

WESTERN Recorder

July 14, 2015

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 189, Issue 14

7 black churches burned in 10 days

By Diana Chandler

Nashville—Fires at seven black churches in 10 days have fueled discussions of racial hatred, as the first occurred within a week of the June 17 massacre of nine black Christians by a white supremacist at a Charleston church.

Arson had been confirmed in three of the fires as of July 1, but none had been deemed hate crimes. Two of the churches are Southern Baptist congregations.

While the fires are still under investigation, Southern Baptist Convention President Ronnie Floyd said "racism and prejudice must cease."

"The continuation of African American churches being burned in our nation is highly concerning to me," said Floyd, pastor of the Cross Church in northwest Arkansas. "Our Southern Baptist family hurts for our brothers and sisters who have suffered these devastating losses, especially

those who are suffering at the hands of individuals who purposely inflict harm. As members of the family of God, we stand with them in prayer and encouragement."

K. Marshall Williams, president of National African American Fellowship of the SBC and pastor of Nazarene Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Pa., called the arsons "the manifestation of sinful and wicked humanity."

Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, said he is brokenhearted "at the burning of a house of prayer or God's house and it disturbs me greatly because of the cowardice of such acts and the hatred of such acts of violence."

The latest fire destroyed Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church in the small town of Greeleyville, S.C. The church had been rebuilt after the Ku Klux Klan burned it to the ground 20



years ago.

Arson was confirmed in a June 24 fire that caused \$250,000 in damage at Briar Creek Road Baptist Church in Charlotte, N.C., a predominantly black Southern Baptist church that also hosts services for two Nepali congregations.

A June 27 blaze still under investigation destroyed the sanctuary of the predominantly black College Heights Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist church in Elyria, Ohio, causing \$1 million in damage, the Cleveland ABC

affiliate NewsNet5 reported.

Arsonists torched College Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church in Knoxville, Tenn., on June 22, and on the following day at God's Power Church of Christ in Macon, Ga., both predominantly black congregations.

Fire destroyed Glover Grove Baptist Church in Warrenville, S.C., on June 26. Bobby Jones, the church pastor, told NPR that he had often discovered "KKK" scrawled on the building's outside walls but said he hoped the fire was not set by arsonists.

The fire left only the steeple and two walls standing in the church that was home to about 35 worshippers.

Greater Miracle Apostolic Holiness Church in Tallahassee, Fla., was destroyed by another June 26 fire likely caused by a tree falling on overhead electrical lines, fire officials said. Damage at the predominantly African American church was estimated at \$700,000.

NAMB fund donations

Those wishing to give to the NAMB fund for the churches can visit namb.net/givenow or call toll-free 866-407-6262. Checks should be made out to NAMB with "Church Fire Fund" on the memo line and mailed to NAMB, P.O. Box 116543, Atlanta GA 30368-6543.

One hundred percent of donations will go to help churches—regardless of denominational affiliation—impacted by the fires. (BP)

At Bowling Green church, Page urges, 'Be God-empowered in a fallen culture'

By Diana Chandler

Bowling Green—Long before the U.S. Supreme Court legalized gay marriage nationwide, Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee President Frank Page had planned to preach a sermon at Living Hope Baptist Church on "Finding Hope in a Fallen Culture."

"Pastor Jay Pettus, who is away on sabbatical, had enlisted me to preach probably a year or more ago," Page said, "asking me to preach on how to have hope in a (post-) Christian, postmodern culture. The message had already been planned," connecting "powerfully with the events of the previous day. It just shows the power of the Holy Spirit."

That same power will enable Christians to stand firm in faith and proclaim the spiritual truth

of marriage the nation has deserted, Page said in his message at the Bowling Green church.

"When societal forces rise up—we say we will stand against you in the power of the name of the

Lord God Almighty," Page preached. "We either believe in it, or we might as well go home."

If leaders will stand on the power of God's word, congregations will be emboldened to follow, Page said, using the text of the shepherd boy David slaying Goliath in 1 Samuel 17, followed by the Israelites' victories against a string of Philistine giants in 1 Chronicles 20 after David had begun his reign as king.

Just as David and the Israelites stood against the Philistines, Christians must stand against the giants facing modern culture, Page said, referencing such evils as racism.

"I want to be a giant killer, and if a man or woman stands up for what is right, in a way that's right, God's people will follow," Page said. "You want to be a leader, then be a giant killer."

Page called Christians to minister to homosexuals by engaging them in conversation and relationship.

"We will continue to speak the truth in love. We'll continue to love every man, woman, boy and girl on the face of this earth. ... The worst form of love is to love somebody and not tell them the truth," Page said. "We're in a culture that will not tell you the truth. We're in a culture that will not speak the truth, but we're continuing to fight the giants. We're to do it in the spirit of love and kindness, but we will fight."

Homosexual marriage will precipitate a cultural decline in America with an unknown ending, Page said, likely including

□ See God-empowered ... Page 9



Frank Page



Experience 1:8 teams partnered with the North American Mission Board's Crossover Columbus to do ministry with churches, church plants and community outreach centers across the city.

Experience 1:8 teams challenged to 'leverage lives for the gospel'

By Myriah Snyder

Columbus, Ohio—As part of Experience 1:8, a summer missions program for the Kentucky BCM, Kentucky students spent 10 days "immersed in an experience of life and ministry" in Columbus, Ohio, according to the ForColumbus website. The students were challenged to "leverage their lives for the gospel."

Coinciding with the 2015 Southern Baptist Convention in Columbus, Experience 1:8 teams partnered with the

North American Mission Board's Crossover Columbus to do ministry with churches, church plants and community outreach centers across the city.

"A really great thing about ForColumbus was just this opening of our eyes, that we need to be aware that NAMB has a host of 'Send Cities' that they want people to go to and build their lives in, because our world's just becoming a global place," said Jessie Nickell, Western Kentucky University campus missionary associate

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COOPERATIVE PROGRAM The Heart of Southern Baptist Missions and Ministries



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Blindfolded 5k encourages runners to 'think differently'

By Myriah Snyder

Corbin—On July 4, 60 runners lined the streets of Corbin for a 5K race. Thirty of them wore blindfolds. Halfway through the race, they switched places with their guides.

"We were looking for ways to raise awareness, and began thinking about taking people out of their comfort zones and doing things that force people to think differently," said Travis Freeman, a member of Central Baptist Church in Corbin and founder of the Freeman Foundation.

"One way that you do that is by immersing people in a situation that they're not used to and uncomfortable with," said Freeman, who also is a missions and ministry professor at University of the Cumberlands.

His autobiography, "Lights Out," tells the story of how an illness at 12 years old left him sightless. However, drawing on strength from the Lord and his salvation, Freeman went on to play football in junior high and high school, and get his bachelor's degree from the University of Kentucky and his master's and doctorate degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Freeman's story has been featured on the Today Show and Dateline, and it was made into a movie that released last year, "23 Blast."

The Freeman Foundation was established around the release of "23 Blast." The organization's mission is "to promote the truth that disability does not equal inability," Freeman said.

"I came across this idea, and we did the blindfolded 5K this past Saturday.

"We're looking at doing a dinner in the dark in late fall. That would be where people come and eat dinner blindfolded," Freeman said.

He continued, "We just want people to



Above, Lights Out Blindfolded 5K participants begin the race. Top right, Travis Freeman with his fiancé, Stephanie Taylor, and parents, Mary and Larry Freeman. Right, Drew Mahan and son, Silas Mahan near the finish line.

really think about what it's like to lose one of your senses or be disabled, so next time they encounter someone who has a disability, maybe it will make them think differently."

"I heard several people talking about what they learned, and one individual said that when their partner put on the blindfold, they were really gripped by how that person's life was really in their hands at that point, (and) how the person who was blindfolded was extremely dependent upon them for finishing that half of the race," Freeman recounted.

"I think people are going to really think about it differently, and they're going to have a lot more respect for people who navigate with a disability and live life with a disability," he said.



Central Baptist's pastor, Chad Fugitt, said, "Travis' life and faith are a living illustration to our church of the scriptural truth: we walk by faith, not by sight."

Fugitt continued, "His many accomplishments, including a PhD from Southern Seminary, are proof that disability really doesn't equal inability.

"Now the movie '23 Blast' and his book 'Lights Out' are giving Travis a platform via the Freeman Foundation to bring the hope of the gospel to others as well," he



said.

"Our church was happy to help sponsor the blindfolded 5K and continue to look forward to the many ways God will continue to use Travis for his glory," Fugitt added.

Drew Mahan, a lifelong friend of Freeman and pastor of Forward Community Church, said, "I had an interest especially in the 5K because I knew, having traveled with Travis, that when you walk with someone who is sight impaired, you have to become aware of your surroundings, knowing that they are not, that they are adjusting, to new areas, new pathways and have obstacles in their way.

"I was looking forward to this blindfolded 5K because many people in our community got a chance to see just what it's like to be in an unfamiliar situation and not be able to see," said Mahan, who is a Freeman Foundation board member.

"I think what it did was just show everybody that, 'Yes, there are obstacles, but you just finished a 5K and half of it was blindfolded.' So life is not only possible when you're sight impaired, but it is just as exciting and fulfilling as it is for folks with vision," Mahan explained.

"I'd just love for people to get ahold of me and continue spreading the mission of the foundation and the message of my life. I really want to point people to the hope of the gospel," Freeman concluded.

He can be reached at info@travisfreeman.org. (WR)

Crossings headed toward record summer with 440 lives changed ... and counting

By Alison Pulliam

Bagdad—Like many other teens throughout the years, Aaron Prather came to the Crossings camp at Cedarmore because it sounded like a blast, with the zip lines, messy games, bazooka ball and swimming.

"I had a bunch of friends going, and I thought maybe this would be a fun experience," he said.

With no spiritual expectations in mind, Prather attended a worship service at Crossings that changed his whole world, he said.

The camp pastor talked about how the prophet Hosea was prompted by God to marry a prostitute, and Hosea continued to pursue her even in her unfaithfulness.

"That really struck home, because I realized that I was always falling away from the lessons I was taught. I would never really obey Christ," Prather said. "I realized that I was ready to give my life over to Christ and that night, I was saved by the glory of God."

Prather's story is not unique.

Through their two locations at Cedarmore in central Kentucky and Jonathan Creek near Land Between the



Crossings Ministries is projecting another record year in attendance with more than 13,000 students registered for summer camps. So far, 400 teens have made the decision to accept Christ.

Lakes, Crossings summer camps attract record-breaking numbers of young people every year.

So far this summer, Crossings has recorded 440 first-time decisions to accept Christ as Savior.

In addition to the hundreds of salvations, the camp also provides an environment that helps young Christians grow closer in their walk with God.

"I've seen God use Crossings to work in my life by showing me ways I'm not

being obedient and not following him like I should be," said camper Gabby Wasson.

Youth Pastor John Hedberg said the camps are always "a very fruitful time" in youth evangelism.

"Each year we have students surrender to Christ, grow deeper in their walk with Christ, and make life altering decisions," said Hedberg, who serves at Kings Baptist Church in Taylorsville.

Changed lives don't happen at just any summer camp. Dedication to the gospel and all-around excellence at Crossings set the camp apart from others like it, he said.

"Crossings has a unique way of training their camp staffers to be very intentional with both students and adult leaders," Hedberg said.

"I have not been a part of another camp in which the camp pastor and worship leaders interact with the students like at Crossings."

With 13 more sessions left this summer, camp staffers will continue to minister to a record 13,000-plus total registered attendees, through which the number of salvations could easily reach or exceed last year's 800 teens saved. (KBC)

All-State youth choirs foster friendships, make memories

By Myriah Snyder

Louisville—Each year, dozens of youth from Kentucky Baptist churches across the state participate in the Kentucky Baptist All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra.

The group dedicates a few days to rehearsal, one day to group bonding—this year, a King's Island trip—and then performs concerts across the state. Their mission is "to unashamedly spread the gospel through our music, our sharing, and our conduct," according to their tour book.

This summer's itinerary included performances at Campbellsville University; Campbellsville Baptist Church; Allen Baptist Church in Prestonwood; Eastern Kentucky Veterans Center in Hazard; First Baptist Church of London; and Grace Baptist Church in Somerset.

Mason Sims and Stephanie Morgan have been involved with Kentucky Baptist All-State Choirs since the fourth grade.

"Both of these individuals represent a group of future leaders in our churches.

Both of them have solid commitments to the Lord and have been able to use their talents in the area of music within their church," said Jason Stewart, music and worship consultant for the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

"One of the purposes of the KBC All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra is to seek and find individuals like these two, and

"My favorite part about being in the choir is probably the experiences or people I've met. It's the memories you make, the friendships you make, and realizing that you always have a support group..."

Stephanie Morgan



Each year, dozens of youth from Kentucky Baptist churches across the state participate in the Kentucky Baptist All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra.

pour into their lives so they can continue making a great difference," he added.

Sims is a recent high school graduate and a bass singer from Second Baptist Church of Hopkinsville. With the exception of one year off for the Governor's Scholar Program, he has been involved in All-State choirs continuously.

"I participate in the All-State Choir because, for one, I love singing. I'm a member of my church choir at Second Baptist, and praise and worship has just always been a part of my life—a special

part of my life," Sims shared.

"Sometimes, I'm not the best speaker at things," he continued. "If there's music playing, that's something just flowing through me—I feel like that's God working through me. I guess that is why I choose to go back every year, because we're with fellow believers, fellow musicians, and we're just using the gifts God gave us to praise Him."

Sims will attend the University of Kentucky in the fall to study political science and journalism.

He describes himself as a "very involved student," and one day hopes to be a political analyst or correspondent for a news network, integrating his faith with politics.

"I feel like this week especially, in our

Bible studies that we have, we talked about getting involved in worship and immersing yourself in worship. That really hit home. I enjoy doing that, but there's so much more I can do within my church to get more involved with our music department just to glorify God," Sims said.

Morgan, another recent high school graduate, is a member of Hartford Baptist in Ohio County. She sings alto and plays the bass clarinet.

"My favorite part about being in the choir is probably the experiences or people I've met. It's the memories you make, the friendships you make, and realizing that you always have a support group to come back to. You always have people who care about you," Morgan said.

Morgan plans to attend Campbellsville University in the fall, majoring in educational ministries and public relations. She is an "all A" student and hopes to one day be an overseas missionary.

"I started choir because it sounded like something fun, then it became a really big part of my life," Morgan said. "It was a way to meet new people and exercise my faith. It was something where I could go and meet Christians who were my age. It just helped me realize that I'm not alone with my walk and my faith."

Sims added, "If you're a KBC church and you're not involved in the Kentucky Baptist All-State Choirs, you need to recruit your kids to join it, because it's an uplifting program. It's a great way to spread God's word.

"It's a fun time, you make friends, you praise God, and these friends are doing the same stuff as you. They'll last a lifetime regardless of how often you see them." (WR)

Kentucky BNF: A 'catalyst' for missional lifestyle

By Myriah Snyder

Louisville—"We're not the biggest organization, but we're a committed organization," Wanda Walker, adult and church-wide consultant for the Kentucky WMU and liaison between the local chapter and national Baptist Nursing Fellowship, said of the Kentucky BNF.

"Just to see them in action, Jesus shines through these ladies and men," she continued. "They live a missional lifestyle. BNF is the catalyst for helping them pursue that."

The Kentucky BNF "is an organization for health care professionals to network with others through Bible study and worship; participate in mission/ministry projects; encourage and support one another through prayer; prepare for a witnessing lifestyle and provide information and encouragement about mission careers in the medical field," according to the group's website.

They meet twice a year, once at the spring Kentucky WMU annual meeting and the last Saturday in June.

Two of the many dedicated Kentucky BNF nurses are Benita Decker and Charlotte Rock.

"Benita Decker has a true mission's heart," Walker said. "She's very compassionate, but she's a straightforward person. She is real honest about things, and has a real respect among her peers and colleagues."

Decker has served as president of the



Two of the many dedicated Kentucky BNF nurses are Benita Decker and Charlotte Rock.

Kentucky BNF, and "has just been really involved in the growth of the organization—promoting it, believing in it and what it's about," Walker added.

Through the BNF and Kentucky WMU, Decker went to Malawi two years ago and is returning this year to "teach pastors' wives," Decker said.

"Two years we taught them about various aspects of being a pastor's wife, but they also wanted some health information," Decker continued.

"The healthcare system in Malawi is pretty poor, and they needed information and hands-on training on what they can do to be healthier and to help their communities to be healthier," Decker said. "Another nurse and I went and taught various aspects of health."

This year, she will be returning to do the same thing—teach them how to be healthy and put a spiritual spin on it, she said. She will also be "equipping them

with some real tools that they can take back not only for themselves, but to their communities and to their churches."

"While I'm doing that, the other ladies are teaching them how to be on mission, how to be a good pastor's wife and some Bible studies to really help equip these ladies as they go back and minister in their churches."

"I would not have had that opportunity had I not been involved in the Kentucky WMU and the BNF."

Decker, widowed mother of two adult daughters, works for the Department for Public Health as an adolescent health coordinator. She also is music director at Farmdale Baptist Church in Frankfort and serves on the administrative committee of the Mission Board of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

"Charlotte Rock has a heart of gold, and what I perceive as her part of BNF is the education part—getting out there and helping people understand the importance of taking care of themselves," Walker said. "She is a very faithful person. She is strong in prayer and support for missions, for nurses."

Rock is instrumental in the wellness ministry at Walnut Street Baptist Church, Walker added.

Rock and her husband, Clayton, are retired missionaries to Argentina, appointed in 1982 and retiring in 2007. While on the field, in addition to ministering in other capacities such as church planting, she was a trainer for commu-

nity health evangelism.

"Right now my role with BNF in Kentucky is the faith community nurse consultant," Rock said.

In that role, she helps "other nurses look at what the possibilities are in their churches to begin some type of health ministry for the congregants," she said.

Rock, mother of three, grandmother of two, and avid knitter, recently retired from continued work in the healthcare profession.

She and Clayton have been on the membership roll at Walnut Street Church in Louisville since 1992.

Additionally, both women help with community mission projects, health booths and other aspects of the BNF.

"Most healthcare professionals recognize that this is a calling, and that God has equipped and gifted us with the art of healing and compassion," Decker said.

"We do that every day in our work, but some days it gets pretty downrighted because we live in such a fallen world. Being able to strengthen and equip each other along the way has been the biggest benefit," she said of the BNF.

Rock concluded, "Being a Christian nurse, we have the hope of the Lord Jesus Christ in our lives and, hopefully, we can impart that to the people we take care of. I believe that one of the biggest benefits of the BNF is helping nurses to see themselves in that role as a Christian, first and foremost, and utilizing that in the nursing profession." (WR)

Lessons in the storm

By Tom James, KBC president

Warren County, where I live, has been rocked by several storms over the past few weeks, producing three separate power outages in our neighborhood. One outage lasted 10 hours. God used this time to remind me of some spiritual truths.

1. Sometimes it takes storms to make us aware of the reality of darkness; it is easy to take light for granted. Once we come to faith in Christ we become part of the "light of the world."

Over time, it is easy to forget that there are billions who are hurting and hopeless, blinded by the darkness, trying to find their way one day at a time. Whether it is carrying our light across the street to a neighbor or to an unreach, unengaged people group, we must let our light shine (Matthew 5:14).

2. Darkness is uncomfortable. It was HOT when the power was out and our house was without air conditioning. Spiritual darkness is an uncomfortable place to be. People are looking for meaning, for something to fill the void in their lives. Because they walk in darkness, they often try to bring joy to

their lives with the wrong things that only compound their misery.

3. Those in darkness look for those who have the light. After several hours of darkness, I was frustrated. I drove around trying to find those working on the power in hopes of knowing when I would have lights. Those in spiritual darkness are looking for someone—anyone really—who might tell them how to have light in their lives. They drive by our churches and walk past at work desperate for hope, and we often are blind to their plight.

4. Ten hours seemed like a lifetime. In my frustration, the Lord spoke to me and reminded me that a temporary power outage and walking in darkness for a few hours is nothing like walking in darkness for a lifetime, only to then spend eternity in the darkness of hell.

5. There was joy when the lights finally came on. It was 1:30 a.m. but I still felt like throwing a party. I could finally rest as the house would be more comfortable. The joy I felt when the lights came on is nothing compared to the joy in heaven over a sinner who repents and is ushered from spiritual darkness into light (Luke 15:10). Being lost is an uncomfortable place to be. For many like myself, we have been saved so long we forget the pain of being lost. We have the One who is the "light" (John 8:12), and we should daily take Him to those in darkness, extending to them the hope that is only found in Him. We have the Holy Spirit who gives power (Acts 1:8). It is He who uses us to help those walking in darkness to walk into the light.

Let's take the light while there is time, for night comes when no man will work (John 9:4).

Together
We are the KBC

Paul Chitwood

One flag lowers; another is raised

In what can only be described as a surprising development, the Confederate battle flag was taken down last Friday at the South Carolina Statehouse.

For as long as I can remember, the Confederate flag has flown on the Capitol grounds there—first atop the dome, then at a historical monument. As a native of the Palmetto State, I can attest that the flag's removal is something few sandlappers thought they'd ever see.

Despite what some may think, the flag has not always flown over the state's capitol. Its appearance atop the dome dates back to 1961, when it was raised in recognition of the 100th anniversary of the Civil War, but stayed up the following year in protest of the civil rights movement and integration. There it remained for nearly 40 years.

I was working at the Baptist Courier in South Carolina in 2000 when the compromise was reached to relocate the Confederate flag from the Capitol dome to a monument on the Statehouse grounds. At the time, South Carolina Baptists—in reminding followers of Christ that they are called upon to be peacemakers and in desiring to be "a force to achieve racial harmony"—joined in the call for state legislators to consider relocating the flag.

The issue reached a boiling point again last month following the killing of nine worshippers at a historic African-American church in downtown Charleston by a young white supremacist, who had posted photos online posing with a Confederate flag. Social outcry arose: "Take it down!"

On Friday morning, a South Carolina Highway Patrol Honor Guard, which included two African Americans, lowered the flag. It now will be displayed in the

Confederate Relic room in the State Museum—an appropriate venue. "No one should ever drive by the Statehouse and feel pain," Gov. Nikki Haley told NBC's "Today" show. "No one should ever drive by the Statehouse and feel like they don't belong."

In other flag-related news, a North Carolina pastor has begun advocating flying the Christian flag above the American flag, recognizing that "we are first and foremost Christians who are called to serve the living God." His suggestion comes in response to the Supreme Court's ruling favoring gay marriages and a call by some conservative evangelicals for civil disobedience.

Rit Varriale, a former Army Ranger, maintains, "With all due respect, we honor our government, and we're very proud to be Americans, but we must honor God before human authority." Reversing the flags' positions acknowledges there is a Divine Being

who is the greatest authority and to whom each person is accountable, he explains.

While some may see raising the Christian flag to the position of prominence as a silly, unpatriotic act; it is not intended to convey disloyalty to one's country. Rather, it is a visual representation of the Pledge of Allegiance's declaration that we are "one Nation under God." It also can be an expression of one's desire for God's Kingdom to come on earth and for His peace to fly over every human heart.

In reality, our flags are just pieces of cloth. And, while we've given them symbolic meanings, real societal transformation only comes when the flag of racism, ethnicity and prejudice is lowered, and the flag of Christian humility, love and brotherhood is raised in our hearts.

After
Thought

By Todd Deaton

It's still completely free—to pastors & DOMs

Our phone rings, and a question often arises: "Can I still get the Western Recorder free?"

If you are a pastor of a Kentucky Baptist church or a director of missions, the answer is, "Absolutely." The same goes for our retired ministers.

True, a couple of years ago, we had to discontinue sending print editions to senior pastors and directors of missions. Because of rising printing and mailing costs and a significant reduction in our Cooperative Program allocation by the Kentucky Baptist Convention, we simply could no longer afford to send complimentary print issues to each of our more than 2,225 senior pastors and directors of missions. We really regret that it was necessary. So, we determined to provide our digital issues and all of our stories that are posted on our website to you—free.

As a former pastor of mine repeatedly said, "All means all, and that's all that all means." ALL articles on our website written by the KBC communications staff, as well as all stories

from Baptist Press, are always open access. Anyone can read them, anytime, anywhere.

"But when I click on some of your articles, I can only read a couple of paragraphs and then a log-in form appears. Can I read those stories free, too?" some pastors and DOMs may wonder.

Absolutely. Yes, some articles are subscriber exclusives, and you need to be a print or digital subscriber to the Western Recorder to read them. BUT, if you are a senior pastor or director of missions, you have a complimentary digital subscription to the Western Recorder. All means all! So you can read all of our e-issues and all of our online news—absolutely free.

"What do I need to do to be able to read all your stories?" I'm glad you asked. You will need a subscriber number for the online form to create your username and password. Just call the Western Recorder at 1-866-489-3535, identify yourself as a Kentucky pastor or DOM, and we'll take care of the rest. Even the call is

free!

What are you waiting for? Call today! You don't want to miss a single Kentucky Baptist news story. And, we don't want you to, either.

We know you will enjoy reading your Western Recorder e-issues and all of our online articles so much that you will encourage others to read it, too. And, we hope you will consider starting a church plan, so your church members can receive the Western Recorder, too.

We find that Kentucky Baptists are more generous in supporting their missions and ministries when they know about them. By the way, if a group of five or more members subscribe through your church office, then their pastor also receives a print issue of the Western Recorder—absolutely free.

So, despite what you may have heard, say "it aint so! I'm a Kentucky pastor, and I get my Western Recorder e-issue and all the Kentucky Baptist news online completely FREE"—as it should be.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Good work!

I have been reading the Western Recorder for over 65 years. The current edition of 6-30-15 is one of the finest.

Coverage of the Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting in that edition was thorough. I was unable to attend the convention this year. After reading this edition, I felt almost like I had been there.

Thank you and your staff for your good work!

Louis Shepherd
Russell Springs



To submit a letter to the editor, mail to Western Recorder, Attn.: Editor, PO Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253, or send e-mail to Todd.Deaton@WesternRecorder.org. Letters should be no more than 300 words. Letters must reflect Christian civility and are subject to editing for style, clarity and space.



Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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Letters to the editor:

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

Talking to your children about same-sex marriage

By Russell Moore

Some Christian parents wonder how to explain to their small children the Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex marriage. How does one teach about the law and the controversy without exposing one's children to more than they can handle?

First of all, make no mistake: You should talk to your children about this. No matter how you shelter your family, keeping your children from knowing about the Supreme Court's redefinition of marriage would take a level of choreography of their lives that isn't realistic, nor is it particularly Christian.

The Bible isn't nearly as antiseptic as Christians sometimes pretend to be, and it certainly doesn't shirk back from addressing all the complexities of human life. If we are discipling our children, let's apply the Scriptures to all of life. If we refuse to talk to our children about the reality of the world they live in, our children will assume we are unequipped to speak to it, and they'll eventually search out a worldview that will.

This doesn't mean that we rattle our children with information they aren't developmentally ready to process. But we know how to navigate that already: We talk, for instance, about marriage itself and we give age-appropriate answers to the "Where do babies come from?" query. The

same is true here.

There is no need to inform small children about all the sexual possibilities in graphic detail in order to say that Jesus calls us to live as husbands and wives with fidelity and permanence and complementarity.

Some parents believe that teaching their children the controversies about same-sex marriage will promote homosexuality. But the exact opposite is true. If you don't teach your children about a Christian way of viewing the challenges to a Christian sexual ethic, the ambient culture—which is now codified in our legal system—will fill in your silence with answers of its own.

You can explain to your children what the Bible teaches, from Genesis to Jesus to the apostles, about a man and a woman becoming one flesh.

You can explain that as Christians we believe this marital relationship is different than other relationships. You can then tell them that some people have relationships they want to be seen as marriages, and that the Supreme Court agreed with them, but that we as Christians cannot.

You can explain that you love your neighbors who disagree with you on this. You agree that they ought to be free from mistreatment or harassment.

But the church believes government can't actually define or redefine marriage but can only recognize what God created and placed in

creation. Explain why you think mothers and fathers are different, and why those differences are good. Find examples in your own family of how those differences work together for the common good of the household, and point to examples in Scripture of the same.

Don't ridicule or express hostility toward those who disagree. Don't give into panic or rage about the country. You might have gay or lesbian family members; be sure to express your love for them to your children, even as you say that you and they disagree about God's design for marriage.

You probably already have had to do that with family members or friends who are divorced or cohabiting or in some other situation that falls short of a Christian sexual ethic.

If your children see outrage in you, rather than a measured and Christ-like biblical conviction, they eventually will classify your convictions in the same category as your clueless opinions about "kids these days and their loud music."

The issues at stake are more important than that.

Marriage isn't ultimately about living arrangements or political structures, but about the gospel. When your children ask about the Supreme Court, be loving, winsome, honest, convictional and kind. (BP)

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

Give and Receive

Would you like to establish a legacy gift during your lifetime, but are not sure you want to give up the income that the asset you plan to give has provided?

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Charitable gift annuities ... legacy gifts that allow you to set up a way to give in the future while receiving an income stream now.



By Laurie Valentine

'Are you listening? Really?'

Many people think they listen, but they don't. How do you rate as a listener?

The following descriptions are for self-evaluation and could be called "faux listening." Which of these do you struggle with in relationships?

■ **Distracted Listening** (when one's mind is elsewhere, daydreaming even if making eye contact).

■ **Competitive Listening** (when one hears enough to think of something worse or better than what the speaker is saying).

■ **Predictive Listening** (when one assumes to know what the speaker is about to say and interrupts by either completing the message and/or responding to the assumed message).

■ **Defensive Listening** (when one "listens" in anger and has an attack plan in mind).

■ **Quick Fix Listening** (when one is listening for problems and begins immediately offering solutions without being invited to do so).

■ **Taking Over Listening** (shifting the focus away from the speaker to one's self).

■ **Interruptive Listening** (when too much talking is coming from the listener rather than the speaker).

■ **Dismissive Listening** (when one is unwilling to give serious consideration to what is being shared and sends a clear message that it is unimportant).

Next time you are in a position to listen, check yourself and guard against any of the above types. It takes real concentration to fill the mind with the speaker's words and not one's own.



By Valerie Vincent

How do you know when it's time to go?

It's probably the question I'm asked most—"How do I know when it's time to move on?" Here are some things to consider if you are wondering—in the words of The Clash: "Should I stay or should I go?"

■ **Holy discontent**—I would define it as the thing that stirs your heart and motivates you to action. Does what stirs your heart line up with your current ministry assignment? If your soul is stirred by compassion for community students and your current ministry assignment is not open to lost students that look and act differently from the students in the church, it may be time to look elsewhere. What is it that motivates you to action? If that isn't going to be possible where you are, it may be time to consider a move.

■ **Pressured out**—As much as we'd like to think that this doesn't happen in churches, I have seen it played out over and over. Church staff members are pressured out. Sometime there is justification to it, but not all the time. If you are having to fight to keep your job, if one or two people are "out to get you," it is probably time to move on. Not much good can come from staying, fighting and causing the church membership to pick sides.

■ **Spouse is done**—I will never know the pressure of being a spouse of a minister. There are a myriad of issues that could cause your spouse to be

done: no friends in community, treatment by church members, feeling like a single parent, financial pressure, and the list goes on.

From what I noticed, a lot of spouses are done with the ministry assignment long before the minister knows it. Pay attention to your spouse and where their heart and soul is. It is not healthy for anyone to suffer for the sake of their spouse's job.

■ **Moral failure**—You would think this would be obvious. But again I have seen it played out over and over where a minister has committed a moral failure and doesn't see a need to take a season of repentance and restoration before returning to ministry.

If this is you, step aside, get someone that will help you (and your family) through a restoration process, and then see about returning to ministry.

■ **Competing theology**—If you find yourself in a situation where the pastor and/or the church has vastly different theological views than you do, it is probably time to move on.

Usually one of two things have happened to cause this to be the case: 1) a new pastor comes in and the church is following his preaching and beliefs, or 2) you didn't ask enough questions in the interview process to learn where the leadership and the church membership is on theological issues that are non-negotiable for you.

Youth Ministry Corner



Joe Ball

The situations in which competing theological ideologies can coexist are few and far between.

■ **Battle with pastor or other staff**—You would think that as ministers we would be able to live up to the biblical mandate found in Romans 12:18: "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all" (ESV). But the truth is, we are all sinners and sometimes the rift between fellow ministers is too great to mend. In the best interest of the Kingdom, it may just be time to move on.

■ **Lost your vision**—Hopefully, you came with a vision for what the ministry should look like, what students should experience while they are a part of the ministry. If that vision isn't going to become reality where you are, or God hasn't given you a new vision, it may be time to move on.

■ **God calls**—Honestly, there was a time in my life when I believed this was the only reason a person left one position for another.

But, I have seen people stay far too long because God has not released them from their current assignment, and I have seen people go to places only because it was a stepping stone to a bigger church with a larger salary.

It is a fine line to walk, but if God is calling you somewhere else, honestly, what other choice do you have but to go?

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

Immanuel proving established churches can grow, too

As a revitalization consultant I am often in churches that were once large, but in recent years have experienced significant decline. I recently spoke at a church that ran well over 1,000 in the 1940s, but now barely has 20.

How many city churches have seen their attendance go from 300 to under 100 in the span of a few years?

Unfortunately, these stories are too often told in our convention. So much so that we have come to expect that church decline is inevitable. While there are seasons of growth and pruning in the life of a church, I do believe that established churches can grow and thrive over long periods of time.

One example is Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington. Immanuel has a rich history and has been a leading church in our state for several decades now. The church has remained strong, but recently they have experienced a new, exciting growth spurt.

Numerically, the growth has been amazing. The church averaged between 1,000 and 1,450 in worship for the 30 years leading up to 2011, but since 2012 the church has seen incredible growth. In 2014, the church averaged 2,035 people in their two morning services. This Easter, the church had more than 4,000 on cam-

pus for its worship services.

Growth also has been displayed in their giving and missions involvement. Several people have been involved in partnerships in church planting in Chicago, and numerous groups work to connect through local service in schools, services for the poor and family outreach ministries. Financially, the church has consistently

run ahead of aggressive budgets and continues to support mission endeavors. Morale is high in the church, and it had almost 1,000 first-time visitors last year.

Obviously, only the Lord makes things grow; nevertheless, there are principles that have guided the church during this growing season. I noticed six things that have guided IBC over the past few years.

Celebrate your heritage.

One of the things that I quickly noticed is how Edmondson immediately gives credit to the many people who have made Immanuel a great place for so many years. He believes revitalization pastors should "rediscover instead of reinvent." He shared that many churches need to "get back to things that encouraged a congregation in the past." He reminded young pastors that "all of us stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us We should celebrate that!"

Just recently, I saw this principle put into practice as Immanuel honored longtime pastor, Ted Sisk. The chapel of the church was named in his honor.

Have a "visitor first" mindset.

From the way they welcome people on Sunday morning to pastor Ron Edmondson's down to earth style, the church excels at thinking how will a visitor "feel." When I asked lifelong member Laura Stuart about this, she was quick to respond "intentionality." She said the staff has trained the church to be "intentional in making people's first-time experience a positive one."

Work hard to "get the word out."

The church is strategic in their marketing of events. They utilize social media extremely effectively. Pastor Ron has a blog (www.ronedmondson.com) in which he writes very practical advice for families and church leaders. He and his entire team utilize several mediums of social media to connect with the church and community. Edmondson has a popular Twitter account.

The church invests in marketing as well. They have made strategic hires of a communication director and have utilized several campaigns around Easter, Camp Immanuel (VBS), and Christmas that have generated lots of interest, web traffic, and visitors.

Engage the community outside of the building.

Churches that turn around, large or

small, are churches that have turned their attention outward. Immanuel is definitely outward focused. They are community oriented. When I asked David Howard, associate pastor, what changes have helped their growth, he pointed out that IBC has "tried to get to know our community, its leaders, and best ways that we can help."

Build a great team.

When I asked Edmondson about the growth of the church, he started by sharing about how God has gifted the staff and lay leaders in the church. Excellence is the target in every ministry, both volunteers and paid staff want to give their best for the Lord. The team is not only gifted, but they seem unified around the church's purpose and direction.

Take risks for the Kingdom.

While the church has celebrated their past and maintained things that made the church strong, they have been willing to make changes. The church has adapted service times, stepped out on faith to support church planting, changed some traditional events, adjusted staffing, and modified other things to reach more for Christ.

Change is never easy, and growth always means change, but when the "why" is big enough, the "what" becomes doable.

Laura Stuart adds, "People want to be involved in something that is bigger than themselves." Seeing more people come to faith in Jesus is the big "why" motivating the people at Immanuel Baptist Church. (WR)

Regional SPOTLIGHT

Nick Sandefur
North Central



North Central



London pastor, Dyer, to be nominated as KBC 1st VP

By Todd Deaton

London—A London pastor will be nominated as first vice president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention when its Annual Meeting convenes in Elizabethtown Nov. 10.

Andrew Dyer, pastor of Corinth Baptist Church, will be nominated by Chad Fugitt, pastor of Central Baptist Church in Corbin.

"Andrew's walk with God, combined with his Kingdom vision and experience in serving our state convention, uniquely qualify him to serve as our first vice president," said Fugitt, in nominating Dyer.

Describing Dyer as "a kingdom leader," Fugitt observed, "He is a man who has a vision of God's greater global work" and is "a faithful preacher of God's word."

"He loves to see people coming to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ," Fugitt added. "He has a heart for disciple-making and missions here in the commonwealth and around the world."

As a senior pastor, Dyer has encouraged incrementally increasing giving to the Cooperative Program, Fugitt said. "He leads with the heart of a missionary because he has served as one with our International Mission Board as a church planter in Poland from 2004-06," he said.

Dyer also has been a faithful servant in his local association, the Kentucky Baptist Convention, and the SBC at large, Fugitt said. Dyer serves as a trustee of Golden Gate Theological Seminary.

"I think it should be noted that

Andrew isn't seeking this position out," Fugitt said. "I have prayed and believe the Lord is leading me to present his name."

Dyer, a sixth-generation Kentucky Baptist, has served as a pastor in Harrodsburg and as a minister to youth and young adults in Taylorsville.

He has been a member of the KBC Mission Board, two-time chair of its collegiate ministry committee, and served on the Committee on Nominations.

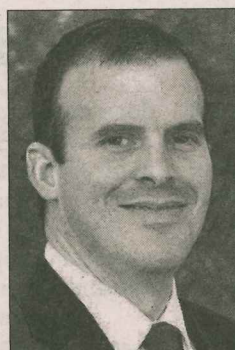
Corinth is among the state's leading churches in giving to the Lottie Moon, Annie Armstrong and Eliza Broadus offerings.

"Several years ago, I told God, 'the answer is yes; what is the question?'" Dyer said. When approached about being nominated, Dyer said he sensed "that was now the question before me."

If elected, Dyer said he would "emphasize unity and cooperation between churches across the commonwealth because I believe we can do more together than we can individually and cooperation both strengthens our churches and is a witness to a lost world."

Corinth Baptist Church contributed \$65,326 through the Cooperative Program of its undesignated receipts of \$818,421, or 8 percent.

The congregation reported 13 baptisms last year. (WR)



Andrew Dyer

Dry Ridge pastor, Payton, to be 1st VP nominee

By Todd Deaton

Dry Ridge—Mark Payton, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dry Ridge, will be nominated as first vice president Nov. 10 when the Kentucky Baptist Convention meets in Elizabethtown at Severns Valley Baptist Church.

Payton, currently second vice president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, will be nominated by Steve Hill, pastor of New Horizon Baptist Church in Glendale.

Noting that Payton has served faithfully in other areas of Baptist life, Hill said, "Pastor Mark has a heart for our convention and for our Kentucky Baptist Convention to remain rooted in missions and evangelism."

"After speaking with Mark and listening to him express his passion for our state and denomination, I believe he is the right man to be elected to the office of first vice president," Hill said in nominating Payton for the post.

Payton served as co-pastor of St. Paul Baptist Church at Shively Heights in Louisville from Aug. 2009 to April 2013. Previously, he was pastor of Shively Heights Baptist Church, a predominately white congregation that merged with a mostly African American congregation, St. Paul's Missionary Baptist Church, led by Lincoln Bingham, making national headlines as a model of racial reconciliation.

Payton, who has been pastor of two other Kentucky churches—Gethsemane Baptist in Danville and Concord Baptist in

Hartford—served on the Committee on Committees of the Southern Baptist Convention in 2013 and as a member of the Kentucky Baptist Mission Board from 2006-2009. He was elected as president of the Kentucky Baptist Pastors' Conference in 2006, and served as its vice president in 2000 and 2005.

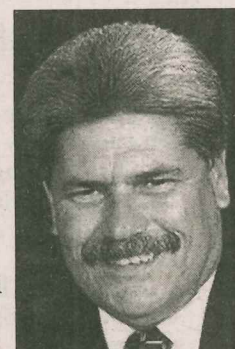
He also has been a trustee of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, serving as vice chairman of its academic affairs committee. He has traveled to Haiti on 35 mission trips.

A graduate of Cumberland College (now University of the Cumberlands), Payton earned a theology degree from Trinity Bible College and Seminary.

"After serving as second vice president, I was asked by several if they could place my name for first vice president. After praying about it, I said yes," Payton said.

"I believe the experience of serving as second vice president will help me," he added. "I understand better the vision of our executive treasurer, Dr. Paul Chitwood. I have been a supporter of his and a friend for many years."

First Baptist Church contributed \$24,959 through the Cooperative Program of its \$258,390 in undesignated receipts, or 9.7 percent, according to the Annual Church Profile. The congregation reported seven baptisms last year. (WR)



Mark Payton

Challenge Houses spark community change and healing

By Whitney Jones

Hopkinsville—About a decade ago former Hopkinsville mayor Wally Bryan left the city's historic district to live in a tougher neighborhood.

He rode his bicycle, saying hello to everyone he saw, hoping to bring some change to the harder parts of his city. Bryan even found an old house near one of the most difficult parts of town, Durrett Avenue. The house was in disrepair, but Bryan had a vision: to refinish it and make it a place where people could come any time of day for help or friendship.

It became Challenge House No. 1. Now there are six, with a seventh in the works.

Bryan faced resistance then from some friends. They would ask him why he felt he had to move to serve the underserved communities. He said he just felt he had to become a part of those communities to spark change and healing.

"God is just amazing and He protected me. He gave me boldness in the middle of situations that could have been panic," Bryan said. "It's really not about me.... It's about the way God honors people's faith. Just the faith of a little mustard seed."

Bryan is still an enormous force in the Challenge House Movement, but he has now put it in the hands of Buddy Slaughter, pastor at Means Avenue Baptist Church and one of the most respected men in Hopkinsville. He is also African-American like more than a quarter of the city.

"Our first goal at Challenge House is to bring people into a relationship with God through Christ," Slaughter said. "Secondly, it's to promote education opportunities for children and post-secondary education for adults. Thirdly, it's to promote a work-over-welfare mindset—not giving away items constantly, but more or less teaching them how to fish."

To do that the movement holds job training and resumé building sessions in addition to programs for children.

Challenge House ambassadors live in each of the homes and pay a small rent, with the understanding that they are there to get to know their neighbors and bring healing into the community.

Everyone involved in this movement—the people living in the houses, those living in the neighborhoods, and leaders like Bryan and Slaughter—says the key to its success and growth is relationships.

While sharing the gospel is one of the central missions of Challenge House, Slaughter says they work to build trust with the neighborhood first.

"There's not crosses and stuff all over," he said. "When you see it, it's just a house, and when you come in, it's just a house. Because a personal relationship with Christ is a relationship."

That trust is vital because in some ways Hopkinsville is a divided city both racially and economically.

Joanne Wright is from Chicago but moved to Hopkinsville to be a Challenge House ambassador after finishing school at Austin Peay State University in Tennessee. She doesn't think racial division is the city's biggest issue, though it plays a role.

"Poverty is my big weight that I feel this city bearing, I would say even more so than race," she said. "If we balance out the poverty and get rid of the poverty and we attack it like it's everyone's problem, this city will be changed."

Wright wants to serve the basic needs of



Clockwise from top, Jeffery Watkins grew up involved in the Challenge movement, and its leaders eventually helped him get a job at Chick-fil-A. Challenge House Executive Director and Means Avenue Baptist Church Pastor Buddy Slaughter talks about Watkins' continued involvement in the movement. Top right, Challenge House Ambassador Joanne Wright shows off the community garden at Challenge House No. 5. Above right, Challenge House No. 7 sits on Phelps Avenue in Hopkinsville and serves as a meeting place for the movement's coordinators in addition to being a safe place for neighbors to come. Above, seedlings used for the community garden at Challenge House No. 5.

the people in her neighborhood first, which is why she and members from her church, First Christian Church, along with a few neighbors built a community garden. She hopes that will help with some of the hunger she sees in the neighborhood.

The members at her church are mostly white, and like many of her neighbors Wright is African-American. While she sees problems with socioeconomic imbalance, education and housing issues between the two communities, Wright believes this work is bridging that gap.

"The important focus is on breaking these walls, destroying these barriers—not worrying about a denomination above worrying about someone's faith or their salvation," she said.

Wright says one of her neighbors won't attend church, but she does come to the Challenge House to pray.

This is one of many examples of how each Challenge House is a safe place, a place where the hard work of the gospel is being lived out.

While the current executive director, Slaughter, is a Southern Baptist pastor, Challenge House also works with many denominations to serve the people of Hopkinsville.

Though the work is hard—even just walking up to a new neighbor and saying "hello" is difficult for some—Slaughter says it is worthwhile to see the change that has occurred in the community since the movement began.

"Love is impossible without a sacrifice and if you have time, then it's not a sacrifice," he said. Love is inconvenient all the time. It is a conscious act of will when you have to move yourself out of the way to love someone else." (WR)

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Is the U.S. special to God?

By Lisa Cannon Green

Nashville—In a nation founded on religious liberty, most Americans believe God has a special relationship with the United States, and they're optimistic the best is yet to come.

Despite headlines lamenting the global decline of the United States since the Cold War, 54 percent of Americans believe the nation is on the upswing, according to a survey by LifeWay Research released July 1.

Only 4 in 10 think "America's best days are behind us," LifeWay Research reported from data in a September 2014 survey.

Though the U.S. Constitution makes no mention of God, 53 percent of Americans say they believe God and the nation have a special relationship, a concept stretching back to Pilgrim days.

Even a third of atheists, agnostics and those with no religious preference believe America has a special relationship with God.

"'God Bless America' is more than a song or a prayer for many Americans," said Ed Stetzer, executive director of LifeWay Research. "It is a belief that God has blessed America beyond what is typical for nations throughout history. I am sure that would spawn many theological conversations" but it's important to note a majority of Americans "think God has a special relationship with their country."

Exceptionalism

Both ends of the political spectrum—from President Obama to the Republican Party platform—have touted American

exceptionalism, the belief that the United States plays a unique role in human history. For some, the concept includes the idea of a special relationship with God, although beliefs about the nature of the relationship vary.

"Some Christians view America as an archetype of biblical Israel, chosen and uniquely blessed by God," Stetzer said. "That's why Christians sometimes speak of God 'healing our land,' when most theologians say this American 'land' is not in the same category as the 'land' of biblical Israel."

Americans have emphatic opinions on the matter, with 35 percent strongly agreeing God has a special relationship with the United States and 25 percent strongly disagreeing. Smaller segments say they somewhat agree (19 percent) or somewhat disagree (13 percent).

Americans also have a firm belief in the nation's future. In recent years the nation has faced an economic downturn and reports of dwindling political power, academic skills and moral fiber.

Nevertheless, 35 percent strongly disagree with the statement "America's best days are behind us," and 20 percent somewhat disagree. In contrast, just 21 percent strongly agree and 19 percent somewhat agree.

Demographic differences

Optimism for the U.S. is highest among the most highly educated Americans. Only one-quarter of those with a graduate degree believe America's best days are gone, compared to 38 percent of those

with some college and 46 percent of those with a high school degree or less.

Protestants are more pessimistic about the nation's future than Catholics, with 43 percent of Protestants agreeing America is past its prime, compared to 34 percent of Catholics.

Women, meanwhile, are significantly more likely than men to believe that God has a special relationship with the United States.

While 49 percent of men have that view, the number rises to 58 percent for women.

LifeWay Research also found differences by age, race, geography, education and religious preference.

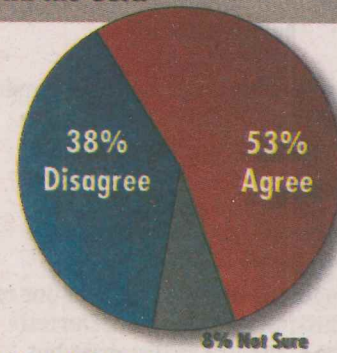
Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of Americans ages 45-54 think God has a special relationship with the United States, a belief shared by 48 percent of those 18-44.

Belief in a special relationship also is high among:

■ African Americans, at 62 percent, compared to whites at 51 percent.

■ Southerners, at 59 percent, compared to 49 percent of Midwesterners and 50 per-

AMONG AMERICANS:
"God has a special relationship
with the USA."



Note: Totals do not equal 100% due to rounding.

cent of Westerners.

■ Those with a high school degree or less, at 66 percent. For those with some college, the rate drops to 51 percent. It drops further to 40 percent of those with a bachelor's degree and 29 percent of those with a graduate degree.

Evangelical Christians are the most likely to believe in a special relationship, with 67 percent agreeing. Among evangelicals 45 and older, the share soars to 71 percent.

"Americans, particularly those in more religious segments or geography, are most likely to believe in this special relationship," Stetzer said. (BP)

Cancer survivor Jim Kelly inspires men at conference

By Daniel Woodman

Nashville—Quarterback Jim Kelly once was known for his victories on the football field. He is still known for winning, but now his victories come off the field.

Nineteen years after his retirement from the NFL, Kelly faced enemies even more terrifying than incoming linebackers—the death of his son and two battles with cancer.

His story has impacted thousands as "Kelly tough" has become a common phrase when describing how he has overcome struggles in his life.

Hundreds of men gathered in Nashville's Municipal Auditorium for the "Main Event" to hear Kelly as well as such speakers as Mike Huckabee and Tony Evans convey how God had an impact on their lives and how that same impact can be experienced by those in attendance.

The June conference in Nashville was sponsored by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention to empower and equip men.

Hall of Fame quarterback Kelly shared how he battled through the death of his son, Hunter. Hunter was diagnosed with Krabbe Leukodystrophy, an inherited fatal nervous system disease. With typical life expectancy about 14 months, family and friends marveled as Hunter lived until age 8.

"I hit rock bottom that day ... the hardest time of my whole life," he said.

Hunter's legacy has had a lasting impact. In his memory, Kelly created "Hunter's Hope," a foundation that "was established to address the acute need for information and research with respect to Krabbe Disease and related

Leukodystrophies," according to the foundation's website.

Kelly then spoke of his own personal health struggles. After his NFL career, Kelly was diagnosed with jaw cancer on two occasions, but he is currently cancer-free.



Jim Kelly

Kelly thanked everyone who has supported him and thanked God for getting him through the tough times.

Kelly told the crowd that coming to know the Lord was a transforming experience, noting that "I was nothing compared to what I am now."

Presidential candidate Mike Huckabee also took the stage to outline how he believes men should react to both the climate of the government and of

the culture.

Huckabee noted the moral decline he sees in America as a major blow to God's favor and warned, "As we continue to turn from Him, we should not expect Him to turn for us."

The founding fathers were a recurring theme in Huckabee's speech as he praised them for making God a priority both within the government and culture.

"The Supreme Court may be the supreme of the various courts, but it is not the Supreme Being.... It is not their decision to make," Huckabee said.

Tony Evans, author of "Kingdom Man: Every Man's Destiny, Every Woman's Dream," then spoke on the concept of a "kingdom man" who "will take (his) stand as a representative of Jesus Christ."

The "kingdom man" is not ashamed of the gospel and puts God and his family as first priority over everything else, Evans said. "You cannot be a secret agent Christian.... It's time, men, to take your stand." (BP)

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Pastor's plan to raise the Christian flag

By Allan Blume

Shelby, N.C.—North Carolina pastor Rit Varriale wants to see churches fly the Christian flag above the American flag as a biblical statement, reversing flag etiquette that calls for the American flag to be flown in the prominent position.

Varriale, as senior pastor of Elizabeth Baptist Church in Shelby, N.C., said the church installed its first-ever flagpole in order to raise the two flags in a special ceremony after morning worship on July 5 in which the Christian flag was raised in the higher position—which prompted interviews by Charlotte-area NBC, CBS and Fox affiliates.

"If you stop and think about it, (flag etiquette) is inconsistent with what the Bible teaches us," Varriale said. "We are first and foremost Christians who are called to serve the living God."

Varriale said the national motto of the United States, "In God we trust," signed into law in 1956 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, acknowledges there is a Divine Being who is the greatest authority and to whom each person is accountable.

"Before our accountability to government is our accountability to God," the pastor said.



"So from a Christian perspective, our flag etiquette is completely improper," he said. "We should be flying the Christian flag above the American flag" as a demonstration that Christians will respect and obey the federal government up to the point that the government asks something that is inconsistent with what God has called His people to do.

Varriale is among an increasing number of pastors who believe government is trying to coerce Christians to live in ways that violate Scripture. "They use different justifications for it, like anti-discrimination laws," he said. "Christians are being coerced to serve the government before

they serve God. That is something we can't stand for."

Varriale is an Army veteran as a Ranger and officer with the 82nd Airborne Division and graduate of The Citadel, Campbell University Divinity School, Duke Divinity School and Princeton Theological Seminary.

Elizabeth Baptist Church is not alone. Varriale noticed a small African American congregation a few miles down the road that was flying the Christian flag on top of the American flag.

"I asked the pastor about this and he shared the very sentiments that I have. We have a common bond on this," Varriale said. "With all due respect, we honor our government, and we're very proud to be Americans, but we must honor God before human authority."

The July 5 worship service took patriotic note of the nation's independence and freedom, but it also addressed "the fact that with our freedom, the greatest thing we can do is to stand up for God's church and the principles of religious liberty," the pastor said. In raising the flags after the service, he said, "We're just doing this to honor our Lord and as a testimony to our community that serving God is our first priority."

The Sunday morning message was titled, "God Before Government," which also is the name of the church's newly launched website GodBeforeGovernment.org and Facebook page.

Varriale said he hopes other churches will join the public witness, including sending photos of their flag displays through the website or through Instagram via godbeforegovernment.org.

"If a church already has a flagpole, start flying the flags in that order. If they don't have a flagpole, go get one, and fly the flags in that order, so any person who drives by their church will see the Christian flag in the highest place and know they are driving by a church that has made the commitment to honor God before anything else."

Varriale said the same Scripture that teaches respect for authority, as in Romans 13:1-3, also invites judgment on the church. "When the authority asks you or commands you to do something that is against our Christian values—that is, something God tells you not to do, or God specifically commands you to do—then the responsibility of Christians is civil disobedience. You see it in the Old Testament—as in Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—or in the New Testament in the lives of the apostles." (BP)

Experience 1:8

Continued from page 1

and Experience 1:8 team coordinator.

"Not only are you investing your life in these cities, but you should be leveraging your life for the gospel—leveraging everything from your home to where you live to what you spend your money on, using your whole life to count for something, because our life is but a vapor," she said.

The students helped with various projects throughout the week, being the "hands and feet" of churches helping within their own communities.

This included doing a neighborhood kids' club, reconstructing a community garden, helping with campus ministries at Ohio State University, among other

projects.

"We just really wanted to serve the community while also sharing the gospel with people," Lucas Taylor, senior at Morehead State University and member of Oneida Baptist Church in Pikeville, said.

"For Columbus, in my experience, was great at getting us involved in the community, but also equipping us with the tools necessary to share the gospel with the people of Columbus," he said.

Taylor's team worked with Veritas Community Church and one of their church plants to hold the neighborhood kids' club. "That was a great experience getting to teach the kids, teach them stories on their level and getting to know the community that way," he said.

He also helped build the garden.

"A lot of the students had never been

exposed to outdoor hard labor. It was really good for our students to sort of get back to the basics of helping people take care of the world around them," Nickell said.

"They got to take a pretty much broken lot that was in the middle of this rundown neighborhood, and in a day's work, they took that nasty lot and they turned it into a garden that had 12 different garden beds that the community could use to get vegetables," she added.

"Columbus was a nice transition. I served for 10 days in New York City after I was in Columbus, and it helped me get used to a bigger city," Taylor said.

"For the rest of my life it just showed me that it's okay to get out of my Kentucky comfort bubble and go to other places and get involved," he said. (WR)

God-empowered

Continued from page 1

court challenges to widely held tenets against polygamy, underage marriage, and marriages between cousins.

"Not a soul ... knows where this is going to lead," Page said, "for once a nation begins to do what no culture has ever done before, to totally disregard the way of God, whose word ... is unambiguous and clear, we have indeed embarked on a journey that is disconcerting and discouraging."

Christians should not expect encouragement from the courts or government, but must rely on God's word.

"Your hope will not be in the state-house. Your hope will not be in the court-house," he said. "All the denominational resources we have will not fit us for the battle. All our seminary education ... it will not give me what I really need to fight the battles."

The cultural battle cry of "love always wins," seeks to skew scriptural beliefs for Satan's advantage, Page said.

"We should never underestimate the power of the enemy to use good thoughts to turn a nation in the wrong direction," Page said. "All we're hearing now is how we ought to accept love and tolerance, and ignore the word of God, and ignore history, and ignore democracy."

In comments to Baptist Press, Page said the culture will necessitate a greater involvement of Christians in the political and governmental arenas, and will require parents, both fathers and mothers, to be more involved in their children's lives.

"We should never, ever be caught again uninvolved," he said. "And in a spiritual sense ... we should always recognize that this world is not our home, and we must recognize our ultimate home lies elsewhere. Things will never be perfect until we arrive at home."

He referenced Ephesians 6:10-13, encouraging Christians to "stand firm in the Lord and in his mighty power." (BP)



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Somerset music minister to be nominated as 2nd VP

By Todd Deaton

Somerset—Stephen Hall, retired minister of music and education at High Street Baptist Church in Somerset, will be nominated to serve as second vice president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention at the Annual Meeting in Elizabethtown in November.

Hall, a member of High Street who recently retired after 23 years of service on its staff, will be nominated by his pastor, Ed Amundson.

If elected, Hall would become the first music minister in 15 years to hold a convention office since Dick Ham, of First Baptist Church of Richmond, served as second vice president in 2001.

"I believe Steve Hall's numerous, weighty contributions to the churches of the Kentucky Baptist Convention over the

past several decades, coupled with his unique connection to the Kentucky Baptist Men's Choral, along with his unwavering stand upon God's word, make Steve the ideal candidate for second vice president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention," Amundson said.

Hall has served on church staffs in Kentucky, Indiana, Alabama and Tennessee over a 50-year ministry career.

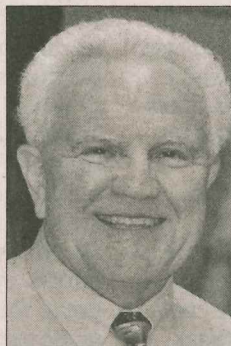
Hall not only led High Street in education and music, he also led the church through five pastoral transitions, Amundson noted.

He is a former missionary with the International Mission Board, having served in Brazil, Amundson said. On the state level, Hall has served as

president of the Kentucky Baptist Men's Chorale, president of the Kentucky Baptist Music Conference, and as a member of the arrangements committee for the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

In Pulaski Baptist Association, he has served in numerous capacities, including moderator, executive board member, a member of the director of missions search team, and as its representative to the KBC Mission Board.

"Having served the local church, the association, and the Kentucky Baptist Convention for the past 23 years, I am excited about the revitalization priority our leadership is offering," Hall said.



Stephen Hall

"As a former SBC missionary, I am also excited about the Cooperative Program emphasis that has moved us to send more funds to support missions," he added.

In nominating Hall, Amundson remarked, "I have been blessed to work with Rev. Hall for the past seven years. He has been my mentor, my brother in Christ and my friend; therefore, I can confidently affirm Steve's heart beats for making disciples of Jesus Christ.

"To this end, I guarantee Stephen Hall will serve Kentucky Baptists well as second vice president," Amundson said.

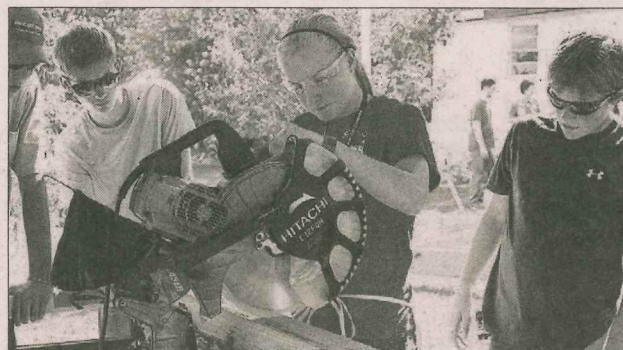
High Street Baptist Church contributed \$32,877 through the Cooperative Program gifts of its \$320,307 in undesignated receipts, or 10.26 percent, according to the Annual Church Profile.

The congregation reported 14 baptisms last year. (WR)



Between 270 and 280 youth traveled to Madison County through the KBC program, Kentucky Changers, to assist low-resource homeowners and residents in the county with home repairs. Above, volunteers are building a new roof for Easter Eaton.

Right, Alen Falen from Fayette County (far left) and Chase Fink from Anderson County watch as Avery Renolds from Anderson County works the chop saw at a work project on Big Hill Road to build a ramp. (Photos by Beth Myers/The Citizen)



More than 270 teens repair homes in Madison County

By Beth Myers

Madison County—An army of Christian teenagers descended upon Madison County in mid-June to work on 28 home repair projects for low-resource people in the county.

The Kentucky Changers, a Baptist program where youth travel to different counties in the state to "help the needy and share God's love," are participating in their second year in Madison.

"We stay two years, because we always have more success recruiting homeowners the second year, once people know who we are," Peggy Murphy, the Kentucky Changers coordinator, said.

The Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union now organizes the 22-year-old program, and Bates Creek Baptist Association and local churches assisted the organization with the Madison County project.

Projects are supervised by skilled construction workers, and residents are

never charged for the work.

The teenagers and their leaders stayed at Madison Southern High School, bunking in the classrooms and using the auditorium for their evening worship.

Local Baptist churches such as Bethel Baptist and Berea Baptist provided meals for the crews, as well as funds and volunteers.

Kentucky Changers have been building new roofs, siding, painting, and building ramps.

Around half of the projects have been in the northern part of the county, and half in the southern.

Many of the homeowners who are receiving assistance from Kentucky Changers are elderly.

"This is a way to share Jesus in a practical way," Murphy said.

Allison Rawlings has been working with Kentucky Changers for five years.

"I do this to get closer to God, and gain new relationships with people," Allison said.

Last year she worked on one home project for a woman in Madison County, whose daughter then decided to volunteer this year. (The Berea Citizen)

LoveLoud Pike helps churches meet needs

By Aaron Nelson

Pike County—Roughly 70 volunteers of all ages have been at work across Pike County as the Pike Association of Southern Baptists organized the county's first LoveLoud Pike.

The event aimed to fulfill the mission set out in 1 John 3:18, to demonstrate love for one's brothers and sisters not just with words, but with action as well.

In doing so, they have identified projects of all sizes and scopes around the county, from light bulb giveaways to major repair and renovation projects.

Kim Ratliff said the group also took the opportunity to minister to the community, and was working to both improve people's quality of life and spread the gospel at the same time.

Ratliff said their car wash at Immanuel Baptist Church in Coal Run Village did not see a lot of traffic, likely because passersby might errantly assume the volunteers are holding it as a fundraiser and asking for donations.

"It's entirely free," she said.

Other groups around the county were landscaping, building ramps for wheelchair-bound individuals or pressure washing and staining homes, in places from Pikeville to Phelps to Elkhorn City.

One group spent a day painting Belfry Middle School.

LoveLoud is a program organized by the North American Mission Board, based in Alpharetta, Ga., which coordinates tens of thousands of individuals in this and similar programs for disaster relief and feeding the hungry. (Appalachian News-Express)

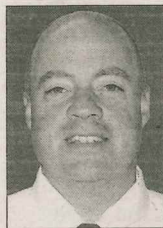


Kayleah Robinette, Curtis Robinette, Mason Scott and team leader Jimmy Parsons build a wheelchair ramp for a resident of Chloe Creek. (Appalachian News-Express photo by Aaron Nelson)

More graduates tell of their Oneida experiences

A female commuting student from Owensboro: "I may not have been here as long as some of the other students, but I have definitely been here long enough to see why my Granny (former OBI dean of students who went to be with the Lord earlier this year) loved this place so much. Someday, I pray that I will be able to impact others and be used by God in someone else's life the same way that He used all of Oneida's staff in mine."

This is Oneida



Larry Gritton

A female dormitory student from Morning View: "My experience at OBI has been a huge roller coaster, and I couldn't have done it without the important people in my life, which includes teachers, family and friends, and God. When I tell myself I'm not going to miss this place, I'm lying. This place was my home, my escape, because I was having family

problems and it got me away from a lot of bad things. This was also the place where I gave a testimony for the first time ever. It was a really amazing experience. I can go on and on about how much this school has impacted my life, but it would be a really long book! I am so blessed to have come to OBI, and I couldn't ask for anything better. It has made me a better and more responsible person."

A male staff student from Oneida: "What is it about OBI that I will remember the most? It could be the campus wide school spirit, international students, my lunch table crew, or the wonderful teachers. Perhaps the one thing no one who was on campus in the year of 2015 will forget was the chicken, chicken, chicken! (We have been blessed this year with tons of donated chicken, and our students and staff, while grateful, often reminded our kitchen staff about it.) No matter what memories come to

mind, I will always consider OBI and the village of Oneida my home, even after I have moved on. I would like to thank all of the OBI staff for their time and effort they have put into the school which has allowed it to excel at its mission to provide 'an education for time and eternity.'"

A male boarding student from Rwanda: "I love the way you give me the opportunity to be here. I thank all the teachers for the way you made me improve my speaking ability. Most of all, thank you for accepting my efforts, even if they were not always great. You always encouraged me and made me believe that I could do better."

Thank you, friends of Oneida, for helping these young people reach their dreams. Even though they may never know you personally, they are grateful to you.

Larry Gritton Jr. is president of Oneida Baptist Institute. Website: oneidaschool.org. Phone: (606) 847-4111

Surrendered to the call

First-year student Chris Greene knew that God wanted him at Clear Creek. God kept reminding him about it for years.

"I came to know Christ as my Savior about seven years ago," says Greene. "My wife was saved before me, but I continued to wrestle with my conviction. I am so thankful for that day when I finally let go and gave my life to the Lord. My wife and I were actually baptized together."

"It wasn't long after I was saved that I found Clear Creek Baptist Bible College online seven years ago. I

wasn't sure at the time why I was even looking at their website.

"I never registered for classes during this time, but over the next six years I was constantly hearing about

how great Clear Creek Baptist Bible College was from different individuals. During those six years, I surrendered to God's call of preaching and doing missions.

"I feel that God is leading me in the area of missions and evangelism," said Greene. "This is the reason I believe God has opened the door for me at Clear Creek. I have already applied some leadership principles to our ministry. I have also been able to teach some of the things which I have learned in my classes to my family and church."

"The leadership principles that I learned in a J-term course have been a blessing for a guy who was in the process of serving as pastor of his first church. I look forward to taking more classes and allowing Clear Creek to fill my toolbox with tools."

"I would recommend to anyone who has a calling from God to do

ministry to take a look at what Clear Creek has to offer," said Greene.

"The professors are well seasoned in the ministry with many years of practical experience. If someone is not sure about school, then I would recommend trying an online class for a semester."

"If someone is thinking about moving to campus, the atmosphere is great. Clear Creek really is like one big family. One thing you can be sure of if you come to Clear Creek: be prepared to learn your Bible."

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

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

Working together

In response to a question about success, Henry Ford stated, "Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."

When I contemplate this quote, I see many ways Southern Baptists have lived this statement through thousands of Baptist churches and millions of Baptist members, by choosing to voluntarily cooperate and combine their efforts for the building of God's Kingdom.

One of the most obvious examples of this collaboration is the Cooperative

Program. The Cooperative Program enables Southern Baptists to accomplish more for Christ together than we ever could on our own. Cooperative Program funds provide

the foundational support for state-wide, national and global missions and ministry efforts.

May I invite you to join a special group of individuals who have designated future gifts to this vital ministry funding source? These gifts will help ensure future missions, evangelistic, educational and care giving ministries and help enrich and save lives for many years to come.

Your legacy gifts directed for the benefit of the Cooperative Program are an investment with eternal implications that will be working 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to connect people all over the world to Jesus Christ.

As Southern Baptists, we can rejoice that we've "come together," "kept together," and "worked together" through the Cooperative Program. When you consider how you may choose to support the Cooperative Program, I encourage you

to talk with your legal and tax advisors who can assist you in determining which legacy gift strategies best achieve your giving goals in light of your overall estate and financial plan.

Some examples of these legacy gift plans include a bequest within your will, a beneficiary designation within your life insurance plan, a charitable remainder trust or a charitable gift annuity, just to name a few.

The Kentucky Baptist Foundation's trust counsel, Laurie Valentine, and I are available to provide you additional information on the Cooperative Program and other Baptist causes which may be of interest to you. Call us at our toll-free number (866) 489-3533.

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

James Dunn, robust advocate for religious liberty, dies July 4

Winston-Salem—James Dunn, one of Baptists' most well-known advocates for religious liberty and separation of church and state, died July 4—a few weeks after his 83rd birthday—in Winston-Salem, N.C.

During his nearly two decades as executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, and for 12 years prior as executive director of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission, Dunn's colorful rhetoric and take-no-prisoners approach in defense of liberty earned him the reverence and fury of Baptists across the theological spectrum.

In retirement his commitments remained undiminished while teaching in the Wake Forest University School of Divinity and in innumerable speaking engagements around the country.

As head of the BJC from 1981 to 1999, Dunn strongly opposed state-sponsored prayer in public schools and federal vouchers for religious schools. That position put him at odds with the Southern Baptist Convention, then one of several Baptist denominations which funded the Washington-based advocacy group.

Eventually the SBC withdrew its support. But Dunn's leadership positioned the BJC to become one of the most respected voices on religious liberty in the nation's capital. It was a key player in the passage of the Equal Access Act in 1984 and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in 1993.

Brent Walker, who succeeded Dunn as the BJC's executive director in 1999, said, "James was my mentor, colleague and friend. I stand in his shoes and on his shoulders every day. We are all impoverished by his death, but heaven is enriched. How fitting that he died—like fellow freedom advocates Thomas Jefferson and John Adams—on the Fourth of July."

A native of Texas, Dunn was born June 17, 1932. After graduating from Texas Wesleyan College there, he earned bachelor of divinity and doctor of theology degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, also in Fort Worth.

After graduating from Southwestern and stints as a pastor, a campus minister and college teacher, Dunn became executive director of the Christian Life Commission, the social action agency of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

When Dunn was named executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee in 1980, the Southern Baptist Convention—the largest contributor to the BJC—began a decade-long shift to the theological right. In mid-1980s Southern Baptist leaders criticized Dunn's positions, but he refused to compromise his principles for what he called "a mess of politically tainted potage." By 1991 the SBC had withdrawn all funding for the Baptist Joint Committee.

After retiring from the BJC in 1999, the Dunns moved to Winston-Salem, where he became professor of Christianity and public policy at Wake Forest's Divinity School. He also served as president of the Baptist Joint Committee Endowment. In 2011 Wake Forest established the James and Marilyn Dunn Chair of Baptist Studies in the Divinity School. (BNG)



James Dunn

Ky. Baptist Foundation



Richard Carnes

Former Lexington minister joins ERLC staff in Washington

Washington—The Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission has named Steven Harris as the director of advocacy in its Washington, D.C., office.

Harris, 29, who served during the last year as a ministry fellow for the Christian Union at Yale University, will advocate for the ERLC's policy positions with Congress as well as the White House and the remainder of the executive branch.

He also will provide analysis of legislative proposals and content for the ERLC's website and its other media outlets.

Harris becomes the second African American to join the ERLC staff since Russell Moore became president in June 2013.

Christian Union's ministry includes the development of Christian leaders at eight universities that have an exceptional impact on American culture.

In addition to Yale, the other schools are Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Penn and Princeton.

In announcing Harris' appointment, Moore described Harris as "one of the most dynamic young leaders in Baptist life today."

"As we searched for someone to fill this key position, we found ourselves running into Steven's name at every turn," Moore said in an ERLC release. "He is well

respected across the evangelical world and has deep experience building coalitions and getting things done."

Before Harris' time with Christian Union, he was an assistant pastor at Consolidated Baptist Church in Lexington, for three years.

While serving there, Harris helped unite the Christian community to

address public policy issues and represented the interests of churches with city government, according to the ERLC.

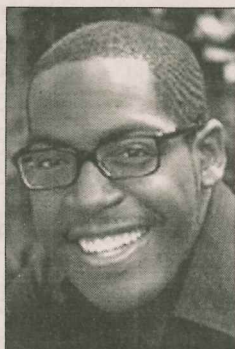
Harris received a master of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2011 and a master of arts in religion from Yale this year.

His undergraduate degree is from Vanderbilt University.

"Though kingdom advancement via congressional advocacy might sound like a heretical category

error that conflates the church and the world," Harris said in written comments for Baptist Press, "it is, in many ways, precisely how I have come to regard my new role—a role that calls me in very particular and political ways to rehearse before both Capitol Hill and the culture that powerful gospel implication that, despite recent events, yet remains true: Jesus is Lord."

Harris began his work with the ERLC July 6. (BP)



Steven Harris

What's in the MAKK-ing?

Last year Kentucky WMU decided to go in a new direction with "summer camp" for children and began making plans for Mission Adventure for Kentucky Kids (MAKK). Our first two adventures were awesome. In both Princeton and Inez last month, children arrived on Thursday where there were introductory activities. Every activity was purposeful as the children were being prepared for how they would be on mission.

The first ministry was to prayer walk the community. Children were introduced to the concept and provided with a ring of cards with prayer prompts for the community. They used these as they walked and prayed. The intergenerational praying was wonderful.

On Friday morning, the children participated in Bible study, music, games, drama and crafts. Every activity had a purpose for a ministry project. Everything the children learned helped them to lead a Backyard Bible Club on Saturday. On Friday afternoon, the children sang at nursing homes, then go to another local ministry to help with sorting and shelving donations. The afternoon included swimming and fun at the park. A missionary was part of the team at each location.

We are so excited about MAKK and how this experience takes camp and missions learning to the next level for children. Adult leaders were very positive about the experience and both

locations wanted to know if we were coming back next year. We do plan to move this around the state so that more children can participate in a hands-on mission adventure.

Kentucky Changers has also been underway in June with projects in Richmond, Marshall County, and Maysville. The final week is July 13-18 in Henderson. It was exciting for me to be present for the closing celebration in Richmond and watch as students filled the front of the church indicating that they had made some type of decision for Christ during the week. And not only students have made decisions. I counseled with one adult who came to help that had been touched by what had taken place. Decisions by homeowners have also been reported. We will give totals after the summer closes.

GA and Mother/Daughter Overnights are a highlight in July at Jonathan Creek and Cedar Crest. Camp Courage at Laurel Lake for RAs, Challengers, leaders and dads will be July 31-Aug. 1. In all of these missions events, the Eliza Broadus Offering is at work. Thank you, Kentucky Baptists, for providing missions learning and opportunities.

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

Campbellsville UNIVERSITY School of Theology

January Bible Study Preview

Thursday, Aug. 6, 12:30 p.m.

Hawkins Athletic Complex
205 Tiger Way, Campbellsville, Ky.



One of the top evangelical scholars in the world, **Dr. Ben Witherington** from Asbury Theological Seminary, will lead the study of "*Second Corinthians: The Church's Ministry Handbook*" starting at 1:15 p.m.

To register, contact:

Dr. John Hurtgen, dean of the
Campbellsville University School of Theology,
or Mrs. Sherry Bowen, secretary.

Phone (270) 789-5029

Supper, catered by award-winning Brothers BBQ of Campbellsville from 5:45 to 6:45 p.m., is \$15.00.

Everyone is invited -- pastors, church leaders and lay persons.

So, what's working at a camp like?

What is a normal day at camp? That's a question that is not easily answered in a few words, but I want to paint a picture of what we get to experience on any given 24-hour period during the summer.

We have as many as 1,600 people at our properties at one time, eating three meals each day. Yes, that is a lot of food and dirty dishes.

It is not uncommon to lose electricity (a real problem when trying to feed such a group).

Air conditioners seem to quit—only when it is really hot.

Sewer lines become clogged, and as you might imagine, clogs happen throughout the entire plumbing sequence.

Staff members get sick and injured.

Delivery trucks miss their schedules, and we can be without needed supplies.

People get in arguments, especially when tired or due to hot weather.

Students go to the hospital for a wide range of issues—prayerfully none too serious.

All these events are what I describe as the "sanctifying parts of camp." They are certainly not pleasant.

All of this part is the result from the curse of sin, but all this is one side of camp, and the other side is ...

Each day the entire morning consists of two large group Bible

studies and dozens of small group Bible studies.

The afternoon includes three rotations of events including specific times for each church group to meet together, time at our recreation lake, and various activities that students pick based on their personal interests.

The evening is centered on the worship service and then the church group "checkpoint time" after each evening service.

Finally, late night shack time—a time of games, soft drinks, ice cream, and personal conversations about what God is doing in the hearts of students.

Ultimately, what takes place is we engage in a spiritual battle—that sees God do miracles. Students are saved, people find comfort from God's word, adults are encouraged, people are called to missions, and money is given to send missionaries around the world.

The Bible is read daily, worship happens daily, and prayers happened daily.

Basically, we see countless miracles each day. This is camp!

Crossings Ministries



David Melber

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



July

- 17-18 GA Overnight, Cedar Crest Camp, Bagdad
17-18 Mother/Daughter Overnight, Cedar Crest Camp, Bagdad
18 International Disaster Relief Training, Kentucky Baptist Building, Louisville.
18 Operation Inasmuch: Kentucky Training, Beaver Dam Baptist Church
31-8/1 Camp Courage, Laurel Lake Baptist Camp, Corbin
31-8/1 Girls in Action Leaders' Retreat, Greenup Baptist Association, Ashland.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

ELIZABETHTOWN—Severns Valley Church has affirmed **Andy Botts** as its new worship pastor.

LOUISVILLE—Carlisle Avenue Church has called **Kevin Weldon** as lead pastor. He has served at Carlisle Avenue since 2012 as pastor of worship, youth & technology.

MOUNT STERLING—Macedonia Church has called **Jim Skidmore** as pastor.

PRINCETON—**Bill Gross** has retired as pastor of Sugar Creek Church.

MARION—Second Church will host The Liberty Boys in concert at 6 p.m. July 25. Donations will be accepted to purchase an HVAC unit. **Chris Lowey** is pastor.

Umphrey named Union DOM

Foster—Seminary student Ray Umphrey became the Kentucky Baptist Convention's youngest director of missions when he joined Union Baptist Association in Foster this month.

Umphrey, 32, will serve as Union's DOM part-time while pursuing a master of divinity degree at Southern Seminary in Louisville.

"I want to serve as a catalyst for church revitalization," Umphrey said, "and unite churches in the association around a common vision to fulfill the Great Commission in their communities and world."



Ray Umphrey

Missions offering materials headed to churches

Louisville—The Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union is buzzing this summer as staff members hurry to fill orders for Eliza Broadus Offering materials.

"Churches tell us how many they want, and we fill their requests—whether they want five prayer guides or 5,000," said WMU Office Manager Denise Gardner. A remarkable 148,000 guides will be sent out to Baptist churches by mid-August.

No small feat, said WMU Executive Director Joy Bolton, "but immeasurable when compared to power that the Eliza Broadus Broadus Offering has to serve and impact lives for Christ on the mission fields in Kentucky and around the world."

Gifts to EBO help to mobilize state and international missionaries, plant new churches, and revitalize existing ones through the Kentucky Baptist

Convention.

WMU uses a portion of the state missions offering for missions education through materials, children's mission trips, summer camps, Kentucky Changers and the Creative Ministries Festival 2.0.

The state missions emphasis is unique because it is created by Kentucky WMU.

Eight Kentucky ministries will serve as a focus for the week of prayer, Sept. 11-18. Each Kentucky Baptist pastor and WMU director will receive a DVD booklet in the mail which includes videos and computer files for printing.

The booklet will also be included with the posters, prayer guides and offering envelopes being sent to each church with a standing order for materials.

For information or to get resources, go to <http://www.kywmu.org/ebo>. (KBC)

CLASSIFIED ADS

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or visit
westernrecorder.org



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.

SEEKING: Wickland Baptist Church in Bardstown, Ky., is seeking a part-time youth minister. Potential candidates may visit our web site at wicklandbaptist.org to view a job description. Send resumes to the church at wicklandnewslink@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Bandana Baptist Church is prayerfully accepting candidates for a full-time or bivocational pastor to lead our congregation (avg. 55 W.S.). Send resumes and CD/DVD to: Bandana Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 87, Bandana, KY 42022.

SEEKING: Dry Run Baptist Church in Georgetown, Ky., is prayerfully seeking a full-time pastor. Mail resumes to: Search Committee 2109 Cincinnati Pike Georgetown, KY 40324 or email to drbcsearch@yahoo.com

SEEKING: Broadway Baptist Church in Lexington, Ky., is accepting resumes for the position of senior pastor. Please send resume to Broadway Baptist Church, Attn: Pulpit Committee, 2500 Harrodsburg Road, Lexington, KY 40503 or e-mail to pastorsearch@broadwaybaptistchurch.org.

SEEKING: Highland Ave. Baptist Tabernacle Church in Fort Thomas, Ky., is prayerfully accepting resumes for the position of full-time pastor to lead a congregation with average worship attendance of

100. Experience and seminary degree preferred, but not required. Please send resume and CD/DVD/Internet link for sermons to: Highland Ave Baptist Tabernacle Attn: Pastor Search Committee, 1080 Highland Ave, Ft. Thomas, KY 41075 or email to pastorsearchhbtcfuse.net

SEEKING: Columbia Baptist Church is seeking a children's minister with a passion for reaching children and their families with the gospel of Jesus Christ. CBC has plenty of room to grow and currently serves approximately 30-50 children weekly, with 90 or more during VBS. A bachelor's degree and prior experience working with children and their families is preferred. Applicants seeking either part-time or full-time work will be considered. Please submit resume to: Personnel c/o Columbia Baptist Church, 201 Greensburg St, Columbia, KY 42728.

SEEKING: New Harmony Baptist Church of Benton, KY is seeking a full-time children's pastor. Send resumes to nhmbsc@newharmonybaptist.net.

SEEKING: Eastern Kentucky church seeking pastor to lead a congregation averaging 100-150 in regular attendance. Send resume and preaching dvd or cd to First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 241, McDowell, KY 41647, Attention: Pulpit Committee.

SEEKING: Part-time youth pastor for Pinckard Baptist Church in Versailles. Send resume to Personnel Team, Pinckard Baptist Church, 3401 Pinckard Pike, Versailles, KY 40383.

SEEKING: Part-time worship/music minister, Buckner Baptist. Blended worship, praise team and choir leading primary duties. Compensation based on experience. Submit resume with references via e-mail: bucknerbaptistchurch@mw.twcbc.com.

SEEKING: First Baptist, Hodgenville, is seeking an associate pastor of family ministry. He will be responsible for developing and carrying out a vision for the preschool, children and youth ministries. Qualifications include working on a completed master's degree from an accredited seminary or divinity school; ordination; and experience in children, youth or family ministry. Mail resume to FBC Hodgenville, 730 Tonieville Road, Hodgenville, KY 42748 or email to sally@fbchodgenville.org.

SEEKING: Executive director (DOM), Noonday Baptist Association, Marietta, Ga. 127 ethnically and economically diverse partner churches and missions are searching for a leader for one of the SBC's leading associations. Skill sets include strategist, consultant, administrator and collaborator. Resumes accepted online through July 31. www.noondayba.org.

FOR RENT: Two condos in Destin, Fla. 2 bed, 2 bath. Book now for Aug-Dec. lbrammer@charter.net 423-309-4422.

WESTERN Recorder + Your church newsletter

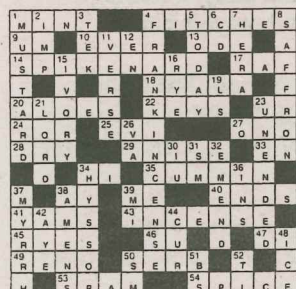
TWO GREAT PUBLICATIONS, ONE LESS POST OFFICE HEADACHE

Bible Crosswords

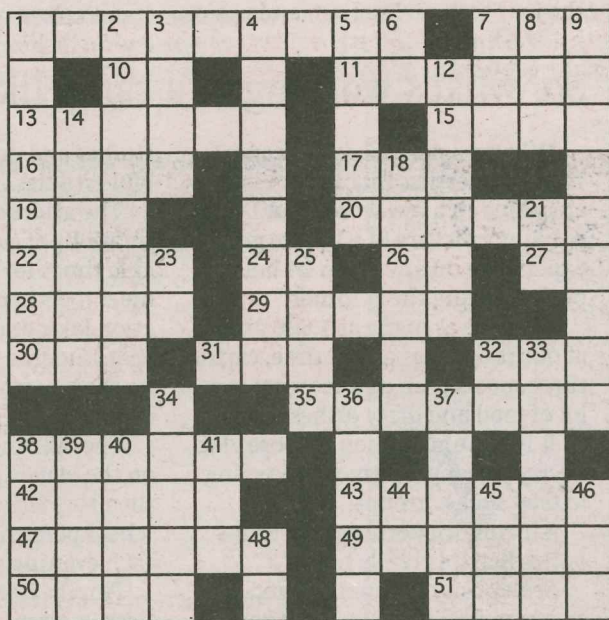
Across

- 1 Religious leaders of Jesus' day (Matthew 23:2)
7 Jesus is called the ____ of man
10 Philadelphia's state, abbr.
11 Barnabas was this (Acts 4:36)
13 Heavy work shoe
15 Abigail, for short, alt. spelling
16 Girl, Scot.
17 Eclipse, abbr.
19 Interior, abbr.
20 Nahor's concubine (Genesis 22:24)
22 Belonging to America's spy agency, abbr.
24 National Guard, abbr.
26 Do, ____, mi
27 Doctor who delivers babies, abbr.
28 "The ____ are a people not strong" (Proverbs 30:25)
29 "They ... are choked with ____" (Luke 8:14)
30 French word used to identify a woman by her maiden name
31 Kid's candy
32 Ostrich like bird
35 Organ remover
38 "A ____ prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17)
42 Written composition
43 Put in writing, var. spelling

#040



By Cheryl Keiser



#041

- 47 Jiphtah and ____ (Joshua 15:43)
49 Great arteries
50 "Which stilleth the noise of the ____" (Psalm 65:7)
51 Long, narrow fish
- Down**
1 Matthew the ____ (Matthew 10:3)
2 One who renounces his faith
3 "All our righteousnesses are as filthy ____" (Isaiah 64:6)
4 "We had the ____ of death in ourselves" (2 Corinthians 1:9)
5 "Rebuke not an ____" (1 Timothy 5:1)
6 Compass point
7 A brother or sister, for short
8 Off Track Betting, abbr.
9 "Love his ____ as himself" (Mark 12:33)
- 12 Regards as precious
14 Like a frog
18 Breakfast food
21 Account of, abbr.
23 Religious education, abbr.
25 Area of Israel that adjoins the Sinai Peninsula
32 And, Lat.
33 Pertaining to the mind
34 Extends across
36 Jesus is called the ____ of life (John 6:48)
37 French spelling of Andrew
38 Pod dwellers
39 To be, Lat.
40 Occupational Safety and Health Agency, abbr.
41 Linear Yard Area, abbr.
44 Negative
45 Resident or follower, suffix
46 Curved shape
48 Laughter sound

IMB celebrates 50 years of journeymen ministry

By Laura Fielding

Richmond—Fifty years ago, a group of 46 college graduates answered God's call to missions through a new effort called the "Missionary Journeyman Program."

Started by the Foreign Mission Board (now the International Mission Board), the program aimed to send a new generation of young Southern Baptists abroad for two years of mission service.

Thirty-one members of that original group—today in their mid-70s—gathered for a 50th reunion last month in Richmond, Va.

Linda Phillips was part of the first journeyman class in '65. She served in West Africa as a librarian.

"We were the pioneers that were going out, and we were going to show the world that the Journeyman Program was a worthwhile thing," Phillips said. She went on to serve as a career missionary in Taiwan for 33 years.

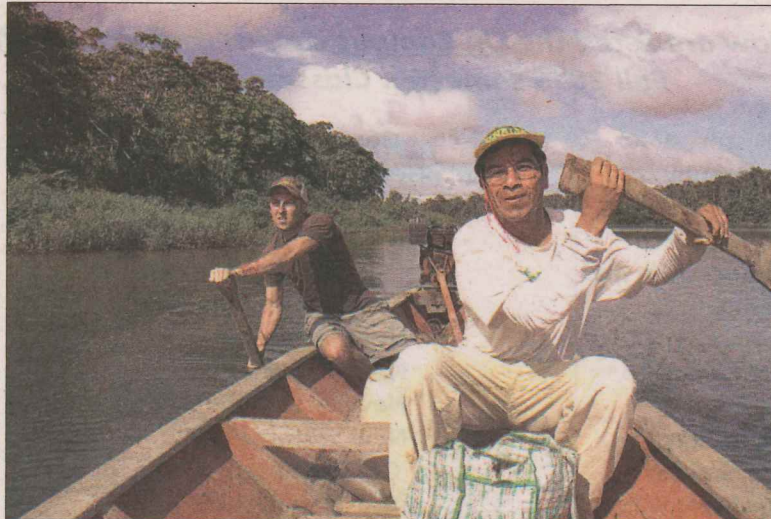
50 years of journeymen

Motivated by the popular Peace Corps and Baptist colleges' summer missions programs, Jesse Fletcher—head of the then-called Foreign Mission Board's department of missionary personnel—envisioned a short-term program for young college graduates with limited language skills to be involved in missions. On July 16, 1964, the FMB authorized the Missionary Journeyman Program, and the first group of journeymen was sent out a year later.

"One of the things these last 50 years has really showed to me is the staying power of the people who put their hearts and their Christian commitment to this task," Fletcher said.

Since the program's beginning, nearly 6,000 individuals have served. More than 1,000 journeymen went on to serve as career missionaries. Currently 229 jour-

Journeyman Chris Cox (left) travels deep into the jungles of Peru to share the gospel in 2005. Jesse Fletcher, the Journeyman Program's originator, says the last 50 years have shown the "staying power of the people who put their hearts" to the task. (IMB Photo)



neymen serve overseas.

Journeymen have served in at least 165 different countries. Their roles include MK (missionary kid) teachers, writers, videographers, photographers, English language teachers, evangelists and church planters. They also serve in sports, youth and children's ministry.

Lloyd Mann, a retired missionary who served in the Dominican Republic, Mexico and Costa Rica for nearly 39 years, started out in that first group.

"The concept of starting the Journeyman Program was a genius idea because there's just something about tapping into the young people, into their vitality, into their faith and into their willingness to serve," he said. "That was a game-changer."

Seize the opportunity to serve

To the young people of this generation, Fletcher advises: "Don't underestimate what God can do with an individual who says 'yes' to Him ... because we've watched some of these people do remarkable things that we wouldn't have thought they were even capable of."

Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, N.C., back to the U.S. to become a pastor, the experience was "radically life-changing."

"If somebody comes back from the Journeyman Program and they go into being an architect in downtown Detroit, that doesn't mean that the Journeyman Program didn't work, because now they are working with a vision of what God is doing in places around the planet," Greear said. "I can't think of a better training program that we would have for making global Great Commission Christians."

April Erwin served as a journeyman in South Asia from '98-'00. Today, she is a neurologist specializing in multiple sclerosis at The NeuroMedical Center in Baton Rouge, La.

As a journeyman, Erwin worked with short-term medical teams to help an unreached tribal group. She saw unimaginable physical ailments, and "to bring them God's love in a compassionate way was really the kernel of how my journey into the medical profession began."

For Erwin, the timing of the Journeyman Program—before pursuing a medical profession—is something she could never repeat.

"Seize that opportunity while you have it," Erwin said. "Give the Lord the opportunity to work in your life and to work through your life before you move on to whatever else may happen—marriage and family and career and all of those things—take that two years as a gift."

Explore pathways of missionary service, including the Journeyman Program, at imb.org/go. See ways churches can partner with IMB at imb.org/send. (BP)



April Erwin was a journeyman in South Asia from '98-'00 and now works as a neurologist in Louisiana. The timing of the Journeyman Program is something she could never repeat. "Seize that opportunity while you have it," she says. (Photo by Elijah Wilson)

As a college student, J.D. Greear applied for the Journeyman Program and worked with a Muslim unreached people group in Southeast Asia from '97-'99. Although God directed Greear, now lead pastor of the

Ky. journeyman marks his 50th year

By Kate Gregory

Richmond, Va.—Kentuckian Larry Keaton served as a journeyman in Israel amid the country's lingering tensions with neighboring Arab countries, leading up to the Six-Day War in 1967.

Keaton dug a bomb shelter near a school where he taught both Jews and Arabs. From the shelter, he could see missiles shooting into the sky and jets chasing each other over his head. He was too young, he says, to think of it in any other terms than an adventure.

Five decades later, he still thinks being a journeyman was "one of the best adventures of my life."

He's participated in a pilgrimage march to Jerusalem twice, the first time while serving as a journeyman. Each time, he walked about 70 miles over the course of four days, playing his drum as he went.

After finishing seminary and marrying wife Kitty, the Keatons served together for more than three years as Southern Baptist representatives in Spain.

Many of the first journeymen continue to be involved in ministry efforts



Jesse Fletcher was the originator of the Journeyman Program back in 1965. To young people, Fletcher advises: "Don't underestimate what God can do with an individual who says 'yes' to Him." (Photo by Elijah Wilson)

to make God's name known among the nations, including among people groups living in the U.S.

The start of the journeyman program is a "major, monumental event ... the first sending out of men and women through a program that would multiply around the world," said IMB President David Platt. Nearly 6,000 young men and women have served through the journeyman program. Currently, more than 200 Southern Baptists in their 20s serve as journeymen throughout the world. (BP)

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2015 Fall Semester Classes

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American History 1
Biblical Geography
Clinical Pastoral Education
Computers in Research
Educational Administration and Leadership
English Composition 1
English Proficiency
Evangelism
Evangelism in Acts
Fine Arts/Humanities
General Psychology

General Science
General Science Lab
Greek 1
Hebrew 1
Internship 1
Introduction to Missions
New Testament 1
New Testament 3
New Testament 5
New Testament 7
Old Testament 1
Old Testament 3

Old Testament 5
Old Testament 7
POWER to Succeed
Principles of Teaching
Private Piano/Voice Lessons
Public Speaking in Ministry
Senior Seminar
Sermon Preparation
Systematic Theology I
Systematic Theology III
Transition to Ministry

On Line Classes

*Below are listed the On Line classes that will be offered during the Fall 2015 semester. Classes **begin August 17, 2015.***

American History 1
Biblical Geography
Clinical Pastoral Education
Computers in Research
Educational Administration and Leadership
English Composition 1
Evangelism
Fine Arts/Humanities
General Psychology
General Science

General Science Lab
Greek 1
Hebrew 1
Introduction to Missions
Internship 1
Ministry in Appalachia
New Testament 1
New Testament 3
New Testament 5
New Testament 7
Old Testament 1

Old Testament 3
Old Testament 5
Old Testament 7
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Senior Seminar
Sermon Preparation
Systematic Theology I
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Transition to Ministry

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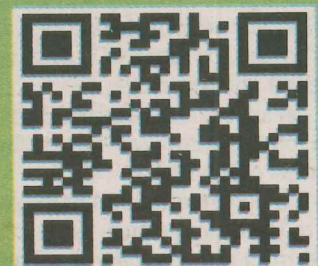
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