

WESTERN Recorder

September 22, 2015

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 189, Issue 19



A beam from Ground Zero in New York City stands tall on the campus of University of the Cumberlands in Williamsburg.

Ground Zero beam stands tall at Cumberlands

Williamsburg—As the nation paused to remember the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, a beam from the World Trade Center in New York City stands tall on the campus of University of the Cumberlands.

The structural steel beam, erected in 2003 on the lawn of the Hutton School of Business, serves as a consistent reminder of the 3,056 lives lost

during the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

"September 11 is a day forever etched in the mind of every American," said Larry Cockrum, CEO and president-elect of University of the Cumberlands. "This piece of fallen architecture stands tall as testimony to the human spirit."

"We not only take time to remember and honor the lives of those lost,

but we also remember and honor the brave men and women who rushed to Ground Zero to rescue others and help with recovery efforts," Cockrum said.

The beam was donated to Cumberlands by Andy Croley, Whitley County coroner. Croley obtained the steel beam while serving as a volunteer in New York City in the days following 9/11. (UC)

W.Va. Baptists elect Lexington pastor as executive director

SCOTT DEPOT, W.Va.—Lexington pastor William "Bill" Henard III has been elected as the new executive director-treasurer of the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists. With a unanimous vote, the WVCSB Executive Board elected Henard during a Sept. 12 meeting at the Baptist building in Scott Depot.

Henard will assume his new role in October. He has served as the senior pastor of Porter Memorial Baptist Church in Lexington since 1999 and as a professor of evangelism and church growth at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary since 2007.

A former president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, Henard has also served as the first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and as a

trustee with Lifeway Christian Resources, serving as chairman for two years.



Bill Henard III

He is the author of the recently released book, "Can These Bones Live?: A Practical Guide to Church Revitalization," B&H Publishing Group.

He is a graduate of Southern Seminary, Southwestern Seminary and Cumberland College. He also holds an honorary doctor of laws degree from The University of the Cumberlands.

"I am thrilled and humbled by the vote of the executive board and have a very clear calling to lead West Virginia. I believe that God has a great future for our convention," Henard said.

He succeeds Terry Harper, who served the convention for 13 years, and retired in November 2014. The WVCSB

assembled a search committee September 2014 in anticipation of Harper's retirement.

"We had a committee of 14 who represented every region in the state. There was a strong sense of unity from the beginning, and it was obvious God was leading the process," said search committee chairman Seth Polk, lead pastor of Cross Lanes Baptist Church.

Polk noted Henard "has a strong record of leadership as a pastor, and is a respected convention leader. He understands the importance of church health and vitality, as well as the critical need to plant new churches. We are excited about and hopeful for the future of the convention."

Henard has been married to his wife Judy for nearly 40 years, and they have a daughter, two sons and four grandchildren. (BP)

CP gifts increase by \$432,000

Kentucky Baptists give \$30 million to spread gospel

By Robin Cornetet

Louisville—Kentucky Baptists gave more than \$30 million over the past fiscal year to take the gospel to the nations.

The largest share of that—\$21.8 million—was given through the Cooperative Program to help cover the cost of missionaries and ministries around the world. That was up \$432,632 over the previous year's total, ending a series of annual declines in the wake of the Great Recession.

An additional \$8.6 million came through three longstanding missions offerings aimed at evangelizing the state, nation and world.

"It's exciting to see Kentucky Baptists join forces to finance the cause of Christ," said Paul Chitwood, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. "The results speak for themselves: Hundreds of thousands of new believers around the world and thousands of new congregations springing up on every continent. This is happening because of the generosity of congregations in supporting the most effective evangelistic initiative in existence today."

In August, contributions totaled \$1,714,439 to the Cooperative Program, the primary means for nearly 750,000 Kentucky Baptists in 2,400 churches to support the work of missionaries at home and around the world.

Total Cooperative Program gifts for the fiscal year reached \$21,837,101—the largest amount received in three years.

Chitwood attributes the increase to "a genuine commitment" on the part of Kentucky Baptists to reach the world for Christ.

"As I travel throughout Kentucky, I'm seeing a renewed excitement among our churches, an excitement that is translating into increases in baptisms and church memberships," Chitwood said. "Our churches and our people are bent on shining the light of Christ in a world that seems to be growing darker by the hour."

Kentucky Baptist churches baptized 14,228 new believers last year and 154,922 over the past decade. They also had a part in more than 305,000 baptisms globally last year because of their support through the Cooperative Program.

Lowell Ashby, head of the KBC's finance and business services team, said giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering reached \$5,100,681 for the year, up 2.3 percent. He said the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering was up 2.3 percent to \$2,283,571, and that the Eliza Broadus State Mission Offering was up nearly 0.7 percent to \$1,220,278. Each of those offerings are named in honor of past missionaries.

"We got the strong year-end finish that we had prayed for," Ashby said. (KBC)

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COOPERATIVE PROGRAM The Heart of Southern Baptist Missions and Ministries



73.20% World Missions Ministries
International Mission Board (50.41%) North American Mission Board (22.79%)
22.16% Theological Education Ministries
Seminaries (21.32%) Library and Archives (0.84%)
2.00% SBC Operating Budget
1.65% Christian Ethics and Religious Liberty Ministries
Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission

Western Recorder 9-22-2015

Bowling Green church holds mass baptism at Barren River

By Robin Cornetet

Glasgow—A crisp turn in the weather wasn't going to stop a group of more than 30 new believers from being baptized at Barren River Lake Sunday.

"The water is not cold," said Bowling Green Pastor Steve Ayers trying to sway last minute decisions toward salvation. "It's the air that is cold."

About 100 onlookers with jackets zipped to their chins responded with laughter and cheers.

Ayers is one of a growing number of pastors who generate excitement around baptism by taking the religious rite outdoors at least once a year. That's part of the reason Kentucky Baptist churches are reporting increases in baptisms. More than 14,200 believers were baptized in the state in 2014, up from about 13,970 the previous year.

This year marked the 22nd year that Hillvue Heights Church has held outdoor baptisms at Barren River Lake. The event culminates an annual evangelistic event known as "Godstock" in which Ayers stresses the need to be part of a community of believers.

"In a shared community, shared faith comes naturally," Ayers said. "For us, it's the people. We don't have program tricks. We take the Great Commission seriously. It's not super sophisticated. Jesus said, 'Go and tell people who I am.' Period."

Ayers said his church saw 531 people baptized and confess their faith in Jesus Christ last year. Hillvue Heights routinely leads the state in baptisms with about 500 a year for the past several years.

For Sharon Poston, being baptized outside was about feeling closer to God.

"There was a significance to me of being baptized outside like Jesus was," said Poston.

After attending the church for nearly 10 years, Poston said it was time for her to be obedient to the call of believer's baptism. Her 21-year-old son, Cody, and her husband, Tim, followed and all three were baptized Sunday in the lake.

"I think no matter where you get baptized, whether it's in a lake, whether it's in a pool, or whether it's in a



New believers follow in the Christian rite of Baptism at Barren River Lake. Some churches are generating excitement around baptisms by holding them outdoors. (Photo by Robin Cornetet)

tub, as long as you are confirming your faith it doesn't matter where you choose to get baptized," he said.

Other churches, like Immanuel Baptist in Corbin, have set up swimming pools in their sanctuaries to mimic the great outdoors. Immanuel baptized 54 people on one Sunday last winter, and followed that with 21 more over the next three weeks.

"While outdoor baptisms are seen by many as a novelty, not so long ago, being baptized outdoors was the

only option," said Paul Chitwood, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. "Today, outdoor baptisms harken us back to the 'old time religion' and present the opportunity for a unique and very memorable baptismal experience."

"When performed in a public place, outdoor baptisms also allow the new believer and church to use this tangible symbol to present the gospel to a watching world." (KBC)

South Union/Mt. Zion Baptists observe bicentennial year

By Todd Deaton

Williamsburg—Overalls and bonnets were once more in vogue as the churches of South Union/Mount Zion Baptist Association gathered Sept. 8 to celebrate 200 years of missions together and to hear the vision of their new director of missions, Steven Jett.

"We've come to celebrate, and celebrate we should," announced Jerry Lowrie, interim director of missions. "By faith our generation is following in their footsteps," he added, speaking of the 18 churches that comprised the early association. "And, by faith, God has raised up another generation in His church to carry forth its work."

"Let's exalt and praise God from whom all these blessing flow!" Lowrie urged the churches of the oldest association in the Cumberland Valley, north of Cumberland Falls.

South Union, which was constituted at Clear Fork meeting house in Whitley County in September 1815, merged with Mount Zion Association in 1997. The oldest churches in the Kentucky Baptist Convention's 11th oldest association are Jellico Creek, Red Bird, Wolf Creek and Patterson Creek.

The estimated crowd of 300, many of whom donned attire of the period, filled the sanctuary of Main Street Baptist Church in Williamsburg, rejoicing through beloved tunes of bygone days, such as "How Firm a Foundation," "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah," and "Bread



of Heaven" and through Bluegrass renditions of "I'll Fly Away" and "Light at the River."

The evening session included some old-time favorite hymns, "Victory in Jesus" and "Because He Lives," an

The 200th anniversary celebration of South Union/Mt. Zion Association included lively Bluegrass Gospel tunes. Left, new Director of Missions Steven Jett and his wife, Susan, join in the celebration. Top right, many celebrated the anniversary by donning period attire.

associational choir performing the contemporary anthems of "I Believe It All" and "The Anchor Holds," and Main Street's praise team singing "How Great is our God."

Rick Fleenor, assistant to the president at the University of the Cumberlands, expressed gratitude for South Union/Mount Zion's continued support of the nearby university, which the association's churches helped found



in 1887 as an institute to provide Appalachian children with a Christian education.

Paul Chitwood, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, brought congratulatory remarks, giving a charge to the churches from Luke 18, "When the Son of Man comes will He find faith on the earth?"

"The question is, will we be the church? Will we carry out His mission?" Chitwood said. "That question rings in my ears, and I hope it rings in your ears and rings in the ears of all Kentucky Baptists. I want to impress upon you our calling to see that good news of the gospel is preached, and that the church not only grows, but excels in her work."

Jett, who has served the past 25 years as a missionary to Germany, shared his vision for the association's 54 churches accomplishing more together in missions than they could alone, using Philippians 1 as his text, and Donnie Patrick, pastor of Crestwood Baptist Church and a native son of the association, brought the annual message. (WR)

Is marriage safe in an adulterous culture?

By Erin Roach

Nashville, Tenn.—Amid news of men, women and families being thrust into the shadow of the Ashley Madison adultery website hacking, Baptist Press asked the wives of a few longtime Southern Baptist leaders how Christian wives can feel safe in their marriages.

Carol Ann Draper, Jodi Chapman and Janet Vines expressed gratitude for their husbands and discussed how the Lord has strengthened their marriages through challenges along the way. Tony Rose, a Kentucky pastor with years of pastoral care experience, also offered some reasons why wives of godly men can feel secure despite today's adultery-ridden culture.

"The thing that makes me feel secure is first of all just knowing God and knowing that God put us together," said Draper, whose husband Jimmy Draper was president of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1983-84 and, later, president of LifeWay Christian Resources. "We were 18 and 20 when we married, and so we literally were growing up together and we had no one else to depend on except each other."

Draper realizes, though, that in many homes the trust has been broken, and in every home Satan wants to plant seeds of doubt. She can recall times when news of divorce or something in the culture was an occasion for her to wonder, "What if?"

"What if?" is always Satan's territory (to) get me to doubt my faith in God and my trust in my husband," Draper told BP. "When I begin to doubt as a wife, I think that begins to place a wedge between me and my husband."

What helped her in those times, Draper said, was that she never had any reason to languish in fear. She recounted a time when a young woman with many problems was seeking frequent counsel from her husband, who was in the pastorate at the time.

"One night I just told him, 'I'm concerned about her coming so much because I think you're just infatuated with her attention,'" Carol Ann Draper said. "He said, 'This will be taken care of and come to an end immediately,' and it did."

Draper believes it was simply a case of her husband wanting to encourage a woman who did not have the spiritually mature husband she was seeking, but it helped him realize a pastor doesn't need to counsel a woman without someone else present.

To help strengthen marriages, Draper recommended wives "polish up first love."

"Give him a hug, give him a kiss, tell him how wonderful it is that he's come home—because we can just start taking that for granted, and our first love begins to get tarnished and spotted, and it loses its enthusiasm and its glow," Draper said.

Prayer provides powerful assurance, she said. "If we women will pray, then God will give us the peace in our hearts of knowing that our man is who we think he is and we won't be surprised that he is a godly man and that he wouldn't do something like that," Draper said.

Chapman, whose husband Morris

Chapman was SBC president from 1991-92 and subsequently president of the SBC Executive Committee, said there are "always needy women who are drawn to a strong leader."

"Most preachers are leaders, have strong egos and love being complimented and adored," Chapman told BP.

"When I saw that type of woman hanging around too much, I made my presence known."

She even confronted a few such women, Chapman said, and warned her husband about them. She made sure to be the one to give him praise and encouragement so he wouldn't look for it elsewhere, Chapman said.

"But I never doubted my husband's love, loyalty, commitment and trust," Chapman said.

Open, mature conversation about boundaries and expectations is an antidote to fear and anxiety, Chapman said, and it's a good way to build a lifetime of love.

"The husband should put his wife at total ease by showing her he is in love with her and only her," Chapman said.

Also, wives should spend more time creating the kind of marriages they want than focusing on what they don't want to happen.

"If you constantly focus on the negative thoughts around your relationship," Chapman said, "chances are you will keep inadvertently creating negative situations between you and your husband."

Vines, whose husband Jerry Vines was SBC president from 1989-90 and was the longtime pastor of First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla., said her advice to women is to love and pray for their husbands.

"Be his No. 1 cheerleader. Always be proud of your mate," Vines told BP. "Assure him of your love. Make time for the love of your life."

Vines emphasized that no one can control another person's life.

"You can't be responsible for choices someone else makes," she said. "God gives us choices, but we do not have the choice of the consequences. God does. All you can do is to carry your concern to Jesus. You cannot make others do as you wish they would. Christian character is not an inheritance; each person must build it for himself or herself."

Jesus is the only source of peace, Vines said, and while a mate may provide a temporary fix for insecurity, Jesus never fluctuates.

"Every day I say, 'Lord, I need your peace, presence, protection and power,'" Vines said. "Lord, I can't make it without you."

Rose, pastor of LaGrange Baptist Church in Kentucky since 1993, said if a woman is married to a genuinely godly man, "he will not be without fault, but one thing he would have spent every day of his married life doing is making his

wife feel secure," using Ephesians 5 as a model.

Godliness, though, "is a trait that must have more than subjective evidence. Godliness can be faked," Rose told BP. "Scripture is plain about 'having the appearance of godliness but denying its power.'"

"Does your wife know your schedule? Does she know all your passwords? Can she pick up your cellphone or look in your email any time she wants to? A godly man should have no fears or hesitations about such transparency. Secrecy is the tool of the devil."



Tony Rose

Actions—not words—make a wife secure in her marriage, Rose said. Something basic a husband can do to make his wife feel secure in their marriage and in his godly character is to have no secrets, he said.

"Does your wife know your schedule? Does she know all your passwords? Can she pick up your cellphone or look in your email any time she wants to?" Rose said. "A

godly man should have no fears or hesitations about such transparency. Secrecy is the tool of the devil."

Large church pastors often have more staff members and leaders around to hold them accountable, so Rose offered some ideas for small church pastors looking to safeguard their marriages.

"There is no biblical requirement that a pastor 'work' from the church building," Rose said, noting there are ways to avoid being alone at the church with a church secretary.

"Under good counsel, and with your wife's help, set your standards before you ever have your first pastoral position," Rose said. "Doing this shows your wife and the church where your priorities are."

Pastors can learn to use their calendars as their friends and protectors, Rose said.

"I don't mean to be irreverent, but people will submit to a calendar before they will submit to the Bible," Rose said. "If you will stay ahead in your calendar planning, you can place your necessary appointments at the same times your church secretary will be working in the building."

"If you plan your family times, specific times with your wife, your prayer and study times two weeks in advance, when someone calls and says, 'Can I come see you in 45 minutes?' you reply, 'I am sorry. I already have an appointment. When can we schedule a time?'"

"Almost everyone will submit to the calendar 'appointment' without question."

Beyond that, Rose said "every pastor needs a bit of healthy self-distrust" and should designate a single channel of electronic communication such as a church email address and should give his wife or office manager access to the account.

"I can see no good and have seen bad—very much bad—come from pastors who communicate with women through texting, private messaging on Facebook and other unwise means," Rose said.

Going to extremes is fine, he said, because "there is nothing silly about Christ's honor and our marriages." (BP)

Woods to explore reconciliation at Southern summit

By Robin Cornelet

Louisville—Baltimore, Charleston and Ferguson are three cities that have become synonymous with racial tension, but not all prejudice and injustices are so obvious.

For pastors, exactly what is the responsibility when it comes to holding communities together and people accountable?

Curtis Woods, associate executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, will discuss racial reconciliation during an instructional conference for pastors at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Oct. 26.

Woods will be one of four speakers at the Expositor's Summit 2015 Pre-Conference: The Pulpit and Reconciliation.

Other featured guests include:

■ Dan Hyun, lead and founding pastor of The Village Church in Baltimore.

■ Juan Sanchez, preaching pastor of High Pointe Baptist Church, a multi-ethnic congregation in Austin, Texas.

■ Jarvis Williams, associate professor of New Testament Interpretation at Southern Seminary.

The event precedes Southern Seminary's Expositor's Summit, a three-day intensive study designed to teach and equip preachers and students for expository ministry.

In addition to SBTS President Albert Mohler, speakers at the Oct. 27-29 summit include H.B. Charles Jr., pastor of Shiloh Metropolitan Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla., and Derek Thomas, senior minister of Preaching and Teaching at First Presbyterian Church of Columbia, S.C.

For information, visit <http://events.sbts.edu/expositorssummit/>. (KBC)



Curtis Woods

Frank Page to speak at Campbellsville

Campbellsville—Frank Page, president and chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, will be guest speaker for Campbellsville University's Baptist Heritage Lecture Series Sept. 29 at 6:30 p.m. in the Banquet Hall of the Badgett Academic Support Center.

He also will be speaking on Sept. 30 at 10 a.m. in Ransdell Chapel on the Campbellsville University campus. Both events are open to the public.

As president and CEO of the SBC Executive Committee, Page oversees the denomination's work of over 46,000 churches with more than 16 million members. He was president of the Southern Baptist Convention from 2006-2008.

Before moving to Nashville, Page served as vice president for the Evangelization Group at the North American Mission Board and also was pastor of Taylors First Baptist Church, near Greenville, S.C.

A native of North Carolina, Page was educated at Gardner Webb University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. (CU)

Plenty to celebrate

The Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting is less than two months away. I hope you are making plans to attend.

The annual meeting is a time of celebration when the people known as Kentucky Baptists will offer praise and thanksgiving for the ways God has chosen to use us this year.

This year we will celebrate new records in salvation decisions through Baptist Campus Ministries and Crossings Camps. We will celebrate another best year on record in church planting. We will celebrate a record number of consultations conducted by KBC team members to strengthen local churches in every aspect of ministry, missions and evangelism.

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

We will celebrate the second-highest Eliza Broadus Offering for State Missions on record. We will celebrate growth in baptisms, church membership, Cooperative Program giving, and the Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong missions offerings.

We will celebrate the true and undefiled religion of Kentucky Baptists, being lived out as we care for a record number of hurting children at Sunrise. We will celebrate Kentucky Baptists' commitment to discipling the next generation, as evidenced through our ongoing investment in Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, a record number of students enrolled at the University of the Cumberlands, and rapidly growing enrollment at Oneida Bible Institute.

And that is just the beginning of all we have to celebrate!

The Apostle Peter called God's people a "chosen" people. Peter wrote, "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy" (1 Peter 2:9-10).

Peter then stated his counsel to the holy nation of God's people during their temporary sojourn on earth: "Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation" (v. 12).

In these days when some speak against us, my prayer for Kentucky Baptists as we gather for our annual meeting, is that we will renew our commitment to live and serve in such a way that we will display God's glory so others might be drawn to Him as the Spirit uses our good deeds and verbal witness of the gospel. I pray what should happen will happen, that through us the light of Christ will shine brighter as the world becomes darker.

Mark your calendar for the KBC Annual Meeting Nov. 10 at Severns Valley Baptist in Elizabethtown. I hope to see you there!

A 'Thank You' note to Kentucky Baptists

Typically agency and institution leaders are invited to speak at only a few associational meetings each year, but I didn't want to miss the opportunity to thank Baptists across our state for their generous support of the Cooperative Program this year. You surpassed last year's total by more than \$430,000, tallying the highest amount in three years: \$21,837,100. But just as noteworthy as your giving is your sacrificial service to the Lord and his church throughout the year.

While indeed sad, do not let the news coming out of our International Mission Board of their decision to pull back 600 to 800 personnel dishearten you. Kentucky Baptists gave the most they ever have to share the gospel around the world—over \$10 million of CP gifts given from Kentucky Baptists went to SBC causes, of which the IMB is the primary recipient. This deserves to be celebrated. In addition to excelling in CP giving, Lottie Moon Christmas Offering gifts from Kentucky Baptist churches were up 2.3 percent, exceeding \$5.1 million. On behalf of each of our missionaries who are faithfully serving the Lord, some working in very dark and dangerous places: Thank you!

Kentucky Baptists also realize that loving your neighbor doesn't just mean sharing the good news with someone on the other side of the globe, but also sharing it with someone across the street, across town, across the state and across the nation. To that end, you gave more than \$2.28 million, another big boost of 2.3 percent, to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. For our home missionaries and our associational missionaries who bring a word of hope and healing to hungry and hurting families in our communities: Thank you!

We would be remiss not to express our gratitude to Joy Bolton and the many dedicated members of Woman's Missionary Union in our churches, who also encourage our people year after year to support and strengthen missions work across our state. Many benevolent and outreach ministries in our associations are dependent upon their efforts, and Kentucky Baptists responded again with \$1.22 million, for the second-highest Eliza Broadus Offering on record. Thank you!

Because of you, Coy Webb and an army of disaster relief volunteers are able to assist those whose homes and livelihoods have been devastated by tornadoes, floods, fires, earthquakes and other natural disasters. To these victims,



After Thought

By Todd Deaton

they are the face of Christ, praying with them as they grieve their losses, providing hope as they pick up the pieces and rebuild their lives, and sharing the good news by giving Bibles to them. Thank you!

Because of you, Brian Combs and our campus ministers who serve at our state's universities are able to engage our students and internationals with the gospel. Having a daughter who is a recent graduate and a son who is now a college freshman, I have become increasingly appreciative of the tremendous work these committed ministers do in keeping kids connected to Christ and our churches. Thank you!

Because of you, Alan Witham and a capable team of regional consultants are able to guide numerous congregations across the state in revitalization efforts, providing much needed encouragement to pastors and church leaders

in fostering spiritual and numerical growth. Thank you!

Because of you, David Melber and a crew of collegiate counselors are able to touch the lives of more than 13,000 children at Crossing camps, leading nearly 850 this year alone to make decisions for Christ. Not only did our children encounter the gospel message at Jonathan Creek and Cedarmore, they were encouraged to become involved in missions. This summer Crossings partnered with the International Mission Board in raising \$240,000 for sending and supporting Latin American missionaries.

Because of you, Dale Suttles and a loving staff at Sunrise Children's Service are able to provide a place of refuge, hope and healing for as many as 700 children whose lives have been scared by physical, sexual or emotional abuse. Thank you!

All this and more, however, would not be possible without the 2,400 pastors and faithful church leaders across our state convention, lifting up the Lord and encouraging His people each week. They spend countless hours in sermon and lesson preparation, discipling others, visiting the sick, and instilling a passion in our souls for sharing the gospel. Thank you!

As your editor, I appreciate those pastors who understand the importance of encouraging their church members to read the Western Recorder, allowing us to help Kentucky Baptists see the tremendous needs of a lost world waiting just beyond their church steps and to know how our cooperative efforts are furthering Kingdom work. "For we are laborers together with God ..." (1 Corinthians 3:9). Thank you!

2015 Western Recorder Reader Guide

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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.

WESTERN Recorder

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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Davis leaves jail, but conscience conflicts remain

By Jennifer Marshall

Kim Davis is out of jail and back to work as the Rowan County clerk. It's worth reflecting on what we've learned thus far from the controversy. After all, it will not be the last. Conscience conflicts over same-sex marriage are only beginning.

Before Davis refused to issue same-sex marriage licenses under her name, religious adoption providers found themselves at odds with policies requiring them to place children with same-sex couples.

Then charges were brought against entrepreneurs like photographers, florists, and bakers who declined to affirm same-sex weddings.

Now, following the Supreme Court's Obergefell decision requiring all states to recognize same-sex marriage, government magistrates and clerks find themselves in the clash. Some have suggested "holdouts" need to get on board with the new regime. But these instances of conflict call on Americans to grapple with how to accommodate religious conscience without taking from others.

Davis' case has struck some as problematic because she is a public official whose job is to implement the law. But this is not a perplexing case.

Kentucky has a Religious Freedom Restoration Act, as do 20 other states and the federal government. RFRA offers a good way of balancing the

kinds of competing interests at issue in Rowan County. It stipulates that government may not substantially burden an individual's religious beliefs unless it can demonstrate a compelling interest pursued through the least restrictive means.

In this case, the government's interest to provide marriage licenses to same-sex couples could be achieved without coercing Davis. The county could, for example, take her name and title off the license and allow a deputy clerk to endorse the license as the "acting" county clerk.

Kentucky law includes a provision allowing clerks to opt out of issuing hunting licenses if it conflicts with beliefs. If animal rights concerns can be accommodated, why not religious beliefs about the nature of marriage as the union of a man and a woman?

In June, North Carolina—anticipating controversies over same-sex marriage—passed a law accommodating clerks' religious objections in a manner that did not interrupt licensing those who qualified. States and the federal government should also adopt policies to prohibit government discrimination against individuals and groups that believe marriage is the union of a man and a woman.

The prospect of pressure by government through, for example, the removal of a religious school's non-profit tax-exempt status was alluded to by the solicitor general of the

United States during oral arguments in the same-sex marriage case. The First Amendment Defense Act introduced in Congress would guard against the federal government stripping a Christian school of its tax-exempt status because of its biblical teaching about marriage.

Conscience conflicts over issues related to same-sex marriage could proliferate across the professions, posing increasingly complex challenges for religious believers whose faith teaches that marriage is the union of a man and a woman.

Counselors asked to affirm same-sex marriage, or physicians requested to provide in vitro fertilization treatments to same-sex couples seeking to have a child, should be free to opt out.

As advocacy extends beyond marriage redefinition to gender identity and transgender issues, questions could become more complex for counselors, doctors, social workers, school administrators and others who interact with children and families.

Now is the time to seek solutions that can help us coexist peaceably and avoid the drama played out in Rowan County. We have tools to accommodate conscience in law and proposed policy. Let's put them to work. (RNS)

Jennifer Marshall is vice president for the Institute for Family, Community, and Opportunity at The Heritage Foundation and senior research fellow at the Institute of Theology and Public Life at Reformed Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C.

FIRST PERSON

Get rich quick!

It's every investor's dream: a money-making technique that you can get in on for a small amount money. Ignore it for a few years, then reap a great reward.

Does it sound like a lost crusade? It wasn't for Ann. She's put aside \$75 a month for five years and earned almost 8 percent per year. And it was not a dream for Martin, who started saving 50 cents per week in 1946 and now has \$82,000. Ann and Martin have been successful in their quest because they stuck to basic principles:

1. Pay yourself first. (For the Christian, this basic secular principle should be stated as "pay God and yourself first.") Ann and Martin invested regularly each month. One used payroll deductions, and one used automatic check withdrawals. The critical thing was the commitment to saving a specific amount every month—even if it was relatively small.

2. Every little bit counts. That's due to the miracle of compound interest and its counterpart: dividend reinvestment. Time is on your side when investing. I remember my grandmother's savings account passbook that was found after her death. The last transaction was many years in the past. It was amazing to see the effects of compounding on a small, seemingly insignificant amount of money. It had grown to become a significant sum.

3. Don't follow the herd. Regular investing saves you from the tendency to buy high and sell low. By investing an equal amount each month, you benefit over time. Know why you're investing. Pick investments that are appropriate to your personal risk tolerance level and to your time horizon. For example, you can utilize higher risk investments for retirement that is years away. Above all, don't chase last year's winners.



Don Spencer

Improving work ethic

Q: How can parents help lazy teenagers to improve their work ethic?

A: One of the seven deadly sins identified in the patristic period of the early church is the sin of sloth, more commonly known today as laziness. This can show itself through apathy or through being unwilling to act. The Bible clearly speaks against laziness in many places.

It is important to remember that God created work before the Fall, thus work is good. To fail to work is to be disobedient to God since He com-

manded in Exodus 20:9, "Six days shall you labor and do all your work..." The apostle Paul endorses working with all one's heart (Colossians 3:23) and even connects it with having food (II Thessalonians 3:10).

While laziness is a heart issue, there are things parents can do to help teens develop a strong work ethic. First, it is important for par-

ents to connect work to a purpose. J.C. Ryle wrote in *The Duties of Parents*, "No created being was meant to be idle. Service and work is the appointed portion of every creature of God. Work attached to purpose excites the soul and drives the spirit in its creative powers." Help your teen see the purpose of work, its connectedness to their God-given talents, and show the results of work as well as laziness.

While connecting work to purpose is crucial, a wise parent can also make work fun. Work alongside your teen and pair work with things they enjoy.

Remember the words of a wise king, "There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, for apart from Him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?" (Ecclesiastes 2:24-25).

No ordinary people

With the beginning of this new Western Recorder series, a relaunch of the past "A Letter from the Laity" column, my son, Wesley, and I had a spirited discussion about a new title. I thought "A Letter from the Laity" sounded rather old, but then I am rather old. Wesley agreed.

I thought maybe, "Notes from an ordinary Baptist," but then I thought of C. S. Lewis' famous sermon, "The Weight of Glory," in which he argued that there were no ordinary people. So then, I said, "Alright, how about 'Notes from an Extraordinary Baptist?'" Wesley just rolled his eyes.

But, you know, there are no ordinary people. I am reminded every day when I go to my favorite coffee shop, when I walk along Murray's downtown farmer's market, or when we go to church. This notion is re-enforced as Murray State students begin the fall semester. Students arrive from St. Louis, southern Indiana, Louisville, and from China, Saudi Arabia, Regensburg, Germany, and Pakistan. Just like our world, our campus is splendid and rich in diversity.

C. S. Lewis preached his famous sermon, "The Weight of Glory," during the middle of World War II from the pulpit of Oxford's Church of St. Mary the Virgin. This is a sermon I quote to my Murray State history students often. He said, "A man who has

lived in many places is not likely to be deceived by the local errors of his native village; the scholar has lived in many times and is therefore in some degree immune from the great cataclysm of nonsense that pours from the press and the microphone of his own age."

During my visits to Oxford, I sat in that church just off Oxford's High Street and tried to imagine Lewis giving that sermon. He said his contemporaries thought unselfishness to be the highest Christian virtue while Christian thinkers of the past—including New Testament writers—focused more on the virtue of love. Lewis argued that "self-denial is really a side effect, not the main point." Love, he stated, is the greatest virtue.

As I sat in that church, I could imagine Lewis saying, "There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors."

"This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn," Lewis assured his congregation. "We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact, the merriest kind) which exists between people

who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously—no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption."

Lewis must have boomed at this point: "To please God ... to be a real ingredient in the divine happiness ... to be loved by God, not merely pitied, but delighted in as an artist delights in his work or a father in a son—it seems impossible, a weight or burden of glory which our thoughts can hardly sustain. But so it is."

"It may be possible for each to think too much of his own potential glory hereafter; it is hardly possible for him to think too often or too deeply about that of his neighbor. The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbor's glory should be laid daily on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken."

And so, when I meet someone, be it beggar or lord, that individual is no mere mortal, no ordinary person, whom I encounter. He or she is made in the image of God. That person is extraordinary, loved by the Almighty certainly, and loved by me as well.

Evelyn and I tend to sit toward the back of the sanctuary in Murray's First Baptist Church. That is where our pastor, Keith Inman, looks for us. So, Wesley came up with "Notes from the Back Row." Everyone knows a Back Row Baptist when they read one.

Duane Bolin teaches in the Department of History at Murray State University. Duane and Evelyn are members of Murray's First Baptist Church.

Notes from the Back Row



Duane Bolin



Scott Wigginton

New Mount Carmel Baptist Church: 'Let the Children Come'

"Van ministry is hard work with many challenges."

This statement would receive nods from anyone who has tried to reach unchurched children through a van ministry and mid-week church programs.

Some of the difficulties associated with van ministry include:

- Finding van drivers
- Discipline issues with some of the children
- Lack of parental support and involvement
- Disparaging remarks from uninvolved church members
- Discouragement due to the sparseness of lasting fruit

None of these maladies, however, has stopped, or slowed, a valiant 20-year children's van outreach at New Mount Carmel Baptist Church in New Concord, located in rural Calloway County. The church, which has about 55 Sunday morning attendees, is to be commended for its prayerful and diligent effort in leading children to follow Jesus.

The children's outreach ministry started without a precedent in 1995 when church members occasionally would use its Dodge van to pick up children within a few miles of the church for Wednesday night Royal Ambassadors, Girls in Action and Acteens programs.

In 2001, a local businessman gave the church several baked hams that were left over at Christmastime. One of the men in the church mentioned that several

children he taught on Wednesday nights were often hungry when they came.

Brenda Stubblefield, a longtime member, asked permission to use the donated hams to feed the children who came on the church van. This simple donation of ham and some willing volunteers has multiplied into a 20-year ministry that now feeds 50 children every

Wednesday night. The weekly outreach program involves the entire church. They send out one van three times to pick up most of the 50 children. Stubblefield prepares a meal of meat, vegetables and dessert. She says, "The children eat better here than they do at school."

Several volunteers serve the meal to the children in a large activities building. The teachers then divide the children into six age-graded classes and Bible instruction begins. The program is funded partially by the church and partially by anonymous donors who learned of the good work and want to support it.

Stubblefield and Pastor Stephen Gannaway said 95 percent of the children who participate come from broken homes. Some children live with grandparents.

Stubblefield said she has cooked more macaroni and cheese in the past years than the church building could hold.

The church also reaches out to the families by hosting several events each year and

including the children in special services.

New Mount Carmel has seen a few families drift into the life of the church as a result of the ministry. Over the years they have seen a good number of the children profess Christ as Savior and be baptized.

The local children discover the ministry through word of mouth. Stubblefield and Pastor

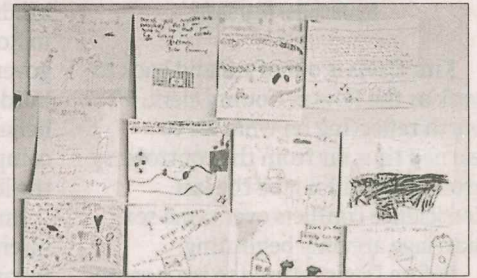
Gannaway agreed that the kids do the best advertising. Recently a little boy named Jesus asked if he could board the church van to attend outreach. "It's the kids who get the kids, and it has always been that way," Stubblefield said.

Some takeaways for a church that wants to reach out to children:

1. Children's outreach is not church growth ministry: When they first started ministering to the children, they were told, "If you're expecting children's ministry to bring new members, forget it."

2. Children's outreach requires a key visionary and responsible leader: While multiple volunteers are needed, a key person who has credibility in the church and who will work tirelessly and champion the cause is essential.

3. Children's outreach requires a missions mindset: Van ministry will require sacrifice with little return to the church's financial bottom line. The church must see the need to reach the children for Christ.



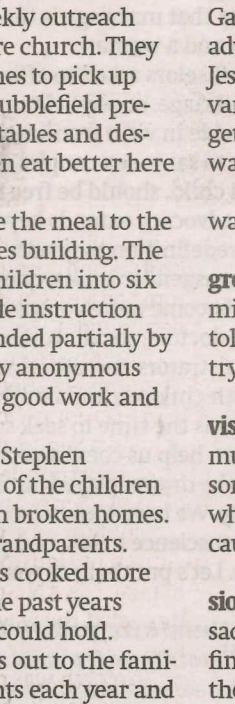
4. Children's outreach is an opportunity to reach families: There is much a church can do throughout the year to reach out to, pray for, and minister to the unchurched or de-churched families. Children's ministry opens the door into their homes.

5. Children's outreach is tiring: The church must find ways to encourage and care for adult volunteers who minister to the children.

6. Children's outreach is valuable: The children who live within a few miles of New Mount Carmel are loved in the name of Jesus by an organized team of adults. They will always remember that a local church loved them in Jesus' name.

7. Children's outreach is needed: Most churches will offer programs for the children of members. There must, however, be some churches that will minister and share Christ with the unreached children of the community. The reason we must reach out to children is because our Lord Himself said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14). (WR)

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Visit for annual meeting details (particularly as program agendas and other details are finalized this fall)

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Elizabethtown Accommodations for Messengers

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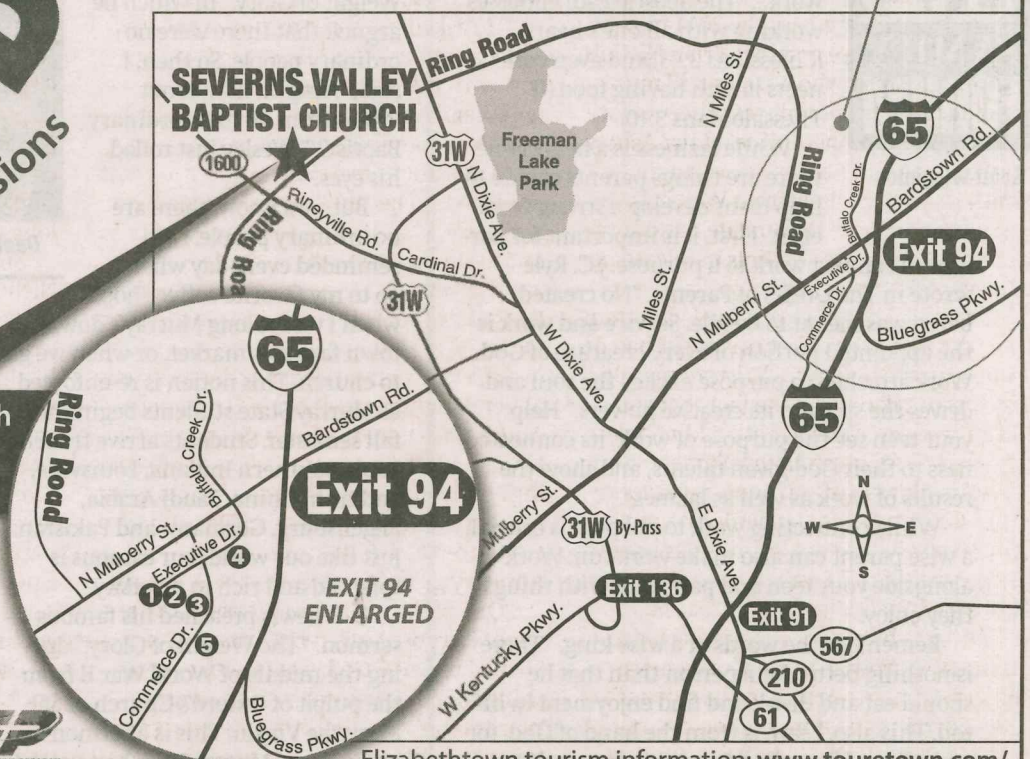
To receive the KBC block rate when making your reservation:

1. Request a room in the KBC messenger/attendee block.
2. Make and pay for your own reservation.
3. Inquire about hotel cancellation policy and/or penalties, if applicable.
4. Meet your selected hotel's reservation deadline.

Hotels listed are at Exit 94 off I-65:

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Pray for Police campaign launches in Houston

By Bonnie Pritchett

Houston—Dozens of law enforcement officers, clergy, and local and state representatives gathered recently at the Houston Police Officers Union headquarters to launch Pray for Police.

It's a campaign they hope will heal the city and unite the nation in support of those sworn to protect and serve.

The Pray for Police campaign ran 6 a.m. Sept. 9 through 6 a.m. Sept. 10 at the HPOU offices in downtown Houston. Police chaplains and volunteer clergy were available for prayer during those hours while others distributed 30,000 blue wristbands with the slogan Pray for Police and #P4P.

The wristbands served as a reminder to pray and as a sign of encouragement to police officers.

Organizers hope the prayer support will continue far beyond this week and beyond Houston and Harris County.

The campaign has been endorsed by Houston's eight mayoral candidates and former President George H.W. Bush, a Houston resident.

In a letter addressed to Floyd Lewis, presiding bishop of the International Church Fellowship, who championed the "Thumbs Up! Domestic Soldiers" campaign, which predated the Pray for Police movement, Bush said, "At a time when it seems to be fashionable to attack the motives and character of the men and women who comprise our law enforcement agencies across



Houston Police Department senior officer and chaplain Monty Montgomery leads a gathering of law enforcement officers, elected officials and clergy in prayer Sept. 8. (Photo by Bonnie Pritchett)

America, I think the work you and your colleagues are doing may be more important than ever."

The call to prayer comes in the wake of the murder of Harris County Sheriff Deputy Darren Goforth on Aug. 28 at a gas station while fueling his patrol car. The man charged in the shooting, Shannon Miles, appeared to have targeted the uniformed deputy simply because he was an officer, shooting him 15 times in the back.

The shooting galvanized this southeast Texas region of 4.3 million residents, prompting marches and prayer vigils at the site of the shooting and an outpouring of sympathy that drew more than 11,000 people to Goforth's funeral at Second Baptist Church in Houston.



Darren Goforth

His murder was the most recent and brutal manifestation of tensions between some citizens and law enforcement nationwide.

Drawing from 2 Chronicles 7:14, Monty Montgomery, Houston Police Department (HPD) senior police officer and chaplain, opened a Sept. 8 press conference with prayer surrounded by law enforcement officers, clergy and elected officials.

Montgomery, who also pastors a local church in Houston, told the Southern Baptist TEXAN Goforth's murder has impacted the way many officers do their jobs.

"Goforth was doing something we all do every day. It changes the focus of our officers," Montgomery said. "We are reacting to calls differently than we did before."

Officers recognize the inherent danger associated with their work, but the blatant

and seemingly unprovoked shooting of Goforth raises fears not for themselves but their families should they be killed in the line of duty, Montgomery said.

"Every single day they don't know if they're going to be able to come home to their families or not," Devon Anderson, Harris County District Attorney, said during the press conference. "Every car they pull over, every door they approach, they know that may be the last person they see on this earth. So we need to pray for them. They deserve our prayers."

Anderson said she will lead the prosecution against Miles, who has been charged with capital murder.

Mayor Annise Parker spoke of the funerals she has attended during her 18 years of City of Houston public service. "Never again" was Parker's commitment following every meeting with the families of police, firefighters and other public employees killed in the line of duty. But, sadly, there was always another funeral.

Echoing the hope that the Pray for Police campaign take on a life of its own, Parker said, "Let it start here. Let it start now. Let it start in Houston."

Charles McClelland Jr., HPD police chief, said, "This showing here today reaffirms in my mind the commitment and the support of this community. And I know the silent majority has always been in the corner of law enforcement."

"This is uniting our community," said Harris County Sheriff Ron Hickman. "We have a groundswell of support unlike anything I've seen in decades. It's so assuring and reaffirming to be supported by our local communities." (BP)

'Captive' shows salvation, hope, redemption

By Diana Chandler

Nashville, Tenn.—Academy Award nominee David Oyelowo was drawn to his starring role in the movie "Captive" because the true story of the 2005 Atlanta-area murder and hostage saga shows the power of the gospel to transform lives, he told Saddleback Church pastor Rick Warren.

Oyelowo, acclaimed for his role of Martin Luther King Jr. in the 2014 movie "Selma," in "Captive" portrays Brian Nichols, an accused rapist who escapes jail, murders four people and injures others before holding methamphetamine addict Ashley Smith hostage in her home overnight. Smith reads to Nichols from Warren's book "The Purpose Driven Life," and successfully encourages Nichols to release her and surrender to police.

"I was less drawn to playing Brian than I was drawn to the effect this event had on Ashley Smith. And as a Christian myself, I was just so taken with the fact that you have a murderer and a meth addict holed up together for seven hours. Somehow out of that comes salvation, hope, redemption, and Ashley Smith in particular stepping into a new chapter in her life where she gets her life back," Oyelowo said in an interview broadcast on Saddleback's online church.

The film showcases Smith as a meth addict and brings to screen the story of their interaction before Nichols surrendered to police. Smith had been reading "The Purpose Driven Life" for 33 days, but had succumbed to temptation to use meth

twice during that time, including the night before her capture.

It was when she refused Nichols' offer of meth during the hostage ordeal that God delivered her from the addiction that had robbed her of hope and caused her to lose custody of her daughter, Smith told Baptist Press.

The film opened nationwide Sept. 18 with a PG-13 rating.

"He asked me three different times, 'Do you want to use this? How 'bout you do this with me? Why don't we do this together?' And I promise you it was like Jesus was standing in front of me saying, 'Do you want to live today, or do you want to die today? Because this is your choice,'" Smith said. "... I looked at Brian Nichols and I said, 'I don't want to use that now and I never want to use it again, whether I've got five years to live or I've got 50 years to live.'"

Smith has remarried, regained custody of her daughter, is author of "Unlikely Angel: The Untold Story of the Atlanta Hostage Hero," and often speaks at meetings of the Celebrate Recovery discipleship ministry founded by Saddleback Church.

Warren said Smith exemplifies that ministry grows from deep hurt and pain.

"One of the chapters she read to Brian out of Purpose Driven Life was 'You're Shaped to Serve God.' And that's everything she's done since that moment," Warren said. "It literally turned the trajectory of her life and she has used the way God shaped her to serve God and others. ... She is serving God out of her pain."

Smith had accepted Christ when she was 7 and had been baptized by Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee President Frank Page when he was pastor of Warren Baptist Church in Augusta, Ga. During her struggles, Satan tried to convince her she was lost, she said.

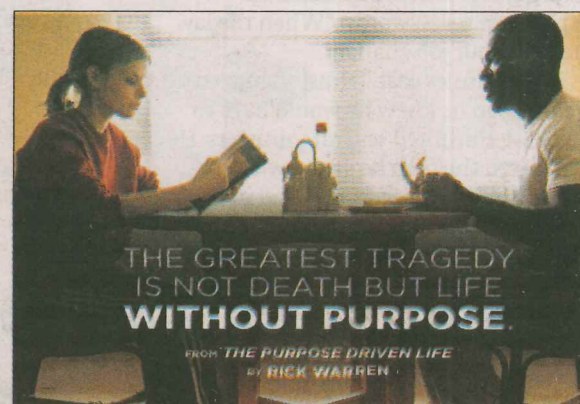
"For a long time I believed Satan's lie saying, 'You know what, it's too late. You're too bad. He doesn't want you back anymore. Your Christianity is ruined because of all these choices that you've made that dishonored God.' And I believed Satan for a very, very long time."

Smith believed she deserved to die at Nichols' hands, she said.

"But it wasn't until God literally reached down into the pits of hell that my life had become, in my apartment that night and He pulled me out of it. And He showed me, 'You know what, I love you. It doesn't matter what you do, who you are, I love you,'" Smith said. "It was like an immediate freedom. ... God was asking me to trust Him. He was asking me if I wanted a new life, or if I didn't want a new life. And I wanted a new life. Thankfully He gave me one."

Oyelowo can relate to Smith's experience. He became a Christian at age 16.

"I felt God say to me, 'David there is nothing you can do to make Me love you less. And I truly believe it was a revelation of that fact, in the midst of this event, that



started to turn things for Ashley. She had messed up so much that she felt she deserved death, and yet a new hope started rising up in her, partly because Brian was a mirror to her of how bad things can get without the Lord's intervention."

Such redemption in the midst of the darkness surrounding Smith and Nichols is the remarkable story of the film, said Oyelowo, who met Nichols' mother Claritha Nichols in August.

"She said that (Nichols) has said very recently that he is (in prison) where he is supposed to be, which is a really chilling thing to say," Oyelowo told Warren. "But in that moment when Ashley was reading your book to (him) I truly believe that what was speaking to his spirit is he may have run out of credit here on earth, but there is a life beyond this life and there is hope for him beyond this life. And to take yet another life in the shape of Ashley's would be just a further erosion of his own life. And so there was a hope of something beyond that situation they were in, even for him." (BP)

Religious clerks follow law, but see conflict

By Claire Galofaro and Dylan Lovan

Louisville—Clerk Mike Johnston prays twice a day, once each morning and once each night, and asks the Lord to understand the decision he made to license same-sex marriage.

"It's still on my heart," said Johnston, whose rural Carter County sits just to the east of Rowan County, where clerk Kim Davis sparked a national furor by refusing to issue marriage licenses to gay couples, a decision that landed her in jail.

Johnston is one of Kentucky's 119 other clerks, many of them deeply religious, who watched the Kim Davis saga unfold on national television while trying to reconcile their own faith and their oath of office.

Sixteen of them sent pleading letters to the governor noting their own religious objections. But when forced to make a decision, only two have taken a stand as dramatic as Davis and refused to issue licenses.

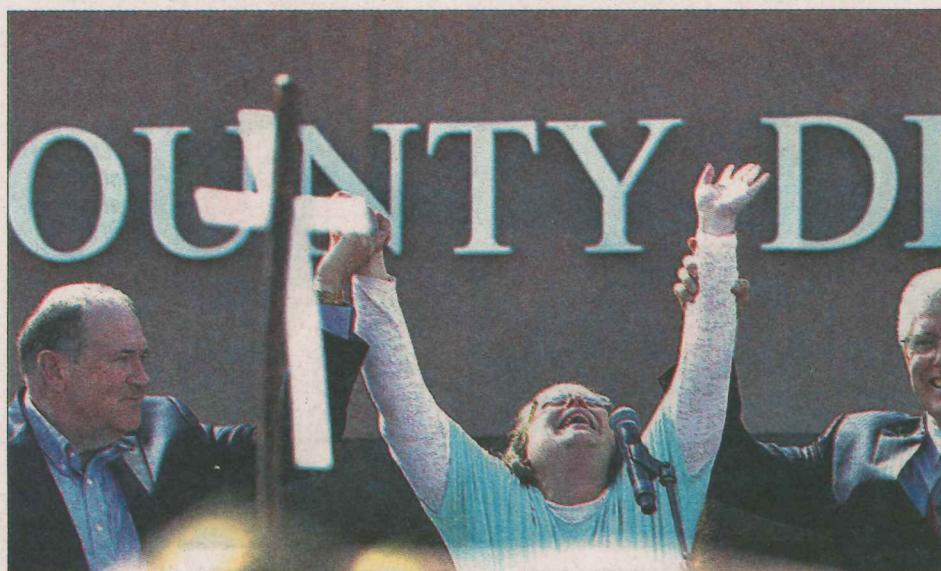
And others say they find the controversy now swirling around their job title humiliating.

"I wish (Davis) would just quit, because she's embarrassing everybody," said Fayette County Clerk Don Blevins, whose office serves the state's second-largest city, Lexington.

After the U.S. Supreme Court legalized gay marriage in June, Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear ordered clerks across the state to issue licenses, launching them along markedly different paths. The clerk in Louisville, Bobbie Holsclaw, issued licenses that very day and the mayor greeted happy couples with bottles of champagne.

Blevins, too, had no problem. He supports gay rights and explained his response in seven words: "When the law changes, your job changes."

But 100 miles east, Johnston prayed over the decision he knew he would have to make. He consulted several ministers. He considered the oath he swore when he took his office a decade ago. And in the



Rowan County Clerk Kim Davis celebrates her release from jail Sept. 8 with Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee, left, and attorney Mat Staver, founder of the Liberty Counsel, the Christian law firm representing Davis. (AP Photo/Timothy D. Easley)

Right, Casey County Court Clerk Casey Davis set out from Pikeville on Aug. 27, vowing to ride about 400 miles to Paducah in support of his fellow clerk, Kim Davis, of Rowan County, who was jailed for refusing to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples. (photo credit: Appalachian News Express)

end, he chose to issue licenses.

"I just pray that I'm not doing anything wrong," he says now, two weeks after he issued his first and only license for a same-sex marriage. "It's always on my conscience. The devil ain't going to let it die; he wants us to be worried. The devil is everywhere, trying to get you to make the wrong decision."

Casey County Clerk Casey Davis and Whitley Clerk Kay Schwartz have joined Kim Davis in halting all marriage licenses out of their office. Casey Davis, who recently rode a bicycle more than 400 miles across Kentucky to show support for



Davis, said last week that he is willing to go to jail for his beliefs, too.

Others clerks told The Associated Press they are opposed to same-sex marriage, but they weighed their convictions against their oath of office and decided to issue the licenses anyway.

"If I can't abide by the law, I'd have to resign," said Teresa Sheffield, the clerk of

Monroe County. "According to the Bible, it's wrong. But I issue them to a lot of people and we're all sinners."

Lawrence County Clerk Chris Jobe, who also serves as head of the state's County Clerk Association, announced in July that 57 clerks, who serve nearly half of the state's counties, had said they would send a letter of opposition to Beshear, asking that he call a special session to change state law to accommodate their religious beliefs.

But only 17 letters trickled in, according to records from the governor's office. Most were from small, Appalachian counties in the eastern part of the state.

One, Leslie County's James Lewis, asked the governor to call a special session, though he did not raise religious objections. He merely thought state statutes could use some clarity.

"It's the law now, the Supreme Court's final. It may not be right, but it's final," Lewis said. "We have to do the job we took an oath to do. We may not always like it but we have to do it. I respect their position, their religious position on it. But it doesn't appear they'll be able to win, I don't see how they could."

Others expressed vociferous opposition.

"We feel we have a loaded gun to our head," Knott County Clerk Kenneth Gayheart typed in a letter also signed by his five deputy clerks. "We strongly resent this ruling and are having a hard time dealing with it."

Boone County Clerk Kenny Brown, a Baptist who has issued around 10 licenses to same-sex couples despite his religious objections, is leading a charge to get legislators to rewrite the law when they return to the statehouse in January. He hopes lawmakers take marriage licensing out of the hands of the clerks and reroute it to a state agency.

"It was tough. I thought about resigning," he said. "But I came to the conclusion that the best thing for me to do was to stay here, do the job the people elected me to do and fight on a different level." (AP)

Prayer meetings held outside western Kentucky courthouses

By Myriah Snyder

Clinton—New Bethel Baptist Church and the West Kentucky Baptist Association have been holding prayer meetings outside their courthouse once a month.

"Beginning in July, I woke up early in the morning with a heaviness on my heart. I began to call around, and on the Fourth of July weekend, we ended up having about 100 people show up. I just felt an urgency on my heart that we begin to pray," said organizer Kevin Keeling, pastor of New Bethel.

"We just felt that our Christian values were being taken away," he said. "I felt it was time."

So Keeling started asking people not only at his local courthouse, but at courthouses around the state to get as many people involved in praying. He hopes a movement will spread across the state.

"That is what was really on my heart, to get as many churches to go to courthouses and pray," Keeling said. Other associations are picking up on the idea, including Graves County Association. Their prayer meetings have drawn more than 200.



A crowd gathers on the Hickman County courthouse lawn to pray for the nation and its leaders. This was one of the monthly prayer meetings started by Kevin Keeling, pastor of New Bethel Baptist Church.

The prayer meetings have been held on the lawn of the Hickman County courthouse. Beginning with a devotional, the Pledge of Allegiance and prayer, the events

last about an hour.

"These are not political rallies; these are prayer meetings," emphasized Charles Blair, West Kentucky Association director

of missions. "We are delighted for politicians and elected officials to come. We pray for them. We pray for our military and our police forces."

"The idea is to gather around the flag at the courthouse or a city hall and to have prayer meetings regularly and let our elected officials know that Christians in general care about them," he said.

The desire is for Christians in positions of leadership across the state to feel empowered. "We want them to feel that they have rights as Christians, as citizens, and that they can express their views," he said. Rather than feeling stifled by political correctness, "we want them to have the liberty that is in Christ," he added.

"We take the stands we take on Sunday morning, and we preach the sermons. But I don't think the world ever sees us taking a stand," Keeling said.

And, that catalyst led to their holding the prayer rallies out in the open at county courthouses, rather than inside their sanctuaries. "(We want) to let the world know there is a Christian group of believers who stand on biblical principles," Keeling said. (WR)

Fla. Baptist Convention to cut staff by nearly half

By Barbara Denman

Leesburg, Fla.—A reorganization of the Florida Baptist Convention staff that reduces the number of employees statewide by 47 percent—from the 115 currently employed to 61 employees—was approved by the State Board of Missions Sept. 18 at Lake Yale Baptist Conference Center.

The reorganization and downsizing was the fulfillment of a promise made by Executive Director-Treasurer Tommy Green on May 29 after being elected to the post. He stressed the need to have a responsive, lean missions organization that is decentralized, regionalized and personalized.

The downsizing will make it possible to send 51 percent of the proposed 2016 Cooperative Program Budget to the Southern Baptist Convention—a nearly 10 percent increase—and ultimately “put more missionary families on the field,” he said.

The new structure is comprised of five major program groups—Executive Director-Treasurer Office, Next Generation, Regional Catalysts, Mission and Ministries, and Support Services—reflecting an effort to streamline and decentralize the convention staff to more effectively provide ministry support to local churches and associations.

The reorganization includes 28 board-elected (ministry) staff; and 33 administrative approved persons who serve as ministry assistants and support personnel.

The 33-member support team includes 13 employees at Lake Yale Conference Center in Leesburg and a caretaker for the Blue Springs Conference Center in Marianna.

Four new staff persons were elected to fill vacancies within the restructured organization. The remaining staff members were reassigned to newly defined roles.

The board approved an executive

management group to be called the Leadership Team—formerly known as the administrative staff—to provide counsel and decision-making advice and perspective to the executive director.

The Leadership Team will be composed of the executive director-treasurer, director of strategic initiatives, director of communications, lead catalyst of the Next Generation Ministries Group, the five regional catalysts, lead catalyst of the Missions and Ministries Group and the assistant executive director/director of Support Services.

The Next Generation Ministries Group will be directed by a lead catalyst and include seven collegiate ministries campus ministers.

Regional catalysts will be assigned to minister to churches and reside within five designated areas across the state.

Five staff persons will serve in statewide catalyst and consultant roles, including a multicultural Church/Leadership catalyst, a Hispanic Church

catalyst, a Black/Multicultural Church consultant, a Haitian Church consultant, and a Music/Worship consultant. All but one will reside in South Florida, the state's most ethnically diverse region.

A downsized Missions and Ministries Group now will be comprised of four ministry catalysts: Church and Community Ministries; Migrant Ministries; Disaster Relief and Recovery; and Women's Missions and Ministries/Missions Education.

Statewide, 22 board-elected employees were identified to be released from convention employment, including five who will retire and three who will remain in consultant roles. Additionally 29 administrative approved (support staff) persons were released from employment.

The board eliminated 36 board-elected staff positions, some of which were vacant.

Green said that displaced persons were treated fairly and generously with their compensation packages. (BP)

Super Saturday ‘helps those who serve in local church’

By Myriah Snyder

Louisville—“Your task is to be clear on the gospel. All the spiritual disciplines are outworks of the gospel, as is all the training you’re going to receive. That is of first importance,” Donald Whitney, professor of biblical spirituality and associate dean of the School of Theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and the featured speaker for Super Saturday 2015 in Louisville, challenged attendees.

“Super Saturday is our flagship, comprehensive training event,” explained Steve Rice, Church Consulting and Revitalization team leader for the Kentucky Baptist Convention. “The goal of the training is to ensure Christians are disciplined in whatever they are doing in the same way that athletes are disciplined in their training, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9:25,” Rice said.

Super Saturday 2015 was held in four locations throughout the state during the months of August and September.

Whitney delivered the opening session’s message in Louisville, focusing on the importance of understanding and articulating the gospel.

“Even among our best and most dedicated people, there is a lot of uncertainty and lack of clarity about the gospel,” Whitney said. “That is why we began with it this morning. We can have our training all day long. It’s going to be excellent. But apart from the foundation of the gospel, we’re building our foundation on sand.”

“Of first importance, Paul said, is clarity on the gospel,” Whitney said. He then explained the gospel message and challenged attendees to be able to do the same clearly.

The featured session was based on Whitney’s book, “Praying the Bible.”

“Our problem in prayer is we tend to say the same old things about the same old things,” Whitney said. He continued, “Let the words of Scripture become the words of your prayers.”

Whitney suggested some practical ways to pray through Scripture and to teach Sunday School classes or small



Left, Boyce College students lead worship for Super Saturday 2015 in Louisville.

Below center, Steve Coleman, minister to youth and families at First Baptist Church of Richmond, leads a workshop titled “Keeping Students Safe.” He was one of many speakers leading workshops throughout the day.

Below, Donald Whitney, professor at Southern Seminary, was the featured speaker for the Super Saturday in Louisville.

groups how to use the Bible to pray.

To drive home his method, he asked those in attendance to pick a psalm and begin to pray through it for seven minutes. The attendees then were asked what their results were, and the overwhelming response was because it was something different, they were no longer “bored” while praying.

“Jesus prayed the psalms. The early church prayed the psalms. Great Christians like George Mueller prayed the psalms. Why not you?” Whitney urged.

His sessions were accompanied by breakout sessions taught by Kentucky Baptists throughout the day. Topics ranged from Sunday School directors to transition and conflict management.

Lisa Moody’s session on women’s ministry defined apologetics as “giving a defense for what you believe.”

“You can spend a lot of time studying God’s word, but until you let it change your life, it’s wasted time,” Moody said.

She covered the basics of the Christian faith and contrasted it with other



religions. For further reading, she suggested “Defending the faith” and “Why do you believe that?” by Mary Jo Sharp.

Another session highlighted the Kentucky Baptist website “Tell your story.” In the session, Andy McDonald, affinity evangelism strategist with the KBC Evangelism and Church Planting team, walked attendees through the website and the importance of “telling your story.”

“All of our featured speakers have been excellent. They’re very different, very diverse,” Rice said. “Beyond the featured



speakers we’ve had a plethora of conference speakers and teachers covering virtually every aspect of church life and training those leaders.

“We’re hearing good feedback, and it has been helpful,” he noted. “That’s certainly our goal, to help those who serve in the local church.” (WR)

IMB announces voluntary retirement incentive details

By Anne Harman

Richmond, Va.—In the first phase of the International Mission Board's plan to address revenue shortfalls, leadership announced details of a voluntary retirement incentive during town hall meetings with personnel Sept. 10.

The goal of the plan, IMB leaders shared, is to offer as generous a voluntary retirement incentive as possible, while honoring the years of service of those eligible and providing smooth transitions for personnel from their current roles.

IMB will offer the voluntary retirement incentive to all eligible staff and active career missionaries age 50 and older with five or more years of service (as of Dec. 31, 2015). For a missionary couple to be eligible for the incentive, only one spouse is required to meet the qualifications.

"Our desire in all of this is to be as generous as possible to as many people as possible," IMB President David Platt said. "Since we are asking everyone in the organization to pray and discern if the Lord is leading them to a new place of involvement in mission, we know that 50-year-olds, for example, are going to be doing exactly that. And if the Lord leads them to make a transition, we want to provide for them as generously as possible."

"We want this (voluntary retirement incentive) to be a picture of honor for past service in mission, as well as future service in mission," Platt said. "I am trusting that just as God has mightily used brothers and sisters through the IMB in the past, He has plans to use them mightily beyond the IMB in the future, far beyond what any of us can ask or imagine."

Transitions

Sebastian Traeger, IMB executive vice president, presented specific details of the plan, which includes a base retirement package, a bonus incentive complete with financial and medical considerations, specific provisions for smooth transition, and additional benefits beyond the scope of a standard retirement package. Personnel who voluntarily elect to accept the incentive will finalize



IMB vice president Rodney Freeman (right) fields questions from staff about the voluntary retirement incentive offered by IMB. Also sitting on the Q&A panel are Clyde Meador, David Platt and Sebastian Traeger. (IMB Photo by Thomas Graham)

their decisions in early December. Those with greater than 15 years of service will be given "emeritus" status to honor their years of service.

Not all missionaries will choose to transition to the U.S. Some may choose to stay on the field as volunteers, through alternative pathways or through employment options. "If you're in a scenario where you would like to stay on the field, by all means, we want to help you to do that,"

Traeger told missionaries, noting personnel transitioning to volunteer status would be allowed to use their housing and vehicles through the end of January 2016.

IMB will provide a transition team to serve every person who chooses to take the incentive. Missionaries will be given a transition grant to accommodate their adjustment. Also, local churches, seminaries and state conventions have contacted IMB offering to help missionaries transitioning back to the U.S. and committing to pray for IMB during this time of transition.

The retirement incentive information was shared in two segments during the

town hall meetings: first to missionary personnel, who mostly attended via electronic communication and then in person and online to staff, who are mostly based in Richmond, Va. The two meeting times allowed leadership to convey specific details that pertain to each group.

Seasoned vs. new

Since the Aug. 27 meeting, Platt said, he has repeatedly heard people ask why IMB would ask seasoned missionaries to leave the field instead of freezing (or decreasing) the number of new missionaries to be sent in the next two years. Platt reported, after much prayer and discussion, leadership concluded their current plan was the most viable option amidst a variety of non-ideal options. Specifically, he noted four reasons why IMB is not freezing or further decreasing the number of new missionaries now.

First, "every type of person in the IMB is important," Platt said, including long-termers and short-termers, staff and missionaries, younger personnel and older personnel, new missionaries and seasoned missionaries. "For this reason, I don't want any particular type of person

in the IMB to step aside from service. That is why I have wanted to call every single person within the IMB to put a blank check on the table and to ask, 'Is the Lord leading me to a new phase of involvement in mission?'"

Second, IMB leadership stresses they want the initial steps of the plan to be voluntary.

"I want to be crystal clear: we are not asking people to leave the field," Platt said. "If someone is thriving on the field and senses the Lord leading them to stay on the field, then I trust they will stay on the field. Again, I believe this bears repeating for the sake of clarity: in these initial steps, we are not asking anyone to leave the IMB. Instead, we are asking everyone to pray about whether or not the Lord is leading them to a new place of involvement in mission, and we are providing an avenue for people to voluntarily leave the IMB if they sense the Lord leading them to do so."

The voluntary nature of the plan also applies to new missionaries the IMB already has committed to send in 2015 and 2016. "We did not want to say to those new missionaries, 'You don't have a choice,'" Platt said. "In light of our commitment to them, we want to give them the same voluntary choice we're giving everyone else."

Third, sending people through IMB "is born out of a conviction that new missionaries being sent from churches through the IMB is a foundational, non-negotiable part of who we are and what we do," Platt said, noting if IMB were to freeze sending new missionaries, within three years IMB would have zero apprentices or journeyman on the field.

"Further, regarding the SBC, the IMB foundationally exists to serve SBC churches by facilitating the sending of missionaries from those churches," Platt said. "The less people we send, the fewer churches we serve. The fewer churches we serve, the more we forsake one of our primary foundations."

A decline in sending missionaries historically results in a decline in IMB's relationship with SBC churches, Platt said. He also noted that of the approximately 300 new missionaries IMB has planned to send in 2015 and 2016, respectively, more than half of that number includes short-term missionaries. Among those 300 missionaries, only 135 of them will be long-term. That number is approximately one-third of the long-term missionaries IMB sent a decade ago.

Fourth, cutting or freezing new missionary sending wouldn't address IMB's immediate need to fix its long-term cost structure. IMB must get to a place of short-term financial responsibility and long-term financial sustainability, and simply freezing the number of new missionaries for the next two years will not solve that problem, he said.

"I would prefer not to make any of these adjustments we're making," Platt said. "My preference is not to stop sending new missionaries to the field, and my preference is not to see existing missionaries leave the field. As I've mentioned at different points, the path we are walking is not ideal in any way, but after much prayer and discussion, other leaders, and I believe the path we are walking is the best option we can take in a sea of non-ideal options available to us." (BP)

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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.

Kendricks' 'War Room' draws diverse crowds

By Diana Chandler

CAIRO, Ga.—Nothing had interfered with the Sunday lunch “Granny” Inez Harrell has served at her home after church services at a small Baptist church where the 83-year-old serves as treasurer.

But after joining her son Kelvin and daughter-in-law Tamra for an Aug. 29 showing of “War Room” at the single-screen Zebulon Theatre, the only movie house in Cairo, Ga., Granny changed her Sunday afternoon priorities.

“You need to go get Kelvin and get him in here and y’all need to eat because I have to leave,” Granny told the couple at the Aug. 30 lunch, Tamra’s sister Mary Jane Holt told Baptist Press. “She said, ‘Well, I’m taking (one) of my friends to see War Room.’ So they have to rush and get out so Granny can go back to the movie.”

Granny’s story is among many that have been told since the latest Kendrick Brothers’ film opened as the top box office draw on Aug. 28, finishing its opening weekend in second place with total earnings of \$11 million, according to Box Office Mojo.

War Room stars noted Bible teachers Priscilla Shirer in a lead role and Beth Moore in the supporting cast. Shirer is cast as a young wife and mother who heeds the advice of an older, wiser woman to establish a room in her home for prayer—a war room—and to pray earnestly for her husband, marriage, child and home.

It was the first movie Granny, known to family and friends as a prayer warrior, had attended in years. She saw the film three times in the opening weekend, including a 7:30 p.m. showing that kept her from her usual Sunday evening church routine at First Free Will Baptist Church in Cairo.

“That night at church after church is dismissed, they go to find her to give her the money for the collection and they can’t find Granny,” Holt said. “Somebody goes by her house and she’s already at home with (a mother and daughter) so she can take them to see War Room on Sunday night. ... She just keeps going to see the movie, and she’s told everybody if you want to go to see it, you come and I’ll take you.”

Audiences have broken into spontaneous prayer and praise openly in theater lobbies after viewing the film, director Alex Kendrick said in a video on the movie’s website thanking viewers for supporting the film about the power of a focused, disciplined prayer life.

“Yet another group said that spontaneous prayer broke out in the theaters,” Kendrick said, sharing emails and comments from viewers. “That’s the response that we were hoping for. We hope to see much more of it.” Pastors and viewers reported 61 salvations among movie viewers as of Sept. 1, Kendrick said.

“They’ve notified us,” Kendrick said, “or a pastor that led them to the Lord notified us, and so we know this. So 61 so far; we’re praying for hundreds more.”

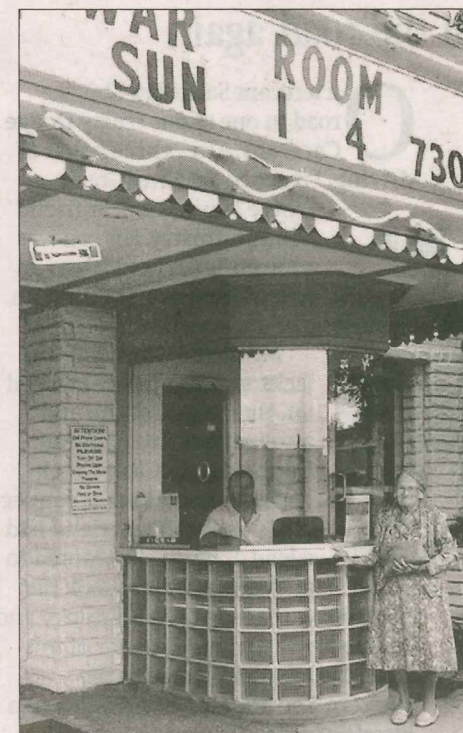
Ken Polk, pastor of Northside Baptist Church in Murfreesboro, Tenn., used the movie to kick-off a “30 Days of Prayer” emphasis at the church that draws about 800–900 Sunday worshippers.

He took nearly 500 members to view the movie Aug. 30, filling three auditoriums at the Wynnsong 16 Theater in Murfreesboro. The church subsidized tickets for viewers to see the film for \$5 each.

“It is really a fine creative ministry to raise people’s awareness of the need for prayer,” Polk told BP. “I would say of War Room, it probably is, I think, about the most theologically sound of the Christian movies made in our generation. It really did speak to truth in so many ways, from what sin does to marriages, to what a real relationship with Christ is, to real repentance.”

The movie is the Kendrick brothers’ first project independent of Sherwood Pictures, the filmmaking ministry of Sherwood Baptist Church in Albany, Ga., where both brothers Alex and Stephen Kendrick are associate pastors. While the brothers have always included multi-cultural casts, War Room features African Americans in all leading roles.

The movie matriarch and prayer warrior “Miss Clara” is played by Karen Abercrombie. T.C. Stallings, who played a gang leader in “Courageous,” plays husband to Shirer’s role of Elizabeth Jordan, and Alena Pitts plays their daughter Danielle.



“War Room” is the first movie 83-year-old Inez Harrell has seen in years, catching three showings during the opening weekend in her small town of Cairo, Ga., where she is known among family and friends as a prayer warrior.

Williams, pastor of Nazarene Baptist Church in Philadelphia, noted the movie’s value as a discipleship tool.

“The movie taught us that there is power in releasing our stresses, strains and struggles to the Lord in persistent passionate prayer. We need to fight our battles in fasting and with prayer on our knees.” (BP)

Las Vegas pastor Vance Pitman joins NAMB as national mobilizer

By Faith Morgan

Las Vegas—Pastor Vance Pitman plans to utilize his church planting experience as he begins working with the North American Mission Board to engage and mobilize pastors to plant more churches.

Fifteen years ago, Pitman and his family were sent out by First Baptist Woodstock in Georgia as church planting missionaries with NAMB.

They moved to Las Vegas and never left.

In his new role as NAMB’s national mobilizer, Pitman will continue to pastor the church he planted a

decade and a half ago—Hope Church.

“God is alive and at work in that city,” Pitman said of Las Vegas as he spoke during the Send North America Conference, Aug. 3–4 in Nashville.



Pitman

“For 15 years, I’ve had an ongoing relationship with the North American Mission Board, but it really intensified a few years ago when Kevin (Ezell) became the president of NAMB,” Pitman said.

So when Ezell asked Pitman about working with NAMB as a national mobilizer, Pitman saw the move as a natural fit.

“When God put us here in Las Vegas, we had a heart not just for Las Vegas but

to see churches planted up and down the West Coast in these pioneer areas.

“Everywhere I’ve ever traveled, everywhere I’ve ever spoken, I’ve always represented multiplying the church in pioneer areas in North America—particularly in the western United States,” Pitman said of his ministry.

“When Kevin talked to me about the possibility of doing that in an official capacity while I stay here in Las Vegas and continue to pastor the church that I planted here, it just made sense.

“I now have the opportunity to give some time to mobilizing 46,000 Southern Baptist churches to engage in multiplying the church in pioneer areas.

“It was something I was already doing

anyway with so much of my time, and it’s great to have the opportunity to do it in an official capacity and to represent the North American Mission Board doing that.”

Ezell said Pitman’s church planting experience in a challenging spiritual terrain like Las Vegas will give him added credibility in the new role.

“Vance is committed to evangelism and church planting,” Ezell said.

“Through his church, he has demonstrated that even the tough to reach places can be productive mission fields.

“I know his efforts to bring pastors and churches into increasing levels of involvement in North America will result in great things.” (BP)

Moore tells journalists faithful evangelicals cannot affirm homosexuality

By Bob Allen

Philadelphia—Biblical inerrancy is at the heart of the debate about whether or not homosexuality is a sin, the Southern Baptist Convention’s top spokesman for moral and religious liberty concerns said at a recent gathering of journalists who cover religion.

Russell Moore, president of the SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said at the Religion Newswriters Association annual conference in Philadelphia that people who call themselves evangelicals while affirming homosexuality as morally acceptable are only “so-called” evangelicals, but in fact are “revisionist voices” who reject the authority or primacy of Scripture, according to a news story by Christian Post reporter Nicola Menzie.

Asked about David Gushee, a former professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary who recently announced that after many years he has changed his mind on LGBT issues, Moore said he doesn’t think a faithful evangelical can arrive at a position that says “our theology was wrong.”

“I think that most of the voices that you see calling for a revision of the Christian sexual ethic have already long ago negotiated away other more basic pieces of orthodoxy,” Moore said. “So the controversies that we typically have with, say a David Gushee or a Matthew Vines, are not first and foremost controversies over the interpretation of particular texts. They’re controversies over an understanding and inspiration of Scripture.”

“If one says the Apostle Paul, for instance, would have spoken differently

about homosexuality if he had known what we know now about homosexuality, or in some cases, Jesus himself was wrong about sexual orientation, well, that’s not a debate over particular passages,” Moore said. “That’s a debate over a very foundational, fundamental issue of what does it mean to believe the Bible and to follow the authority of Scripture.”

Moore said when Christians debate homosexuality, whether they have a high view or low view of the Bible “is where the problem lies.” He said the number of congregations making headlines for changing their views on homosexuality “were long ago negotiating away other doctrines and issues” like biblical inspiration.

Moore contrasted those stories to March 2014, when World Vision had to reverse a decision to hire Christians in same-sex marriages after intense criticism

from evangelical leaders.

“World Vision turned around, and I think handled it very well in terms of rebuilding trust there.”

According to the Christian Post story, Moore said he does not ascribe the term evangelical to gay-affirming Christians because by definition the word means someone who upholds biblical inerrancy. The same principle, he said, applies to the term “gay Christian.”

“There are some people who use that term to mean same-sex attracted but who are living out lives of celibacy believing the historic Christian sexual ethic,” Moore said. “In that case—of course, I think that the Christian life is a life of cross-carrying, fighting against temptation; we have different points of temptation—that every Christian is in a place of struggling against temptation.” (BP)

On the road again

This is
Oneida

Larry Gritton

On a recent Saturday, I hit the road in one of our trusty Dodge Caravans. After three hours of driving, I reached Bowling Green, where I visited a dear friend of our ministry. His son was in from Texas, and it was an honor to meet and visit with him as well.

My next destination was Jackson, Tenn. There I visited another friend of OBI and also met her two children. Donnie Fox of Clear Creek had helped make this connection possible. This friend had a load of items she wanted to give to bless our school. Her husband was a long-time Kentucky and Tennessee pastor and director of missions, and she had served at the Western Recorder for 17 years. It was a blessing to visit this sweet lady.

My next destination was Tusculumbia, Ala., and my route took me through part of Mississippi. I settled

into a beautiful, old house owned by the church that I would visit the next morning. This church had recently traveled with their association to Oneida and had invited me to speak. After a good night's rest, I made my way to Sunday School to share with some of those fine folks who had recently volunteered at Oneida. I poured my heart out at the 11 a.m. service, and this wonderful church blessed OBI with an amazing love offering.

After lunch with the pastor and his family at a local steakhouse, I headed back to the house for a Sunday afternoon nap. Feeling refreshed, I headed for another church in Muscle Shoals. There I found more folks who also love and support Oneida.

After another good night's rest, I gathered with the local Baptist association to share about our ministry with a group of pastors. In addition to telling them some of our Oneida story, I tried to encourage them in the Word and

urge them to continue serving and to not grow weary in doing good, as Galatians 6:9 says.

After some more fellowship and another fine lunch at a local restaurant, I hit the road for home. All told, I traveled 875 miles in the 2.5 days, but even more important than that, I was able to make many new connections for Oneida.

I continue to be amazed at the love and support that folks offer to us. The Lord is so faithful, and often uses his faithful people to meet the needs of our unique ministry. I continue to thank the Lord for all of you who make what we do possible on a daily basis.

If you would ever like for me to come and share more of our story with you, just give me a call and I'll hit the road and head your way.

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.

Ministry students benefit from scholarship

Clear Creek
Chronicle

Donnie Fox

The Rev. Wilbur and Alma Collins Scholarship Fund has been established for ministry students attending Clear Creek Baptist Bible College in Pineville. The Collins' recently shared their blessings with Clear Creek through the largest estate gift in the college's history.

The Collins family came from England to Virginia in the 1600s to establish a new life. Wilbur Collins was born July 23, 1912, in Union County, Ky., and his mother died from pneumonia in 1921, but even in very difficult situations God continued to provide. He graduated high school and college, and then began teaching school along with preaching and married Alma Henry Dec. 22, 1939.

Collins ministered over 75 years as Alma continuously supported him in

all aspects of life and traveled with him to his appointments from coaching basketball to sharing the glorious gospel wherever the Lord led. Collins served as a school teacher, principal, superintendent and assistant superintendent of Webster County Schools. He also was pastor of several churches, including Poole, Blackford, Blackwood, Slaughters and Slover. They were married for 67 years when he graduated once again at age 95—this time to his heavenly home in 2007. Alma went to be with the Lord in 2014.

Through God's blessings and the Collins' desire to bless future ministers of the gospel, the Wilbur and Alma Collins Scholarship was recently established with Clear Creek Baptist Bible College in Pineville, after her death. The scholarship focuses on Kentucky students from Webster County first, then the surrounding counties of Hopkins, Union, Henderson and

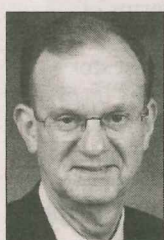
Crittenden, with other Kentucky students being assisted after meeting the needs of the first ones mentioned.

The Wilbur and Alma Collins Scholarship is having an immediate impact for freshman Zachary Olvera of Hopkins County, and will bless many more students in years to come. Clear Creek Baptist Bible College is extremely grateful for the desire of Wilbur and Alma Collins to share their family history and blessings from God in this present time which will extend well into the future for ministry students.

Any individual who is called to ministry and interested in studying at Clear Creek can contact the Admissions Office at: 1-866-340-3196; admissions@ccbbc.edu; www.ccbbc.edu.

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

Securing your church's financial future

Ky. Baptist
Foundation

Richard Carnes

In past columns we have discussed how churches are the most overlooked charities in estate stewardship and legacy giving. It is not that church members are opposed to supporting the ministries and mission efforts of their local church in this fashion.

Rather, it is primarily due to the fact that most church members are never encouraged by their church leadership to consider giving a part of their estate to their church.

It is imperative that churches provide education and encouragement to its members in seeing their available financial resources much more broadly than just the cash that is placed into the offering plate. These resources can also be a person's non-cash assets (which on average

represent 91 percent of a person's net worth).

Church leaders can make great strides in impacting the church's financial future by seizing the opportunity to teach their church members to become "kingdom-minded" stewards through the following ways:

- Teach members what the Bible reveals about an authentic stewardship lifestyle.
- Help members realize that how they plan their estate likely will be the most significant act of financial stewardship they will ever make.
- Encourage members to have and up-to-date Christian estate plan.
- Educate members on how to accomplish their charitable giving objectives through their estate planning.

The great news for church leaders is that they are not alone in preparing this type of Christian estate

stewardship education and training for members. The Kentucky Baptist Foundation stands ready to help facilitate this training of church members to become "kingdom-minded" stewards.

An active part of the Foundation's service is the conducting of no cost seminars and teaching series on financial and estate planning at churches and associations. Also, the Foundation staff is available to individuals for free, private estate stewardship consultation as they consider their estate planning, incapacity planning, and charitable gift planning.

To get started with this action step of securing your church's financial future, 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.

Family speaks out
about New Orleans
professor's suicide

By Gary Myers

New Orleans—The family of Baptist professor and pastor John Gibson is calling his death a suicide connected to the Ashley Madison infidelity website.

By openly discussing the circumstances surrounding his death, including a CNN interview that aired Sept. 8, the Gibsons hope to help other families find forgiveness and reconciliation.

Gibson, 56, served 17 years as a professor at Leavell College, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's undergraduate college. At the time of his death, he also served as pastor of First Baptist Church of Pearlinton, Miss.

Gibson's wife, Christi, found him unresponsive at their home on the seminary campus at 5:30 p.m. Aug. 24. EMS workers pronounced him dead at the scene.

Gibson's son, Trey, spoke of his father's best qualities—his ability to preach, his servant heart and his sense of humor—during a memorial service at the seminary.

Trey also spoke of his father's secret struggles with depression and pornography. Trey boldly encouraged mourners to seek accountability relationships to guard against secret sin.

"My dad was a great man. He was a great man with struggles. My dad reached a point of such hopelessness and despair that he took his own life," Trey said.

While the news jolted the campus, the seminary has rallied around the Gibsons as the family publicly shared the struggles that led to the death of the beloved professor and minister. Seminary President Chuck Kelley touched on the subject Sept. 8 during the NOBTS convocation.

"On the first day of classes, we had the unexpected death of a much loved professor, colleague and friend Dr. John Gibson," Kelley said. "We learned that he made some very sad and unfortunate choices in his life."

Gibson's family spoke openly about his death during a television interview on CNN.

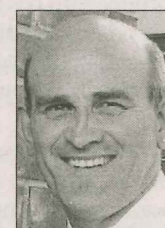
Appearing in the interview with her children, Trey and Callie, Christi said her husband left a note to confess his failures and he confirmed he had been exposed as a user of the Ashley Madison website. He expressed great sorrow for his actions.

In the interview, Christi said if given the chance, she and her children would have been willing to forgive Gibson's failures and work toward restoration.

"There is brokenness in every single one of us. We all have things that we struggle with," she said. "It wasn't so bad that we wouldn't have forgiven it, and so many people have said that to us, but for John, it carried with him such shame."

Christi also expressed her concern for millions of families grappling with shame as hackers exposed a database of users of the Ashley Madison website. She encouraged love and forgiveness.

"These were real people with real families, real pain and real loss," Christi said. "Don't underestimate the power of love. Nothing is worth the loss of a father and a husband and a friend." (BP)



John Gibson

Ga. Baptist paper to cease print editions

Duluth, Ga.—The Christian Index will become online only in 2016, the Georgia Baptist Convention's newsjournal has announced.

"Bowing to the pressures of an increasingly difficult economic climate with rising production and distribution costs—coupled with declining revenue from circulation and advertising—The Index will produce its final biweekly print edition on Dec. 24," the paper reported Sept. 3.

The Index will become a free product online with a never-ending news cycle no longer tied to print deadlines and ever-increasing mailing costs. This shift will free up Cooperative Program funds that will be redirected toward evangelism and church planting efforts, The Index stated.

The Christian Index dates back to 1822 when famed missions supporter Luther Rice started it as the Columbia Star in Washington, D.C. The paper first became part of the Georgia convention in 1840; the convention sold and repurchased the paper in the following years, acquiring it for the final time in 1919.

Gerald Harris, the paper's editor, noted factors that made it "increasingly inevitable that The Index would have to become

an electronic publication only," including:

■ The Index "has been losing subscribers and becoming more dependent on the Cooperative Program" during recent years.

■ "The cost of newsprint and postage has continued to increase. We will save almost \$320,000 annually in printing and mailing costs."

■ "More people are reading the news on smartphones, tablets, and computers."

In 2000, The Index shifted from a weekly with 12-16 pages to a bi-weekly publication of 16-24 pages. Later financial pressures, including mailing costs that exceeded printing costs, reduced the size to 12-16 pages.

Last year, The Index extended its online presence beyond desktop computers to mobile devices.

Harris noted the online Index "will allow us to produce more up-to-date news items by posting stories and sharing opinions on events almost as soon as they happen. News alerts featuring political, ethical, and cultural issues can also be posted on The Index website expeditiously."

The Index will provide a weekly synopsis that churches can print for those who prefer a paper copy. (BP)

Maryland/Delaware seeking executive director

Columbia, Md.—The Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, now also known as the Mid-Atlantic Baptist Network, is accepting applications for the convention's executive director position through Oct. 15 via a portal on the network's website, bcmnd.org/executive-search.

"Our convention, which exists to plant new churches and strengthen existing churches, is strategically connected to our nation's capital and the great city of Baltimore," said Victor Kirk, chairperson of the network's executive director search committee. "We look forward to taking advantage of the opportunities presented to us by virtue of this proximity for our region's churches."

The two-state convention, with offices in Columbia, Md., a suburb of Washington, D.C., serves and resources 550-plus churches in the Mid-Atlantic region that are in a cooperating relationship with the Southern Baptist Convention.

A news release from the search committee noted, according to Kirk, that the executive director will lead with sensitivity and, as chief executive officer, will

demonstrate planning, organizing, directing and the ability to utilize all resources to carry out and fulfill the convention's mission.

The search committee includes administrative committee members from the convention's General Mission Board, a mixture of clergy and laity from Mid-Atlantic Baptist Network churches. The administrative committee oversees personnel, finances and general operations of the network with input from General Mission Board members.

Interested candidates should post a resumé and fill out a questionnaire at bcmnd.org/executive-search

Alternatively, resúmes may be emailed to the search committee at executive-search@bcmnd.org or mailed to Mid-Atlantic Baptist Network, c/o Executive Search Committee, 10255 Old Columbia Road, Columbia, MD 21046.

Those wishing to recommend an individual for the position must send a formal letter of recommendation with the candidate's resumé to one of the above addresses. (BP)

Campbellsville again named to top 100 list

Campbellsville—Campbellsville University has once again ranked among the top regional universities in the South by U.S. News & World Report," Michael Carter, in his 17th year as CU president, said in a university news release. "We are proud and honored to be listed among the top 100 regional universities in the South," he said.

CU has been ranked in U.S. News' "America's Best Colleges" 23 consecutive years.

Carter said CU is moving forward in the ongoing implementation of "Vision 2025—Preparing Christian Servant Leaders," which is the institution's blueprint for the future.

Carter said CU's remaining in the top 100 of regional universities of the South is a tribute to the "excellent" progress in the

enhancement of academic excellence, student engagement and fulfilling the historic mission of serving a diverse student population.

Carter said Campbellsville University is constantly improving and upgrading facilities, along with academic programs. A new wrestling building is soon to be opened.

Campbellsville has a new academic program: Bachelor of Fine Arts. The university also has a Bachelor of Social Work program available fully online beginning this year.

The Master of Marriage and Family Therapy is seeking national accreditation, which will allow CU graduates to practice outside Kentucky.

The university has 145 full-time faculty members. Ninety-seven or 63.8 percent hold terminal degrees, and 59 or 38.8 percent are tenured. (KPNS)

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

BEECH CREEK—Beech Creek Church has called **Jeremy Johnston** as pastor.

BREMEN—Pleasant Hill Church has called **Conrad Barnes** as pastor.

CADIZ—Delmont Church will hold revival services Oct. 25-28 with **Jimmy Gentry** as the evangelist. **John Mitchell** is pastor.

CAMPBELLSVILLE—Saloma Church is hosting a gospel concert on Sept. 27, 6 p.m. Featured vocalists are **Yulanda Bradshaw** and **Ricardo Hughes**. Email salomabaptistchurch@windstream.net for information. **John Chowning** is pastor.

CENTRAL CITY—First Church has called **Chase Thompson** as pastor. He will begin duties Oct. 1.

EDDYVILLE—Hebron Church has called **Terry Davis** as pastor.

FRANKFORT—Franklin Association will host a Kids Festival Block Party Oct. 3, 5-8 p.m., at the Ash Building Parking Lot, 14 Reilly Rd., Frankfort. For more information, please call **Ed Whittaker** at 502-223-2719.

GLENDALE—Glendale Church will be celebrating homecoming on Sept. 27. **Clint Antholz** will be the guest speaker. For more information, call (270) 369-7868. **Sam Hinkson** is pastor.

PLEASUREVILLE—Elmburg Church will hold a picnic at Harry Hill Park on Sept. 26 at 3 p.m. They also will have Elmburg Day on Oct. 10, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. and revival on Oct. 11-14, starting at 7 p.m. **David Smith** will be guest speaker and **Dennis Gwizdala** will lead music. **Brad Jennings** is pastor.

SHELBYVILLE—Highland Church will hold a church picnic on Sept. 27, 4 p.m., at the HBC campus. **Chris Platt** is pastor.

SOMERSET—High Street Church has called **Brandon Carrier** as minister of worship, discipleship & assimilation. His first Sunday will be Sept. 27. The church also celebrated its 100th Anniversary Sept. 20. **Ed Amundson** is pastor.

WILLISBURG—Brush Grove Church will hold homecoming on Sept. 20. For more information, call (502) 673-3695. **Everett Hood** is pastor.



September

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

October

6 October Power Lunch, Kentucky Baptist Building, Louisville

8-10 Ministers in Transition, Louisville

11 Women's Chorale Concert, Campbellsville Baptist Church

14-15 B+ Captive Saint, Kentucky Baptist Building, Louisville

16-17 Disaster Relief Blue Hat & State Leaders' Training, Kentucky Baptist Building, Louisville

22 Men's & Women's Chorales Combined Concert, Scottsville Baptist Church

Hope from one who knows hopelessness

By Christi Moffett

Over the last year, I have had the privilege of getting to know an amazing woman. Miss Alice is on the board of directors for Sunrise.

Miss Alice was delivered to the "old Glen Dale" at age 8. Her mother died, and her father was not able to care for her. She grew up living on the Glen Dale campus. She lived in a cottage with a house mother, attended school, did her chores and went to church. At 18, she left to attend college.

Miss Alice married and raised two boys. As a fourth grade teacher, she impacted many children throughout her career. Even in her retirement, she continues to give.

You may find Miss Alice every Thursday night at the new Glen Dale, leading a Bible study for the girls. She listens to them. She ponders their questions and prays for wisdom to guide and inspire. Miss Alice understands that these girls are not in this situation by their own choosing and they often feel hopeless.

Recently Miss Alice was asked to explain what it meant to be a Christian. Not to take this divine opportunity lightly, she scheduled an appointment to meet with the girls. She called me, asking for prayer for this special time. Unfortunately I kept her on the phone too long and she was running late, leaving her precious

Bible at home.

When she arrived at Glen Dale, there were now four girls that wanted to hear about this "eternal hope." In the common room they found a Bible and made copies of the Scripture so they could all follow along. This was much better than sharing from her Bible, and reading to them; they could read it themselves. God provided!

Later that evening, Miss Alice called me with tears of joy. Two of the girls asked Jesus to be their Lord and Savior. Miss Alice knows what it means to be abandoned and have no hope. She shared from her heart how Jesus saved her, will never leave her, and has provided hope beyond measure. Now these young ladies have hope for eternity.

When I met Miss Alice, I felt sorry for her when I heard her story, but I now look at her with pure admiration. She is an instrument of God. She allowed God to use her and her life experiences to lead others to Him.

There is room for many more to offer hope to our kids. Visit our website, www.sunrise.org to see how you can get involved.

Contact Sunrise Children's Services, P.O. Box 1429, Mount Washington, KY 40047-1429; (502) 538-1000; www.sunrise.org.



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 a.m. 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: 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: 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. Submit resumes to First Baptist Church, Attn: Search Committee, 118 W. South St., Mayfield, KY 42066, or by email to office@firstmayfield.com.

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: 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: Duke Memorial Baptist Church of Somerset is seeking God's man to become their pastor. Previous pastor of 22 years retired due to physical disability. We will receive only printed resumes until 12/31/15. Address is 106 Layman Ave., Somerset, KY 42503.

SEEKING: Providence Knob Baptist Church in Warren County, Ky., is seeking a bivocational pastor. Send resume to pkbc-search@yahoo.com or mail to PKBC, P.O. Box 54, Rockfield, KY 42274.

SEEKING: Alton Baptist Church in Lawrenceburg, Ky., is seeking a full-time pastor. Candidate should have at least five years' experience and should be a traditional, conservative, biblically-based pastor who believes in the Baptist Faith and

Message 2000. Send resume to Don Powers 1205 Douglas Circle, Lawrenceburg, KY 40342.

SEEKING: Bivocational/retired pastor. Small, eastern Jefferson County church, searching for part-time minister. A contributing member of KBC and LRBA. Salary offered \$100/week. Send resume to First Baptist Church of Eastwood, P.O. Box 103, Eastwood, KY 40018.

SEEKING: Lynn Baptist Association (Hardin, LaRue and Hart counties) is seeking a director of missions. Resumes will be accepted through September. POC is J D Shipp, 511 College Street, Upton, KY 42784, or jd.shipp@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Garner Missionary Baptist Church in Rush, Ky.: multiple ministry church seeking pastor. Average attendance 200. Send resume to P.O. Box 630, Catlettsburg, KY 41129-0630.

SEEKING: Highland Baptist Church in Shelbyville, Ky., is prayerfully searching for a full-time minister of worship and youth. Experience and master's degree preferred, but not required. The job description is available on our website www.hbc-ky.com. Resumes may be submitted to hbcworship-ministry1@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Sherman Baptist Church is seeking minister of music. Send resume to Music Search Committee, P. O. Box 256, Dry Ridge KY 41035.

SEEKING: Large contemporary church seeking full-time youth pastor for grades 6-12. Submit resumes to Administrative Pastor Adam Neel at aneel@bellnet.org, or mail to Bellevue Baptist Church, 4950 State Route 56, Owensboro, KY 42301.

SEEKING: Sparta Baptist Church is seeking part-time pastor. Candidate should be a 1 Timothy 3 man and preach the word of God. Resumes can be submitted to the pulpit committee by e-mail: spartabaptist-comm@gmail.com, or mail: Sparta Baptist Church, P.O. Box 5, Sparta, KY 41086.

SEEKING: Union Missionary Baptist Church in Morgantown, Ky., is seeking a bivocational pastor to fill our pulpit. We are looking for someone eager to serve God and do His will. Duties would include Sunday morning service, Wednesday night Bible study, visitation and the occasional Sunday afternoon service at the local nursing home. Resumes can be sent to jongivens78@yahoo.com.

SEEKING: Bethel Baptist Church, Norman, Okla., is seeking a full-time senior pastor. Located approximately one mile from the University of Oklahoma, we are a conservative Southern Baptist church that supports the Cooperative Program. Email resumes to bbcnormanpsc@gmail.com, or send to Pastor Search Committee, Bethel Baptist Church, 1717 W. Lindsey St., Norman, OK 73069.

SEEKING: A small southern Baptist church in scenic southeastern Kentucky is seeking a God-called pastor/preacher to help grow our church. Send resume to Pastoral Search Committee, P.O. Box 1332, Middlesboro, KY 40965.

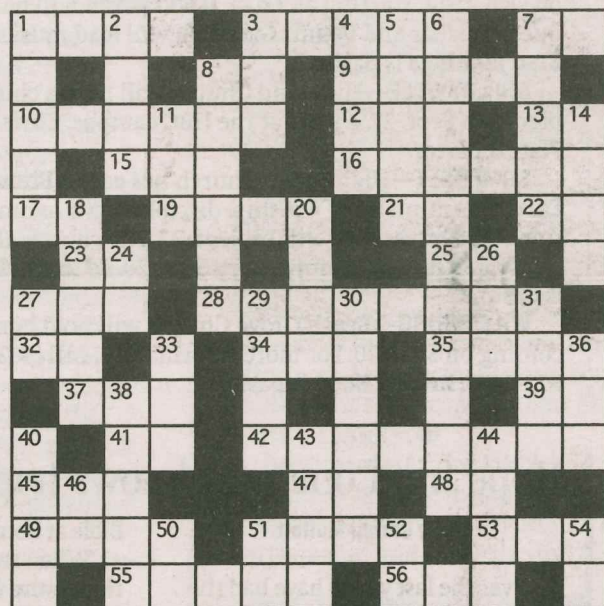
FOR SALE: Pews. 19-19 ft long (\$100 each), 1-11'11", 1-10'11", 1-9'11" (\$50 each), 3 matching chairs (free if buying pews). Buyer is responsible for removing them from Sanctuary. Mill Creek Baptist Church, 431 Poplar Flat Rd., Bardstown, Ky. (502)348-5049, millcreekbc@millcreekbc.org.

WANTED: Mission Hope for Kids is in need of a 15-passenger van to pick up and transport children for its after-school program in Elizabethtown, Ky. MHFK is a Christian organization addressing the spiritual, educational, physical and emotional needs of "at risk" children in Hardin County. They currently have enrolled 170+ children. Contact Nelle Thomas, director, at 270-765-4673 or missionhope4kids@gmail.com.

Bible Crosswords

Across

- 1 "Thou art an _____ people unto the Lord" (Deuteronomy 7:6)
- 3 "The Holy _____ shall teach you" (Luke 12:12)
- 7 "They went ... from _____ ... into Canaan" (Genesis 11:31)
- 8 A short laugh
- 9 Moses and _____ went before Pharaoh (Exodus 5:1)
- 10 "_____ is the way, which leadeth unto life" (Matthew 7:14)
- 12 Three, prefix
- 13 Des Moines' state, abbr.
- 15 One of the twelve tribes (Numbers 1:38)
- 16 David reigned there (2 Samuel 2:1)
- 17 Antimony, chem. symbol
- 19 Twelve months
- 21 Europium, chem. symbol
- 22 Northeastern region of the U. S., abbr.
- 23 Earned runs, abbr.
- 25 Sixth note of the musical scale
- 27 "The eyes of Israel were dim for _____" (Genesis 48:10)
- 28 "If thy brother _____ against thee, rebuke him" (Luke 17:3)
- 32 Pa's wife
- 34 Poem
- 35 Bonds
- 37 "_____ of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark" (Genesis 6:19)
- 39 "Being reviled, _____ bless" (1 Corinthians 4:12)
- 41 "God saw that _____ was good" (Genesis 1:10)
- 42 An unclean thing (Leviticus 11:29)
- 45 Coal scuttle



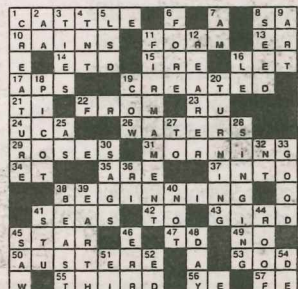
#046

- 47 Gym, in other words, abbr.
- 48 Colorado's neighbor, abbr.
- 49 "A land whose stones are _____" (Deuteronomy 8:9)
- 51 Mongrel
- 53 "As _____ as blood" (2 Kings 3:22)
- 55 "My flesh is clothed with _____" (Job 7:5)
- 56 Sash worn with a kimono

Down

- 1 "With his _____ spread up to heaven" (1 Kings 8:54)
- 2 "Confess that Jesus Christ is _____" (Philippians 2:11)
- 3 Guaranteed annual wage, abbr.
- 4 "Let there be now an _____ betwixt us" (Genesis 26:28)
- 5 Asian garment, alt. spelling
- 6 "Deliver me out of all _____" (1 Samuel 26:24)
- 7 The joining of two or more things
- 8 "Whatsoever things are _____ ... think on these things" (Philippians 4:8)
- 11 Sunbeam
- 14 Over again
- 18 "Abraham _____ Isaac" (Genesis 25:19)
- 20 "A bruised _____ shall he not break" (Matthew 12:20)
- 24 Regarding, abbr.
- 26 Airspeed indicator, abbr.
- 27 God's name for Himself: I _____
- 29 "I am the _____ and the offspring of David" (Revelation 22:16)
- 30 "He revealeth his _____ unto his servants" (Amos 3:7)
- 31 Stitches
- 33 "One _____ or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law" (Matthew 5:18)
- 36 "When we shall _____ him" (Isaiah 53:2)
- 38 "If any _____ have children ... , let them first learn to shew piety at home" (1 Timothy 5:4)
- 40 "The noise of a _____" (Nahum 3:2)
- 43 Great work
- 44 Zaccur's father (Nehemiah 3:2)
- 46 Either
- 50 "To be sin for us, who knew _____ sin" (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- 51 2000, Romans num.
- 52 "Given _____ hospitality" (Romans 12:13)
- 54 "Without me ye can _____ nothing" (John 15:5)

#045



Refugee crisis opening door for gospel

By Nicole Lee

Budapest, Hungary—The discovery of an abandoned refrigeration truck full of corpses on an Austrian highway on Aug. 27 and the body of a 3-year-old toddler washed up on the shores of Turkey on Sept. 2 have epitomized the tragic circumstances faced by masses of humanity trying to escape conditions in their home countries and find refuge in Europe.

With more than 350,000 refugees crossing into Europe in the first eight months of 2015, this human migration is believed by many to be the greatest in Europe since World War II. But International Mission Board workers in the Middle East and Europe say this crisis is an unprecedented opportunity for hope.

Acts 17:26-27 says God “made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him though He is not far from each one of us,” said Franklin Lewis,* a theological consultant in Eurasia.

Lewis explained, “This Scripture gives us hope that the tragic events we see unfolding before us also reflect God’s sovereign hand in bringing the people displaced into contact with the gospel, that they might come to know Him. In that sense, this crisis is not only tragic, it is also an amazing opportunity for people to come to know Christ.”

This is the reality followers of Christ are witnessing as hundreds of thousands of refugees make their way through towns, countryside and train stations in Europe, where Christian laypeople and volunteers offer water, food, clothing and conversation. Many refugees are hearing the gospel for the first time.

“God is working through war and suffering to move peoples into places where they can encounter Christ,” said James Keath,* an IMB strategy leader in the Middle East. During the last year, followers of Christ have seen people from seven different Syrian people groups, including Sunni, Orthodox and Shiite, come to faith, begin to meet as house groups and even reproduce groups in their refugee communities.

“Syria is the humanitarian catastrophe of our day, but it is also one of the greatest opportunities of our day for gospel advance among some of the least reached peoples on earth,” Keath said. “In every country around Syria and now throughout Europe, we have the ability to openly engage Syrians like never before. And those working among refugees are finding not just broken lives but open hearts.”

In some places refugees pass through, like Serbia and Macedonia, churches are helping to distribute water, food and clothes, but the contact in those places is usually brief. Most refugees don’t want to be detained until they get to a better destination—perhaps Germany, Austria or Sweden—somewhere that is more economically sound and generous to refugees.

IMB worker Wayne Vinton* described one encounter in Macedonia. “We met some refugees on bicycles and spoke with them briefly and offered some water, as they were thirsty,” he said. “We discussed some options of providing water along the road, but now that the border guards are watching for them, many are trying to



Refugee families camp outside Nyugati Train Station in Budapest, Hungary. (IMB photo by Jennifer Freedman.)

cross at places away from the main border crossing, hoping to be undetected.”

Many refugees have been stuck in Budapest, where they await transport to another European Union country. IMB workers are joining forces with Hungarian relief workers to be the hands and feet of Jesus. The majority of the refugees are from Syria, where 4 million have fled the horrors of ISIS terrorists and the effects of four years of civil war.

IMB worker Jennifer Freedman* spoke with a man in Budapest who explained what they are running from.

“Daesh (ISIS) was in our village ... and they hit me, and they gave me 30 lashes on my back,” the man said. “My son—he saw a beheading. We had to leave. That’s not life, that’s not living. I want a better life for my kids than Daesh, I want my kids to go to school, to be educated. So we left.”

His family’s 1,800-mile journey was long and arduous, taking almost two months, and their hoped-for destination is Sweden. They plan to take a taxi to Vienna, since they have been thwarted at the Budapest train station while EU officials grapple with the biggest humanitarian crisis the EU has faced as a unified body.

“The situation here is chaotic,” said Trey Shaw, an IMB church planter in Budapest. “The numbers coming in are by far more than Budapest can handle. The nonprofits are trying to do what they can, but there is more work than workers.”

Shaw’s church plant, Agora, is helping refugees at Budapest’s Keleti train station, collecting clothes and partnering with two nonprofit organizations to minister

where they are able.

Hungary has reportedly seen 50,000 new arrivals in the last month. Unsure of what to do with the influx of people, the country is looking to the rest of Europe to help with the crisis.

Germany has begun accepting refugees who arrive there without having already been registered at their point of arrival in the European Union, so many of the refugees in Hungary are already making their way to Germany. Austria has welcomed thousands of refugees as well, but European nations are reportedly threatening to close their borders because they are overwhelmed by the large numbers of refugees seeking to enter Europe.

Wesley Selway,* a teacher in Germany, said his small city near Cologne is one of

Prayer focus

■ Pray for IMB workers and national Christians as they are ministering to refugees.

■ Pray for physical strength and stamina and for more churches to take the responsibility to love the refugees and introduce them to Christ.

■ Pray for the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of the refugees that they will be willing to listen and open to learning about Jesus.

■ Pray for EU governments as they try to determine how to accommodate the influx of refugees.

■ Pray specifically for German city officials near Cologne who are trying to help but are overworked. Pray for supernatural strength, and pray they will see the power of the gospel and experience it in their lives as churches display God’s character.

many that have been asked to create a place to house 150 refugees while they are processed into the country. City officials transformed a local gym into a refugee center, and Selway and his wife Miranda* are among those allowed inside to help with new arrivals. More than 800,000 are expected to arrive in the country by the end of 2015, and though Germany can meet their immediate physical needs, the refugees need something more.

“They need relationships—people to talk to them, engage them. As the relationship builds, they’re more receptive to spiritual conversations,” Selway said. “God is bringing them here, and there’s an opening there for them to be engaged with the gospel.”

Selway says God has designs to use this crisis among the German believers. As the community sees the church in action, they are more responsive to listening to what followers of Christ have to say.

“We (the church) are connecting with all these German people who have like-minded hearts to help people, and we’re getting into conversations with them, and that to me is a God-given gift,” he said.

Troy Staubach,* an IMB strategy leader in Europe, sees that as a trend in the days to come throughout Europe. “I believe that God is using a tragic situation to bring the gospel to many and also to give the church a real opportunity to be the body of Christ for the hurting,” he said. (BP)

*Names changed.

Austrians bring clothing and personal care items to a refugee camp in Traiskirchen, Austria. The village about 20 miles south of Vienna is the location of an official refugee camp in Austria. (IMB photo by Patrick Royals.)



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