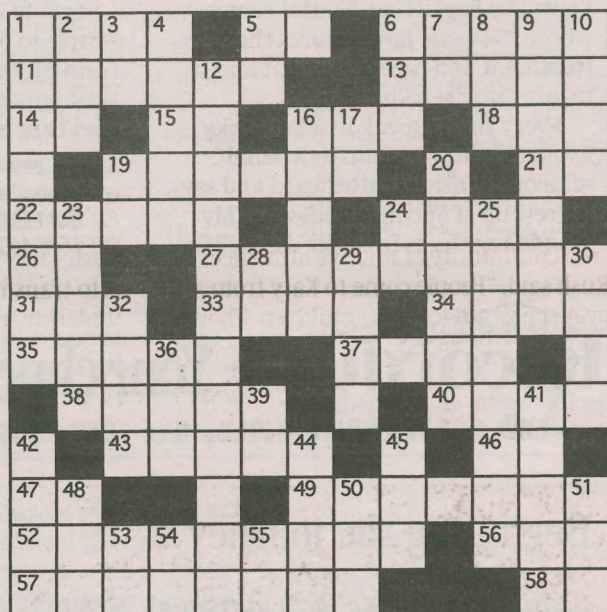
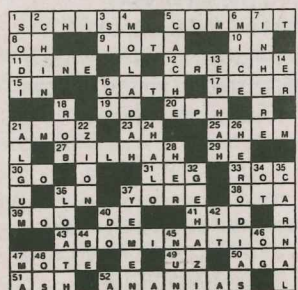
Bible Crosswords

By Rebecca Souder

Across

- 1 "___ and see" (John 1:39)
- 5 Town near Bethel (Joshua 7:2)
- 6 "Them that ___ in riches" (Mark 10:24)
- 11 Valley near Jerusalem (Joshua 15:8)
- 13 "___ is he" (Romans 14:22)
- 14 Aluminum, chem. symbol
- 15 Nashville's state, abbr.
- 16 "I am the ___" (John 14:6)
- 18 "Trees of the Lord are full of ___" (Psalms 104:16)
- 19 Large stringed instruments
- 21 Do, ___, mi
- 22 "We beheld his ___" (John 1:14)
- 24 "Like a refiner's ___" (Malachi 3:2)
- 26 East Indies, abbr.
- 27 "Whosoever ___ in him should not perish" (John 3:16)
- 31 "A great ___ dragon" (Revelation 12:3)
- 33 "Unto the ___ of the earth" (Acts 13:47)
- 34 Resound
- 35 "The ___ of death is sin" (1 Corinthians 15:56)
- 37 "To sit up ___" (Psalms 127:2)
- 38 "When ___ the king had heard these things, he was troubled" (Matthew 2:3)
- 40 "Naphtali is a ___ let loose" (Genesis 49:21)
- 43 Calendar numbers
- 46 Victory in Europe, abbr.
- 47 "He was ___ the world" (John 1:10)
- 49 Accomplish
- 52 "He ___, and denied not" (John 1:20)
- 56 "Made it a ___ of thieves" (Matthew 21:13)

#038



#039

- 57 "No man hath ___" (John 3:13)
- 58 Road, abbr.
- Down**
- 1 "Poured out the ___ money" (John 2:15)
- 2 "Took no ___ with them" (Matthew 25:3)
- 3 St. Paul's state, abbr.
- 4 "He cannot ___ into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)
- 5 "I ___ the living bread" (John 6:51)
- 6 "Father, glorify ___ name" (John 12:28)
- 7 Egyptian sun god
- 8 ___ and downs
- 9 "He that ___ his rod" (Proverbs 13:24)
- 10 Kind, variety
- 12 "Glory as of the ___ of the Father" (John 1:14) (2 words)
- 16 "The ___ was made by him" (John 1:10)
- 17 "Love one another, ___ I have loved you" (John 15:12)
- 19 Company, abbr.
- 20 "Go thy way; thy son ___" (John 4:50)
- 23 "As much as ___ in you" (Romans 12:18)
- 24 Iron, chem. symbol
- 25 "As many as ___ him, to them gave he power" (John 1:12)
- 28 Printer's measure
- 29 "I ... was in the ___ that is called Patmos" (Revelation 1:9)
- 30 "___ fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21)
- 32 "Jesus Christ, Who ___ for us" (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10)
- 36 Gun lobbyists, abbr.
- 39 Eastern seaboard state, abbr.
- 41 "___ man spake like this" (John 7:46)
- 42 Type style
- 44 Correspondence enclosure, abbr.
- 45 Doctorate degree, abbr.
- 48 Negative votes
- 50 Committee for Economic Development, abbr.
- 51 "To this ___ I was born" (John 18:37)
- 53 State where man first flew, abbr.
- 54 Far East, abbr.
- 55 Northwest state, abbr.

To place an advertisement

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



SEEKING: Crofton Baptist Church in Crofton, Ky., is prayerfully accepting resumes for the position of full time pastor to lead our congregation. Experience is preferred. Please send resume to Crofton Baptist Church, Attn: Pastor Search Committee, 155 College Street, Crofton, KY 42217 or email to office at croftonbaptist@bellsouth.net.

SEEKING: Olive Branch Baptist Church in Hanson, Ky., is prayerfully accepting resumes for a bivocational director of music ministries. Please send resumes to 400 Olive Branch Church Rd., Hanson, KY 42413, Attn: Personnel Committee, or email to olivebranch552@bellsouth.net.

SEEKING: Little River Baptist Association is currently seeking a full-time director of missions. Resumes with references may be sent to: Little River Baptist Association, Attention: DOM Search Committee, 5092 Blackhawk Rd. Princeton KY, 42445 until June 30.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Rockville, Md., was begun in 1821 and is a regional church located 25 miles from downtown DC. FBC is seeking God's will for a senior pastor to lead a contemporary and a traditional worship averaging combined 232 with three support staff. Christian preschool. Qualifications are: 1) Minimum master's degree from SB seminary with at least 5 years pastor experience. 2) Believe in inerrancy of Bible and exemplify qualities in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. 3) Lead worship, preach, teach, the gospel message relevant to spiritual growth. 4) Communicate and connect with all age groups with love of Christ and provide counseling and ministering in crisis. 5) Passion for evangelism and start new ministries and participate in SB denomination. 6) Compassionately lead congregation of diverse ethnicity in spiritual growth, leadership, conflict resolution, and interpersonal relationships. 7) Oversee administrative responsibilities and mentor staff. Send letter of interest and resume to pastorsearch@firstbaptistrockville.org or mail to: Pastor Search Team, 682 College Parkway, Rockville, MD 20850-1134. Deadline July 1.

SEEKING: Hedgeville Baptist Church is seeking a full-time pastor. Applicant must

meet qualifications of 1 Timothy 3. Send resume to: Hedgeville Baptist Church, P.O. Box 262, Danville, KY 40422.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Lawrenceburg, Ky., is seeking a part-time children's minister. For more information contact Phillip, (502)598-6146, or Heather, (502)859-2506. Send resumes to fbcresumes@gmail.com. Deadline June 30.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Bowling Green, Ky., is prayerfully seeking a full-time pastor who God has chosen to lead and shepherd our congregation. Resumes will be accepted until 6/30, and can be submitted via email to 621SGW@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Part-time music director position available to serve at First Baptist Church of Cold Spring by coordinating and administering an effective music program by blending contemporary and traditional music at the 10:30 am and 6 p.m. Sunday and Wednesday evening services. Please send resumes to Music Ministry Search Team at 4410 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, KY 41076. Job description available at http://fbccs.com

SEEKING: Oneida Baptist Church, in Oneida, Ky., and adjacent to Oneida Baptist Institute, is prayerfully accepting resumes for a bivocational pastor. Email resumes to christy.gay@clay.kyschools.us

SEEKING: Small Baptist church in Warren County, Ky., seeking a bivocational pastor. Close personal walk with the Lord along with knowledge, wisdom and understanding of the Holy Bible is required. Motivated leader with vision and focus to carry on God's mission, "to seek and save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Prior pastoral experience, education and training is preferred. Applicants send your resume to pkbcsearch@yahoo.com or mail to PKBC, P.O. Box 54, Rockfield, KY 42274.

FOR RENT: Two condos for rent in Destin, Fla. 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. Book now for 2015. lbrammer@charter.net (423) 309-4422.

SERVICES: The family and employees of JCA Media would like to thank you for the outpouring of support displayed during the passing of Jim Cottrell. Your cards, calls, visits, and presence during this difficult time were a testament to how many people Jim touched. We are saddened by his absence in our daily lives, but know Jim's presence remains within the honesty, integrity, quality of workmanship, and fairness upon which he built his reputation. We look forward to continuing to help you enhance your worship experience. For information/references, please visit JCAMedia.com.

Revival key for family unit, pastor says

By Karen Willoughby

Katy, Texas—More than 3,000 people of all ages worship each week at Kingsland Baptist Church in Katy, Texas. Bucking a decades-old national trend, children past nursery age sit with their parents during Sunday morning worship.

Family togetherness is a significant aspect of home life, church life and denominational life at Kingsland Baptist Church, where Ryan Rush has been pastor since May 2014.

"The family has been ordained by God as the foundational place for faith to take root and grow," Rush told Baptist Press. "The decline in healthy home life, then, is a crisis with far-reaching implications that must not be taken lightly."

Spiritual revival is key in achieving God's design for the family, Rush said.

"This cultural decline of healthy home life is a problem too great for political or educational efforts to change. We must turn instead to spiritual revival, and we are convinced that God has prepared Kingsland for this important moment in history," Rush said. "We have a vision of seeing 10,000 homes transformed by the power of the gospel in the next 10 years through our ministry, church planting, missions endeavors, and providing resources to other congregations."

Supporting the church family as a whole is accomplished through the church's investment in a variety of local-to-global ministries entire families can support.

"We have teams out about 40 to 42 Saturdays a year serving the Greater Houston area," said Omar Garcia, missions pastor for the last 10 years. "We

mobilize our small groups to take ownership of local initiatives."

The church's commitment to the greater family of 46,000 Southern Baptist churches starts with its support of the Cooperative Program, which enables Southern Baptist churches to work together to support state, national and international missions and ministries.

Kingsland Baptist for the last 14 years has given 10 percent of its undesignated offerings to missions through the Cooperative Program, in addition to its hands-on support of several SBC-related national and international outreaches, and its generous support of seasonal offerings.

Garcia said when parents and their children work together in missions, it builds memories of serving together, helps spread a passion for missions to future generations, and strengthens the small group the family is a part of. Garcia casts a vision to the congregation "to live incarnationally, to see the need and respond accordingly, as Jesus did."

For the past eight years, the first Sunday of March has been "Caring for Katy Sunday." Kingsland Baptist members—armed with \$125,000 and a variety of tools including paint brushes, lawn care items, and trash bags—have used Sunday worship time to spread across the community, meeting the needs of city residents at 60 to 100 sites.

The church mobilizes 3,000 volunteers annually to work with an informal "urban alliance" to do whatever its partners in Greater Houston say is needed.

Five years ago, the church started 10K, 5K and one mile runs/walks named "Just



Children work alongside adults on "Caring for Katy Sunday," a community outreach ministry of Kingsland Baptist Church in Katy, Texas. (Submitted by church)

Run for a Just Cause," raising money and awareness about human trafficking. The event has become a local favorite as it ministers in India. The church works with international partners and with people who have moved to Houston from other countries. Professions of faith in Jesus have been made by people disillusioned with their traditional religion.

The church partners with Southern Baptist churches in Texas, New Orleans, Montana, Idaho and Chicago. It has started four churches locally, and another eight or more across the nation.

A Houston suburb known for having the largest outlet mall in the nation, Katy "is a community of relative affluence," Rush said. "People come to Katy from all over the world for their children. They define family success the wrong way: college, sports. We're ministering to a group of people in our Jerusalem who are unfulfilled and broken, and don't realize

their own poverty."

That's why the church emphasizes family ministry. Rush said they take great care to capitalize on the milestones of each child's life. "We send home every Sunday 'Faith Talks' based on the sermon. We worship together with all generations so (children) can experience the joy of worship and the example of their parents: 'Hey, Daddy's worshipping Jesus!'"

Healthy homes are ones that reflect God's image, where the attributes and character of God are taught so children can come to know who He is and why they should follow His guidance rather than their own thinking, the pastor said.

"Every problem is a family problem," Rush said. "The only hope for our nation is to transform the home. The theological undergirding of the family has come to a place where it's more critical now than ever to know who God is and what He says. ... The future of our culture is on getting this right." (BP)

Plan a family vacation with a purpose

By Mary DeMuth

Nashville, Tenn.—When our family helped plant a church in southern France, our eldest daughter's perspective changed. "I realize now that God is everywhere. He's not an American." You don't need to relocate to experience this change with your kids—vacation with a purpose.

Why minister as a family?

Mary Gore, with the Toledo Bend Resort Ministry in Zwolle, La., explained, "What better way to share the love of Jesus than to take something you enjoy as a family and use it as a platform to share the gospel?" Living out the gospel together in another place enlivens it for the kids.

Serving together also deepens the impact of discipling our children, said Keith Ivey, head of Georgia Mountain Resort Ministries. Doing missions together is best taught hands on.

What is a vacation with a purpose?

A vacation with a purpose is simply an extended outing with your family where you actively seek to serve or minister to people—serving a campground staff, offering water to people on a hot mountain trail or helping a church planter engage a people group in New York City.

How do you prepare?

Families must have a plan, particularly if you intend to partner with an existing

ministry. Missionaries have insight to the people they serve so seek to meet specific needs, not the needs you think they have.

It's important to prepare spiritually for the trip as a family. Ivey encourages families to consider the passions of your family. If your children are younger, look for projects that allow their involvement. He encourages a family meeting to help determine where and when to serve, then pray fervently about the opportunities God might bring. Don't forget to schedule down time. Plan extra time for that if your children are younger.

What can you do?

A vacation with a purpose may simply mean you interact with the folks you meet as you vacation. Opportunities are limited only by imagination. Your children will be help brainstorm how you can serve. Ivey encourages families to get to know people, find out their needs, and serve by listening.

"People on vacation are thinking about spiritual things and are open to conversations on spiritual topics. Most dread the return to the crazy schedules they left and are contemplating changes they either need to make or wish they could make in their lives."

It's possible to instill your beliefs into your kids' lives in an organic, life-changing way. Seek to serve others alongside your kids, to put feet to Jesus' words, "Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations." (Matthew 28:19). (BP)



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Is Your Church Prepared?



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in the past year, 2 years, 3 years, etc?***

***How many of them included the church
in their estate plans?***

Lifeway
Research
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February 2013

72% of Southern
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should include
the church and
other ministries
in their estate
plans, BUT

86% stated they
had not provided
their
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