

WESTERN Recorder

September 8, 2015

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 189, Issue 18

International board to cut up to 800 positions

Richmond, Va.—The International Mission Board faces cutting as many as 800 staff and field personnel to make up for significant shortfalls in revenue, board officials announced Aug. 27.

This year IMB anticipates a budget shortfall of \$21 million, and over the past six years expenditures have exceeded revenue by a total of \$210 million.

Sebastian Traeger, the IMB's executive vice president, said the goal is "to align our cost structure with the amount of money given to us each year."

The developments are particularly painful for a denomination that was founded as a missionary-sending organization and that prides itself on making Christian converts across the globe.

"Sure, this is not an ideal step but quite frankly there are no ideal steps at this point," said IMB President David Platt during a conference call with journalists.

The cuts will be achieved through a volunteer retirement plan for employees

and planned restructuring of the agency.

Despite the shortfalls, the mission board intends to send new missionaries to the field—about 300 this year and a similar number in 2016.

Although the board has attempted to address shortfalls by reducing numbers of missionaries through attrition and limited appointments and through property sales, Platt said such methods have not been sufficient.

"(W)e cannot continue to overspend," he said in a statement. "For the sake of short-term financial responsibility and long-term organizational stability we must act."

The agency had relied on cash reserves but, according to a document released Aug. 27, is "now close to depleting its reserves and must work to restore them to a more responsible level."

"If we are going to balance our budget, we must reduce approximately 600 to 800 of our staff and field personnel," Platt said, indicating that number represents

□ See IMB cuts ... Page 11



David Platt

Cumberlands provides shoes for school children

Williamsburg—More than 400 Whitley County children have brand new shoes and school supplies, thanks to an event organized and hosted by the University of the Cumberlands.

During the fourth-annual "Shoes 4 The Soul" event, elementary students from Pleasant View, Boston, Whitley East and Whitley North poured onto the Cumberlands campus. More than 200 UC student-athletes and staff served children by washing their feet and fitting them with brand new shoes and socks.

"Do you know the story of Jesus washing his disciple's feet?" asked sophomore Destiny Beattie of Williamsburg. "We want to humble ourselves like Jesus did and give back to you."

Shoes 4 The Soul organizers worked with local schools to identify children who would benefit most from the event. In addition to shoes and socks, each child received a backpack filled with school supplies. Children played numerous games with Cumberlands' students,



UC football players Christian Black, left, and student assistant Juantez Hartsfield wash the feet of a local child.

including tag and jump rope. Forcht Bank also provided free ice cream for students and teachers.

"The best way to serve others is by showing someone you care, and that's what all these volunteers are doing," stated event organizer Wes Chandler.

"This university is blessed with a great number of people that demonstrate that characteristic. It teaches our students, athletes, coaches and everyone involved that these kids want to be like them one day," Chandler said. "It's hard to see who is enjoying themselves more—the volunteers or the kids. It makes the kids feel like they are a part of something special."

The Shoes 4 The Soul event was made possible by community donations. (UC)

HURRICANE KATRINA: 10 years later, faithfulness and courage prevail



Neighborhoods and highways throughout the New Orleans metro area flooded from levee breaks in the days after Hurricane Katrina's landfall in late August 2005. (Jocelyn Augustino/FEMA file photo)

By Will Hall

New Orleans—A decade ago, it was difficult to see anything more than the devastation that accompanied Katrina as she swept across Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. But looking back now, it's possible to see the triumph that emerged from the tragedy.

After passing over the Florida panhandle as a moderate Category 1 hurricane, then weakening to a tropical storm, Katrina grew in ferocity fueled by the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico, growing in intensity to a 200-mile-wide Category 5 tempest.

But before it made a predicted direct hit on New Orleans, dry air from the Midwest absorbed some of its energy, dropping it to a strong Category 3 system and causing it to shift direction, making landfall about 25 miles east of the city, as reported by the Houston Chronicle. Moreover, the winds over New Orleans, where the weakest part of the storm passed, reached only Category 1 levels and the storm surge failed to top the levees as predicted.

But, where a natural disaster of the predicted magnitude failed to materialize in New Orleans, a man-made one burst forth.

Levees along the Mississippi River held, but some holding back Lake Ponchartrain, Lake Borgne and the waterlogged swamps and marshes to the east and west of New Orleans were built atop sandy and erodible soil, and these failed, resulting in about 80 percent of the city being flooded, in some places up to 19 feet.

A Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals study found that around 400 mostly elderly residents drowned, largely in the neighborhoods near the compromised levees, and nearly 550 died from acute and chronic diseases in hospitals, nursing homes and private residences because of the interruption of hospital and emergency services.

Additionally, about 70 percent of all occupied housing in New Orleans suffered damage, The Data Center in New Orleans stated in a 2014 analysis.

Elsewhere, Katrina's winds and storm surge had a more direct impact.

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Emphasis**

The
Heart
of the Story

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Cuban Baptists' boldness challenges Paducah youth

By Myriah Snyder

Paducah—First Baptist Church of Lone Oak's youth group took a mission trip to Cuba, partnering with Second Baptist Church of Santiago de Cuba and the Eastern Baptist Convention.

A group of 10 students and five adults spent four days helping with a camp for about 180 Cuban children. They taught English, crafts, evangelism, devotions and games.

The last day of camp was "Evangelism Day." About 120 campers, along with the students, canvassed the neighborhood, going door-to-door and doing street evangelism. The results were 2,000 tracts being distributed, 200 gospel presentations made, 100 professions of faith and 80 follow-up contacts for Second Baptist.

"There's just a great movement among children across Cuba to share their faith. The older generation wasn't taught this as they grew up, so they're making sure that the children of today know how to share their faith with joy and they're seeing many people come to Christ," said Jeff Wallace, minister of global outreach and 55+ at Lone Oak First.

"There is a revival going across Cuba; there is a desire by the average believer to share the faith, particularly with the Baptists of Cuba," said Wallace, moderator for West Union Baptist Association and former IMB missionary.

Patrick Greer, senior high student pastor at Lone Oak, said, "A portion of the strength of the Church in Cuba has to do with the fact that they have experienced such persecution over the last 50 years, and now that has been lightened, the church is exploding."

The trip came about through a partnership that West Union Association and its director of missions, Howard Atkinson, former IMB missionary to Cuba, have with Cuban Baptists.

"Brother Howard gave our association the vision to create a partnership between West Union and Cuba. In February 2013 West Union sent a vision team to Cuba. Our team visited a couple of Baptist camps. We also visited many churches and mission points and met pastors and missionaries, and the Eastern Baptist Convention," Wallace said.

When time came for the international mission trip, Wallace and Greer felt the Lord leading youth to Cuba.

"Of the 10 who went, many of them were a part of our WMU mission's education programs for years. It sparked their love for missions," Wallace said.

"One of the youth felt the Lord had called him into missions, so this just solidified his call," Wallace noted. "One of our college students feels the Lord has called her into the Journeyman program with the IMB."

These were just two of the stories he shared.

"The big takeaway for our students was the boldness that the Cuban children and adults had for sharing the gospel with those around them," he said. (WR)



Jeff Wallace, moderator for West Union Baptist Association, and Joel Dupont, president of Cuba's Eastern Baptist Convention.



Crossings 2015 saw 849 salvation decisions among the 13,166 campers who attended. Pre-registration for Crossings 2016 already surpasses this summer's total by 200 campers. The theme will be "Identity."

Crossings sets records, renews missions focus

By Myriah Snyder

Louisville—Crossings 2015 was not only a banner year for decisions and attendance, but this year even the camp staff found a renewed focus on missions.

This summer Crossings partnered with the International Mission Board to raise funds to send and support Latin American missionaries in their home countries. They raised \$240,000 for the IMB partnership.

"Our theme this summer was 'Proclaim,' in the context of proclaiming the gospel. The IMB partnership was just a continual reminder to our staff of the urgency of proclaiming the gospel wherever you live and internationally," said David Melber, president of Crossings.

"Day in and day out, looking at missions through the context of the Bible, and having that before our staff on an ongoing basis forces us all to evaluate how we're living out our lives," Melber explained. "Are we passionate about proclaiming the gospel in every aspect of our lives?"

"I think that the Lord still uses this strange temporary environment called camp to pull not only students but also adults out of our daily distractions to be focused on God's word, and to realize that He has us on this earth for a

reason, and that's to be His ambassadors and proclaim the gospel," Melber added.

In addition to the money raised for IMB, Crossings 2015 saw 849 salvation decisions among the 13,166 campers who attended.

Pre-registration for Crossings 2016 already surpasses this summer's total by 200 campers. The theme will be "Identity."

This summer was unique for Crossings because not only did they participate in international missions, but they also had a mission field come to them. First Baptist Church of Mayfield had just returned from a mission trip to a Native American reservation in Arizona and brought back about 10 students with them for camp.

"It was the first time many of them had even set foot off the reservation, so you can imagine the wide eyes as they thought, 'What are we getting into?'" Scott Bidwell, director of Jonathan Creek, said.

He continued, "It was a really neat opportunity to get to share the gospel in a place that can be dark, to share the gospel with folks in a completely different context than what they're used to."

Seth York, program coordinator at Cedarmore, was encouraged by his interaction with the staff, primarily college students who spent their summer break working at camp.

"We get the campers for just five days, but for the people who live and work on the properties, we get these college students for two months, and we get to see them process some really significant life decisions. They will almost certainly be sharing the gospel every single day," York said.

"You get to help these college students work through and walk through many of the implications of making gospel decisions and the impact it has on our lives," York said.

"It just gives them a broader view of what we're called to do as followers of Christ. We get to train these college students who will then go to their college campuses and be missionaries."

Bidwell added, "'Proclaim' is more than just a theme for the summer. We exist to proclaim the gospel. It's becoming more than a mission statement. We're starting to see people actually live that out in their lives."

"You see our summer staff that is going overseas. You see some that are going to some very difficult places to take the gospel," Bidwell said. "To me, that's an encouraging thing."

"The Lord doesn't use camp for camp's sake. He uses it because His word is being proclaimed, lives are being changed and students and adults are going back different than they were before," Melber concluded. (WR)

Church planting effort in Cincinnati needs Ky. Baptist support

By Robin Cornetel

Cincinnati—The North American Mission Board has a massive church planting effort underway in Cincinnati and they need help.

The goal is to plant more than 70 new Southern Baptist churches, said Send City Missionary Travis Smalley, "and it all starts with a response to the fundamental call of the Great Commission."

Smalley will lead a church planting vision tour of the Queen City on Sept. 28-29. He is asking Kentucky Baptists to help kick start the movement by first learning how churches can get involved.

During the two-day Cincinnati Send City Vision Tour, pastors, directors of

missions and ministry leaders will hear from church planters in the region about potential missions partnerships in the Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky metropolitan area.

"This vision tour is about connecting pastors to church planters," Smalley said, and seeing to it that new churches have the resources needed to reach people for Christ.

According to the North American Mission Board, less than 14 percent of Cincinnati's 1.6 million residents are affiliated with an evangelical church. More than half identify with no religious body at all.

Smalley said NAMB has designated more than 100 communities in and

around the metropolitan area as sites for new church plants. So far, about 20 churches have been started.

As pastor of Lakota Hills Baptist Church in West Chester, Ohio, Smalley has had his hand in coaching five of the new churches.

"Jesus has commissioned us to take the gospel to ends of the earth, and one of the most effective ways to do that is planting churches."

To register for the Cincinnati Send City Vision Tour, go to www.kybaptist.org/cincy. The cost is \$50 per person and includes transportation while in Cincinnati, meals, lodging and admission to a Cincinnati Reds baseball game.

Registration ends Sept. 19. (KBC)

Clerk loses, then resists high court on marriage licenses

Morehead—A Kentucky county clerk not only lost at the U.S. Supreme Court Aug. 31, but was found in contempt of court Sept. 3 for again refusing to grant marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

Rowan County Clerk Kim Davis and her deputies turned away gay couples seeking marriage licenses Sept. 1 at their office in the eastern Kentucky town of Morehead. Their refusal came after the high court denied Davis' request to block enforcement of a federal judge's order that she issue licenses for same-sex marriages.

Lawyers for the gay couples subsequently filed a contempt of court motion against Davis. The Louisville Courier-Journal reported. U.S. District Judge David Bunning ordered Davis to jail until she complied with his order to issue the licenses.

The Supreme Court's denial of Davis' application for a stay of the order came two months after the justices legalized same-sex marriage nationwide. The ruling prompted some county clerks to resign rather than issue licenses to gay couples. Davis stopped issuing marriage licenses and has refused to resign, appealing for an accommodation of her religious beliefs in order to keep her job.

American history "is filled with accommodations for people's religious freedom and conscience," Davis said Sept. 1 in a statement issued by Liberty Counsel, a religious freedom advocacy organization that represents her. "I want to continue to perform my duties, but I also am requesting what our Founders envisioned—that conscience and religious freedom would be protected."

Paul Chitwood, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, found the Supreme Court's decision unsurprising, since the same justices ruled in favor of same-sex marriage. "This case is just another step along the sad road where erotic liberty trumps religious liberty in the United States," he told Baptist Press.

"This can't be an easy stand for Mrs. Davis to take," Chitwood said. "The criticism is sharp, and the potential for fines and even jail time is very real. No matter how this plays out, we can all agree she's facing an unenviable situation, and Christians across this country need to be praying for her."

Tom James, president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, supports Davis.

"To issue the license would not only violate her conscience but also her protection under the First Amendment of our Constitution, which provides for the free exercise of religion," said James, pastor of Eastwood Baptist Church in Bowling Green, in a written statement.

"Christianity is not something a person can stop practicing when they go to work or school; our relationship with Christ should be marked by deeply held convictions that permeate all of who we are."

"We as a society are moving towards removing all of God's standards and to silence all of God's children who seek to speak light and truth in a society that is becoming darker by the minute," he said. (BP)



Kim Davis

Ky. Baptists reach out to international students

Louisville—With growing numbers of international students in Kentucky, evangelical Christians are taking advantage of an opportunity to reach the nations with the gospel without even leaving the state.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention became a pacesetter in the initiative when its Administrative Committee voted unanimously to hire an international campus missionary to develop strategies to reach foreign students.

KBC Executive Director Paul Chitwood announced the decision to hire Brett Martin, a former International Mission Board missionary, for the newly created position.

"We realize that God's call to make disciples of all the people groups of the world is a call we now can answer without ever leaving the state," Chitwood

said. "Brett's overseas experience with the IMB, along with his track record of serving the local church here in Kentucky, makes him a perfect fit for this missionary role."

Southern Baptists see college and university campuses in Kentucky as crucial mission fields.

"Enrollment at Kentucky's colleges and universities continues to increase, but 95 percent of those enrolled in college do not know Jesus," said Brian Combs, the KBC's collegiate evangelism strategist.

"The task before us is great, but the opportunity is great as well."

Combs said about 8,500 of Kentucky's 257,000 college and university students come from countries that are largely unreached with the gospel.

Martin, who has been student pastor

at Corinth Baptist Church in London for the past four years, said he's eager to get started in the new role.

"I am excited to be a part of it, and am convinced He is placing me within this role to help churches engage the nations on school campuses across this state," he said. "Many of these internationals represent unreached people groups across the world."

Corinth Baptist Church Pastor Andrew Dyer said the Administrative Committee's decision to hire Martin was a sad day for his church, but a great day for Kentucky Baptists.

"God has uniquely equipped Brett to serve in this position," said Dyer, a member of the Administrative Committee and the one who made the motion to hire Martin. "Brett has a heart for internationals." (KBC)

Local churches help Cumberlands freshmen on move-in day

Williamsburg—Every year, hundreds of new faces grace the campus of the University of the Cumberlands on freshmen move-in day.

Parents and students pull into dorm parking lots dreading the many trips that have to be made to move into residence halls.

Much to their relief, an army of volunteers are on hand, offering to help with the big move.

"The help we received from the local church was a God send," Johnetta Traylor of Los Angeles, Calif., said about the volunteers who helped move her daughter, Jazmine, into her third-floor dorm room in Gillespie Hall.

Multiple churches, including First Baptist Church of Williamsburg, Immanuel Baptist Church in Corbin and West Corbin Baptist Church, traveled to the University of Cumberlands to spend a Saturday helping new students and their families unload vehicles.

West Corbin Baptist brought 20 volunteers, as well as water and snacks for everyone moving. This was the first year of participation for West Corbin, whose



Brent Foley of Immanuel Baptist Church carries a bin into the dorm for an incoming freshman at the University of the Cumberlands.

pastor, Billy Howell, has a daughter who is a UC freshman.

"We want people to know we are out here, that we love the Lord, that we serve Him by serving others, and we're hoping to help the girls find a home church similar to their church back home," Howell said. "It's important to have a church where they feel at home."

Brent Foley, worship leader at

Immanuel Baptist, led a team of 12 volunteers who helped freshmen and upperclassmen men move into Robinson-Cook Hall.

"We moved in all kinds of folks who were looking for community or in need in some way," Foley said. "God certainly brought us to the right people; with God there's no coincidence, only His providence." (UC)



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The need for hunger relief is huge. One out of every six people in the world is undernourished; one out of every six people in the U.S. don't get enough food to be healthy. Poverty among children is on the rise, and 18.4 percent of Kentucky's children live in poverty.

The eternal impact of the World Hunger Fund is tremendous. Last year, 192 people in Kentucky professed faith in Jesus Christ as a direct result of hunger relief ministries.

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Freedom in the balance

We entered a sad era for the American judicial system and Kentucky state government when a county clerk was incarcerated by a judge for refusing to place her name on the marriage licenses of same-sex couples.

Kim Davis had stated that her religious convictions prevented her from giving her official signature of approval for gay marriage. She had requested that Gov. Steve Beshear accommodate her conscience by excusing her from that duty. Beshear refused and told her to do her job or resign.

This is the same governor who allowed Kentucky's attorney general, Jack Conway, to refuse to defend Kentucky's constitutional definition of marriage. Beshear spent the commonwealth's money

on private counsel to protect Conway's religious convictions on gay marriage, but he refuses to allow other elected officials to use the county's ink pens in order to protect Davis' religious convictions. Conway, by the way, is now a gubernatorial candidate in the state.

In light of Beshear's unwillingness to accommodate Davis' faith, U.S. District Judge David Bunning chose not to fine Davis, or request that Gov. Beshear call on the state legislature to impeach her, or that Rowan County voters organize a recall referendum on her election. Rather, Bunning chose to throw Davis into jail.

Should Jack Conway have been jailed? Of course not. He should have been ordered to do his duty as an elected official and, if he refused, a due process should have unfolded to allow citizens of the commonwealth to decide if he should continue to hold office. Should Davis have been jailed? Of course not.

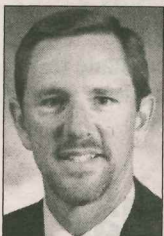
Yet, in the midst of what is quickly becoming one of the most heated cultural debates since slavery, Judge Bunning created a martyr and, at the same time, wrought a great injustice upon a public servant and a wife and mother of two. With countless alternatives to be explored and exhausted, Bunning used his gavel to swat the proverbial gnat with a sledge hammer.

Where does this end? I honestly don't know.

If Davis was my wife and the mother of my children, I would have quickly asked that she respond to this great injustice by resigning her position and coming home to her family. She defended her beliefs and, from what I have observed, took her stand with gracious and God-honoring speech. She made her case. She did all that she could do.

As for the failure of Gov. Beshear to protect her freedom of conscious, unfortunately, his name won't be on the ballot in November. But, once again, the people of Kentucky are learning the hard lesson that elections really do matter. In fact, freedom hangs in the balance.

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

When a spiritual leader lets us down

Recently a video surfaced online of a Christian leader whom many admired which purportedly shows his involvement in an extramarital affair. The devastating revelation of an alleged indiscretion and the subsequent after-effects of a sin made public have caused great dismay, disgust and distress.

And, the hack of a website database which promised secrecy to those wanting to cheat on their spouses not only was the further undoing of a Christian television personality, it may bring the fall of other church leaders and members into disgrace and fractured families left in turmoil. In his blog, Ed Stetzer wrote: "Based on my conversations with leaders from several denominations in the U.S. and Canada, I estimate that at least 400 church leaders (pastors, elders, staff, deacons, etc.) will be resigning Sunday. This is a significant moment of embarrassment for the church—and it should be."

"Yet, rarely do people consider a larger group affected by a pastor's failure, a group larger than even the pastor's own family, who is facing the primary brunt of the agonizing pain," Stetzer observed. "What happens to the sheep when the shepherd is disqualified from pastoral ministry?" he poignantly asks. How do those who trusted these spiritual leaders—even placed them on a pedestal—cope with their defrocking and demise?

Two biblical stories may provide insight here:

Before we rush to condemn another, the story of the woman caught in adultery confronts us with a reality that we all have sinned and fall short of God's standard. While others hastily grab for stones, in Jesus, grace and mercy should be shown, but sin should never be condoned. Jesus gently lifts

and admonishes guilt-ridden souls, "Go and do not sin again."

With King David, however, we also encounter the destruction wreaked when a leader fails. One often compounds sin with deception, secrecy and conspiracy. David arranges to have Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, killed to cover up his indiscretion. Yet, when confronted by Nathan, David also exhibited a contrite heart and a spirit of repentance.

While not every leader should retain their position, God, in His grace, can yet restore and use some to bring healing. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit," David prayed.

Psalm 23, one of the most beloved, teaches that even when we walk through the valleys in life, our God is still there with us. Both His rod of discipline and His staff of guidance can afford us great comfort in dark times. Lynda Randle in a classic gospel tune observes:

"We talk of faith way up on the mountain.

Talk comes so easy when life's at its best.

Now down in the valleys, of trials and temptations

That's where your faith, is really put to the test.

For the God on the mountain is the God in the valley.

When things go wrong, He'll make them right.

And the God of the good times is still God in the bad times.

The God of the day, is still God in the night."

After Thought

By Todd Deaton



How to number your days wisely

By Erich Bridges

"So teach us to number our days, that we may present to You a heart of wisdom," the psalmist prayed (Psalm 90:12, NASB).

How, exactly, do you go about numbering your days? Is it even possible, when you don't know how long you will live? The psalmist had some thoughts on that, too: "As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, or if due to strength, eighty years, yet their pride is but labor and sorrow; for soon it is gone and we fly away" (Psalm 90:10).

The average life expectancy for Americans is 78.8 years (81.2 for women, 76.4 for men), according to a 2014 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics. The 10 leading causes of death are heart disease, cancer, respiratory diseases, stroke, unintentional injuries, Alzheimer's disease, diabetes, influenza and pneumonia, kidney disease and suicide.

In truth, the leading cause of death is mortality. It awaits us all, even 18-year-old dudes who think they will

live forever. Sorry, dudes, but insurance actuarial tables beg to differ.

Suppose you live to 90. Sounds like forever—until you pass the halfway point of getting there. I'm well past that halfway point, so this topic holds significant interest for me. But even if you're a kid with "forever" in front of you, "numbering your days" is a useful exercise if you want to use them to serve God.

FIRST PERSON

The weeks in your earthly life are a prelude to your life in eternity. How will you spend them? Consider well; God is observing your choices. "Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil," the apostle Paul advised (Ephesians 5:15-16). You can spend them loving God and following Him, or you can spend them on yourself.

In these days of medical advance, your life might contain many more weeks than it takes to make 90 years. Or it may be far fewer.

Kyra Karr, age 30, a missionary, wife and mother of three young daughters, died in a traffic accident Aug. 13 in her

home state of Georgia. She didn't have the opportunity to return to Rome, Italy, where she and her husband Reid began serving after their appointment in 2009 with the International Mission Board.

This young woman had been sharing the gospel with others since she was a teenager. She had "found her groove as a mom raising her kids in Italy," a missionary colleague said. She was ministering to children through the church, helping new missionaries learn the language and mobilizing Christians in Rome to help women victimized by sex trafficking.

"Kyra was the aroma of Christ in Rome. We sensed it. We breathed it. We were blessed by it," her pastor in Rome, Leonardo De Chirico, said. "Kyra was a glimpse of what it means to be absorbed in Christ."

"I think her life would encourage anyone considering missions to go all out, to not waste time, to pursue it because we don't have a promise of tomorrow," another missionary said.

Although Kyra Karr's hours and weeks were brief, she numbered her days well. (BP)

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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.

Victims of Hurricane Katrina: Still in our 'mind & heart'

By David Crosby

A middle-aged woman recently attended worship at our church. She came in early and sat up front. I greeted her and introduced myself.

She promptly told me her Katrina story. The flood destroyed her home. She permanently relocated to a small town in central Louisiana. A faith community there reached her, and she now attends every Sunday. She came to our church while visiting New Orleans because she wanted to thank God for the journey of faith Katrina caused her to travel.

A week earlier, an unfamiliar couple slipped into a pew. They had evacuated in Hurricane Katrina, and were only now returning permanently.

Without prompting, I hear weekly stories of Hurricane Katrina. I told my own story recently to a stranger. The destruction of my daughters' homes, the church as a relief center, deploying 21,000 volunteers, building 91 homes with Habitat for Humanity, gutting 1,000 flooded homes—this is my narrative.

A Baptist denominational executive from Texas said he was surprised and delighted to see the diversity in the membership of First Baptist, New Orleans, after a visit to our church.

We are black and white, Asian and Latino, and all over the economic scale as a church. This diversity is part of the legacy of Katrina.

The devastation of the storm forced an outward focus for our church. The flood washed us out of our building and into our community. Cleanup and rebuilding programs, education, feeding initiatives, medical missions and rehabilitation efforts involved hundreds of members. I found myself working all over the flooded footprint of our city.

Doors throughout the city stood ajar after the flood. There was little point in locking up. Everything was ruined. Along the streets, we saw the debris line drawn by the floodwaters on every structure.

Those open doors were a vivid symbol of the openness we all experienced post-crisis. Outreach connected our congregation with a range of people outside our church. As trust and friendships developed, a greater diversity of people gathered inside.

A permanent change occurred in the spirit and character of First Baptist New Orleans. Efforts to reach our neighbors continue. Authentic faith goes to the need and is not constrained by race or social standing.

Most importantly, Hurricane Katrina presented us with the opportunity to partner with Pastor Fred Luter and Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, a predominantly black congregation. Our congregations shared education space, offices and the worship center for nearly three years. We joined forces for a variety of minis-

tries, summer camps and fellowship.

Our congregations learned to love each other deeply, and that bond remains strong. I was delighted to nominate Luter to be the first black president of the Southern Baptist Convention. The election took place in New Orleans and it was a moment of celebration for our churches and convention we will never forget.

Talking about race is not easy. Listening is even more difficult. Katrina gave our city an opportunity to set aside prejudice and listen to others. We discover our stories are similar and we have the same dream, concerns and priorities.

We rode the buses. We evacuated in helicopters. We were downtown in a vertical evacuation. We were at Baptist Hospital and the Superdome. We manned the boats, rescued the drowning and buried the dead.

We did not drown or die. We are Katrina survivors. We know what it takes to put your life and community back together. Our memories are not all pleasant, but they are powerful. And they continue to shape the people that we are and will become.

We have not gotten over the great flood. We are still going through it in mind and heart. We live today in the light of what we learned about the transitory nature of things and the supreme value of one another. (BP)

David Crosby is pastor of First Baptist Church of New Orleans.

FIRST PERSON

Show your love in word and deed

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son..."

"The LORD said to me, 'Go, show your love to your wife again...'"

"Yet I will show love to Judah; and I will save them.... the LORD their God, will save them."

"Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this..."

"This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him."

"God sends forth his love and his faithfulness."

If you have heard the saying, "It's not what you say, but what you do that matters most," how do you apply that in your marriage?

You can say you love your wife, but how do you show your wife that you love her? You can say you love your husband, but how do you meaningfully demonstrate that love?

Scripture is filled with messages about God's love for us. God does not just tell us He loves us, but has demonstrated His love for us. God acts on His love. How do you act on your love for those persons in your life who you say you love?

God has shown us how to love in both word and deed. It is in writing: We have a love message from God in His written word.

It is in sacrifice: God sent His son. Christ gave Himself up for us. What are the words you use regularly to show your love to your spouse?

Do the words you direct to your spouse truly demonstrate love? What do you regularly do to show your love? Do your actions demonstrate love?



Valerie Vincent

Nine principles for revitalizing your church

By Ronnie Floyd

Revitalizing a church is an ongoing process, beginning with the pastor and continuing with the church. Both pastor and church are in need of continual revitalization.

We never arrive. Church revitalization is about the church becoming stronger and healthier. It is about penetrating your community with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The crisis is real

The vast majority of the 50,000 churches and congregations that comprise our Southern Baptist Convention need revitalization. In 2013, LifeWay Research illustrated that 74 percent of our churches are plateaued or declining. We have to experience seasons that involve brutal honesty, leading us to re-create churches and restore the hope that our churches reach our community.

9 strategic principles

CATCH the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Catching the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ is our only hope for revitalizing and influencing communities. Never forget that we were once lost and hopeless until we trusted in the reality that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and raised on the third day to give us forgiveness, power and hope.

CLARIFY your mission.

Our mission must be biblical and

clear. Cross Church has this vision:

"Reaching Northwest Arkansas, America, and the world for Jesus Christ." We realize this vision when we engage in reaching, baptizing and discipling people of all nations.

CONSIDER carefully what your people are saying.

I counsel pastors to create listening sessions with four to six questions to ask groups. Tell the people, "This is your meeting. As I listen to you and ultimately listen to God, God will use all to speak to me in how I need to lead the church." There are seasons in each church when this principle needs to be followed strategically.

COMPREHEND the context of your community.

Demographic studies need to be ongoing for church leaders. Never assume you know who is in your community. Shifts may alert you to challenging demographic realities.

I must see my community as it is, not as it used to be. If we do not know our community, how can we reach them? We must function as missional strategists in and for our church.

CALL upon the people to go with you.

After prayer and study, the pastor must call upon the people to go with him on this journey. At this moment, call upon the people to reach your community like never before. Going hand-in-hand together is imperative.

COMMIT to hear God's voice and do whatever He says.

Flexible family philanthropy

A Donor Advised Fund ("DAF") is a giving plan that provides the giver immediate tax benefits and the input on future distributions.

A DAF is established through gifts to a public charity under an agreement in which the giver retains for himself/herself, and possibly others, the right to make recommendations for future distributions out of their DAF to other charitable organizations. Those recommendations can be for distributions of the DAF's income and/or principal.

Gifts to a DAF are deductible in the year you make them, whether or not there is any charitable distribution out of the DAF during that year.

A DAF is a good charitable giving plan for people who want flexibility in timing their charitable support.

A gift can be made to your DAF at a time when it may be most advantageous for tax-planning purposes without having to immediately decide what charitable causes/projects the gift will ultimately support.

A DAF can also be an excellent tool for teaching philanthropy to children.

Including children as "advisors" of the family's DAF gives them the opportunity to learn first-hand, as the family makes decisions about charitable distribution recommendations together, how their parents approach philanthropy, which organizations they value most and why, and what their parents expect from charitable organizations they support.

Donor advised funds provide flexibility in timing your philanthropic support to charitable causes important to you and a method for "growing" giving children.



Laurie Valentine

The pastor and the people need to experience a spiritual moment of absolute surrender to Jesus Christ. Make a commitment to hear God's voice through scripture and do what He says to do. Prayer must be a priority in the journey.

CAST your vision effectively.

Whatever vision God has given for your church, find 100 ways to share it. Preach it, teach it, talk it, pray for it, and equip others to see it into reality. Cast the vision everywhere you go.

CREATE momentum with wins.

Revitalization begins with small wins that lead to bigger wins. Start where you are, identify easy wins, accomplish, celebrate and go forward.

CHALLENGE your church passionately and continually

We must challenge our church passionately and continually. We must be engaged as leaders, overflowing with passion, so we can stand up and challenge our people continually.

A closing prayer

"Lord, we pray that You will revitalize pastors and churches so that we will become more effective evangelistically and in making disciples of all the nations. We know it is Your will and stand upon Your word in Acts 16:5, believing it can be done."

Acts 16:5: "So the churches were strengthened in the faith and were increased in number daily." (BP)

Ronnie Floyd is president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Breaking the 60 barrier at Indian Fork

By Alan Witham

Bagdad—In the past five years, among all Kentucky Baptist churches in the Central Region that reported on the Annual Church Profile, seven broke the 60 barrier in average worship attendance. Five years ago they averaged below 60, but today they are averaging over 60 in worship.

One of those churches is Indian Fork Baptist Church, located two miles from Bagdad. When Pastor Josh Rucker was asked how the church achieved this mark, he was quick to give glory and credit to God.

When Rucker came for his first Sunday, 22 people were present. Fifteen members voted on him to become their pastor, with a 100 percent vote. Today the church averages 70 in worship attendance.

Rucker accepted the pastorate as a bi-vocational pastor. He also has a full-time job with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet for the Division of Equipment.

The following things are what God led Rucker and the Indian Fork congregation to focus on:

Shifting priorities. In his first year Rucker led the church to focus on kingdom growth and spiritual growth of the people. He sought to prioritize the Great Commission and the Great Commandment, and it translated into people being reached.

During his first year, they witnessed 17 people come to faith in Christ and be

baptized. This was more than in the previous 10 years combined. They have witnessed 40 baptisms since May 2012. Their priorities have been to make and multiply disciples.

Evangelistic outreach to the community. The congregation saw the need to move beyond their four walls. Rucker quoted the late Adrian Rodgers who said, "Churches are often like stores with goods to sell, but often they lock the store and try to sell them to the people within."

Rucker believes in boldly proclaiming the gospel. He doesn't just teach about evangelism, he leads the way with his personal lifestyle. Knocking on doors in the

community and having gospel conversations is a common practice for Rucker and his people.

The church conducted a community survey asking people what they thought were the greatest needs in the community. They visited more than 500 homes.

Information gathered helped them understand their community and where people were spiritually.

The church established a relationship with a local school. They provided appreciation gifts to each teacher. Rucker is now a board member on the resource center with the local elementary school.

The church is planning an Operation Inasmuch initiative involving home repairs, food services, wellness checks and free haircuts. They are also making plans to join Florence Baptist Church in sending a team to serve in Haiti. This will be the



Indian Fork Baptist Church in Bagdad is a testimony of how rural churches can grow.

first international mission trip in Indian Fork's 209-year history.

Priority of proclamation. Rucker places a high priority on faithfully and passionately proclaiming the word of God through expository preaching and teaching. He preaches and teaches on average six times per week.

"God's word has the power to change people's lives," Rucker said. He preaches verse by verse through books of the Bible, recently focusing on Colossians, Jonah, 1st, 2nd and 3rd John, Proverbs and Acts. He is preparing to preach through the first 11 chapters of Genesis.

Evaluation of space and facilities. As the church grew in worship attendance, space became an issue. They worked with their KBC regional consultant to conduct a space and facilities study to determine options for addressing their most limiting factors for growth. They prayerfully evaluated options and determined to build an addition to their facility. Plans are to add on to their sanctuary, build more classrooms and a fellowship hall, and transform the

old fellowship hall into classrooms.

Their space study also revealed that their parking lot was too small. So, they provided 28 more spaces and paved their lot.

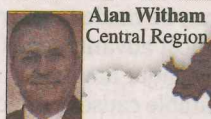
Priority of prayer. "Anything we do has to be bathed in prayer, not only individually, but also corporately," said Rucker. The church has a prayer service each Sunday before Sunday School. Recently he taught a 12-week series on prayer.

Pastor the people. Rucker believes you have to be a shepherd to the people. "We must preach, but we can't separate preaching and people," Rucker said. He places a high priority on being with people in their struggles and celebrations.

The intentionality of the church could be summed up in a comment made by member Rachael Hymer: "We don't just talk about things. We put a plan in place and do it."

Indian Fork is a testimony of how rural churches can grow. "The Lord can use you no matter what your context," Rucker said. (WR)

Regional SPOTLIGHT



Alan Witham
Central Region

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The Heart of the Story

2015 State Missions Emphasis and Eliza Broadus Offering

"One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." John 9:25b ESV

For many years, Paul Harvey captured attention on the radio as he told little known engaging stories about people and situations with some key element of the story held back until the end. The stories always ended with the tagline "And now you know the rest of the story."

Jesus' disciples wanted to know the rest of the story when they asked Him about a man born blind and whose sin had caused the blindness. Jesus told them that neither the man or his parents had sinned, but that the blindness had happened "so that the work of God might be displayed in his life" (John 9:3). The rest of the story happened later, when after

being healed by Jesus, the man was questioned by the spiritually blind who were sure that Jesus was a sinner because He healed on the Sabbath. The man answered their inquiry with these ringing words, "One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25b ESV). At the heart of this story was a man in need and our compassionate Savior who not only healed physical blindness, but led the man to faith as He revealed Himself as the Son of Man.

This year we want you to know the heart of the story. The featured stories show the impact of Kentucky missions on people—those who are lost as well as believers who have experienced spiritual growth through missions involvement.

Do Kentucky Baptist ministries make a difference? Just ask Mike Hoy, pastor of New Liberty Baptist Church, Metcalfe. His church participated in the Liberty Association LoveLoud outreach.

"LoveLoud gave us the opportunity to build relationships in our own community with kids and their parents in an apartment complex when the Tree Top Apartment complex allowed us to hold a Backyard Bible study at their facility. Over the last two years our LoveLoud teams have had the opportunity to see 'that our work is not in vain' (1 Corinthians 15:58) when a young girl came to Christ," said Hoy.

"LoveLoud also allows the teenagers to take charge of the Bible study as they teach the lessons and show the love of Jesus. We have been blessed to be able to see the fruits of our labors. This also opened the door for the church to follow up and invite the children to other church events. LoveLoud caused all involved, saved and lost, to draw a little closer to Jesus Christ."

Drawing closer to Christ, sharing Jesus with the lost, and changing lives.

That's the heart of the story. Your prayers, your personal involvement, and your giving are also at the heart of the story.

As you read this state missions special edition, let your heart listen to the stories of real people who have been won to Christ through Kentucky missions. Learn about the ministries which touched their lives. Lift these ministries to the Lord in prayer. Leave an offering to support continuing work across our state.

The Eliza Broadus Offering is sponsored by Kentucky WMU in cooperation with the Kentucky Baptist Convention. It supplements the Cooperative Program to provide much needed funds for missions and to tell the heart of the story.

The Heart of the Story

ELIZA BROADUS OFFERING 2015-16 Allocations

Kentucky Baptist Convention	\$860,000
Missions Mobilization	\$438,000
Evangelism & Church Planting	\$398,000
Church Consulting & Revitalization	\$24,000

Kentucky Baptist Associations & Special Ministries ...\$130,000

All Kentucky Baptist Associations will be given a ministry grant of \$500 provided the association meets EBO grant guidelines.

Additional requests for Special Ministries funds may be made through an application process. Kentucky Baptist affiliated ministries may apply, including ministries of associations, MSC missionaries, etc.

The deadline for submitting an EBO allocation request from the 2015-16 offering is December 15, 2015. The allocation request form is posted online: kywmu.org/eboapplication.

Kentucky WMU	\$260,000
Missions Education, Leader Development, Resource Materials	\$146,635
Missions Events, Kentucky Changers, Camps & Overnights	\$52,615
Missions Promotion & Season of Prayer	\$60,750

Eliza Broadus Offering 2015 Goal \$1,250,000



TellYourStory.today provides a gospel witness on the internet

She was a Muslim student at a Kentucky university and listened to a testimony on the website tellyourstory.today. Now she is a believer in the Lord Jesus. Through the simple act of sharing stories, Kentucky Baptists are reaching thousands of people with the gospel. In fact the web site had so many visitors, that it collapsed and had to be completely redone to handle the volume of traffic.

Tell Your Story is as easy as one-two-three-four. First, visit the website and call the toll free number listed to record your story. Two, press 1 and follow the instructions. Three, a text message will be sent to you (usually within 24 hours) when your story is posted in the "Stories" area. Four, share your story with others. You can post a link to your story on social media, send an e-card to a friend, or print cards with the web address of your story that you can give to people you meet. And every time someone listens to your story, you will get a text message letting you know that someone has listened.

Tell Your Story was officially launched at the Kentucky Baptist Convention last November. Pastors were urged to tell the story of their own encounter with Jesus and then encourage their congregations to share their stories. For many, just writing out their story before recording it was life changing. Tommy Webb, Buck Creek Baptist Church, shared that he had a member who had not felt comfortable witnessing. He helped her write out her story, then she followed the steps to record her story and it was posted on the website. She was ecstatic when she received the first text message that someone had listened to her story.

Barbara Flener, a retired teacher and active member of Aberdeen Baptist Church, had completed a Beth Moore Bible study and, in conjunction with Tell Your Story, decided to share her story. Barbara had been ill for some time and the night she wrote out her story, she passed away. Her story continues to inspire others to faith in Christ.

Donnie Patrick, pastor of Crestwood Baptist Church in Oldham County, asked everyone in the congregation to write out

Tell Us Your Story!
It's As Easy as:
One - Two - Three - Four!

their story and turn it in. "It was a first for some of our members," he says. "Some, I believe, found healing as they shared their story. It was helpful to witness how honest and transparent the people were with their stories. As I read the stories, I could keep in mind people who have struggled and been delivered from similar backgrounds. This has been helpful to point out when others find themselves struggling."

In 2015, Crestwood Baptist Church issued a 90 day challenge each quarter asking members to share their story at least once. Thus, by year end, the goal is for each member to have told their story to at least four people. When the effort began, Crestwood started by asking their entire staff to share their story with their young children. One mom shared her story for the first time with her elementary age children and the older daughter said, "Wow! Why didn't you tell us this before?"

A student at Crestwood who at the time was struggling with several tough things in her life, was also reaching out to a friend. After praying and learning Scripture verses, the student wrote out her story and then led her friend to faith in Christ.



Upon receiving Christ, her friend said, "Now I have a story!"

In the first three months that the site was live, over 35,000 people from 10 different countries listened to the stories on the site. In January, someone from China shared their story. Since then the number of listeners and countries continues to climb. Through a website and stories of believers, Kentucky Baptists are reaching out all over the world.

"I think that it is the easiest method that I have seen thus far in presenting the gospel," said Stephen Bruce, pastor of Crosswoods Baptist Church in Nicholasville. "Tell Your Story is a great idea for anybody and everybody to do. You are not going to have the nerve, maybe, to go up to the cashier at Kroger, or the bag boy and sit there and tell the gospel. You will probably not have the time anyway. But it does not take much to give them a card and say thank you for helping me, would you mind to listening to my story?"

Learn more by visiting the Tell Your Story web site which includes a video introduction and complete instructions for recording your testimony and sharing the link with others.



"One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see"
(John 9:25b ESV)

This insert made possible by the gifts of your church through the Cooperative Program and the Eliza Broadus Offering. It was adapted from the Master Article included on the 2014 *Power to Serve DVD* (pdf file).

The Writer: Joy Bolton is the executive director-treasurer of Kentucky WMU. She has served in this role since September 1, 1999.

Please note: The 2015 *The Heart of the Story DVD* complements this article. A copy of the DVD has been sent to each pastor and WMU director. A copy was also provided with each standing order for envelopes, posters, and prayer guides. All materials are also posted online: kywmu.org/ebo.

Church planting partnerships are needed in language missions

DjoDjo Nsenga Tshiunza became a Christian 18 years ago in his home country, The Democratic Republic of the Congo. Tshiunza served the Lord there going door to door in the village to share Christ.

Because of the political turmoil and religious persecution in the Congo, Tshiunza and his family prayed for God's protection and an opportunity to escape. God opened a door for the family to move to Uganda and eventually to come to America as political refugees. "I know God preserved my life for a reason," said Tshiunza. "I struggled with knowing what God wanted me to do. After moving to Lexington, I noticed that there were no French speaking churches and then I knew what God was calling me to do. I knew that God was calling me to church planting but I did not know how."

After knowing that God wanted him to become a church planter, Tshiunza prayed for God's direction. One Sunday, while prayer-walking around Lexington, he met Job Juarez, Church Planting and Development Associate with the Kentucky Baptist Convention. After exchanging pleasantries, the Holy Spirit led them to have a lengthy conversation regarding the



Left: DjoDjo Tshiunza and Job Juarez launched an evangelistic crusade focused on French-speaking African refugees.

Right: Iglesia Bautista de Crestwood in Sunday worship.



need for African French-speaking churches.

Guided and coached by Juarez, Tshiunza completed the KBC's Basic Training for Church Planters and was connected to the local Baptist association. A few months later, Tshiunza and Juarez, launched an evangelistic crusade focused on French-speaking African refugees. The crusade was coupled with community service projects and out of these efforts, Assembly of Saints Church was born.

Today the church meets every Sunday evening at the office of the Central Kentucky Network of Baptists (Elkhorn Association). They average 40-50 in attendance and expect to continue growing. One of the challenges of their present location is space for children's activities. A visit to the congregation finds the pastor preaching to youth and adults in the meeting room and the pastor's daughter trying to teach the children in the kitchen.

Some language churches have found that partnering with an established English speaking church is a helpful arrangement. Children and youth participate in English speaking classes while adults have Bible study in their language. Then everyone gathers for worship together. Both Carlos De La Barra, Church Planting Strategist for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, and Donnie Patrick, pastor of Crestwood Baptist Church, are excited about how Anglo and language churches can work together.

"Iglesia Bautista de Crestwood started as God began to work in hearts at the KBC and also here at Crestwood," says Patrick. "We had been praying for God's heart and when we found out that they were looking for a place in Oldham County to plant a church to reach an unreached people group in our area, it was just an automatic, 'Yes, Lord.' We are thrilled to be two churches in one location."

Many second generation family members of internationals do not learn to read and write in their parents' language. So a partnership allows for having classes in English for the children and in another language for adults.

A church planting partnership does far more than provide meeting space. "Because of the church plant and our partnership, we have discovered that we are learning more of God's heart for all peoples, all nations... not only around the world, but also right here at home," explains Patrick.

The Eliza Broadus Offering is vital to church planting. "Probably more than half of the money that we use for church planting is EBO money," says De La Barra. "But it is not only this. It is Super Saturday for Hispanics and the Evangelism Conference for ethnics. These and other events are fully funded from EBO. So without EBO most of the ethnic ministry cannot be done."

Creative Ministries help students take the gospel to the streets!

After a two-year transition followed by a six month snow delay, Creative Ministries Festival 2.0 was officially launched August 14-15, 2015 under the sponsorship of Kentucky WMU. The event was held at Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green. It is a story of calling and perseverance.

In 2013 Kentucky WMU was asked to take responsibility for two popular student ministry opportunities - Kentucky Changers and Creative Ministries Festival (CMF). After much prayer, the Kentucky WMU Executive Board approved and called Peggy Murphy as coordinator of the two events.

In taking on these two ministries, WMU decided to give CMF a rest for one year to allow time to focus on launching Changers. The delay also gave time to meet with leaders and determine the direction of this event for the future. A concern that WMU wanted to address was that prior year attendees had shared that they struggled with putting their skills into practice and how to find places to use their skills.

From those discussions, Creative Ministries Festival 2.0 was born. The first CMF 2.0 was scheduled for March 2015 but due to snow, had to be postponed until August. However, it is now scheduled annually for the second weekend in March.

Creative Ministries Festival 2.0 is a two-day experience that equips students to share the gospel in creative ways. The event includes classes in various aspects of creative ministries such as puppets, balloons, interpretive movement, sign, 'God Rods,' skits, juggling, face painting, magic, lip synch, clowning and human video.



Clockwise: David Buckner served as emcee; Bethel puppet; Tim Bertram art presentation of Jesus; balloon hats are a favorite; clowns and student performers at block party; Teresa Parrett shares at missions fair; Tom Smoot recognized in closing.

New elements were added to Creative Ministries Festival 2.0 to take this event to the next level in missions. First, a practical application component in the form of a block party was added to allow students an opportunity to perform, mingle with the crowd, and see creative ministries in use to share the gospel.

In addition, a Missions Fair allowed leaders and students that want to go on a mission trip and use their creative ministry skills to meet people from ministries that are seeking creative ministry teams to help them. Various ministries had displays at CMF explaining their work and how creative arts teams could help them share the gospel.

To prepare students for personal evangelism, an additional element of CMF 2.0 was the requirement that every participant attend a workshop on sharing the gospel. After learning a creative way to share the

Romans Road in the general session, students were dismissed to small groups where they learned to use a tract and tell their story to share the gospel. This also provided the opportunity to encourage students to confirm their own relationship with Christ and then to share Jesus as they use creative arts in missions.

The 2015 Creative Ministries Festival 2.0 featured guest artist Jeff Smith, director of Salt and Light Ministries, Richmond, VA. A popular participant in previous festivals known for his use of drama, music and storytelling, Jeff came to provide instruction on a variety of creative arts, but his niche is creative movement and human video where he is known as "The Rodfather."



Jeff Smith

In addition to creative arts classes, conferences for adult leaders were offered on planning mission trips, block parties, on-going missions involvement for students, and other topics.

General sessions included performances by workshop instructors as well as creative arts teams from churches. Students also performed at the block party where they received feedback on their presentations.

The first CMF 2.0 was a hit with the 200+ participants. One student learned to do "pocket magic evangelism" in a class and the next day was using that new skill at a block party. "The kids thought I was good," he happily shared with his leader.

Tom Smoot, who began the Creative Arts Festival over 20 years ago, was recognized with a plaque and book of letters in the closing session of the 2015 event.

The next CMF 2.0 is scheduled for March 11-12, 2016 at Rich Pond Baptist Church in Bowling Green.



Student ministry takes hope to schools

Allison Smith simply told her story and it was posted on YouTube. It is the story of a student who had been bullied and suffered from depression. She began cutting her arms and felt that God had left her. In her sophomore year of high school she reached a breaking point and spent four months in a psychiatric hospital in Lexington.

Allison says that it was prayer that helped her get through. Her dad would tell her, "When you are down to nothing, God is up to something." After coming home, a friend introduced her to First Priority (FP). There she found family and a place to belong. When asked to be a FP leader, "I saw it as an opportunity to tell my story and help others," said Allison.

"I feel closer to other students in First Priority. They are my brothers and sisters in Christ. We are going to heaven together," says Allison. "Being in First Priority has not only helped me, but helped others, too. People know my story so it helps others, too."

Tim Bargo, Kentucky MSC missionary and director of First Priority, is excited about the impact of this ministry. After being involved with FP as a youth pastor for over 10 years, Bargo joined the staff of First Priority Tri-States for a year before starting the Tri-County group. After recruiting a board of directors, the group applied for non-profit status as a 501c3 organization and began raising funds. FP Tri-County is a chapter of the national organization and is based in southeastern Kentucky and now includes Clay, Knox, Laurel and Whitley Counties.

The vision of First Priority is "The hope of Christ for every student." Through club meetings on school campuses, FP is sharing the gospel with students and encouraging believing students in their walk with Christ. At this time, FP Tri-County has 30 local schools with clubs meeting mostly before school



Tim Bargo

starts. Bargo's job is to train student leaders, keep them accountable, give them a strategy to use, and raise money for them. Each school has a \$300 budget per year to buy snacks, etc.

The activities done by each First Priority club vary from servant evangelism to school programs. The Tri-County group does several large events each year to raise awareness in the schools of the presence of the clubs. Events include a FP Bowl football game, feeding each team at the State Regional Basketball Tourney, and several other smaller events. First Priority also hosts a yearly outreach rally where student leaders are trained to use the First Priority "HOPE" strategy and then are encouraged to participate in "See You at the Pole" the following Wednesday at their schools.

Students can witness and share Christ in their schools during the course of normal interaction with other students. FP equips believing students to witness and gives them courage to stand for their faith.

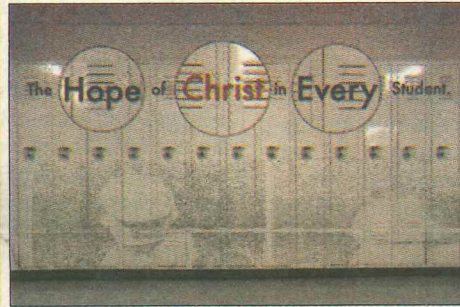
During the first five years of FP Tri-County, over 1500 students have been saved. Clubs are student led and First Priority serves to encourage, empower, and equip students to witness. First Priority has changed the culture in the schools by equipping students to be leaders and evangelizing lost students. It has made such an impact that school administrators are now contacting them monthly asking for help in school events.

Local churches are a critical part of FP. "Churches in the area have a secure place to have a presence on the school campus through First Priority," says Bargo. "We have volunteer coaches available for each school. I also meet with youth workers and pastors monthly for lunch to discuss how they can be more involved in each of our counties. Each church gets a contact list to follow up with students who accept Christ monthly."

FP Tri-County began hosting a weekend community DiscipleNow (D-Now) event three years ago. Churches have joined together for this yearly event as well as the annual See You at the Pole rally. "EBO funds this past year helped supply training and materials for us to give to student leaders," explained Bargo. "EBO helps us to equip students to lead their friends to Christ and help disciple them."



First Priority has changed the culture in the schools by equipping students to be leaders and evangelizing lost students.
- Tim Bargo



Churches join together for ministry through Baptist associations

"My youth pastor always had a motto, 'Let's go serve their socks off,'" said Becca Keen, student leader with LoveLoud in Liberty Baptist Association. "Throughout the day I would repeat that along with 'Be the hands and feet of Jesus.' With those sayings running through my head it was so easy to stick to serving because I could focus on why we did it all, and that is for Him."

At evening worship after a day of LoveLoud ministries, Becca described the scene.

"I love looking through the crowd of students seeing hands lifted, tears falling all at the name of Jesus. I close my eyes and imagine us all, thousands upon thousands, standing in glory, singing in unison. Those few days serving with youth make me so excited for God's Kingdom. They always say there is strength in numbers, but I think there is power in youth who love Jesus. When we all came together and worked for His Kingdom, souls were saved and many grew in maturity."

The North American Mission Board (NAMB) describes LoveLoud as "a movement of churches demonstrating God's love by meeting significant human need while sharing Christ." Kentucky Baptist Associations are finding ways to "love loud" with assistance from the Eliza Broadus Offering.

Since 2012, EBO has provided each of the 70 associations affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention at ministry grant of \$500. Each association determines the use of the funds and reports back on how the money was used. Projects are varied and reports range from Bibles to ministry trailers, from jail ministry to block parties, and from ministry to children to senior adults.

LoveLoud in Liberty Baptist Association includes three days of mission service opportunities designed to engage middle and

high school students in sharing Christ in their tri-county area. Through LoveLoud, students can be involved in construction, community service, and evangelistic outreach.

In their 2014 LoveLoud effort, Liberty Association had almost 150 volunteers engaged in 20 projects designed to share Christ through meeting practical needs. In addition to people touched in the community, three high school student participants came to personal faith in Christ. One of those students was Kiley Sanders. Jordan Woodie, Director of Missions, had the privilege of baptizing her a few months later.

"2014 was my second year participating in LoveLoud and I could not have asked for a better ending to the three-day missions

program. As I worked I did not realize until the final day that I had the greatest need. The final day was when I came to understand the need for Christ in my own life," said Sanders.

Sanders served on a team of nine students and several adults. Over the three days of LoveLoud the team helped build a deck and do landscaping with Habitat for Humanity, helped with clean up and painting at a church, cleared brush at an overgrown cemetery, and painted a mobile home roof for a senior citizen.

Each night, Sanders and her team met with other teams for supper and worship. "On the third and final night at our worship gathering, God spoke to my heart. I prayed and asked to be forgiven of my sins and accepted Jesus as my Savior that very night," said Sanders. "I was so happy that I did not want the night to end. I thank God for the LoveLoud mission program and what it means to me today."

While not every association uses the term, the spirit of LoveLoud is evident in many of the ministries. Here is a sampling of association ministries using 2014 EBO funds:

- Blackford/Breckinridge shared the gospel through a block party in Owsley County and through canvassing the area to visit and witness.

- Boone's Creek purchased supplies for Familyfest. There were 20 salvation decisions during the week.
- Casey County conducted a "Big Top" Backyard Bible School near two apartment complexes and a live nativity, "Twas the Night Jesus Came," on the courthouse lawn.
- Nelson engaged in evangelism and outreach through "Crossover Shepherdsville"
- West Kentucky held "Summer Fun Days" to reach unchurched families.

In addition to the \$500 provided to each Kentucky Baptist Association, a portion of the Eliza Broadus Offering is designated for Special Ministry grants. Ministries across the state apply each year for funds to help with ministries such as crisis pregnancy, youth outreach, equestrian ministries, addiction ministries, Friendship International, jail ministries and much more.

Applications for grants from this year's offering are due by December 15 and will be awarded in February 2016. The application form with instructions and eligibility criteria is also online: kywmu.org/eboapplication..

The Heart of the Story

The Heart of the Story DVD includes short videos designed to be shown in worship services throughout September.

Materials are also available online kywmu.org/ebo

Kingdom Kids children's ministry

"I served my home church as Children's Minister for ten years," said Stacey Burton, "but always felt heartbroken for the smaller churches in the association who did not have enough children or funds to provide the activities and opportunities for families that could be found in larger churches."

"I watched as families left those smaller churches in search of something for their children instead of staying where they were and building programs there," explained Burton. "In 2005, God used an associational children's choir in Texas to show me His plan for my heart. I resigned at my church and began an associational ministry that is now Kingdom Kids."

Kingdom Kids is a ministry for children and families that offers a variety of activities including a children's choir, mission action projects for the whole family, missions education for children, day camps, family movie nights, and much more. All of the events are promoted through social media and through the school systems. Activities draw in both church and unchurched children.

Through relationships built during Kingdom Kids activities, Burton then connects unchurched children with local churches. "For example," she says, "if Johnny does not attend church but becomes friends with Matt who does, I contact Matt's family and church and encourage them to reach out to Johnny's family. My prayer is that unchurched families find a church home and that the smaller churches grow."



Children enjoy singing and activities with Kingdom Kids

During the school year children can sing with Kingdom Kids Singers, an elementary choir, and A Joyful Noise, a middle school choir. The choirs sing at community events, revivals, nursing homes and wherever they are invited. Kingdom Kids also offers family missions projects such as serving a community Christmas dinner to clients of a local homeless ministry, trips to visit Kentucky missionaries and serve alongside them for a day, and Children's Ministry Day projects.

In the summer months, Kingdom Kids offers day camps and assists smaller churches with Vacation Bible School. "In 2014 we had a sports day camp and a creative ministries day camp," said Burton, "each with an average of 65 children in attendance."

Kingdom Kids also hosts family movie nights and churches use the movie nights as outreach. "I have met many children as a result of Kingdom Kids events," said Stacey. "Some come one time and we never see them again, but the majority attend as long as they are in the age range. Many even come back as leaders in the program instead of aging out. We have planted seeds and even been invited to the baptisms of children who felt that our events played a large role in their development and wanted us to be part of the celebration."

Rick Hatley, Director of Missions for Pulaski Baptist Association, says "Kingdom Kids is a wonderful ministry of outreach and inreach within the Pulaski Baptist Association. It reaches out to the lost and forms a wonderful atmosphere for evangelism, discipleship, ministry, fellowship, and worship. It is a growing ministry that is supported by Pulaski Baptist Association through prayer, giving, and participating."

A grant from the Eliza Broadus Offering in 2014 helped provide a sound system for Kingdom Kids which is used by the choirs.

Natural disasters are a catalyst for the gospel

"Doris" was bitter and defensive when the Kentucky Disaster Relief team arrived to help her family after a wildfire took the home that had been in her family for over 100 years. Yet through the compassion of the team, God began to break down the barriers she had put up to Him and on the morning of the third day, she surrendered her life to Christ. The next Sunday Doris was in church for the first time in her life and the Bible given to her by the Kentucky team was the first she had ever owned.

Thus the heart of the story of Disaster Relief (DR) is in the lives of those who come to faith in Christ through the witness of volunteers in a time of crisis. Like many other locations, DR opened the door to an area of Colorado Springs that had been closed to a gospel witness.

When disaster strikes, the yellow shirts and hats of DR volunteers are a welcome sight. Working in cooperation with Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, Kentucky units are called out for response to all kinds of disasters. Kentucky teams have gone in after floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, forest fires, and more.

Kentucky DR has responded both in state and in other states as well as for international needs. In 2014 Kentucky DR witnessed 57 recorded decisions for Christ which represented 20% of all decisions in the Southern Baptist DR response.

Last year Kentucky Baptist DR teams recorded 1,012 chaplain family ministry contacts and almost 3,500 volunteer ministry contacts. In the Detroit Metro flood response, Kentucky Baptist DR chaplains led 15 people to make decisions for Christ including two Muslims and opened doors for ethnic ministry work in the greater Detroit Metro area.

"The Eliza Broadus Offering provides funds for ministry in times of disaster that enable us to minister with compassion in times of crisis as we seek to supply basic needs and a positive witness for Jesus Christ," says Coy Webb, DR Director for the Kentucky Baptist Convention.



To staff all of the work of Kentucky DR it takes a host of trained volunteers. Throughout the year, Disaster Relief training is offered in various locations. Every DR volunteer must be certified through the completion of a basic training course and must be recertified every three years. In addition, Kentucky DR offers Unit Leader, Collegiate, Chainsaw, and International training events.

"In 2014, Kentucky DR trained over 1,000 volunteers in six regional trainings," said Webb. EBO helped to provide training resources and nationally recognized ID cards for DR volunteers. EBO also helped us conduct a Baptist Global Response Disaster Relief event, provide training for over 100 college students at four campus training events, and provide training for 67 chainsaw operators. We were also able to provide leadership training for over 70 unit and state DR leaders."

The importance of the Eliza Broadus Offering to Kentucky Disaster Relief is also reflected in the equipment used. "Our equipment continues to need repair and maintenance as it is called on more and more," said Webb. "We are also facing a time when some of our equipment after years of use will need to be replaced. Most of our kitchen equipment on three main feeding units is aging and demonstrating the wear-and-tear of heavy use. We need to systematically replace tilt skillets and convection ovens on all three units."

Several Kentucky Baptist associations have formed DR response teams and invested in equipment. EBO has helped a number of associations purchase equipment needed for disaster response.



Church planting in Barren County shares new life

"Will" was interested in what Christianity was all about. Over the course of a few weeks, Wes Simpson, lead church planter for New Life Community Church, had a chance to minister to him one-on-one as the result of Will's participation in a class called "Christianity Explained." "This class is a great way for non-believers to learn the foundations of Christianity in a non-threatening environment," explained Simpson.

Will came for a couple of the meetings in the 6-week course, but his work schedule would not allow for him to attend all six, so Simpson met with him to continue the study. They grew in friendship and Will became more open to Jesus Christ. A few weeks later, God lifted the veil off of his eyes and he recognized Jesus as Lord and Savior. "I began teaching Will what it means to follow Jesus and His commands. He has just recently moved and we are praying that he holds fast to the faith and that we can still connect with him," said Simpson.

A native of Barren County, Simpson understands the lostness around him. "Our county is full of lost people, many of

whom have no interest in Jesus Christ or visiting an existing church," explains Simpson. "We knew God was calling us to plant a new church in a different way than just being the next trendy modern church."

The need for a new church was also driven by the rapid growth in the southern part of Barren County, specifically the Haywood community. "Haywood is our focus community. Our emphasis in these early stages is to build relationships and share the gospel abundantly with our community. We did not want to just start a worship service and ask people to come to us. We want to sacrifice our time and resources to meet people where they are, evangelize them, teach new converts to follow Jesus, and then multiply further and further until it is necessary to gather these new believers into a formal church body," says Simpson.

Simpson is appreciative of the Eliza Broadus Offering and the funds provided to the KBC for church planting from the offering. "We have been able to buy Bible study materials and other things for building up the body," explained Simpson.



A promotional booklet/DVD has been sent to the WMU director and pastor in every KBC church. The DVD includes videos as well as teaching plans for all ages and suggestions for churchwide promotion of the Season of Prayer for State Missions and the Eliza Broadus Offering.

Orders for posters, prayer guides and offering envelopes were filled according to the standing order of each church. Request additional copies by calling Kentucky WMU at 502-489-3534 or toll free: 866-489-3534; or email: kywmu@kybaptist.org. These materials are provided by the gifts of your church to the Eliza Broadus Offering and the Cooperative Program.

State missions videos and print materials are also posted online: kywmu.org/ebo.

Church contributions to the Eliza Broadus Offering should be mailed to: Eliza Broadus Offering for State Missions, Kentucky Baptist Convention, 13420 Eastpoint Centre Drive, Louisville, KY 40223. Checks should be payable to the Kentucky Baptist Convention and designated "EBO."

Church treasurers may also include EBO contributions with other contributions through the Kentucky Baptist Convention using the KBC church contribution form and designating the amount for the Eliza Broadus Offering.

Individuals or groups may contribute directly to the Eliza Broadus Offering. Please make checks payable to the Kentucky Baptist Convention and notate "EBO" on the check memo line. Mail these checks to: Eliza Broadus Offering, Kentucky WMU, 13420 Eastpoint Centre Drive, Louisville, KY 40223. Please enclose name and address for an acknowledgement of your gift.

Contributions for the 2015-16 Eliza Broadus Offering will be received from September 1, 2015 through August 31, 2016.

Hurricane Katrina

Continued from page 1

Mississippi's coastline was devastated by a storm surge of 27 feet, as reported by CBS News, and an estimated 90 percent of structures were flattened within a half-mile of the coastline. The surge was so large and powerful that it traveled as far as six miles inland over land, and 12 miles up bays and rivers.

Winds of about 127 miles per hour tore through the state, snapping trees in half and leveling homes.

President Bush declared a state of emergency for all of Mississippi, but the greatest damage occurred in the lower two-thirds of the state, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency provided full federal assistance to 49 of 82 counties—about 1 million of 2.9 million Mississippians were seriously impacted.

A storm tide about half the height of the one in Mississippi hit Alabama with the estimated 14-foot surge nearly destroying the infrastructure and the fishing fleet



Planting the Christian flag in New Orleans is "an expression of our hope the Gospel of Jesus Christ will go forth as never before," Bobby Welch (center), then-SBC president said in New Orleans with David Hankins, executive director of the Louisiana Baptist Convention; New Orleans pastor Fred Luter and Baton Rouge pastor Stephen Trammel. (BP file photo)

in Bayou La Batre. Tornadoes were spawned around Brewton and power was lost for nearly a week for about 600,000 in the state of 4.5 million residents.

In all, more than 1,800 people lost their lives; the federal government spent about \$120.5 billion (\$75 billion in emergency relief operations); and insurers paid out

about \$41 billion in claims—making Katrina the largest natural disaster in U.S. history, CNN summarized.

Southern Baptists launched and maintained one of the largest sustained disaster relief operations in its history—196 continuous days, according to Baptist Press. Indeed, on the order of 21,000 trained

Southern Baptist volunteers and 500 disaster relief units responded just in Louisiana and Mississippi. Nearly 15 million hot meals were served, 17,000 homes were cleared of mud and downed trees, while almost 8,000 children were cared for.

After emergency relief operations wound down, long-term operation began like Project NOAH (New Orleans Area Homes) Rebuild.

Southern Baptists invested nearly \$25 million to build or rebuild some 500 homes in the most ravaged of New Orleans neighborhoods, and 26 water-damaged churches, schools and ministry centers were repaired.

Another 26,500 Southern Baptists participated as volunteer workers. Homes were restored, so was hope, and the message of eternal hope was shared as well.

When all was said and done, Southern Baptists had ministered to tens of thousands of storm victims and disaster relief responders, and shared the Good News to those who would receive it, with thousands responding by submitting their lives to Christ. (BP)

Ky. church reaches over the river to help Indiana congregation

By Whitney Jones

Hawesville—Hawesville Baptist Church is taking a big step to connect with Tell City, a town just over the state line in Indiana, and it started with a Post-It note.

Hawesville Baptist's pastor, Barry Fields, heard the congregation at Tell Street Baptist Church had dwindled to less than a dozen after a few years of struggling and several pastors. Since his church had a history of lending a hand to Tell Street, he made many calls reaching out to help, but they went unanswered.

So he took the bridge over the Ohio River and stopped by Tell Street in Perry County. When he found the church's doors locked, he left a note saying that if they needed help, they should call him. Tell Street's interim pastor, Harold Smith, found the note and was happy to start a conversation about reviving the town's only Southern Baptist church.

"We got some young people to help with visitation and as Sunday School teachers, and this kind of stuff, which we didn't have," Smith said. "There wasn't anything but older people in the church. I'm 84 myself, and the rest of them are just a few years younger. So there's a problem: Older people just can't go out and do things that they (young adults) could."

Fields said half the people of Perry



Hawesville Baptist's pastor, Barry Fields, heard the congregation at Tell Street Baptist Church had dwindled to less than a dozen after a few years of struggling and several pastors.

County have no religious affiliation. On any given Sunday, 94 percent aren't in church.

Fields had already felt the call to serve not just at Hawesville, but in Indiana, too. His father spent some of his childhood in Indianapolis, so there was a special place in his heart for the state.

"The challenge for us was, do we sit on the side of the river and keep things going where they are, or do we go over to the other side of the river and seek to reach people with the gospel? That was a big push for us," Fields said.

After a year of work, the two churches agreed to merge, with Tell Street becoming a satellite campus. Many of Hawesville Baptist's more than 250 regular attendees

already lived in Tell City, but made the short drive across the bridge to attend church. Deacon Tim Gooch said the communities already have a tie that is fueling some excitement for the grand opening Sept. 13.

"Some of our current members who live there want to have a place where they can invite friends and family and still be right in their community to attend church services," Gooch said. "That's an exciting thing for a lot of people," he added, "and I

think also it's the excitement of being able to reach out and not knowing fully what the Lord has in store for us from a blessing standpoint of being able to reach people."

After the Sept. 13 opening, around 30 Hawesville Baptist members will begin attending the Indiana campus, which has been renamed Crossroads Tell City.

Crossroads will host a family fun day Sept. 12 to reach out to residents of Perry County and introduce them to the revived church family. (WR)

IMB cuts

Continued from page 1

up to 15 percent of IMB's total employees.

Current employees include about 4,800 missionaries and 450 staff.

IMB leadership has decided the best way to reduce staff is to begin with a voluntary retirement incentive that will be offered to all eligible employees, including both missionaries and staff. While the parameters defining who is eligible are still being finalized, details of the incentive will be announced Sept. 10, and those eligible will be notified following the announcement.

"Whether to accept the incentive is a voluntary decision completely up to the

discretion of eligible individuals," he said. "This offers personnel who may already be considering a transition in their lives an opportunity to make that transition."

As phase one of the plan (the voluntary retirement incentive) is being implemented, phase two of the plan will focus on concluding a reset of the organization. Platt said that phase would include consolidating support services, recalibrating mobilization, assessing global engagement and re-envisioning training.

"We must get to a healthy place in the present in order to be in a healthy position for the future," Platt said. "We want to move forward with innovative vision, wise stewardship, and high accountability to the churches we serve, the peoples we reach, and the God we worship." (From RNS/BP wire sources)

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Oneida Baptist Institute opened her doors on Jan. 1, 1900. That first day of school saw 100 kids of the mountains take seats in our classrooms. These same classrooms and our school would also eventually house kids from across the world.

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Larry Gritton

Our founder, James Anderson Burns, believed the best way to stop the feuding in our area was to educate our children. Some hurting and struggling young people entered our doors that cold day in 1900, and since that day tens of thousands of hurting and struggling kids have since passed through this unique, little place called Oneida.

I love that our kids come from all over our state, country and world, but I also know our own backyard is filled with kids who need an education for time and eternity. For the 2015-16

school year, we have re-opened our doors to local, commuting kindergarten through fifth grade students.

As my family shared an evening meal a few days ago, my wife asked our kids what their favorite thing was about the new school year thus far. I hate to tell you that I can't remember exactly what each of my three children said, but I can remember what my answer was. I said my favorite thing had been seeing our little K-5 children on our campus. Many of these little ones arrive at our campus each morning by bus, and it warms my heart and gives me great satisfaction to know we are fulfilling our original calling and mission.

When I was a staff student, we typically had 100 local students. At this time two years ago, we only had nine local kids. I am thrilled to let you know that at the writing of this article (Aug. 20) we have 59 day students. We also have 52 staff children, which pushes our commuting student total

to 111 students. In Matthew 19:14 Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me." We are doing all we can to let them come to Him because we know the Kingdom of God belongs to these little ones.

Tuition in 1900 was \$1 per month. Full tuition today is a lot more than \$1, but we still have many kids whose families pay what they can. One of the first things Dr. Barkley Moore did as president of Oneida was eliminate tuition and fees for local kids. Local kids today continue to pay nothing for their education here at OBI. We are grateful to our friends across this state and country who help us to "do unto the least of these." Come and see these little ones. I promise it will warm your heart to see what God is doing here.

Larry Gritton Jr. is president of Oneida Baptist Institute. Website: oneidaschool.org. Phone: (606) 847-4111. Follow OBI on Facebook at www.facebook.com/OBI.KY and Twitter, @Oneida_Baptist and @lgritton.

Simple steps help protect churches refusing to host same-sex marriages

By Robin Cornetel

Lexington—Churches can protect themselves from lawsuits for refusing to host same-sex marriages by taking simple steps, including adopting written policies that clearly spell out their biblical objections, an attorney told church leaders Aug. 22.

Kentucky Baptist attorney Bryan Beaman said the first line of defense is to put everything in writing.

"Some think that by adopting a formal policy they are stirring up a hornet's nest," said Beaman, but not doing so, he said, makes the church an easy target.

Beaman, who led a training workshop at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, spelled out the steps churches should take in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in June that legalized same-sex marriage nationwide.

The workshop will be offered again in coming weeks at "Super Saturday" conferences in Bowling Green and Louisville.

"We want to have written protections and policies in place that communicate what the church's views are both in the church and with the community so that if any legal claims are ever made the church's stance is crystal clear," Beaman said.

Beaman said churches should:

- Add language about gender, sexuality and marriage to their confessions of faith.
- Establish formal policies for church membership and discipline.
- Adopt policies spelling out the circumstances under which pastors will participate in weddings and under which churches will host weddings.
- Adopt employment standards that require employees to agree with the confession of faith and uphold standards.
- Create a policy of who may use church facilities.

Beaman said he expects Christian organizations that receive government funding to be next in line to face legal challenges from gay rights groups.

"I would be concerned about the private schools, the colleges and universities, any recipients of federal funds, food pantry services or soup kitchens and homeless shelters," he said. "They really need to be on the ball and get protections in place."

But that doesn't mean church leaders can relax, thinking they won't be dragged through the courts, Beaman cautioned.

"It's not a matter of if, but when," he said. Just ask pastors in Europe, he said, who are feeling the heat from activists for refusing to perform same-sex wedding ceremonies.

"If you think you can lay low and not make yourself a target," Beaman said, "when that wolf comes knocking at the door, you're not going to have a defense."

Beaman's workshop was one of more than 70 offered at "Super Saturday," the Kentucky Baptist Convention's largest training event of the year. Other "Super Saturday" workshops discuss church health, discipleship, missions, Sunday school and church planting.

For information, or to register for an upcoming Super Saturday event, go to kybaptist.org/supersaturday. (KBC)

Far beyond the dreams

This summer has been incredible. When one thinks of camp—perhaps if you live in Kentucky—you might think about what happens at Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek. More specifically, you might just think about how lives are changed at camp and how this impacts youth.

Crossings Ministries



David Melber

While those thoughts are accurate, they are not complete.

First, camp impacts all people who attend or are involved. Camp, specifically God's activity in our lives that takes place while at a "camp property," is not just limited to the campers.

Our staff, both full-time and part-time, are impacted. Bus drivers are impacted, contractors and delivery people are impacted, and the list goes

on.

Already, this year we have numerous stories of how God has worked in the lives of our staff to change our hearts on His plans for our lives.

The partnership with the IMB this year had missions front and center in every aspect of camp, and seeing that on a weekly basis has caused many to change their path in life.

Even more significant now, the IMB partnership has helped to place and keep missionaries from Latin America to several different countries. In the next few months, missionaries will be sent out to four more countries.

Consider that some 15-20 years ago the very existence of camp was questioned to the point that selling Cedarmore was a real possibility. I have no doubt that if Cedarmore was sold, Jonathan Creek would be sold soon thereafter.

Today God is using these properties to be a place the gospel is proclaimed and global missions is taught and missionaries are mobilized.

In short, this summer 849 salvations took place at Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek. Over \$240,000 was given to send Latin American missionaries all over the world, and 743 were called to missions and/or ministry.

God is doing far beyond what I think anyone would have ever dreamed through these places we call camp. I am so thankful for those who stood up and said, "God can still use these places for His Glory"—He certainly deserves all the glory for what is taking place.

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

A Super Saturday

Recently, I had the privilege to participate in the first of four Super Saturday training conferences for all the local church ministry segments, including discipleship, preschool & children, Sunday small groups, Woman's Missionary Union, worship and music, youth ministry, and the list goes on. This tremendous conference is coordinated by the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board staff.

Ky. Baptist Foundation



Richard Carnes

I enjoyed the great opportunity to meet with the church treasurers that attended the session on Conducting the Financial Business of the Church. This session was facilitated by Don Spencer, the KBC's director of the Church Financial Benefits department, and Tom Adkisson, the principal partner of a local CPA firm. The

informative session provided valuable subject matter for the local church treasurers on the topics of Charitable Contributions, Handling Money in the Church, Basics of Financial Support for Ministers, and Federal Reporting Issues.

It was also my pleasure, as a part of the session, to speak with the treasurers on how the Kentucky Baptist Foundation can assist local churches to bridge the gap to secure the financial future of their ministries. Many people are surprised to learn that churches are the most overlooked charities in estate stewardship and legacy giving support. Actually, this reality should not be a surprise when we recognize the average person's net worth consists of 9 percent in cash and 91 percent in non-cash assets (home equity, life insurance, retirement assets, business assets, and savings). Most churches' appeals and education on financial

support focus on the 9 percent cash of the person's net worth and ignore the remaining 91 percent of the person's assets.

The Kentucky Baptist Foundation helps bridge this gap for churches by educating church members on the value of having an up-to-date Christian estate plan to address the 91 percent of a person's assets. We provide this educational support to church members through a variety of estate stewardship seminars on how to accomplish their Christian estate planning objectives.

The Kentucky Baptist Foundation staff is also available to assist you by providing private estate stewardship consultation. You may contact the Foundation's trust counsel, Laurie Valentine, or me 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.

Williamstown Baptist honors pianist for 75 years

Williamstown—Williamstown Baptist Church honored Frances Stanley for her 75 years as church pianist by setting aside a July Sunday as "Frances C. Stanley Day."

Stanley became pianist in 1940. She continues to faithfully serve as pianist for worship services and accompanist for quartets, duets and soloists. She has also performed many solos.

She served as assistant director of the "Cheerful Chimers" hand bell choir. Because of her faithful stewardship, the church purchased a new grand piano in 2012.

As a funeral director, Stanley has used her musical talents as she ministers to grieving families.

Members of the same family have played the instruments at Williamstown

since 1905.

The legacy began with F. M. Clinkscales and his wife, Anna Blanchett Clinkscales, sharing their love of music with their children. Anna played the organ and piano from 1905-31, when daughter, Ann Clinkscales Kinsey Rouse became pianist and served from 1931-39. Stanley's sons, Michael and Dennis, and their families are also involved in music ministry.



Frances Stanley

"We thank God for the years of service that Frances C. Stanley has given to our church. Our prayer is that God will continue to bless her with happiness and good health as

His devoted servant sharing her giftedness serving as our pianist," said Marietta Hedges, co-historian of Williamstown Baptist.

Convention challenges church's stance on homosexuality

By David Roach

Greenville, S.C.—The South Carolina Baptist Convention has asked a Greenville church to reverse its decision to open marriage ceremonies, church membership and ordination to homosexuals or withdraw from the state convention.

First Baptist Church, whose pastor in 1845 was elected the Southern Baptist Convention's first president, voted to cease cooperation with the SBC in 1999, according to the church's website. But South Carolina's Baptist Courier newsjournal reported First Baptist still cooperates with the state convention but not with the local Greenville Baptist Association. The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is listed among the church's "affiliations."

Meanwhile, a Southern Baptist seminary president has argued the church's position on homosexuality illustrates the result of Baptist moderates' rejection of inerrancy and the trajectory of the CBF—founded by moderates in 1991.

First Baptist voted in May to adopt a "consensus statement" declaring, "In all facets of the life and ministry of our church ... First Baptist Greenville will not discriminate based on sexual orientation or gender identity."

The SCBC requested the church's withdrawal from the convention or reversal of

the policy by Sept. 10, with an affirmation of the Baptist Faith and Message's definition of marriage as "the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime."

The Baptist Courier reported First Baptist likely "has no intention of recanting its position," which may trigger a motion to withdraw fellowship at the SCBC's annual meeting.

First Baptist pastor Jim Dant said in adopting the consensus statement, "We made no decision regarding the issue of homosexuality—members hold different convictions. We did make a statement on what it means to be church—diverse and respectful of God's unique work in the life of every member, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity."

Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said that claiming the church did not make a decision on homosexuality "is theologically, biblically, morally and even logically incoherent." Refusal to affirm the doctrine of scriptural inerrancy in the late 20th century set the stage for actions like that of First Baptist years later, he said.

"Once a church or denomination is untethered from the inerrancy of the Bible," Mohler wrote, "there is no brake on the relativizing effects of cultural pressure." (BP)

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

CRESTWOOD—Crestwood Church will host a revival kick-off Sept. 26, with "A Royal Invitation Ladies Luncheon" and a "Sportsman Banquet." **Donnie Patrick** is pastor.

LEBANON—Central Association annual music night is scheduled for Sept. 20 at Lebanon Church at 6 p.m.

David Whitlock is pastor.

LEXINGTON—Central Kentucky Network of Baptists will host a fall pastor's fellowship Sept. 29 at 11:30 a.m. in the CKNB offices. **David Stokes** is president.

LOUISVILLE—Bethany Church will hold its church family picnic Sept. 13, 4-7 p.m., at Des Pres Park in Hikes Point. **Kenneth Vickery** is pastor.

Bethlehem Church will host the Commonwealth Quartet of Gallatin, Tenn., in concert at 6 p.m. on Sept. 20. **Mike Towler** is senior pastor.

Eastern Parkway Church has called **Michael Powell** as pastor. Powell previously served as associate pastor.

Walnut Street Church congratulates **Scarlet Henderson** on her 20th anniversary as church pianist.

MAYFIELD—Graves County Association had 57 people from four churches (Pilot Oak, Liberty, Northside and Wingo) travel to Omaha, Neb. They worked on three properties, which each housed three congregations. They held backyard Bible clubs, Vacation Bible Schools, sports camps and worship services.

Graves County Association also had two churches (Mayfield First and Bell City) travel to Sioux Falls, S.D. Three block parties were held for a church planter. Mayfield First also sent a team to Sacaton, Ariz., to work with First Church, Pima, and on an Indian reservation.

Glynn Copeland is director of missions.

MOUNT VERNON—First Church will host "Night of Joy" senior adult banquet Sept. 19. To register, call (606) 256-2922. **Neal Thornton** is pastor.

SEDALIA—Delores Hanks, wife of **Virgil Hanks**, pastor of Rhodes Chapel Church, died Aug. 20. She was 70.

SOMERSET—Deacons of First Church invite its widows and widowers to lunch on Sept. 13 in the fellowship hall. RSVP to (606) 678-5106. **French Harmon** is pastor.

SYMSONIA—Symsonia Church recently celebrated its 20th homecoming. **Rick Miller** is pastor.



September

- 12 Super Saturday, Southern Seminary, Louisville
- 16-18 Kentucky Missionary Retreat, Cumberland Falls Resort State Park, Corbin
- 18-19 Disaster Relief Chaplaincy Training, Rich Pond Baptist Church, Bowling Green
- 19 CA-BOOM!, Aberdeen Baptist Church, Morgantown
- 19 Disaster Relief Training Phases 1 & 2, Rich Pond Baptist Church, Bowling Green
- 19 Super Saturday, Edgewood Baptist Church, Bowling Green
- 24 Kentucky Baptist Music Conference, First Baptist Church, Shelbyville
- 25-26 Men's & Women's Chorale Retreat, Hurstbourne Baptist Church, Louisville
- 25-26 Basic Training Journey for Hispanic Church Planters, Bellevue Baptist Church, Owensboro
- 26 Men's & Women's Combined Chorales Concert, Hurstbourne Baptist Church, Louisville
- 28-29 SEND Cincinnati Vision Tour, Cincinnati

The Heart of the Story

Everyone likes a good story. Jesus knew it and shared many important truths about the Kingdom of God through parables. To this day, we know the stories of the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan and the Lost Sheep. Stories stay with us.

Likewise, radio broadcaster Paul Harvey knew this and told stories on his program about people and situations that included significant but little known information. The stories were engaging, and for many years he captivated listeners with his stories. Harvey was known for his the famous line, "And now you know the rest of the story."

Our 2015 state missions emphasis is titled The Heart of the Story. We want you to know the stories of people who have met Jesus through Kentucky missions. We want you to know the stories of people who lead ministries across our state and their call to serve. We want you to know that your praying and giving makes an eternal difference.

In this issue of the Western Recorder, you will find four pages of stories about Kentucky missions (p. 7-10). Read about Barbara Flener who wrote her story just before she died. Read about the student at Crestwood who shared her story with a friend, and now her friend has a story.

Read the story of Pastor DjoDjo in Lexington who came to America as a

refugee and is now planting a French speaking African church. Read the story of Allison Smith who was bullied and suffered from depression. Allison is now a leader in First Priority student ministry, sharing the hope of Christ with other students.

Read the story of Kiley Sanders who participated in LoveLoud to help people in need and realized that she had the greatest need, the need for a Savior. These and many other untold stories are the heart of the story of state missions. The ministries funded through the Eliza Broadus Offering are not an end in themselves, but rather are vehicles for sharing the gospel with people who need to hear.

Church planting, language missions, collegiate ministries, community outreach through food and clothing, evangelism, and disaster relief are among the ways we as Kentucky Baptists share the gospel. Ministries in Baptist associations as well as those led by Kentucky missionaries are additional ways we share the gospel. And never forget that our praying, giving, going, and sending are also at the heart of the story!

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

Call For Resolutions

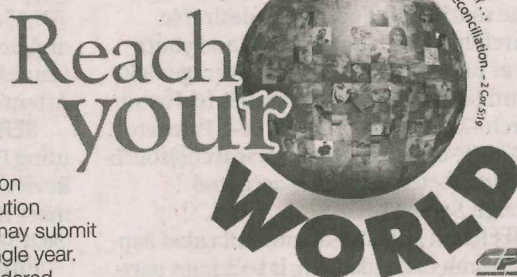
Deadline Oct. 9

The KBC's Committee on Resolutions will receive resolutions for consideration at this year's annual meeting until October 9. This year's meeting is on November 10 at **Severns Valley Baptist Church** in Elizabethtown.

Resolutions Must:

- Be typewritten, titled & dated.
- Be accompanied by a letter or email from a church qualified to send a messenger to the annual meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Convention certifying that the person submitting the resolution is a member in good standing.
- Include complete contact information for the person submitting the resolution, and his or her church. No person may submit more than three resolutions in a single year.
- If you have a resolution to be considered, email to: communications@kybaptist.org (preferred)

Mail to: Committee on Resolutions
c/o KBC Executive Office
13420 Eastpoint Centre Drive
Louisville, KY 40223-4160



KBC Executive Office
502-489-3374 or
866-489-3374
www.kybaptist.org/annualmeeting

CLASSIFIED ADS

ANNIVERSARY: Farmdale Baptist Church in Louisville will be celebrating its 90th anniversary on Sunday, Sept. 27. Worship service will be 10:50 a.m. with a celebration meal following the worship service. Come celebrate this joyous time with us. If any questions, please call (502) 366-1434.

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. Send resumes to Music Ministry Search Team at 4410 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, KY 41076. Job description available at <http://fbccs.com>.

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 pastorsearchhbtcc@fuse.net.

SEEKING: Sunrise Children's Services has multiple openings for Direct Care Counselors in the Mt. Washington, Elizabethtown, Morehead, and Danville locations. Provides direct provision of care and supervision to clients according to agency policies and procedures, licensing and accreditation requirements. Must be capable of physically restraining youth up to 19 years of age. Bachelor's degree with no experience, or high school degree or equivalent with 1 to 2 years.

SEEKING: Pastor Search, Summersville Baptist Church, Summersville, Ky., is looking for a traditional-type pastor who can and will relate to all age groups. Someone who is interested in activities for the young as well as the older adult. He needs to be grounded in and believes that the Bible was

and is the inspired, inerrant word of God, and preaches God's message to one and all. If you feel that God is calling you to be the pastor at Summersville Baptist, send your resume and taped or video recorded sermons to: Summersville Baptist Church, C/O Pulpit Search Committee, P.O. Box 68, Summersville, KY 42782.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Madisonville, Ky., is prayerfully trusting in the Lord as we seek a senior pastor, one who will lead and shepherd our congregation. Resumes will be accepted until 9/30/15. Please send resumes to PSC, FBC Madisonville, P.O. Box 17, Madisonville, KY 42431 or e-mail to searchfbcmadisonville@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Kirksville Baptist Church is currently seeking the man God is calling to serve as our next pastor. Our church was established in 1838 and is located in Richmond, Ky., with a membership of 653. We are a member of the Southern Baptist Convention that adopted the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 as our doctrinal position. We are very mission driven and support the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention. God has blessed our church with strong leadership and pray our next pastor will have those same leadership skills but need not be a CEO of all, but an under shepherd with the ability to lead and feed the flock. If you feel God inspired to pursue more information, please send your resume to Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 877, Richmond, KY 40476, or e-mail to S.Hammons@bhtoolworks.com. Our close date for resumes will be Oct. 1.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Mayfield, Ky., is currently seeking a full-time minister of music/worship leader. Candidates should be able to lead in both modern and traditional styles of worship, have previous ministry experience, and be passionate about leading others in musical worship. FBC Mayfield is located in western Kentucky and averages 350 in Sunday morning attendance. Please submit resumes to First Baptist Church, Attn: Search Committee, 118 W. South St., Mayfield, KY 42066, or by email to office@firstmayfield.com.

SEEKING: Bond Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a bivocational pastor to lead congregation (avg. 100+ W.S.). Church parsonage available. Send resume and preaching CD or DVD to Bond Baptist Church, Attn: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 520, Annville, KY 40402, or email to BondPastorSearchCommittee@gmail.com.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Franklin, Ky., is presently accepting resumes for a full-time pastor to lead our church in glorifying God. Resumes are accepted at www.searchteam@franklinfbc.org or by mail at Search Team, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1068, Franklin, KY 42135. Resumes will be accepted through Sept. 30.

SEEKING: We are opening the process again for individual resumes for senior pastor for Southside Baptist Church, Princeton, Ky. Candidates should have strong preaching skills, passion for pastoral care, demonstrated administrative ability, a heart for missions and evangelism. Some seminary education is desirable. Church has minister of music and youth pastor plus support staff and averages 350 in Sunday School. Send resumes to: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 684, Princeton, KY 42445; or e-mail to pastorsearch@southsidebaptist.com. Resumes accepted through Sept. 30.

SEEKING: Minister of music. Bagdad Baptist Church in Bagdad, Ky., is seeking a part-time minister of music. The successful candidate will lead a blended style worship, working with a adult choir, praise team and instrumentalists. If interested, submit resume to Kyle Wiley at Kwiley83@att.net.

SEEKING: Bagdad Baptist Church is

seeking a part-time secretary. If interested, send resume to Kyle Wiley at Kwiley83@att.net.

SEEKING: Church seeking senior pastor who preaches the truth, teaches the word, locally and globally mission-minded, relates to all walks of life, has a ministry degree, can work with a leadership team, and supports external interdenominational ministries. We are theologically and biblically conservative, a multi-racial, socially and economically diverse congregation, casual dress, contemporary worship service, with a wide spiritual maturity range. Resumes can be sent to: cfbcpastorsearch@gmail.com

SEEKING: Pastor. The Church@Cedar Creek in Lincoln County, Ky., is seeking a part-time pastor for a small non-traditional congregation. The candidate needs to be willing to grow the church in a non-traditional way for God's glory. Send resume to 2667 US Hwy. 27 S. Stanford, KY 40484, or lmiracle@uky.edu.

SEEKING: Next Steps Pastor. Hickory Grove Baptist Church in northern Ky. is seeking an experienced & educated SBC minister to oversee all things discipleship. Job description & application requirements can be found at www.hickorygrovebaptist.weebly.com/nsp.html. Applications will be accepted through Sept. 30.

SEEKING: Harrodsburg Baptist Church is seeking a full-time student minister with a passion for reaching Jr. and Sr. high youth with the gospel and maturing them in their faith. HBC has an extremely strong youth group, wonderful facilities, large youth budget, and a strong reputation in the community. Applicants may apply by sending resume to HBC Personnel Committee 312 South Main Street Harrodsburg, Ky. 40330, or email to wayne@harrodsburg-baptist.org

SEEKING: Part-time music minister. FBC Calvert City is looking for a part-time music minister. Approximately 20 hrs/week. One Sunday morning service and Wednesday choir rehearsal. Average worship attendance 100 and growing. Must be comfortable combining traditional and contemporary musical elements. Contact Pastor Jim Ewing, (270) 395-4600.

SEEKING: Adairville Baptist Church in Adairville, Ky., accepting resumes for full-time pastor upon retirement of our pastor due to health concerns. Prayerfully seeking a shepherd for our 100 year-old church moving toward blended worship. Experience and seminary degree preferred, but not required. Please send resumes to ABC Pastor Search, P.O. Box 36, Adairville, KY 42202, or email to abc@logantele.com.

SEEKING: Sulphur Spring Baptist Church in Franklin, Ky., is prayerfully accepting resumes for the position of full-time senior pastor to lead a congregation with average worship attendance of 130. Please send resume to: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 1104, Franklin, KY 42135, or email to pastorsearch@ssbc.me before Oct. 15.

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.

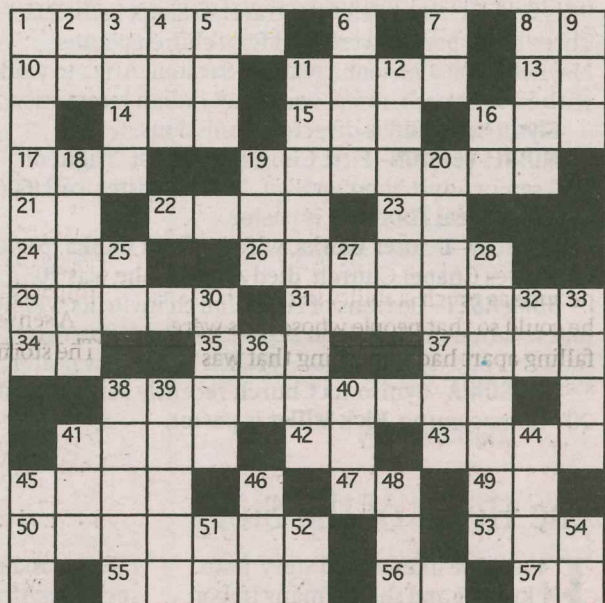
SERVICES: Churches interested in scheduling Personal Revival Training, or Church Revival Preparation Training. Call Jerry for more information and church references, (502) 531-0396.

FOR SALE: Pews. 19-19 ft long (\$100 each), 1-11'11", 1-10'11", 1-9'11" (\$50 each), 3 matching chairs (free if buying pews). Buyer is responsible for removing them from Sanctuary. Mill Creek Baptist Church, 431 Poplar Flat Rd., Bardstown, Ky. (502)348-5049, millcreekbc@millcreekbc.org.

Bible Crosswords

Across

- 1 "Let the earth bring forth ...
_____, and creeping thing,
and beast of the earth"
(Genesis 1:24)
- 8 Southern continent, abbr.
- 10 Precipitates
- 11 "The earth was without
_____" (Genesis 1:2)
- 13 Judah's son (Genesis 38:3)
- 14 When you're going to leave,
more or less, abbr.
- 15 Anger
- 16 "____ there be light"
(Genesis 1:3)
- 17 Christ's followers, abbr.
- 19 "God _____ the heaven"
(Genesis 1:1)
- 21 Seventh note of the musical
scale
- 22 "Divide the waters _____ the
waters" (Genesis 1:6)
- 23 Ruthenium, chem. symbol
- 24 Fiddler crab genus
- 26 "Let the _____ under
the heaven be gathered
together" (Genesis 1:9)
- 29 War of the _____
- 31 "The evening and the _____
were the third day" (Genesis
1:5)
- 34 Extraterrestrial, abbr.
- 35 "Where _____ you?" (Genesis
3:9NIV)
- 37 "Breathed _____ his nostrils
the breath of life" (Genesis
2:7)
- 38 "In the _____ God" (Genesis
1:1)
- 41 "The waters called he _____"
(Genesis 1:10)
- 42 Common preposition
- 43 "He did _____ it under his
raiment" (Judges 3:16)
- 45 "There shall come a _____
out of Jacob" (Numbers
24:17)
- 47 Touchdown, abbr.



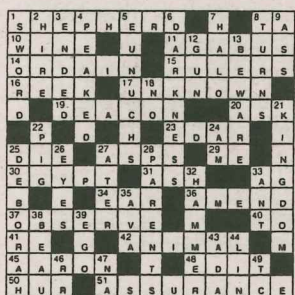
#045

- 49 Negative
- 50 "Thou art an _____ man"
(Luke 19:21)
- 53 "And _____ said, Let there be
light" (Genesis 1:3)
- 55 Day when plants were
created
- 56 "Hath God said, _____ shall
not eat of every tree?"
(Genesis 3:1)
- 57 Iron, chem. symbol
- feed" (Isaiah 11:7)
- 20 "Neither shadow of _____"
(James 1:17)
- 25 "Ye shall be _____ gods"
(Genesis 3:5)
- 27 Preposition
- 28 "Declare his works with
_____" (Psalms 107:22
asv)
- 30 Droops
- 32 Part of Scripture that
contains the new
covenant, abbr.
- 33 "And God saw that it was
_____" (Genesis 1:10)
- 36 Smallest state, abbr.
- 38 "God made the _____ of the
earth" (Genesis 1:25)
- 39 "Let the _____ bring forth
grass" (Genesis 1:11)
- 40 "Thou shalt _____ eat of it"
(Genesis 2:17)
- 41 Man's name, for short
- 44 "Under the shadow of my
_____" (Genesis 19:8)
- 45 "God _____ every thing that
he had made" (Genesis
1:31)
- 46 "Fools, shall not
therein" (Isaiah 35:8)
- 48 "On the seventh _____ God
ended his work" (Genesis
2:2)
- 51 East Indies, abbr.
- 52 Education, abbr.
- 54 Eastern seacoast state,
abbr.

Down

- 1 "Every living _____ that
moveth" (Genesis 1:21)
- 2 Support organization for
alcoholics, abbr.
- 3 Binds
- 4 Explosive, abbr.
- 5 Illegal drug referred to as
acid, abbr.
- 6 "According to the
_____knowledge of God" (1
Peter 1:2)
- 7 God's name for Himself: I
_____ (Exodus 3:14)
- 8 "Whose _____ is in itself"
(Genesis 1:11)
- 9 "For dust thou _____" (Genesis
3:19)
- 11 "God called the _____
Heaven" (Genesis 1:8)
- 12 One who raises
- 16 French article
- 18 Decorative loop on ribbon
- 19 "The _____ and the bear shall

#044



Gulf Coast church persevered in the wake of Katrina

By Allan Blume & Seth Brown

Gulfport, Miss.—Shortly after 10 a.m. on a hot Sunday in August 2005, residents of the Mississippi Gulf Coast heard the familiar tone of the National Weather Service's radio warning.

"Devastating damage expected," the report said. Early the next morning, Aug. 29, Katrina made landfall as a Category 3 hurricane.

Katrina wrecked homes, cars, businesses and churches. But for Chuck Register, now executive leader of church planting and missions partnerships for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, it affected more than material possessions.

"The storm changed my entire philosophy of ministry," Register said.

Register was in his sixth year as senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Gulfport, Miss., when Katrina struck. FBC held an abbreviated worship service that Sunday morning as a "full evacuation order" went out. Only about 50 people, a fraction of the congregation, attended.

Wind gusts of more than 100 miles per hour were only half the danger for Gulfport residents. Properties near the beach, including First Baptist, faced the greater threat of a storm surge.

The church's elevation was 19 feet, yet "we sustained water the equivalent of a 32-foot storm surge," Register said. The storm devastated four of the church's seven buildings, and the remaining three structures were unusable. Eighty-five families in the congregation lost everything.

Brian Upshaw was First Baptist's senior associate pastor. His responsibilities were the administration, discipleship and education ministries. Today, he is the disciple-making team leader for Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

After the brief Aug. 28 Sunday service, Upshaw made the church facility "as secure as we could make it." He packed up the church's computer server and, along with his family, evacuated to Georgia to stay with his wife's family.

"The next day Chuck called and told me the facility was gone," Upshaw said. "Chuck saw it on TV. I had not seen it yet, but about 30 minutes later I saw it on the news. A news anchor was standing in front of what was left of our facility."

Upshaw returned to Gulfport with generators and fuel. As daylight broke Thursday, recovery began. With the church directory in hand, the staff began visiting the homes of church members.

"Those early days were very hectic and crazy, trying to determine what was going on," he added. Insurance companies had to be contacted—for his family and for the church. Working without water and electricity, Upshaw faced repairs at every turn. Disaster relief organizations were not able to respond for at least five days. But as the weekend arrived, North Carolina Baptist Men (NCBM) and other relief agencies were figuring out how to get into Gulfport.

Contingency plans

First Baptist began to implement a series of contingency plans, Register recounted, "for how we would do church without a facility." At a retreat the previous April, the church's staff speculated on the question, "How would we do church if we didn't have a facility?"

The April retreat was "the hand of God



on us," Upshaw said. "We did what we thought was an intellectual exercise on doing church without a facility. But much of the plan we were able to implement the first five days was a direct result of having those conversations in April. There is no way we could have predicted Katrina, but just the exercise of the staff working through a problem was really beneficial."

The first Sunday after the storm, they joined two other Gulfport churches for worship. First Baptist, Crosspoint Church—a church plant from FBC—and First Presbyterian Church met in Crosspoint's facility. Gulfport High School allowed First Baptist to use its facilities to worship for the following three years.

First Baptist's ministers met at Register's house in the early days. "We would divvy up the city in sectors and assign those to a staff member," he said. "My wife would cook supper for us on the camp stove outside. We would have supper, pray together and the next morning we would take care of those sectors of the city."

"We did our disciple-making through home cell groups throughout the week," he said. "For the next 18 months our days were consumed with pastoral care ... trying to help people put their lives back together in that environment."

"The body of Christ worked together better than at any moment in my 55-year history," Register said. "I had several meetings with North American Mission Board personnel and disaster relief teams to help them understand the need."

"The story of North Carolina Baptist Men is the story of our recovery as a city," Upshaw added. "Those volunteers who really poured into us and ministered to us," he emphasized.

NCBM were the first feeding unit to arrive. They began what would become a ministry on the Gulf Coast for two and a half years that included more than 40,000 volunteers rebuilding more than 700 homes.

Upshaw confessed he learned a lot about ministry fatigue. "The months went on, caring for our own church families' needs, serving the community, dealing with church administrative issues, trying to find a place to worship, dealing with the nuts and bolts of trying to get an office going, organizing small groups—it's incredible to think of all that goes into that."

Many of the church's senior members were displaced. "They lived in places they

thought were safe and secure," Upshaw said, "but they lost everything."

No one in the church was killed from the storm's direct onslaught, but some died from related circumstances—many of them can be attributed to the trauma of Katrina, Upshaw added. The church held 26 funerals in the 12 months after Katrina.

Upshaw praised Register for keeping a focus on the priorities. "I can't say enough about Chuck's leadership," Upshaw said. The preaching of the Word of God every Sunday, ... keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus in the midst of circumstances, trying to provide as much stability in church life as he could so that people whose lives were falling apart had something that was stable."

Recovery and regrowth

Before Hurricane Katrina, worship attendance at First Baptist ranged from 750-800. After the storm, the numbers sank to approximately 400.

More than 41,000 residents left the Gulfport-Biloxi area in the period between July 2005 and January 2006, according to a report by the Brookings Institution. Many never returned.

"The wave of migration out of Gulfport began with young adults," Register said, because they were the first ones released from jobs. "Then our senior adults began to leave town," he said. Needing to rebuild their homes, many seniors decided to relocate near their families in other parts of the state or country.

After three years without a permanent facility, the church moved into a 58,000 square-foot building on more than 30 acres of land. To make that transition, the church pooled resources from multiple channels. In what Register describes as providential, the insurance committee of the church had reviewed its policies a year before the storm, adding a million dollars to the flood insurance plan.

Register also led the church in a capital campaign to raise money for the new facility. "Our folks really had a sense of stewardship, a sense of commitment to the Father and His Kingdom," he said.

"I was very pleased with the way they responded to the capital stewardship campaign at the same time they were trying to rebuild businesses that had been lost, rebuild homes that had been lost, deal with their own set of life crises. ... The Father was honored in that."

Reflecting on the hurricane's effect on his ministry, Register said, "My history had

been pastoring churches that had grown significantly, had been recognized by the Billy Graham School for their growth ... so my ministry had become number-centric." He had also been a professor of evangelism at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Register described his ministry outlook as, "We had to be larger this Sunday than we were Sunday a year ago."

"What the storm helped me to understand was that for a lot of my ministry I had not been focusing on truly making disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. I was focused on one-half of the Great Commission—the evangelistic side of the coin—but had not focused on the disciple-making side of the coin."

Discipleship became a priority. "If it's not life-on-life transformation taking place," Register said, "we're missing this thing called disciple-making." The people in the congregation who were significantly involved in discipleship groups "really rose to the occasion following the storm in ministering to fellow believers and in providing leadership to the body of Christ."

This prompted a significant shift in ministry philosophy for Register. "So many things that I thought were critical in ministry pre-storm," he said, "seemed to be really insignificant post-storm."

He developed "very little tolerance" for self-serving ministry, now wanting to see outward-focused ministry—among both clergy and congregation—directed toward "impacting our culture with the gospel."

A sense of urgency dominated him. "The storm taught me that whatever you're going to do for God's glory and for the Kingdom, you better do it now because you don't know what tomorrow is going to hold," Register said.

Greatest lesson learned

Among the lessons Upshaw learned is that lay leadership is extraordinarily valuable in church ministry.

Mobilization begins with "empowering the people at the closest level to the situation," he said. "Trust people that are closest to the situation to make the call ... those volunteers, the lineman from the power company or those disaster relief volunteers on the site—those are the people that made a difference by making good decisions based on the circumstances they were in."

Although Upshaw already valued the church's leaders, he said, "I grew in appreciation for the men and women in the church who have an expertise in a certain area—like insurance—and gave that expertise to the church. Because of their wisdom, we had a good inventory of church property," and First Baptist had the insurance coverage needed to rebuild.

The greatest lesson God taught him, however, was "God is faithful. We know that. He proved that to us."

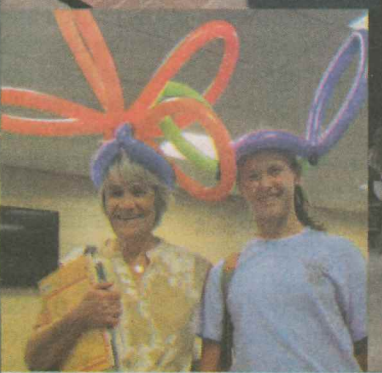
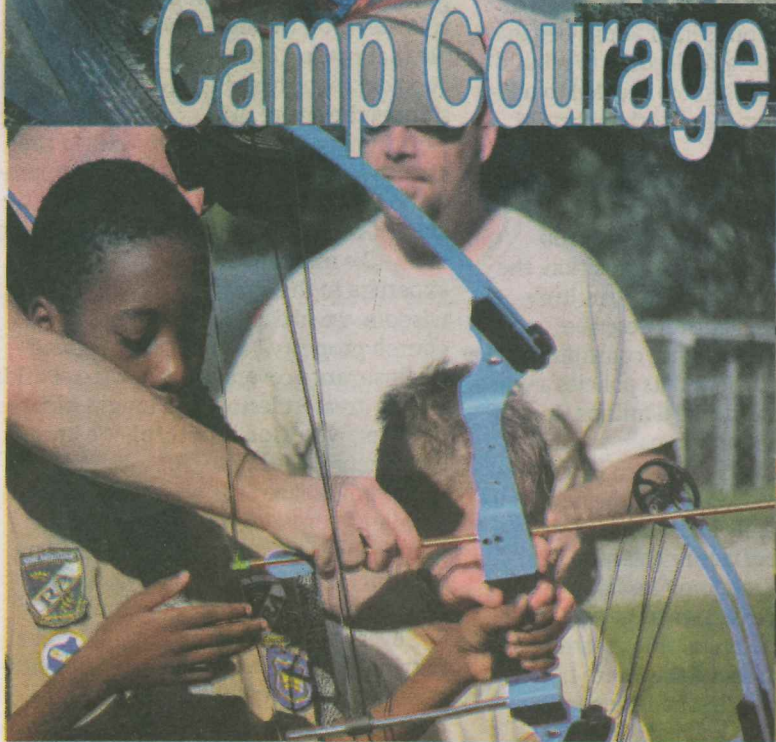
Upshaw shared the words of the popular Matt Redman song "Blessed be Your name" that say, "You give and take away, my heart will choose to say, blessed be Your name."

"Every time I hear that song I think of Katrina, because we were placed in a situation where we had to choose to praise the Lord for who He is and not for our circumstances," Upshaw said. "God is sovereign even in tragedy, we know He has not abandoned us, and He is still worthy of our worship." (BP)



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