Western Recorder

January 12, 2016 — *Shine Like Stars* ✳ Philippians 2:15 — Volume 190, Issue 1

Top Kentucky headlines in 2015

By Todd Deaton



Louisville—Kentucky Baptists made history in 2015 by electing an African-American as their top leader, supported county clerks in their stance against gay marriages, hired a lobbyist and chaplain to influence and support state lawmakers, saw the first Kentuckian elected to lead national WMU, and witnessed a possible turning point in baptisms and giving.

Among the top newsmakers for Kentucky Baptists this past year were:

Kentucky Baptists elect first African-American president



Kevin Smith, teaching pastor of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville and a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, made history at Elizabethtown's Severns Valley Baptist Church by becoming the first African-American to be elected as president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. Smith was nominated by Lincoln Bingham, senior pastor of St. Paul Baptist Church at Shively Heights in Louisville. The race-relations pioneer in Kentucky for more than three decades highlighted Smith's contributions as a champion for racial reconciliation, church revitalization, evangelism and missions.

Baptist leaders dismayed by Supreme Court decision

In a 5-4 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court transformed the legal definition of marriage June 26, legalizing same-sex marriage nationwide. Baptist leaders expressed their dismay, as well as their encouragement for the church to respond with courage and compassion. Among them was Paul Chitwood, KBC executive director, who wrote on his blog: "Moving forward, one of the most pressing questions now regards religious liberty. Does the ruling threaten this foundational principle of American law and life?" he asked. "... Appealing to the First Amendment, biblically faithful Baptists in Kentucky will continue to preach and teach God's truth on the sanctity of marriage between one man and one woman, as well the sinfulness of the homosexual lifestyle."

Clerk loses, then resists high court on gay marriage licenses



A Kentucky county clerk not only lost at the U.S. Supreme Court Aug. 31, but was later found in contempt of court for again refusing to grant marriage licenses to same-sex couples. Rowan County Clerk Kim Davis and her deputies turned away gay couples seeking marriage licenses Sept. 1 in Morehead. Their refusal came after the high court denied Davis' request to block enforcement of a federal judge's order that she issue licenses for same-sex marriages. Tom James, KBC president and pastor of Eastwood Baptist Church in Bowling Green, said, "To issue the license would not only violate her conscience but also her protection under the First Amendment of our Constitution, which provides for the free exercise of religion."

❑ *See Top Kentucky stories ... Page 6*

Does God rank high in your New Year's resolutions?

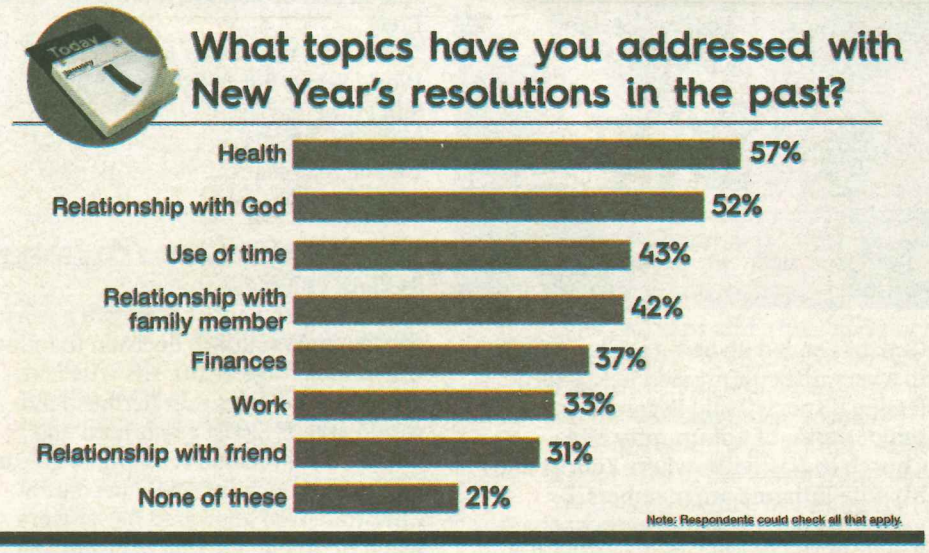
By Lisa Cannon Green

Nashville—When Americans make New Year's resolutions, a better relationship with God ranks almost as high as better health, according to a study by LifeWay Research.

And for many groups, faith actually outranks health. Older Americans, African Americans, Hispanics and Christians are all more likely to say they've made resolutions about God than about health.

Overall, 57 percent of Americans report making health-related New Year's resolutions in the past while 52 percent say they've addressed their relationships with God. Those were the top two responses in a LifeWay Research survey of 1,000 Americans.

"We don't hear a lot of talk about it, but a relationship with God is still something people want," said Scott McConnell, vice president of LifeWay Research. "They have time at the holidays to think and they realize what they didn't do last year—things they value but are not living out. So they start the year with an aspiration to change."



Topics of resolve

While health and faith are the leading topics for New Year's resolutions, Americans also report addressing their use of time (43 percent), relationships with family members (42 percent), finances (37 percent), work (33 percent) and relationships with friends (31 percent).

Many of the issues overlap as people aspire to improve themselves, McConnell said.

"Use of time is probably the best measure of priorities," he said. "And investing in a relationship with God may encourage people to address other priorities as well, such as spending time with family or fixing their finances."

More than one in five Americans (21 percent) say they haven't made New Year's resolutions on any topic mentioned in the survey.

Resolutions of faith

Americans with evangelical beliefs are among the most likely to make New Year's resolutions about their relationships with God. Faith trumps health by a wide margin for them: 72 percent say

❑ *See New Year's resolutions ... Page 3*

Congress sends PPFA defunding bill to Obama

By Tom Strode

Washington—Congress forced President Obama's hand on federal funding for the country's No. 1 abortion provider.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed Jan. 6 in a 240-181 roll call a budget-related bill that would have cut nearly 90 percent of federal funds in the next year for the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) and its affiliates. The legislation also would have repealed fundamental sections of the controversial 2010 health-care law opposed by nearly all pro-life organizations.

The Senate approved the same measure by 52-47 in a Dec. 3 vote.

Obama, a strong backer of both Planned Parenthood and the health-care law, however, kept his vow to veto the legislation, which apparently marks the first time a bill to cut funding for the organization has reached a president's desk. Neither house of Congress, has the votes for a two-thirds majority to override a veto.

❑ *See PPFA defunding bill ... Page 7*

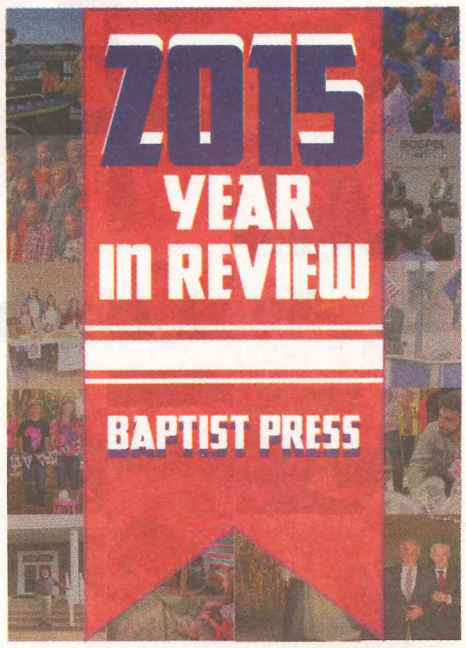
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Top 10 Baptist Press stories



NASHVILLE—*As politics, scandal and terrorism dominated the headlines this year, two stories related to the budget shortfalls of the Southern Baptist Convention's international missions entity were the most-read articles of 2015 on Baptist Press' website. It was the second consecutive year the entity accounted for the top story on the list. These stories are the top headlines from this past year.*

IMB'S PLATT SENDS OPEN LETTER TO SBC FAMILY

In September, International Mission Board President David Platt sent an open letter to Southern Baptists regarding the organization's financial plan announced in August. Addressing the entity's budget shortfalls, Platt noted several concerns and criticisms raised related to the plan, specifically the announcement that IMB planned to reduce its missionaries and staff by 600-800 people over the next six months. Platt wrote in the letter, "When we stepped back and looked at IMB finances since 2010, we realized that IMB has spent a combined $210 million more than people have given to us." Platt called on Southern Baptists to "pray that God will provide grace, wisdom, strength, and unity across the IMB family as we navigate the various challenges" in the coming months.

PLATT UNVEILS RESET OF IMB STRATEGY, STRUCTURE

In February, IMB President David Platt announced a streamlined strategy and structure for the missions entity during a board of trustees meeting in Houston. Trustees, meeting Feb. 24-25, unanimously voted to approve the plan.

"We want to empower limitless missionary teams to make disciples and multiply churches among unreached people," Platt said. "We need a strategy that doesn't cap our number of missionaries merely based upon how much money we have." Platt noted the IMB operated "in the red" last year, with the entity's operating expenses exceeding income by nearly $21 million.

MISSIONARY REMEMBERED AS GODLY MOTHER, WIFE



On Aug. 13, the evening before she and her family had planned to return overseas, Kyra Lynn Karr, a Southern Baptist missionary to Italy, was killed in a tragic traffic accident. News reports indicated a tractor-trailer driver exited his vehicle to conduct a safety inspection but the safety brake was not engaged and the truck began to roll. The vehicle hit the pickup in which Karr was traveling on U.S. 41 in Bartow County, Ga. Karr, 30, died at the scene. Her husband Reid and their two youngest children were transported to nearby hospitals, where they were treated and released. Their oldest child was not with them at the time. The tractor-trailer driver was arrested and charged with DUI, police said.



ROYALS' BEN ZOBRIST A MISSIONARY TO TEAMMATES

In October, Baptist Press ran a story on the Kansas City Royals' Ben Zobrist. Zobrist, the son of an Illinois pastor, played college baseball at Dallas Baptist University before entering the Major Leagues. In the article, Zobrist's pastor called him "a missionary" in pro sports.

"Ben, by virtue of the providence of God, has ended up being a missionary in a very difficult mission field of professional sports," said Byron Yawn, senior pastor of Community Bible Church in Nashville, where Zobrist and his wife Julianna are members.

Zobrist played second base for the Royals in the World Series against the New York Mets. The Royals won the series 4-1.

ROYALS GM: CHARACTER KEY TO TEAM'S TURNAROUND

In July, Baptist Press featured a story on Kansas City Royals' general manager Dayton Moore. Building godly character in players, coaches and front office personnel has been key to the Royals' success in recent seasons, Moore told Baptist Press.

In 2014, the Royals made it to the World Series but fell short against the San Francisco Giants in Game 7. This year, The Royals returned to the Fall Classic to defeat the New York Mets.

101-YEAR-OLD'S SALVATION CAPS WIFE'S 24-YEAR PRAYER

In October, Baptist Press ran a story on George Warshaw's decision to follow Christ at the age of 101. His wife Lou prayed for 24 years that her husband would accept Christ as his Lord and Savior. After years of refusing to give up on the hope that he would become a Christian, God answered her prayers when George made that decision and followed through with believer's baptism.

FIRST-PERSON: HOW 50 SHADES OF GREY HARMS WOMEN AND JESUS SAVES THEM

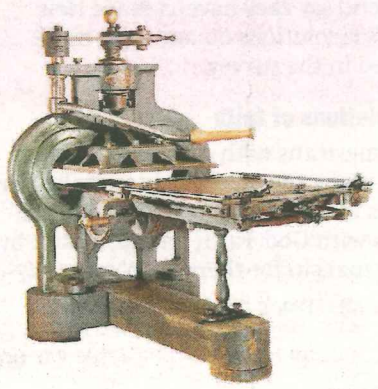
In February, seminary professor and author Owen Strachan countered the claim that the Bible is oppressive to women in his critique of the controversial movie "50 Shades of Grey" that was released in theaters that month. Strachan writes that the movie, based on The New York Times best-selling book trilogy, tells the fictional story of Cristian Grey who enters into a relationship where he sexually abuses and uses a woman, who finds herself drawn to the man despite his actions. Today's secular culture aims to "entice young men to sexually abuse women while exhorting young women to engage in harmful sexual practices," Strachan writes. "Honestly, what kind of twisted, deviant culture is this?"

PREACHING THROUGH BIBLE HAS RISKS, PASTORS SAY

In June, Baptist Press posted a story on a panel discussion sponsored by The Gospel Project, a curriculum series of LifeWay Christian Resources. The panel was held during the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting in Columbus, Ohio. Panelists urged a balance between verse-by-verse exposition and sermons on specific topics. While some pastors may believe tackling Scripture verse by verse from the pulpit is the only acceptable approach, people in the pews may have a different view, the four panelists agreed.

Can you guess what this is?

If you were around in 1825-26 when your state Baptist paper was getting started, your newspapers would likely have been printed on a Stanhope Press like this one.



Western Recorder

Celebrating 190 years of Kentucky Baptist newspapers



FLOYD AND FORMER SBC PRESIDENTS TAKE MARRIAGE STANCE

In June, Southern Baptist Convention President Ronnie Floyd and 16 former SBC presidents issued a statement on biblical marriage and same-sex marriage. Their statement was a response to the U.S. Supreme Court's 5-4 ruling to declare same-sex marriage a constitutional right in all 50 states.

"What the Bible says about marriage is clear, definitive and unchanging," they said in the statement. "We affirm biblical, traditional, natural marriage as the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime."



Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers Danny Daniels (left), Richard Ward and Bill Surls (right) load a portable generator for transport to St. Louis, Mo., to be used with the SBDR flood response in the city. Daniels and Ward are both from Trussville, Ala., and members of Ridgecrest Baptist Church. Surls is from Cumming, Ga., and is a member of First Redeemer Baptist Church, where the unit was being stored. (NAMB photo by John Swain)

Holiday storms draw Baptist D.R. volunteers: Kentucky teams en route

By Joe Conway

Alpharetta, Ga.—Deadly storm systems slashed across the nation over the holidays killing scores and bringing rapid response from Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers.

In Texas alone, eight people were killed and more than 800 dwellings were damaged or destroyed by tornadoes that struck the day after Christmas in Dallas. The rain accompanying the storm systems has the Mississippi River and its tributaries at flood stage.

North American Mission Board SBDR interim executive director Mickey Caison described the response as all too reminiscent of historic flooding that hit the St. Louis area in 1993. As of Jan. 4, 11 states had volunteers serving at ministry sites in Alabama, Arkansas, Illinois, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas.

NAMB also dispatched equipment to assist flood survivors in Arkansas, Illinois and Missouri.

"The lives of so many families and communities are forever changed," Caison said. "Southern Baptist Disaster Relief is so much larger and has so much more experience today to be able to bring help, healing and hope."

Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief is deploying two flood recovery teams and units, along with a chaplain team to respond to historic December flooding along the Mississippi River, according to Coy Webb, director of Disaster Relief for the Kentucky Baptist Convention. The teams will be working in the flood-ravaged St. Louis area.

"We pray that our teams will bring much needed help, the healing of God's grace, and the hope of Christ to multitudes of hurting folks in the Midwest," Webb said.

Webb said Kentucky Baptists will be assisting residents with mucking debris from homes and removing water-damaged drywall, carpeting and cabinets.

"Being a disaster relief volunteer isn't glamorous," Webb said. "It's messy, it's sweaty and it's exhausting, but it's not about us. It's about demonstrating the love and compassion Christ has for all His children."

NAMB president Kevin Ezell said, "Our prayers go out to the survivors and volunteers across our nation. Many volunteers sacrificed time with their own families at Christmas to serve others."

"And they did it with the same kindness and compassion that they always bring to relief ministry," he added.

Missouri Baptist Convention state disaster relief director Dwain Carter said the storm system that dumped rain across the state followed the I-44 corridor from the southwest corner of the state into the metro St. Louis area. Carter anticipates serving at least 1,000 homeowners in the response.

Carter reported Missouri volunteers, now 125 strong, will soon be joined by SBDR teams from the Southern Baptists of Texas, Texas Baptist Men, Kansas-Nebraska, Kentucky and Tennessee. NAMB SBDR coordinator Eddie Blackmon is serving with Carter's command team.

"We have chaplains and assessors already working," Carter said. "I know we will serve at least 1,000 survivors who had homes damaged. Our chaplains have had great opportunity to minister to people at temporary shelters. They are reporting a great response. Our working relationship has been solid with all the municipalities. We appreciate people's prayers and support."

Caison also asked for prayers. "Please pray for the southern states responding to the tornadoes as well as those responding to the floods," he said. "We know our Lord will inspire our volunteers to mobilize. We will be sending resources for a long-term response. Mississippi and Tennessee are planning for potential flood responses there, as well. And all of this with active tornado responses in Alabama, Mississippi, Texas and Oklahoma."

NAMB is dispatching a mobile command center, a portable generator and two mud-out units to St. Louis. On Jan. 5, two semi-truck loads with supplies left NAMB, one bound for Arkansas and Illinois, the other, for Missouri.

Greg Forbes, a meteorologist with The Weather Channel, reported at least 55 tornadoes struck the nation during the span of days from Dec. 23-28. (BP/WR)

New Year's resolutions

Continued from page 1

they have made resolutions regarding God while 56 percent have addressed their health.Most evangelical believers (51 percent) also report having made New Year's resolutions about their use of time.

"For an evangelical, faith should be integrated into every area of life," McConnell said. "Not every resolution will be about having a relationship with God, but their relationship with God should be affecting what they do in other areas."

In contrast, only 43 percent of those who do not hold evangelical beliefs have made New Year's resolutions about their relationships with God, and 39 percent have addressed their use of time.

Resolutions about a relationship with God are widespread among African Americans (73 percent) and Hispanics (63 percent). In addition, 61 percent of Christians, 59 percent of Southerners and 56 percent of Americans 55 and older say they have made resolutions regarding God.

"In January we always hear about health-related resolutions. We don't hear as much about people's concern for their relationship with God," McConnell said. "But this research shows faith has a prominent place in New Year's resolutions. Many people want to take steps to make God a greater part of their lives." (BP)



The congregation of Pleasant View Baptist Church witnessed 18 baptisms on Dec. 11.

Rural church baptisms result of bus ministry

By Myriah Snyder

Waynesburg—Pleasant View Baptist Church in Waynesburg baptized 16 children, one adult and a teenager on Dec. 11. The majority of these came by way of the church's children's/bus ministry, GLOW.

Each Wednesday, Pleasant View runs two vans and a bus, making multiple trips, to bring in around 70 children and teenagers. There, they are fed a meal and taught the gospel.

"Our church is in a rural context in a poor area of our county, and on Wednesday nights, bus ministry is something that still really works," Kyle Page, pastor of Pleasant View, shared.

"These children, a lot of them, only have a Christian atmosphere one hour a week, and that's on Wednesday night. They're coming, getting filled with the gospel and the Holy Spirit, going back home to their parents and being missionaries in their own community," Chuck Jacobs, a bus driver for the ministry, said.

"It's a major opportunity for our church not only to reach out to these kids and youth, but also through them to their parents," Page added.

Jacobs shared how he and another worker had the opportunity to share the gospel with and see a little girl accept Christ in her driveway one evening while being dropped off. "It is good for us and good for them also," he said.

"It's not that we've done anything necessarily different here lately, it's just that God has blessed. His Spirit moved. In the midst of this, our church in general has seen a lot of spiritual growth," Page said.

In November, Pleasant View hosted an "Awakening Weekend" through One Cry, "a movement of believers who are urgently crying out to God to revive the church and transform the culture. It's a movement of like-minded people, churches, and organizations who agree that our nation needs a dramatic turnaround," according to their website.

As a result, the church was not only "spiritually renewed and reinvigorated," said Page, but they began to focus "on training people and encouraging people to have personal quiet times with God."

Page said that the children's ministry has also been focused on teaching the children how to have a quiet time. Additionally, they have concentrated efforts on small groups.

He explained, "These salvations came in the context of their small groups. They all have small group leaders and the younger ones who can't read have leaders who sit down with them and help them learn how to have a quiet time with God. The gospel was shared in that context.

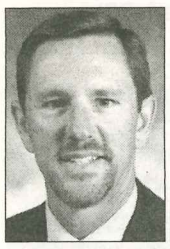
"Our Wednesday night has really become more of an outreach night for our whole church," Page said, explaining the church's vision to reach their poverty-stricken community.

Page believes the bus ministry is "that open door that we have to reach out to these kids and these youth." (WR)

Protecting the KBC from 'vision leak'

Leaders talk often about protecting churches and organizations from "vision leak." Vision leak is the tendency to lose focus on the organization's ultimate goal. For example, I would argue that the local church exists to bring glory to God by making disciples of all peoples. When a church fails to focus on that goal, it has lost its vision.

Together
We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

The Kentucky Baptist Convention is not a local church, but it exists to help churches. The KBC's vision can best be captured by asking three questions.

First, we ask "Why?" Why does the KBC exist? That question is best answered with our mission statement—"The Kentucky Baptist Convention: Created by churches, for churches, to help churches reach Kentucky and the world for Christ."

Next, we ask "How?" How will the KBC carry out its vision? That question can best be answered like this—"By fostering missions cooperation among churches and providing vital resources and services to assist churches in fulfilling the Great Commission."

Then, we ask "What?" What does the KBC do in order to fulfill the vision of helping churches reach Kentucky and the world for Christ?" The following points summarize what we do:

- Provide comprehensive ministry consulting for KBC churches
- Facilitate training and networking opportunities for leaders & churches
- Facilitate missions partnerships & church planting opportunities in Kentucky, North America, and to the ends of the earth
- Inspire and equip churches in evangelism and disciple making
- Facilitate relationships between Kentucky Baptist churches and their agencies and institutions
- Promote & process Cooperative Program and other missions giving in order to assist churches in their Great Commission obedience
- Mobilize Kentucky Baptist churches to influence society and government with the Christian principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love

The Mission Board staff members at the KBC have committed our mission statement to memory and allow that mission statement to guide us in our work, keeping us ever focused on our goal, i.e., helping churches. That is one of the ways we protect ourselves from vision leak. As we begin a new year of ministering to Kentucky Baptist churches, we are praying that our churches will be more effective than ever before at their ultimate goal of bringing glory to God by making disciples of all peoples. We are also praying that we will be more effective than ever before at helping churches achieve that goal.

Is gun control a Christian issue?

Guest Viewpoint



Russell Moore

President Obama has tightened the nation's gun control laws through executive action. This action, of course, comes in the wake of the terrorist attack in San Bernardino, California, as well as numerous mass shootings over the past several years.

I am often asked, "Is gun control a Christian issue?" After all, some might ask, if we are truly pro-life should we not also be as adamant about gun control as we are about abortion control? Is the gun control debate simply one that we should ignore?

First, let me in full disclosure say that I hold to traditionally conservative views on the Second Amendment as a personal and individual right.

Like every other constitutional right, this right is not unlimited or all expansive, to be sure. We rightly do not allow private citizens to own surface-to-air missiles, for example. But I'm suspicious of gun control measures as naïve and ineffective, if not counter-productive, preferring to combat gun violence with strict enforcement of laws against gun crime and murder rather than with measures to impede the ability of law-abiding citizens to own weapons.

That said, I recognize that there are many, including orthodox evangelical Christians, who disagree with me on my general opposition to more gun control. This should not divide us.

I hold my Second Amendment views for different reasons and with different conviction than I hold my First or Second Commandment views.

My views on the issue are informed, I hope, by my conscience as a Christian, which is to be shaped by Scripture and the church. But it is not a "Thus saith the Lord" command with the authority of Scripture. I do not think that our debates over gun control are debates over whether or not we will be pro-life. The question of gun control is a different question than the question of gun violence itself.

The gun control debate isn't between people who support the right to shoot innocent people and those who don't. It's instead a debate about what's prudent, and what's not, in solving the common goal of ending criminally violent behavior. That's why orange-vested National Rifle Association members and Birkenstock-wearing vegan gun-control advocates can exist, as the Body of Christ, in the same church without excommunicating one another.

Wherever one stands on gun control, no one is denying the personhood of gun victims or their right to be protected from violence. Whatever one thinks about gun control, no one in the American debate today supports selling guns to those who intend to kill. The question instead is how to prevent guns from being used criminally.

Some think gun control measures are a necessary way to do this; others think such laws are averting the real issue.

This is quite different from the abortion debate where one side denies the personhood of those subject to lethal violence.

Just because the gun control debate is different from, for instance, the abortion debate, and just because Christians disagree on guns for law-abiding people, this doesn't mean the debate itself doesn't pose real lessons for the church. Consider why, for instance, gun control continues to be so divisive as a culture war issue.

The parts of the country that are most like the context of most of revolutionary America, rural and agrarian, are also the parts of the country most resistant to gun control legislation. That's certainly not just a "southern" thing.

Metropolitan areas such as Philadelphia, Chicago, and Seattle tend to support rigorous gun control. But rural Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Washington state are almost as pro-gun rights as rural Alabama. Even socialist U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders often opposed gun control legislation in his career, because his rural Vermont constituency wouldn't have it any other way.

If one lives in a community where people know one another, trust one another, and can call a neighbor (armed, if necessary) to help where needed, crime rates tend to be lower.

This is not, I suspect, a case of "more guns, less crime" as much as it is "more community, less crime." This is quite different from some of the big cities in this country, and increasingly our suburbs, where we do not know the people around us, and have no one to turn to but to the government to protect us from criminal enterprises that are often guarded with (usually illegal) guns.

We should listen, I think, to the rhetoric behind the rhetoric of the gun control debate. Both sides are often scared. They are scared of violence, often with good reason.

The gun control advocate wants the government to protect him from gun-wielding criminals.

The gun-rights supporter wants his gun to protect him from gun-wielding criminals.

The gun control supporter trusts an armed government; the gun control opponent trusts an armed community.

Both sides of the debate are longing for the kind of civic community that is slipping away in a globalizing, urbanizing America. There are some things that government can do to address this, but not much. It is driven more by cultural and economic factors than by political ones.

Into this void must step churches that foster and build real communities built on real love and real truth.

These kinds of churches can flourish in rural Oregon and urban Atlanta, in blue states and red states. These kind of churches can seek to create not just individual disciples, but an alternative order in which the citizens of heaven know one another, trust one another, and are able to call on one another when one hears a strange sound at the window.

This will not end the gun control debate, but it can start to bear witness to an aspect of this debate we are too afraid to have.

Russell Moore is president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. This article first appeared as a blog post at RussellMoore.com. Used by permission.

Staying spiritually hungry

By Jessica Pigg

FIRST PERSON

January can be the most intimidating time of the year. New habits, new resolutions and new goals stir in us a passion for more and better—as well as a fear that we may fail.

Resolutions are a beautiful thing when made for the right reasons. Most resolutions I make aren't kept for more than a few weeks. However, resolutions that are made for the Lord and rooted in His Word not only change my own life, but the lives of those around me.

This year, instead of making a list of resolutions that revolve around yourself, resolve to be in the Word every single day and hide truth in your heart. It is the one thing that will mold and shape your life to be more like Christ.

Have you ever been so hungry you snacked on a bunch of sweets? Usually after eating them, you feel sick and not fulfilled, not like when you eat a nice meal. I like to compare these sugary snacks to the things of this world. Time after time, they promise to satisfy your hunger, but instead they leave you feeling sick and unsatisfied.

The Word of God is unlike any other book ever written. It has stood against every test and its promises hold true in every storm and trial of life. The psalmist challenges us in Psalm 34:8 to pick up our spiritual fork and knife to "taste and see that the Lord is good."

Jesus explained to the disciples in Luke 6:21 that it is good to be spiritually hungry. "Blessed are you who are hungry now," He said, "for you shall be satisfied." The meaning of "blessed" reflects happiness, which doesn't come from achieving worldly success. The ache for more will only be satisfied by knowing Jesus through the Word.

What if in 2016 we resolve to be spiritually hungry? What if we picked up our Bibles, journals and pens, and ate the truth of the Word that never fails and answers our deepest needs? (BP)

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BAPTIST FORUM

Deliver us from the evil in America

First Person



Ronnie Floyd

The continual shootings in America are unprecedented and they are evidence of a desperate need for a spiritual awakening in this country.

Whether the shootings in America are related to terror, work, race, family, mental illness, or hate, they are killings. Violent. Lawless. Evil. This lawlessness cannot be solved by legislation, but by the power of the love of Jesus Christ to destroy the evil in our hearts.

More than one evil shooting a day

The New York Times addressed the San Bernardino killings as the 354th mass shooting in America last year. The New York Times stated, "Since January, there have been at least 354 such cases in about 220 cities in 47 states, according to shootingtracker.com."

In response to the San Bernardino mass shooting, The Washington Post stated, "The Mass Shooting Tracker is different from other shooting databases in that it uses a broader definition of mass shooting—the old FBI definition focused on four or more people killed as part of a single shooting."

Others can debate the terminology and statistics regarding what comprises a mass shooting. Regardless, we cannot deny we are seeing people shoot and kill others at a rate of more than one a day.

This is pure evil. It is a spiritual problem.

The human heart and the forces of hell

What is the cause of this shooting spree in our nation? Opinions abound, every one is expressed passionately, and they are debated continually. Yet, almost no one discusses the real problem, which is much deeper.

The problem is the condition of the human heart, as affirmed by the Holy Scripture in Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is more deceitful than anything else, and incurable—who can understand it?"

The human heart has the potential to express evil in unimaginable ways.

We are experiencing this today. While each of these shootings is occurring in different cities and for different reasons, the root problem is consistent in each of them—the evil condition of the human heart.

Jesus Himself answered a question from his disciples about various signs that will point toward His coming and the end of the age. One of these glaring signs Jesus gave to them is stated in Matthew 24:12, "Because lawlessness will multiply, the love of many will grow cold."

This is the evil we are witnessing in our time. Lawlessness is multiplying. The love of many is growing cold. Everything we are seeing relating to the devaluation of human life from an epidemic of abuse to the coldhearted murder of innocent people begins with the condition of the human heart.

I believe the Bible speaks clearly about the powerful force of Satan and his demonic forces; and a weak, sinful and evil human heart is vulnerable to the evil forces of hell. The Bible states in 1 Peter 5:8, "Be serious! Be alert! Your adversary the Devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour."

Be assured, Satan is alive and well, scheming against each person who is a devoted follower of Jesus Christ, and stoking the fire of hate in the hearts of those who chase after violence. I believe Satan is especially and continually scheming against America because of our Christian heritage. His goal is to destroy our lives, our nation, and all it represents. This is why evil abounds not only inside of our nation, but also from outside our nation.

America is becoming more susceptible and vulnerable to our enemies when we fail to listen to the words of Psalm 11:3, "When the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

The foundation of our nation is strong, but with every attack on that foundation, our nation suffers. Presently, America seems to be experiencing a season unrestrained and unrelenting attack.

The hope for America

On Dec. 2, 2015, an op-ed was printed in the Wall Street Journal by its owner—Rupert Murdoch—who is also the executive chairman of News Corporation. Rupert Murdoch had received the Hudson Institute's Global Leadership Award, and the op-ed, which was entitled "America the Indispensable," was an excerpt of his remarks in that gathering.

Murdoch called for, "Reviving our sense of direction and celebrating America's exceptional nature." Then he stated these words that captured my attention: "Around our country, there is a restless desire for revival." He is speaking not of a spiritual revival, but a revival of our nation that is in, as Murdoch called it, "a slow descent."

I appreciated his dynamic words and his call to our nation. Yet, my call to America would take his concern one step further—to a revival of the human heart. I love America and believe in our future greatly. But the evil we are seeing unrestrained in our nation today will not find its answer politically, socially, materially, nor financially. Rather, it all begins in the heart.

My hope is in the gospel

The condition of the human heart discovers its cure only in the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When we repent of our sin and by faith turn to Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven completely. A spiritual transformation occurs within us, changing us from the inside out.

We must share, speak, write and preach the Gospel to people and in places where the Gospel has never been before, across our nation, and world.

My hope is in the revival of the church

I believe there is a restlessness also occurring in the church that desires an unprecedented move of God like we have never seen before. Spiritual revival in the church is our hope.

When the church desires this move of God and seeks the God who can give it, then we will become even more convicted of the need to pray for ourselves and for our nation the powerful words of Jesus from the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:13, "...deliver us from the evil one."

The church needs to get prayer back in the church. It is the church that must lead the way in praying for the security in our nation.

> ***"A great spiritual awakening is the greatest hope for America."***
> Ronnie Floyd

My hope is in a great spiritual awakening

I am often asked, "Dr. Floyd, have you given up on America?" I respond immediately, "Absolutely not!" I have not given up on America because I believe in a God who can do anything, anytime, anywhere, with anyone.

This includes America. A great spiritual awakening is the greatest hope for America. This is our hope.

Lord, deliver us from the evil in America. (BP)

Ronnie Floyd is president of the Southern Baptist Convention and senior pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas.

Is your child learning how to give?

FINANCIAL FORUM

David Garrard

When I was a young boy, I asked my mother why our Sunday bulletin had the item "We Worship with His Tithes and Our Offerings." Her answer changed my life forever. Mom explained that a tithe, or 10 percent of all I had, belonged to God. When I gave a tithe I was simply giving to God what was already His. Only when I went beyond the tithe was I really bringing an offering to God.

My parents were givers. We didn't have a lot of money but I remember seeing their offering envelope on the dresser every Sunday. I remember, too, how they gave special offerings over and above their regular giving. Mom and Dad gave, and they taught me to give. When I was a boy I couldn't wait to get my own box of envelopes.

Before I had my own money, they made sure I had some to put in the offering plate. When money came my way, they reminded me to make my gift to God. Giving was a habit they helped me establish at an early age, and it has stayed with me. These days I find myself wondering if children are being taught to give. When our children were little, we used the "Three Envelope System" to help them learn to give. We gave them envelopes labeled "Give," "Save" and "Spend," and that was the order we taught them to fill the envelopes.

When it comes to giving, God says, "Test me! Try me out on this one and see what happens!" (Malachi 3:10). When we give, we open the door for God's blessing in our lives, and it keeps money from becoming too important.

Teach your children to give:

- Because they want to, not because they have to.
- To show their thankfulness for all God has done for them.
- To show their love. God loved. God gave. That's what you do when you love.

Remember, the best way to teach your children to be good givers is to be a good giver yourself.

Handling money: 3 key words

FINANCIAL FORUM

Don Spencer

Scripture emphasizes stewardship. Many of Jesus' parables deal with stewardship issues. Why is stewardship so important? Because it is a visible indicator of an inner spiritual condition. Show me how someone handles their money and it tells me volumes about their relationship with God.

The same can be said for a church. How a church deals with financial and material issues speaks loud and clear about that church's relationship with God.

In regards to a church dealing with money, let's focus on the following three words:

Integrity—If finances are handled with integrity it is done with honesty, accuracy and truthfulness. Integrity is the opposite of hypocrisy. When a church and its leaders handle finances with integrity, they do it based on the values, beliefs and principles they claim to hold.

Accountability—This is critical. On a basic level this includes tracking how much comes in, who it comes from and what it's used for. A church must have good internal controls and a healthy transparency. On a higher level, it recognizes that all persons who handle money in the church recognize it is God's money. It does not belong to any one individual or group of people in the church. Though it may be done with good intentions, whenever anyone in the church approaches money like they are the owners, problems will eventually develop.

Witness—The way a church handles its finances and material possessions will present either a positive or negative witness to the community. An church's witness is affected by their reputation. Over time a church and its leadership gets a reputation for how they handle financial issues, which impacts the church's collective witness to its members and to lost people in the community.

These three words are connected. Do all you can to make sure anyone handling any church finances are doing it in a way that helps facilitate, enhance and strengthen the ministries of the church.

Epoch changing lives through fitness, spiritual wellness

Owenton—Almost every new year, individuals will seek to make positive changes in their lives. Eat healthy, strengthen relationships, and work on their spiritual life.

Epoch Fellowship in Owenton had a vision of helping individuals develop habits that would assist people in this endeavor—not only at New Year's, but all year long.

Epoch Fellowship does this through the MasterFit gym and fitness program, which provides lifestyle education and training. The church has provided a facility and programming that helps their community move toward physical fitness.

Trent Holbert was the initial church planter at Epoch Fellowship in 2007. The church desired to reach the community through authentic relationships and community investment. But the idea of MasterFit was born out of the pastor's heart for his community and his personal experience.

Holbert's life has changed drastically over the last four years. After some time of fighting scoliosis and an autoimmune disorder with a 30 percent fatality rate, he readjusted his diet and lost 60 pounds.


Trent Holbert

"I literally saved my life through rethinking fitness and spiritual wellness," Holbert said.

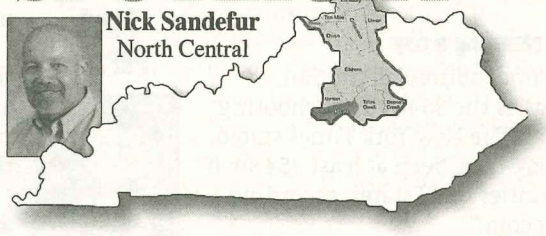
Holbert became a certified personal trainer and realized that others could use help in their journey. "This is my way to give a blessing back," he said.

Holbert wants people to realize the reality of Psalm 139:14—Mankind is "fearfully and wonderfully made."

"Our mission behind the gym is to help everyone feel that reality," he said. MasterFit had 70 members before the gym officially opened its doors Oct. 5, and within four days, it grew to 97 members.

At MasterFit, members develop natural connections with members of the community. Volunteers from Epoch Fellowship handle things from marketing and sales to processing memberships. These connections create avenues through which the gospel can be shared. There have been several people who have attended worship services as a result of the ministry of MasterFit.

Regional SPOTLIGHT


Nick Sandefur
North Central

Through the work at the gym, Epoch Fellowship models several things that would help churches across Kentucky reach their communities.

First, they model the importance of natural networks. Churches that are growing seek ways they can naturally connect with their communities. Whether a church uses sports leagues, schools, hobby groups or common points of interest, the gospel will flow best from friend to friend.

They also utilize the unique experiences and gifting of their church leaders to reach the community. Each church is uniquely made. Growing churches leverage the unique makeup, passion and skills of its members.

Epoch Fellowship also understands that the gospel is to affect our entire lives. Mind, body and soul—all should be encompassed in one's faith in the Lord.

If the gospel is able to save us to eternal life, surely it should affect every area of the here and now.

Finally, Epoch realizes the best way to reach people for Christ is to engage them where they live. (WR)

Top Kentucky stories

Continued from page 1

Kentucky Baptists: 'Stop funding Planned Parenthood'

Convention messengers adopted a resolution calling for ending public funding for the Planned Parenthood agency. Citing statistics indicating that "one of every four abortions performed in America are carried out at Planned Parenthood," the statement adopted at the KBC Annual Meeting in Elizabethtown noted that 995,787 abortions were carried out at Planned Parenthood in the past three years. Leading to the resolution were several videos released that showed Planned Parenthood officials talking about selling organs from aborted babies.



Baptists have chaplain, lobbyist, journalist at Capitol

Kentucky Baptists implemented a three-pronged strategy intended to give them more input in political issues that have moral and ethical implications. Executive Director Paul Chitwood unveiled the strategy at the KBC Annual Meeting, telling messengers about a grant that is covering the cost of a lobbyist, a chaplain and a journalist, all of whom will be based in Frankfort. Former Kentucky Legislative Research Commission Deputy Director Tom Troth has signed on as lobbyist; Steve Weaver, pastor of Farmdale Baptist Church near Frankfort and a teacher at Southern Seminary, has assumed the role of chaplain; and former International Mission Board foreign correspondent Kristen Lowry has been hired to cover news from the Capitol.

Tompkinsville native chosen as national WMU president



Woman's Missionary Union elected Linda Cooper of Tompkinsville to serve as national WMU president during their Missions Celebration and Annual Meeting at First Baptist Church of Grove City, Ohio. Cooper is the first Kentuckian ever to be elected to the post. A member of Forest Park Baptist Church in Bowling Green, she succeeds Debby Akerman, who served as WMU president for five years. "Please pray for me, for national WMU and for those lives who are being eternally changed through you as you lead missions education each week through WMU," Cooper requested.

Turning Point: Baptists see rise in baptisms, members, giving

Kentucky Baptist churches baptized 14,223 people, a turning point for the state's largest religious organization that had been in a gradual decline for the past decade. The state's 2,400 churches also reported an overall increase in membership, another sign that 2014 may have been a watershed year. Undesignated financial contributions to churches were up substantially from $309.8 million to $314.3 million last year. In September, the KBC reported that Cooperative Program gifts for the fiscal year reached $21,837,101—the largest amount in three years. That was up $432,632 over the previous year's total.

Crossings sets records, renews missions focus

Crossings not only saw a banner year for decisions and attendance, but this year even the camp staff found a renewed focus on missions. This summer Crossings partnered with the International Mission Board to raise $240,000 to send and support Latin American missionaries in their home countries. In addition,

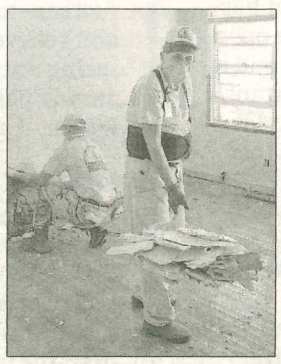


Crossings saw 849 salvation decisions among its 13,166 campers. Preregistration for 2016 already surpasses this summer's total. In October, Crossings President David Melber was named senior vice president of Send Relief—a new compassion ministry of the North American Mission Board to offer Southern Baptists opportunities to meet physical needs and serve underprivileged communities.

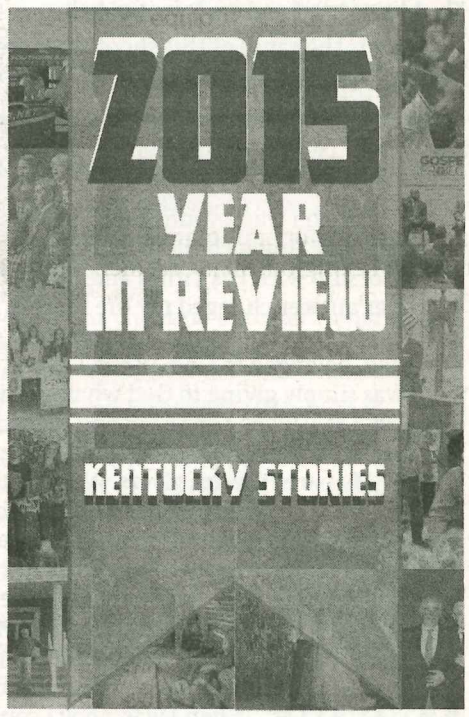
God's greatness compels us (IMB President) Platt tells new missionaries

At Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, 34 candidates were appointed as missionaries by the International Mission Board. The event marked the first IMB commissioning service held at a Kentucky church in recent years. Several Kentucky Baptist couples were among those commissioned, including Nick Moore, pastor of Redemption Hill Church in Fisherville, and his wife Kyndra, to Zimbabwe; Phil and Laura Metcalfe, members of Immanuel Baptist church in Louisville, to Mexico; and another couple, who have ties to Marion Church.

Kentucky Baptists helping S.C. flood victims



Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief teams arrived in Sumter to assist in recovery efforts after more than 20 inches of rain fell on parts of the state in early October. KBC Disaster Relief Director Coy Webb said several Kentucky flood recovery teams, a feeding team, and chaplains went to South Carolina. More than 650 homes in the Sumter area alone were damaged extensively by the torrential rains and two breached dams. More than 100 homeowner assistance jobs were completed, and more than 1,250 meals were prepared. Chaplains also reported four decisions for Christ.



In other Kentucky Baptist headlines...

- Two new agency leaders were elected: Dale Suttles, at Sunrise Children's Services, and Richard Carnes, at the Kentucky Baptist Foundation
- An Owen County teen, Nichole Roberts of Frankfort, won the national high school Bible drill tournament
- Grayson layman, Bill Johnson, was recognized as one of the nation's top disaster relief leaders for his Hurricane Sandy Relief work
- Three Kentucky cities—Lexington, Louisville and Paducah—were listed among the top 25 Bible-minded cities in the country. (WR)

'Intensive' evangelism conference to draw hundreds to Bowling Green

By Robin Cornetet

Bowling Green—Hundreds will gather in Bowling Green next month for an intensive two-day evangelism conference aimed at helping Kentucky Baptist churches "make much of Jesus."

"We have enlisted some of the top minds in evangelism who can ignite hearts and empower churches to engage their world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ," said Chuck McAlister, team leader of Kentucky Baptist Convention Evangelism, Church Planting and Collegiate Ministries.

The 2016 RISK Evangelism Conference will be hosted by Hillvue Heights Church on Feb. 8-9.

McAlister said participants will be given resources they can take back their churches to captivate the hearts of church members to engage their community with the gospel. More than 15 noted Southern Baptist speakers from Kentucky and across the country will emphasize the urgency to evangelize, reconcile and plant churches.

Presenters include: David Bailey, founder and executive director of Arrabon; Ricky Chelette, executive director of Living Hope Ministries; Paul Chitwood, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention; John Dickerson, author of "I Am Strong" and "The Great Evangelical Recession"; Ron Edmondson, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington; Shane Farmer, senior pastor of Cherry Hills Community Church in Highlands Ranch, Colo; Ronnie Floyd, president of the Southern Baptist Convention; Alex Himaya, senior pastor of theChurch.at, Tulsa, Okla; Chuck McAlister, leader of the KBC's Evangelism, Church Planting and Collegiate Ministries team; Brian Mills, speaker and author of "Virtuosity: Doing the Common Uncommonly Well"; Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville; Frank Page, president of the SBC's Executive Committee; Vance Pitman, senior pastor of Hope Church in Las Vegas; and Thom Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville, Tenn.

Speakers will expand on this year's theme, "Make Much of Jesus," by helping participants better understand the workings of their church, culture and community and then use that knowledge to determine needs and heed the call of scripture.

McAlister said networking opportunities abound at RISK from talking with individuals experiencing tremendous church growth and to learning the process of planting a new church.

A special women's-only breakout session is Feb. 9. Among the presenters will be Peggy Berry, ministry transition specialist at the KBC, and Janice McAlister, Chuck McAlister's wife.

Worship will be led by Keith Scarborough, associate worship pastor at Hillvue Heights Church, and Jason Stewart, worship and music consultant with the KBC.

The cost to register is $15 through Jan. 31 and then increases to $20. Group rates are available by calling 502-489-3418. To register, go to www.kybaptist.org/risk. (KBC)

PPFA defunding bill

Continued from page 1

Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, commented on President Barack Obama's veto of the Restoring Americans' Healthcare Freedom Reconciliation Act, legislation which included a provision that would have ended federal funding for Planned Parenthood.

"The President's veto and his support of Planned Parenthood are not surprising moves, but they are sobering reminders of how much more there is to do for the cause of women and the unborn," said Moore. "The tax-supported human trafficking of Planned Parenthood is deeply entrenched in our cultural conscience, and it is grievous to see this administration's continual denial of the most basic of human rights to the most vulnerable among us."

The approval by both houses of an effort to eliminate most of Planned Parenthood's federal funding still amounts to a long-awaited victory. For years, members of Congress have sought to hold accountable an organization that performs more than 300,000 abortions a year, receives more than $500 million from the government annually and continues to be plagued by scandal.

Planned Parenthood's latest black-eye—which fueled the current congressional defunding action—was last year's revelation through undercover videos it trades in baby body parts.

Pro-life leaders applauded the House action. Moore called the vote to cut funds for PPFA "a just decision that we should celebrate."

"There is no moral justification for sponsoring the human trafficking of Planned Parenthood clinics with our tax dollars," Moore said in comments for Baptist Press. "Justice for the unborn and for women demands much more than this one vote, but it is a step in the right direction."

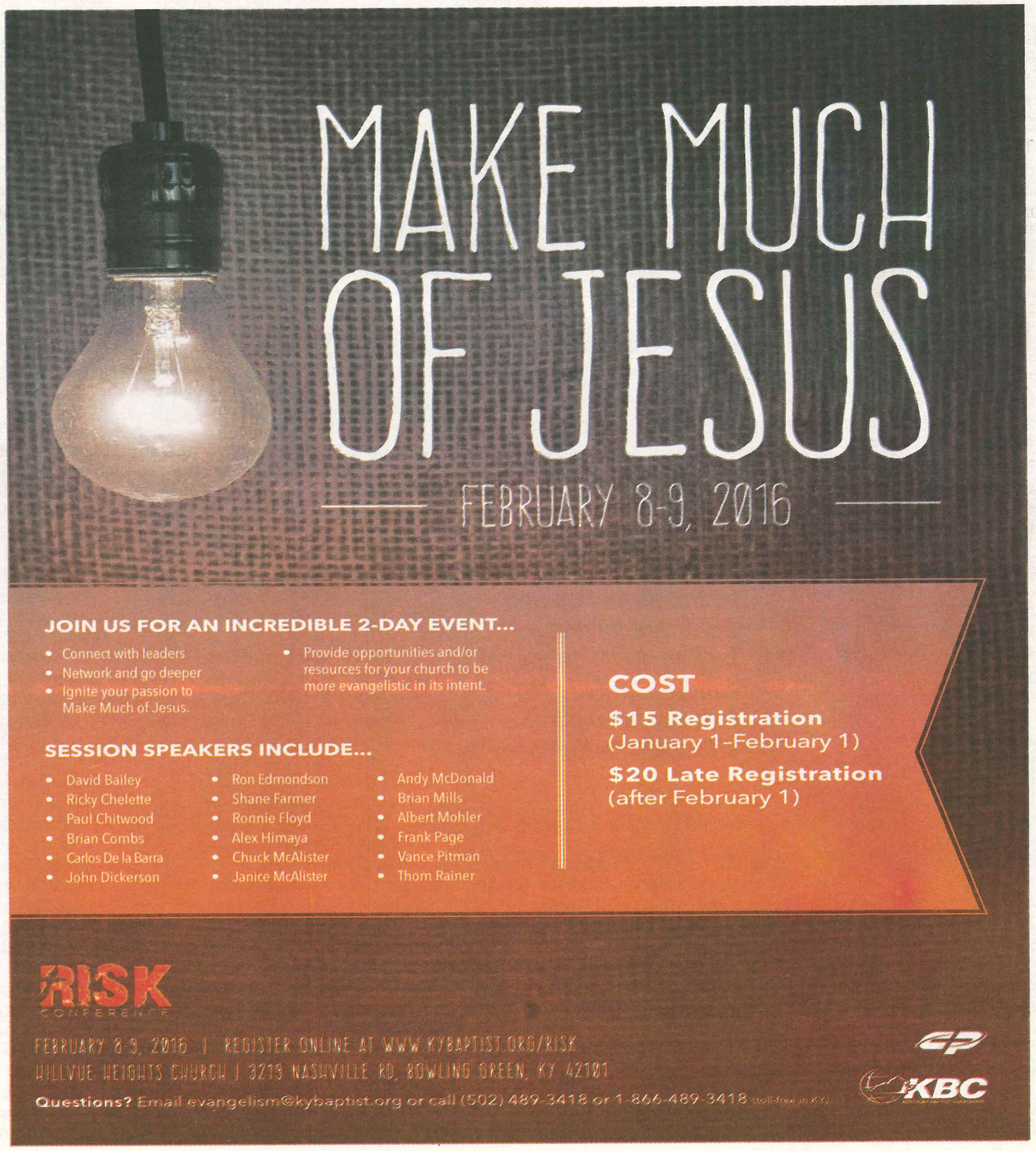
Casey Mattox, senior counsel for Alliance Defending Freedom, said the House did "the will of the majority of Americans." He said in a written statement, "It is time to end this immoral partnership that has been forced upon the American people."

Charmaine Yoest, president of Americans United for Life, said in a written release, "While we know that it's unlikely that the President will respect the majority of Americans who do not want to be forced into business with the abortion industry, this vote shows that the framework is there to defund Big Abortion with a pro-life president."

Supporters of the effort to defund Planned Parenthood used what is known as the reconciliation process in their latest effort. Reconciliation enables the Senate to pass a budget-related measure without the need for 60 votes to overcome a filibuster attempt.

The House had approved a non-reconciliation bill to defund PPFA in September, but the legislation was dead on arrival in the Senate because of the need for a super majority. In August, the Senate had fallen short on a defunding bill despite a 53-46 majority, because it failed to gain the 60 votes needed to invoke cloture, as it is known, and block a filibuster.

The ERLC's Moore and 37 other pro-life leaders wrote congressional leaders in October to encourage them to use the reconciliation process in an attempt to defund PPFA. (BP)



Star Wars & Christians: Old, new analyses awaken

By David Roach

Nashville—The latest Star Wars movie has awakened a force of Christian-themed commentary touching on subjects from the film's theological errors to its relation to the storyline of the Bible.

"Star Wars: The Force Awakens," rated PG-13, was expected to gross approximately $200 million in North America on its opening weekend and could earn up to $1 billion in domestic box office revenue, becoming the top grossing movie of all time, according to The Hollywood Reporter.

The film is set 30 years following "Star Wars: Episode VI—Return of the Jedi" (1983) and chronicles the protagonists' effort to defeat a totalitarian-led army seeking to conquer the universe.

Among Southern Baptists, a Missouri pastor has written an analysis of theologically troubling themes in Star Wars, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary devoted the cover of one campus publication to the latest film and a Southern Seminary professor has re-released his 2003 book exploring a Christian experience of the first six Star Wars movies.

In the broader evangelical world, Christianity Today, The Gospel Coalition, R.C. Sproul's Ligonier Ministries, The Heritage Foundation, Crosswalk.com and The Christian Post among others all have published Star Wars-themed articles.

Phil Boatwright, a Christian movie critic, told Baptist Press "it's good Christians want to talk about" Star Wars. The series, he said, has generated discussion since 1977, when the initial movie became the highest grossing film to date.

"The people writing about Star Wars today grew up watching it," Boatwright said. "Star Wars changed the way films were made, beginning a trend of special effects becoming more important than story and inanimate objects becoming central characters. It was then, as now, a phenomenon, with brilliant marketing tactics causing moviegoers to want to see it over and over."

In his review of "The Force Awakens," Boatwright said New Age and Eastern religious themes, for which Star Wars movies have drawn criticism from believers in the past, "are pared down a bit." He called the latest installment "a spin on the western genre, if you will. Or perhaps more precisely, it is a good vs. evil actioneer wherein a price is paid for freedom, truth and the Galaxy way."

Jake Taggart, director of education at Concord Baptist Church in Jefferson City, Mo., wrote in an Internet commentary on the church website that Christians should enjoy "The Force Awakens" but be aware of "theological fissures of Star Wars lore that heterodoxically distances it from Christianity."

Among the theological points noted by Taggart are that Star Wars appears to equate God with forces in the universe—a religious system known as pantheism—and to suggest salvation comes through losing personal identity after death and becoming "one with the Force."

Despite these themes, "Christ-followers need not fear attending the latest Star Wars movie," Taggart wrote. He urged parents to discuss with their children the differences between Star Wars and Christianity.

"Star Wars is a great drama, but its theology is not from a galaxy far, far away, but more likely from an earthen region in the far, far east," Taggart wrote. "Just remember that it is only the Gospel of Jesus Christ that can save humanity."

At Southern Seminary, the cover of the December-January issue of the campus publication Towers pictures a starry sky and features the headline: "Star Wars: The Wonder Awakens." A four-page spread discusses "the religious world of the Star Wars saga."

A message from editor Craig Sanders notes, "The Force Awakens ... is expected to be the biggest movie of all time. If you don't see this movie, most of your friends and family will, so I hope this issue helps you engage in the task of interpreting movies from a Christian worldview."

Southern Seminary professor Timothy Paul Jones' book on Star Wars, "Finding God in a Galaxy Far, Far Away," was re-released by Waterbrook Multnomah in



conjunction with the opening of "The Force Awakens."

Jones told BP that Star Wars films, like nearly all movies "worth watching," echo the Bible's storyline by depicting a good state of existence that is lost and needs to be restored.

"In the best movies, the heroes endure suffering and sacrifice to triumph over evil and bring about a new and better possibility," Jones, a professor of family ministry, said in written comments. "This basic storyline characterizes the best movies because this storyline was God's storyline long before it was ours.

"God created a good world; this world was distorted through the fall of Adam and Eve; God purchased redemption through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; and this glorious resurrection inaugurated a new creation that God will bring to fruition and fulfillment at the end of time," Jones said. (BP)

Pre-teen girls raise more than $1,000 for missions

By Marilyn Stewart

New Orleans—When Jay and Elizabeth Terrill decided to forego Christmas gifts to each other and instead give to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, it sparked an idea for their daughter Mollie and her cousin Lexi Cole: a Christmas craft fair to benefit the International Mission Board.

With the recent IMB financial/personnel cuts in mind, the 11-year-olds enlisted the help of their church—Gentilly Baptist Church in New Orleans—and set a goal of $1,000. With donated crafts, baked goods, garden plants and other items, the fair netted $1,067.

"I was so excited," said Pam Cole, grandmother of the two girls. "For them to have other people on their hearts at this time of the year was what was so special to me. They wanted to give and help the missionaries stay on the field."

> ***"Watching them has been affirmation that we ... are having a lasting effect on these children and they in turn are having an effect on the Kingdom"***
>
> Elizabeth Terrill, Mollie's mother

Staged less than a month after the girls approached pastor Ken Taylor with the idea, the craft fair drew nearly 80 people, said Dennis Cole, associate pastor and the girls' grandfather.

Pre-teen girls at the church made ornaments and crocheted bracelets. Children age 4 to 10 contributed crafts such as jingle bell necklaces and nativity scenes made from tongue depressors. One item sold at the craft fair was an acrylic painting by Hannah Scarbro, an NOBTS student and daughter of former IMB missionaries in the Philippines.

Mollie said she and her cousin thought of the idea in part because a longtime friend, Sandra*, now serving with the IMB, recently had returned to her home church.

"One of our missionaries who used to go to our church told us how it is important to give money to the missionaries," Mollie said.

"When people stop giving, then less people get to know the Good News," Lexi added.

Pam Cole said her family, along with church members, frequently wear the "Not On Our Watch–Support the International Mission Board" T-shirts designed and printed by an NOBTS student and others, with proceeds going to the IMB.

The T-shirts, sold on campus during NOBTS' Global Missions Week in November, reflected a rhetorical answer of "Not on our watch" to whether Southern Baptists would allow personnel to come home in light of Jesus' commission to send workers into the harvest field.

Elizabeth Terrill said her daughter came to her two weeks before the Christmas market and asked why missionaries are wanted on the field, but people are unwilling to support them financially.

"In that moment, I knew that she really grasped the issue at hand and that it was really weighing on her heart," Elizabeth Terrill said. "Watching them has been affirmation that we as parents and as a church are having a lasting effect on these children and they in turn are having an effect on the Kingdom."

The girls already are making plans for the next year's market, Elizabeth Terrill said, adding, "I can't wait to see how God will continue to use them." (BP)

Ala. chief justice defies Supreme Court ruling, forbids clerks to issue licenses

By Cathy Lynn Grossman

Alabama's probate courts may not issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples, the chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court has ordered.

Chief Justice Roy Moore ruled Jan. 6 that Alabama's Marriage Protection Act, which bars such unions, remains "in full force and effect" despite a June ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court that struck down similar laws banning same-sex marriage in Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio and Tennessee, according to USA Today.

"Until further decision by the Alabama Supreme Court, the existing orders of the Alabama Supreme Court that Alabama probate judges have a ministerial duty not to issue any marriage license contrary to the Alabama Sanctity of Marriage Amendment or the Alabama Marriage Protection Act remain in full force and effect," Moore wrote in the order. Alabama is faced with conflicting rulings, between an earlier decision of Alabama's Supreme Court and the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in Obergefell v. Hodges, Moore wrote. Until the Alabama court acts to resolve the conflict, its earlier decision stands.

This is not Moore's first attempt to blur church-state boundaries. He was Alabama's chief justice in 2003, when a state judicial panel removed him because he refused to obey a federal judge's order to remove a 5,200-pound granite Ten Commandments monument from the lobby of the Alabama Judicial Building. But he was re-elected in 2012.

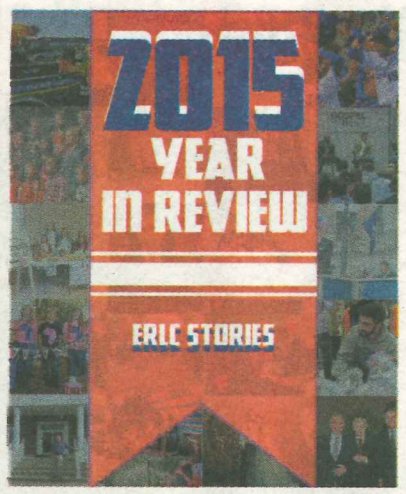
In the same-sex marriage showdown, Moore does not have the authority to override higher courts, Scott McCoy, a senior staff attorney for the Southern Poverty Law Center, told Reuters news service.

"This is Moore yet again confusing his role as chief justice with his personal anti-LGBT agenda," McCoy said.

But Christian supporters were vocal about supporting the chief justice. (RNS)



Panelists discuss the Gospel and homosexuality at the ERLC's Equip Austin event. (Photo by Gary Ledbetter)



Marriage, race among top issues for ERLC

By Tom Strode

NASHVILLE—The Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission addressed same-sex marriage, religious freedom, racial reconciliation, the sanctity of human life and politics among other issues in a tumultuous year for social and church-state issues.

The ERLC sponsored conferences and panel discussions, provided resources to equip pastors and churches, and advocated for biblically based policies with the federal government during 2015.

Russell Moore, the ERLC's president, urged those attending the entity's national conference in August to engage the culture's important issues socially and politically but not to claim politicians as "spiritual mascots" or to adopt a "siege mentality."

"We are exiles in America not because we have lost America," Moore said. "We are strangers and exiles in every culture and every place because the gospel and the mission get us out of step with the culture."

Here are 10 key news items related to the ERLC from 2015:

Supreme Court legalizes same-sex marriage nationwide

The U.S. Supreme Court transformed the legal definition of marriage in June by ruling 5-4 that states must recognize marriages between people of the same gender. Southern Baptist leaders responded to the legalization of gay marriage nationwide with dismay but also with encouragement for churches to act with courage and faithfulness.

ERLC offers resources to churches on gay marriage

The ERLC provided aid before and after the Supreme Court's ground-breaking decision to assist churches in addressing same-sex marriage. This included a manual offering legal advice to churches, schools and ministries, as well as a July equipping event in Austin, Texas. Moore also spoke on a panel about the issue at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in June.

Leadership summit addresses gospel, racial reconciliation

Black, white and Hispanic pastors presented the gospel of Jesus as the solution to America's racial divisions during the ERLC's second annual leadership summit in March in Nashville. Moore addressed racial reconciliation in other forums as well, including appearances in Charleston, S.C., following the murder of black church members there and a blog post calling for removal of the Confederate battle flag from the South Carolina statehouse grounds.

Conference calls for gospel-shaped political engagement

Speakers in August at the ERLC's second national conference urged evangelical Christians to engage politically with a witness shaped by the gospel. Just prior to the conference, Moore spoke to more than 13,000 people on a Christian's citizenship responsibilities at the North American Mission Board's Send North America Conference, also in Nashville. During its conference, the ERLC hosted an event familiarizing young pastors and leaders with the SBC and the Cooperative Program.

Videos instigate effort to defund Planned Parenthood

Undercover videos providing evidence Planned Parenthood trades in baby body parts prompted a renewed call by the ERLC for the federal government to eliminate funds for the country's No. 1 abortion provider.

Religious freedom office opens in Middle East

The ERLC opened an international office in the Middle East to advocate for religious freedom and social justice, with Travis Wussow as its director.

ERLC launches Capitol Conversations in Washington

The ERLC inaugurated Capitol Conversations, a series of periodic panel discussions in Washington, D.C. The first three events in the series addressed same-sex marriage and religious liberty, Planned Parenthood and the sanctity of human life, and the Syrian refugee crisis.

Briefs urge Supreme Court to review HHS mandate

Friend-of-the-court briefs filed by the ERLC and other Southern Baptist entities asked the Supreme Court to review lower-court rulings that upheld the federal abortion/contraception mandate for Baptist universities and ministries served by GuideStone Financial Resources. The high court announced in November it would rule in the cases.

ERLC, Focus on Family unveil Evangelicals for Life

In January, the ERLC and Focus on the Family introduced Evangelicals for Life—a major evangelical, pro-life conference in conjunction with the 2016 March for Life.

Christianity Today honors Moore's 'Onward'

Christianity Today named Moore's latest book, "Onward," as its Book of the Year, and the top book of the year in the politics and public life category. (BP)

Jones to join SBTS faculty as biblical counseling professor

By Andrew Smith

Louisville—Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has appointed Robert Jones as associate professor of biblical counseling. Jones joins the SBTS faculty after serving as a biblical counseling professor for 11 years at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina.

"Dr. Robert Jones is one of the leading figures in the biblical counseling movement," said Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary. "He combines scholarship and biblical fidelity with clear theological vision and a tremendous ability to translate biblical principles into the lives of others."

Jones earned a Doctor of Theology degree from the University of South Africa in 2015 and a Doctor of Ministry in pastoral counseling at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. He has also earned degrees from the The King's College and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

Jones has also served since 2006 as an elder and pastor of biblical counseling at Open Door Church in Raleigh, N.C. Before moving to Southeastern Seminary in 2004, Jones served for 19 years as lead pastor of Grace Fellowship Church in Hurricane, W.Va.

"Dr. Robert Jones combines a commitment to scholarship with years of ministry experience and a heart for students," said Randy Stinson, provost and senior vice president for academic administration. "I am delighted that he will be joining our faculty and confident that he will be instrumental in training up future generations of biblical counselors and pastors who faithfully apply God's Word to those in their care."

Jones is a fellow and certified counselor with the Associate of Certified Biblical Counselors (ACBC), a council board member with the Biblical Counseling Coalition, and a certified conciliator and adjunct instructor at Peacemaker Ministries.

Jones and his wife, Lauren, have been married for 32 years and have two adult sons. Jones will officially start at Southern Seminary on June 1, 2016. (SBTS)

Iranian pastor Fathi finally freed from prison

By Diana Chandler

Tehran, Iran—Iranian pastor Farshid Fathi has been freed after five years imprisonment in Tehran because of charges linked to his Christian faith, Middle East Concern announced, estimating nearly 100 Christians remain imprisoned there.

"We are so thankful to the Lord for his protection over Farshid while in prison," Middle East Concern said in a press release.

"It is our hope that the gospel will continue to spread throughout Iran."

Fathi was released Dec. 21 from Rajai Shahr prison, five months after prison authorities informed him he would be due for early release this month, although no reason for the early release has been reported.

Previously, he was scheduled for release in December, 2017, after authorities arrested him Dec. 26, 2010 for "acting against national security through membership of a Christian organization, collection of funds, and propaganda against the Islamic Regime by helping spread Christianity in the country." Sixty other Christians were arrested on the same day in Tehran while worshipping in a house church.

The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) also expressed thankfulness for Fathi's release.

"Fathi's release is a testament to the power of prayer and international pressure. After years of aggressive advocacy from many players on the international stage, Pastor Farshid Fathi will get to spend this Christmas with his family," ACLJ said in a statement posted on its website. "Fathi's release also reminds us of the importance of our continued efforts to free the 91 other Christians who are imprisoned for their faith in Iran." Fathi has a wife and two children. (BP)



Farshid Fathi

Shipley: Football only part of reason he landed at Murray State

By Bill Sorrell



Murray—Occasionally Zach Shipley will skip words while leading a devotion and will say something that doesn't make sense.

However, he doesn't mince words when explaining why he is at Murray State.

"I feel like I was truly brought to Murray State to play football, to share my faith and to lead people to Christ. Football is more a platform for Christ than about me playing," said Shipley, a sophomore wide receiver from Shelbyville.

While basically a shy person, Shipley has become bold in his faith since becoming a leader in Campus Outreach, an interdenominational ministry that focuses on evangelizing and discipling college students.

"I have never been one to go out of my way to meet other people so that has changed now that I have come to Christ and saw the need for evangelism. Evangelism is huge. That calls me to be bold in my faith and really speak out and challenge some people's views. I try to do ministry on the team as well as I try to lead Bible studies.

"My job is to bring Christ into this atmosphere and show them what it truly means to love the Lord and walk with Him. It's completely two sides of the spectrum. When you have a football team that lives for football, that is a very worldly atmosphere."

Worldly could describe his thoughts in high school, he said.

"Not everybody who claims to be a Christian throughout their life probably is. That was me growing up. I was the guy who said that he was a Christian, who led a good lifestyle, who everybody thought was, but deep down I was just a guy who was very prideful, very arrogant, who led himself."

Raised by Christian parents Todd and Michelle Shipley, Zach was active in First Baptist Church of Shelbyville. He was quarterback at Shelby County High School. His father was his head coach.

As a senior, he was honorable mention all-state and helped lead the Rockets to the district championship. As defensive back his junior year he was second team all-state.

Twice he was first-team all-district at quarterback and defensive back.

He was the state champion in the 300 meters as a junior.

Redshirted during the 2013 season, he played wide receiver and punted in 2014 for Murray. His punts averaged 37.2 yards, placing six inside the 20-yard line. This season he began at wide receiver but finished at safety after injuries to defensive players.

Shipley, who is 5'10" and weighs 178 pounds, brings speed, top-notch hand-eye coordination and consistency.

"I am going to be there on every play and do exactly what they ask me to do and be at the right spot at the right time. I've always considered myself as a receiver that happened to play quarterback in high school because that is where I needed to be."

> ***"We hold each other accountable. If we are pursuing Christ together, our thought life is better."***
>
> Toby Omli,
> Murray State teammate

Murray State teammate Toby Omli, a safety from Brookville, Kansas, said, "You have got to be sure that you have got two eyes on him. You have got to stay honest with him. He knows his job. He can block. He can catch. He can run every route and do anything you ask him."

Murray State head football coach Mitch Stewart said that he wishes he had 100 Zach Shipleys.

"He is a football junkie, but at the same time we talk about building your football program with class kids that love football and love class and do things in the right way. He embodies all of that."

"His personality and work ethic and the way he goes about his day-to-day, if you had a team full of those guys the chances of you winding up on the short end of the scoreboard would be slim to none."

Bernard Thomas, a senior cornerback from Blue Springs, Mo., said that while Shipley can do a lot of different tasks on the field, it is his generosity off the field that makes a difference.

"He is always ready to do something for somebody. He is always giving people rides, black and white, everybody is all the same to him. He is definitely close to God."

Shipley was a freshman at Murray when he became a Christian through Campus Outreach.

"I knew God throughout my whole life. In college I saw these guys that were truly living hard after the Lord. I saw that I was in control of my life," he said.

"I think what really brought me to Christ was the Lord part. I always knew that I had a savior in Christ but He has called us to be our Lord. He is truly my Lord now."

Shipley was baptized in September 2015 at Hardin Baptist Church, where he is an active member. During summer 2015, Shipley worked seven weeks in Tampa with Campus Outreach. He did missions work and personal faith development.

During the spring semester in 2014, he said that he "had been with Christ for about a year or two where I saw that He called me to have more than just an average lifestyle."

That prompts him to spend a minimum of 30 minutes each day "with the Lord to get to know Him better."

Prayer is huge, fellowship with other believers, speaking on campus, studying the Bible and leading Bible studies, "telling others about Jesus and seeing them come to Christ" have been keys to spiritual growth.

One of Shipley's spiritual goals is "to have many men come to Christ on this football team. I am seeking after the freshmen right now. I'm really trying to invest in their lives. As long as kids come to Christ and the Lord is using me, then I am happy. It's amazing to lead those guys and watch them grow."

When Shipley goes onto the field, he heads straight to the Lord in prayer. After the game starts, he wants to "glorify Him with my thoughts, actions and words."

Omli, who became a Christian when his parents shared the gospel with him, and Shipley team together to lead discipleship.

"It is awesome to see him growing. We hold each other accountable. If we are pursuing Christ together, our thought life is better," Omli said. "It's really cool to have a brother in Christ like that."

When Omli arrived on campus during the spring semester in 2015, he said that it was hard coming in "by yourself. I didn't have any friends. Zach was the first guy to invite me to his home and to hang out with me and to love me, not knowing whether I was a Christian or not, just as a friend. He was making sure I was feeling at home and making sure I had everything I needed."

Shipley said that everything he needs is found in Christ.

"I have to realize that God is in control of my life and I am not. That comes from solid prayer time and solid Word time with Him. I can't just pick a day to be a Christian and the other day to be a football player. It is truly that I am a Christian who happens to play football." (WR)

Bill Sorrell has been pastor of First Baptist Church in Whiteville, Tenn., for 18 years. He writes faith-based stories for Southern Baptist Convention newspapers.

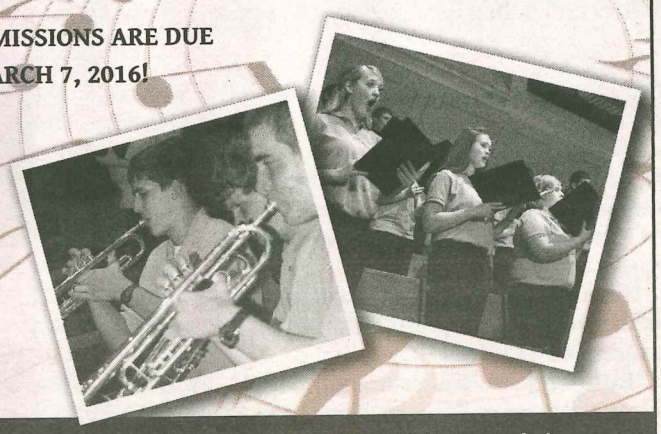
AUDITIONS ARE NOW OPEN!

all-state youth choir & orchestra 2016

June 19-26, 2016

The Kentucky Baptist All-State Youth Choir & Orchestra is an auditioned choir made up of young musicians in grades 9-12. Members are chosen by audition and, once selected, may continue to participate through the summer after graduation. The choir and orchestra meet for a rehearsal retreat followed by a tour throughout the state of Kentucky.

ALL AUDITION SUBMISSIONS ARE DUE
NO LATER THAN MARCH 7, 2016!



For more information and instructions for the audition, visit our website:

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Questions? email worship@kybaptist.org or call (502) 489-3390.

Cru cofounder, Bright, dies at 89

By David Roach

Orlando, Fla.—Vonette Bright, cofounder of Campus Crusade for Christ and an internationally known leader in prayer and women's ministry, died Dec. 23 from complications related to acute leukemia. She was 89.


Vonette Bright

Bright and her husband Bill, who died in 2003, launched Campus Crusade, now known in the U.S. as Cru, at UCLA in 1951. It has since grown into what news reports called the world's largest Christian ministry, with 25,000 staff members and 300,000 volunteers working in 173 countries.

Vonette Bright also was instrumental in petitioning Congress and the president to designate the first Thursday of every May as National Day of Prayer. After Ronald Reagan signed legislation establishing the National Day of Prayer in 1988, Bright chaired the National Day of Prayer Task Force for nine years.

She authored more than a dozen books and in 1993 founded the women's ministry Women Today International.

Southern Baptists who knew Bright included student and women's ministry leader Diane Strack, former LifeWay Christian Resources President James Draper and Trinity International University President David Dockery.

Strack, wife of speaker and author Jay Strack, told Baptist Press Vonette Bright "wanted to impact the world with prayer and Scripture, never allowing herself to rest on the past, even though it was amazing." The Stracks became friends with the Brights in the mid-1990s, when both couples moved to Orlando, Fla.

Draper and his wife Carol Ann told BP, "Vonette Bright will be greatly missed. We shared many events and times of fellowship and ministry with Bill and Vonette over the years. She was always by his side and he relied upon her counsel through the developing years of Campus Crusade for Christ. She was a dynamic leader with enormous influence. At the same time, she had a personal touch that was always an encouragement to all she came in contact with."

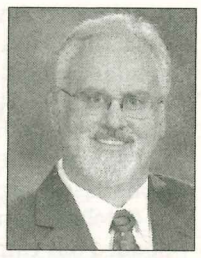
Dockery, who served with Bright on the board of The King's College in New York, told BP she was "an integral part" of Campus Crusade's "magnificent ministry of evangelism and discipleship on college campuses across the country and around the world."

Among those paying tribute to Bright on the Cru website were evangelist Billy Graham and women's ministry leader Beth Moore.

"Vonette had a heart for the gospel and an extraordinary vision to reach people for Jesus Christ," Graham said. "Her single-minded focus on the power of intercessory prayer has been both an encouragement to my life and a model for the church." (BP)

Lynn Association calls Smith as director of missions

Munfordville—Lynn Association has called John Smith as its new director of missions. He assumed the role Jan. 1.


John Smith

Previously, Smith served as the pastor of Munfordville Baptist Church in Lynn Association for more than eight years. He served as pastor of Upton Baptist Church, also in the Lynn Association, for 13 years. Before this, he was youth pastor at First Baptist Church of Paris.

A 1985 graduate of Campbellsville College, Smith is in his 30th year of ministry.

"I just see the position as the 'encourager, equipper and engager,'" Smith said of his new role. "The role of the director of missions is to be the 'Chief Encouragement Officer,' to stand alongside the churches and encourage the churches and pastors," he added. "It's to be an equipper to provide training and materials when necessary and to engage our churches to be involved actively in missions."

He and his wife Becky have two sons, one a student at Western Kentucky University and the youngest at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. (WR)

Putting feet to faith: Hawkins' 'James Code'

By Roy Hayhurst

Dallas—When you get down to it, there are really only three relationships in life, GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins says: an upward relationship between man and God; an inward relationship with oneself; and an outward relationship between man and the world around him.

Those three relationships exist regardless of time or place—a lesson Hawkins learned throughout 25 years as a pastor, from wheat-farming country in Oklahoma to cosmopolitan and business centers in Fort Lauderdale and Dallas. They spurred the creation of a now-complete trilogy of books, culminating with the release of "The James Code: 52 Scripture Principles for Putting Your Faith into Action."

Excelling in the outward relationship is the message behind The James Code. Hawkins uses the illustration of the stagnant Dead Sea, with no water outlet, and the vibrant Sea of Galilee, with both a water inlet and outlet, to describe the works that flow from faithful believers.

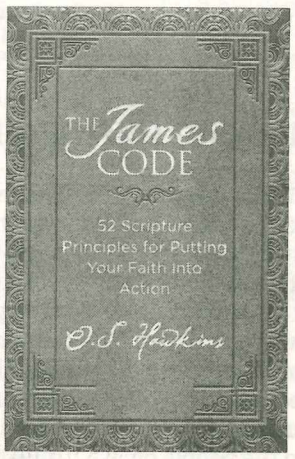
"Vibrant believers not only take in, but they also give out," Hawkins writes. "They put the word they receive (input) into action (output). In this way, they become 'doers of the word, and not hearers only.'"

The book of James is as relevant today as it was when the half-brother of Christ penned the words, Hawkins said.

"If you are struggling to put your faith into action, the message of James is for you."

The struggle, he noted, is not in knowing what Christ calls His followers to do; it's in actually doing it.

"The challenge is practicing with our lives what we know in our minds and proclaim with our lips," Hawkins said. "Throughout the book of James, we are reminded that when we walk in the Holy Spirit, we should be wearing out the soles of our shoes.



"It's not about faith or works, or faith and works, but about a faith that works," Hawkins said about the faith James describes as well as the apostle Paul. "That's the kind of faith that the early church had, and it's the kind of faith the modern church needs too."

The James Code is divided into 52 chapters, allowing anyone to study the book week by week over the course of a year. The 52 chapters are divided into 12 subsections, making for a 12-week series as well.

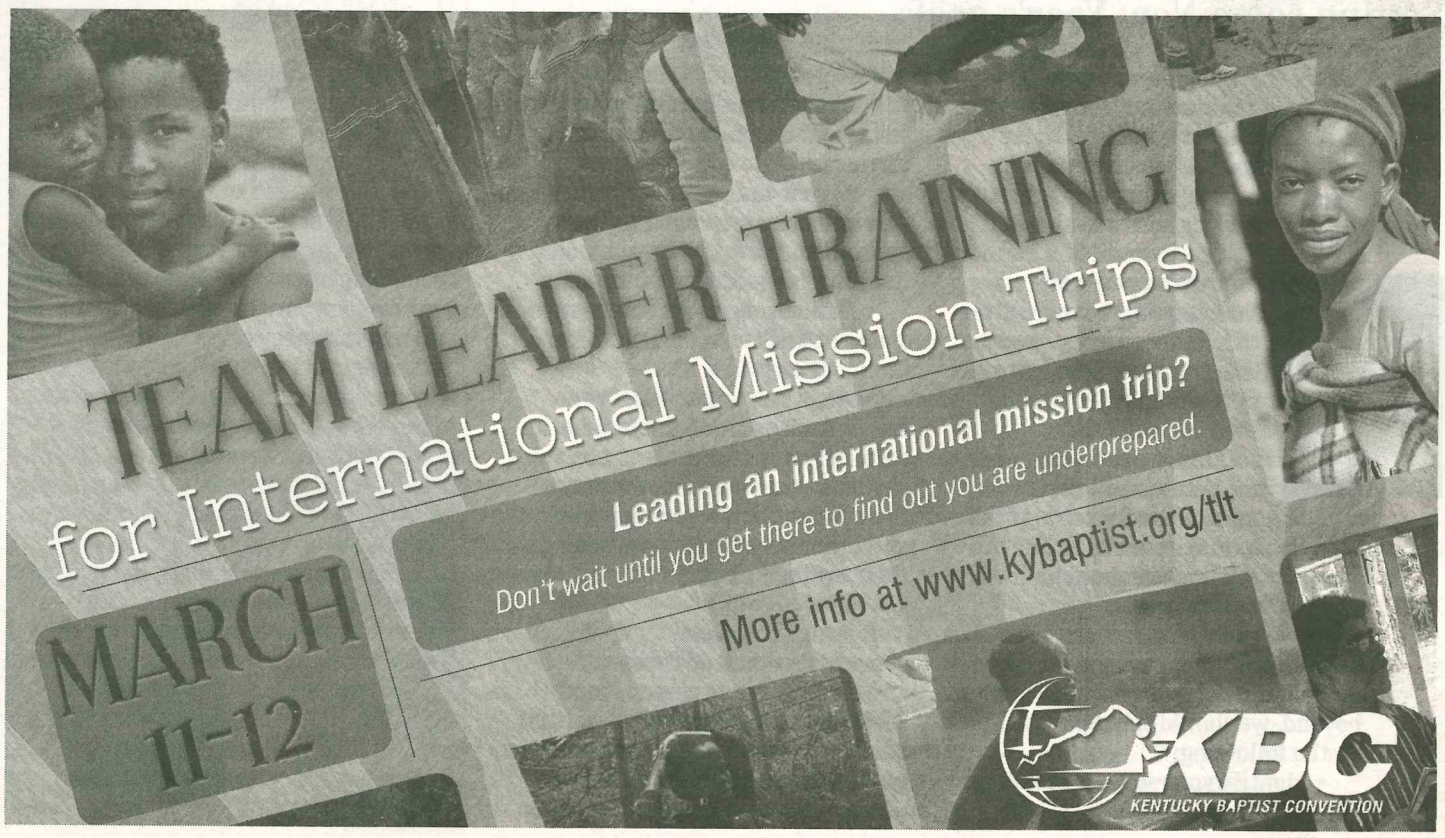
The James Code follows "The Joshua Code: 52 Scripture Verses Every Believer Should Know" and "The Jesus Code: 52 Scripture Questions Every Believer Should Answer" in helping Christians live out their faith, Hawkins explained.

"The Joshua Code deals with the upward relationship, our relationship with the Creator of the universe. It's what separates us from all the other created order," Hawkins said. "Bottom line: We're never properly related to each other or ourselves unless we're properly related to God through Jesus Christ.

"The Jesus Code has to do with our inward relationship. The Bible says we are to give an account for the hope that is within us. Once we are properly related with God, then ourselves, The James Code comes along to speak to the outward expression of our faith."

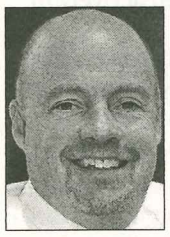
One of James' most famous admonitions is that pure and undefiled religion in the eyes of God is to care for widows and orphans in their distress. This isn't lost on Hawkins, who donates all author proceeds to Mission:Dignity, the GuideStone Financial Resources ministry that assists retired Southern Baptist pastors and their widows in financial need.

"We're on a mission to bring dignity to these retired pastors, and now, 60 percent of the recipients are widows, with an average age of 85," Hawkins said. "One widow wrote and told us, 'I get to eat tonight now and it's not just a piece of toast.' That's a blessing as we put feet to our faith and care for these pastor widows in their declining years." (BP)



Year in review

This is Oneida



Larry Gritton

The Lord blessed us in 2015, and I'd like to highlight some of those blessings with our year in review.

January: Our girls' basketball team made the Class A Regional championship game for the first time ever. Our dean of students went to be with the Lord. Her funeral was a celebration and a reunion of many past Oneida folks.

February: As we neared spring break, we went two days without water. We were well stocked with food and drinking water, but dorm life was the challenge. Kids melted snow to bathe and we hauled buckets of water from our swimming pool to flush toilets. If we had gone another day or two without water, I probably would have sent our kids home for an early spring break, but the Lord saw us through.

March: We had snow, ice and flooding during spring break. For two days a church in Lexington housed our kids scheduled to go home by plane. Many of our kids stayed with us a day longer due to bus cancellations.

April: Our Board of Trustees voted to expand our K-5 to include local, commuting students and to add a classroom to our new boys' dormitory.

May: We sent out 51 graduates.

June: We had 60 students in our summer work program. This teaches the value of hard work and a reduced-tuition education. Carnahan Hall was demolished.

July: Construction began on our Carnahan-Daugherty facility. Summer school saw 75 kids recover credit or get a jump start on the 2015-16 school year.

August: The school year opened with the most students we've had on opening day in many years, and more local students than we have had in two decades. It was the first time since the 1950's that we had an elementary school with local kids. Many gave their hearts to Christ during our first week of school.

September: 1. Both soccer teams won Class A regional championships.

October: Hundreds of guests flooded our campus for homecoming.

November: Our volunteer season wrapped up. We were blessed by 529 volunteers this year.

December: We celebrated our Savior's birth with an International Christmas Around the World, A Walk to Bethlehem, and Hanging of the Green.

Thank you, Kentucky Baptists, for helping make 2015 a banner year for our ministry.

Larry Gritton Jr. is president of Oneida Baptist Institute. Website: oneidaschool.org. Phone: (606) 847-4111. Follow OBI on Facebook and Twitter.

Students go on mission during break

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

We recently had 1992 alumnus Doug Criswell speak in a chapel service about his ministry, Harvest International Missions, and their work in Guatemala. As a result, two Clear Creek students, Mike and Tracy Raftery, decided to participate in a mission trip to minister to the people of Guatemala.

"The place Tracy and I visited was called Hope of Life, said Mike. "It is a mission campus in the middle of Rio Hondo, Guatemala. It took us four hours to travel there even though it was only 70km (43.5 miles) from the city. This was the most exhilarating drive we had ever experienced.

"The trip was five days long and we were exposed to the people of Guatemala in a ministerial way, which included feeding the poor; visiting the elderly, the sick and orphans; and sharing the gospel in villages and in the markets. We would also conduct street ministry, handing out information, and most importantly, speaking to people about Christ and coming to a decision about salvation.

"We had the opportunity to love on the elderly, love orphans, and console the sick on the first day. We fed soup to a village of very poor people on the second day," Mike said.

"This village's main source of income is recycling paper, plastic and glass that is retrieved from an open land dump. Their approximate income per day is about 25 cents, and they live in dismal conditions. It smelled very bad and our hearts broke for these people.

"We ministered to the poor again on the third day when we went to villages and knocked door to door sharing the gospel, he said. "The fourth day we went to the market, but not only to shop; we handed out tracts and several accepted Christ.

"This trip was life changing, and Tracy and I did not know exactly what to expect," said Mike. "Doug Criswell purposely left out details concerning where we were staying and our daily mission activities because he wanted us to experience it all. We did, and we are honored that God used our little team of five people to lead 200 people to faith in Jesus Christ. God is amazing, and we are so glad that we had the opportunity to serve Him in Guatemala."

Donnie Fox is president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, 300 Clear Creek Road, Pineville, KY 40977.

Setting some New Year's goals

Ky. Baptist Foundation



Richard Carnes

Most of us look at the start of a new year as a time for setting fresh goals in many areas of life. These goals typically revolve around common themes such as better health habits (I want to lose 15-20 pounds), improving personal relationships (I'll be more attentive to my spouse), or better life balance (I'll no longer take work projects home each evening).

This is also a time when many of us will review and update our financial plans to make sure the plan will provide adequate financial security for our family.

As we consider strategies for accomplishing our personal and charitable financial goals for 2016 and beyond, we should schedule time to do the following:

- Identify your sources of income and expenses.
- Determine the value of your assets and the income (if any) they produce.
- Review the needs of family members and others, including your church, and consider any changes that may be needed in your plans.
- Define your goals for the management and future distribution of financial assets.
- Make a detailed list of your assets, such as home (including furnishings) and other real estate, vehicles and other personal property, financial accounts, retirement plans and other investments, including their original cost and current market value.

It is also beneficial to meet with your professional advisors to review and establish your personal and charitable financial goals. Your financial advisor, life insurance representative, accountant, attorney or other specialist can help you evaluate your specific circumstances and guide you in structuring an estate and financial plan that best achieves your goals.

Regular reviews of your long-range estate and financial plans are the best way to make certain your desires for the management and disposition of your property are up to date and meet your current needs.

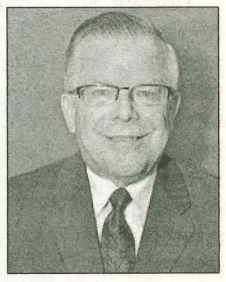
The Kentucky Baptist Foundation is honored to work with individuals seeking how best to organize their estate planning goals to achieve their personal and charitable objectives to support their church and other Baptist causes.

To learn more, you may contact the Foundation's trust counsel, Laurie Valentine, or me at our toll-free number (866) 489-3533.

Richard Carnes is president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, PO Box 436389, Louisville, KY 40253; Find us online at KyBaptistFoundation.org.

CU's Chowning announces retirement as VP

By Joan McKinney



John Chowning

Campbellsville—John Chowning, vice president for church and external relations, executive assistant to the president at Campbellsville University and former chair and board member of the university's Board of Trustees, announced his retirement, effective Jan. 1.

Campbellsville University president Michael Carter, with whom Chowning worked for 17 years, said, "John Chowning is one of the most gifted individuals I have ever met. He is great thinker, and he is wise in his approach to topics across a broad spectrum."

Chowning is retiring after 26 years at Campbellsville, but he will continue to work part time as executive assistant to the president for government, community and constituent relations.

Chowning became involved in fundraising with Campbellsville in 1989 and became a member of its Board of Trustees in 1992. He continued on the board for the next seven years, serving as chair in 1996 and 1997. He became a full-time employee in February 1998.

Joseph Owens, chair of the Board of Trustees, said, "Dr. John Chowning is a shining example of selfless service that has made a difference in many lives at Campbellsville University. He is highly motivated, personable and a spirit filled man of God."

Chowning founded and has directed the Kentucky Heartland Institute on Public Policy at Campbellsville.

Chowning has been involved in many endeavors at Campbellsville, including race reconciliation, establishing Dialogue on Race, a project dear to his heart. He was founding member of the Center for Rural Development and former chair; founding member of the Southern Kentucky Economic Development Corporation and former chair; founding member and former board member and secretary of Forward in the Fifth education reform group.

With the support of CU presidents Ken Winters and Carter, Chowning proposed the university's Technology Training Center and coordinated efforts to secure funding for the project by working with U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell.

He and his wife Cathy have established an endowed scholarship fund that provides annual scholarship awards to qualifying minority students.

As a pastor, Chowning is an active member of Taylor County Ministerial Association and of the executive boards of the Taylor County and Zion District Baptist associations. He has led his church, Saloma Baptist Church, where he has served since 1994, to become a member of the General Association of Baptists in Kentucky, the state's historic black Baptist state convention—one of two historically Anglo Baptist churches to join the GABKY.

The Chownings have lived in Campbellsville for the past 38 years. (CU)

January prayer focus: 'In All Things Pray'

By Art Toalston

Nashville—January is a distinctive month of prayer across the Southern Baptist Convention. It is a time when a readiness to pray can gain new traction in churches, large or small, urban or rural.

Listed as the "Call to Prayer" on the SBC Calendar, it gained momentum from the 2010 Great Commission Task Force report adopted at the SBC annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., and was placed on the SBC calendar as an annual focus during the convention's 2011 meeting.

This year's theme is "In All Things Pray," drawn from the familiar 2 Chronicles 7:14 passage, the journal SBC LIFE of the Executive Committee noted in its Winter 2015 issue.



The theme and key emphases for this year's Call to Prayer were developed with input from the PrayerLink network of state convention and SBC entity prayer leaders. The website inallthingspray.net provides prayer resources.

Key points of prayer for January 2016, with accompanying suggestions listed in SBC LIFE and posted on the website, are:

• **My Family.** Select a family member who is unchurched or without Christ and pray that they would come to faith in Christ.

• **My Community.** Select a friend, neighbor or colleague and pray that they would come to faith in Christ.

• **My Church.** Select a ministry in your church, such as a small group or age-graded ministry, and ask the Lord to use it to engage the lost with the gospel.

• **My Nation.** Select an elected national leader or a Send North America city and pray for the salvation of the leader or the church planting efforts in that area.

• **My World.** Select an unreached people group and pray that the gospel would be advanced among these people.

"My heart is thrilled that thousands upon thousands of Southern Baptists will begin 2016 in prayer," said SBC President Ronnie Floyd, senior pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas.

"Never in my lifetime have we needed to call out to God more than today," Floyd said in a written statement. "In my own church, we are entering into a major 21-day journey in prayer and fasting. Therefore, we stand with you to pray for ourselves, our churches, our nation and world."

Frank Page, president of the SBC Executive Committee, commented, "From time to time, I have wondered if it is a sign of health or weakness to have to remind people to pray. However, after reading Scripture, I see constant reminders and calls to prayer, so I am convinced it is a healthy practice!"

One example cited by Page: "After encouraging believers to put on the full armor of God and explaining what that means, the apostle Paul encouraged us to 'pray always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit...' (Ephesians 6:18).

"As we enter into this new year, I cannot think of a more appropriate thing to do than to pray more, and more passionately, than ever before," Page said. "Our world is in need of prayer and we are in need of praying." (BP)

Sharing His message

By Roger Palmer

Ephesians 3:7-13 reads, "... (O)f which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him..."

This is the time for New Year's resolutions. Many resolutions will be forgotten before January ends.

God, though, has called us, as His children, to share His message of grace, mercy, love and forgiveness to everyone we come across. This is a resolution to keep daily.

God called Paul as a minister, and even in His calling it's according to His grace.

God has called us, too, because we are His representatives and He lives in us through His Holy Spirit.

What a privilege, the same privilege He gave to Paul to share Him and to share about all of His (boundless, fathomless and exhaustless) riches of Christ.

As we share, we shine His light in the darkness of this lost world.

It's our opportunity to share with everyone God's plan, through Christ, to set all mankind free from sin and death.

We, as believers, are His church.

His church is not a building, but it's made up of all of His children.

One last thing, because of our relationship with Christ, and all that Christ has done, we can come to God's throne of grace and mercy with boldness, confidence and complete freedom, without any fear, because He receives us as His own.

This is a message worth sharing, and a resolution that's worth keeping.

Roger Palmer is president of Crossings Ministries. Contact Crossings at (502) 491-7000 or visit www.GoCrossings.com.

London youth center gives teens support needed to survive

By Christi Moffett

Sunrise's Youth Support Center (YSC) in London is a unique, community-based ministry designed to serve clients and families in their home communities through a unique partnership with the Laurel County Fiscal Court.

Existing for more than 15 years, the YSC program is an intensive outpatient afterschool program for identified at-risk youth that serves as an alternative to juvenile detention as well as a therapeutic intervention for those teens and their families struggling with a variety of issues.

Anna is a 17-year-old that was court ordered to the YSC for 30 days on charges of assault.

She was defending her younger sister on the school bus because she was being bullied.

Anna has had to become her sisters' "parent" because her mother and step father are doing and dealing drugs.

Anna and her sisters have lived with relatives, in their car, and motel rooms throughout her childhood.

"My mother is like a teenager, she has all new clothes that are too sexy and gets a tan and her nails done every other week," according to Anna.

Even though Anna is grateful that they are living in much better conditions, she still does not have enough clothing or sufficient supplies for school.

She and her sisters are often neglected and do not have medical cards.

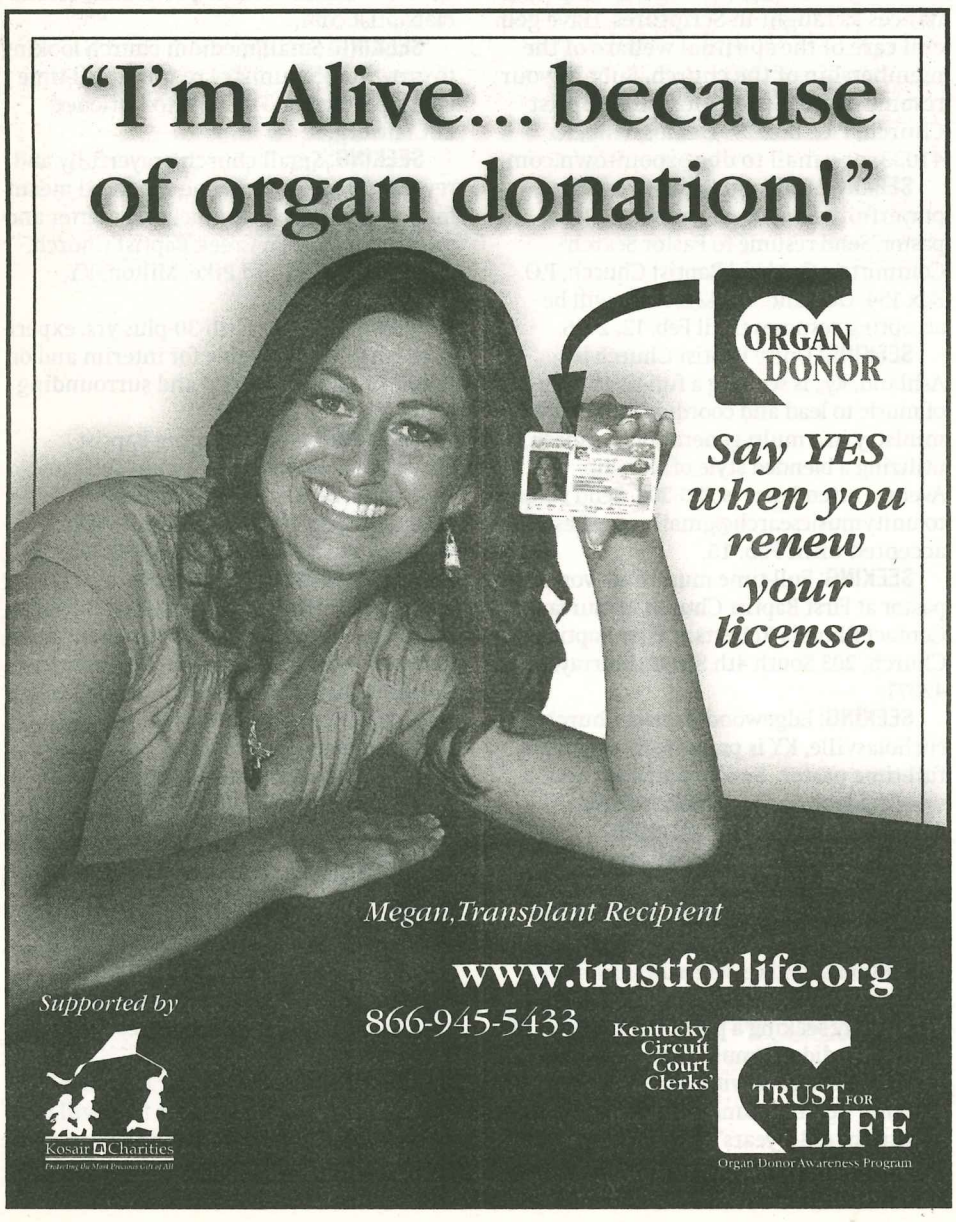
In spite of all these obstacles, including not having a computer to do school work on,

Anna consistently gets A's and B's. The only class she has ever failed is English, and that was due to the constant moves from one school district to another.

Through the Toyota Grant, Anna has been able to work on making up the English credit because she has access to a computer and the help of a tutor.

YSC has given her food to take home to her sisters, clothing from donations and the support needed to survive a life with parents that are not there for her. She is looking into colleges now and plans on attending college next year in a nursing program.

Christi Moffett is the senior director of marketing at Sunrise Children's Services. Contact Sunrise at (800) 456-1386 or visit www.sunrise.org..



KBC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January

15-16 Ky. Baptist Disaster Relief Chaplaincy Training, Beaver Dam Baptist Church

16 Ky. Baptist Disaster Relief Training Phases 1 & 2, Beaver Dam Baptist Church

28-30 Shepherding 2016, Griffin Gate Marriott Resort & Spa, Lexington

2-3 New Directors of Missions Orientation, Ky. Baptist Building, Louisville

February

1-6 São Paulo Vision Tour, São Paulo, Brazil.

2 Power Lunch, Ky. Baptist Building, Louisville.

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westernrecorder.org

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Staff

IRVINE—Knob Lick Church will hold a church-wide singing on Jan. 31. **Fred Livingood** is pastor.

LEBANON—Muldraugh Hill Church will hold a revival with **Barry Fields** Feb. 28-March 2, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Sunday, 7 p.m. on other nights. **Steven Skaggs** is pastor.

LOUISVILLE—Walnut Street Church is presenting a Winter Bible Conference featuring **Don Whitney**, as he teaches from his book, "Praying the Bible." Whitney is professor of biblical spirituality at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The study will meet on Jan. 15, 7 p.m.-9 p.m., and Jan. 16, 9 a.m. to noon, in the sanctuary. For information, call (502) 589-5290.

WACO—Bethlehem Church will host a soup and movie night to start the New Year on Jan. 23. For information, call the church at (859) 986-1711. **Mark McGuire** is pastor.

Byrdwell receives honorary doctorate of public service

By Joan McKinney



Anna Mary Byrdwell

Campbellsville—Anna Mary Byrdwell, a 1960 graduate of Campbellsville University who serves on the school's Board of Trustees, was presented an honorary doctorate of public service at commencement Dec. 11 in Ransdell Chapel.

Campbellsville University president Michael Carter said, "Mrs. Byrdwell is known far and wide as a strong advocate of Christian missions and her servant leadership for nearly four decades in the state and national Woman's Missionary Union organization.

"Anna Mary Byrdwell has been a shining example of a woman who has devoted her life to ministering to others and especially to other women. Her strength and humility combine to make for a wonderful example of a Christian servant leader."

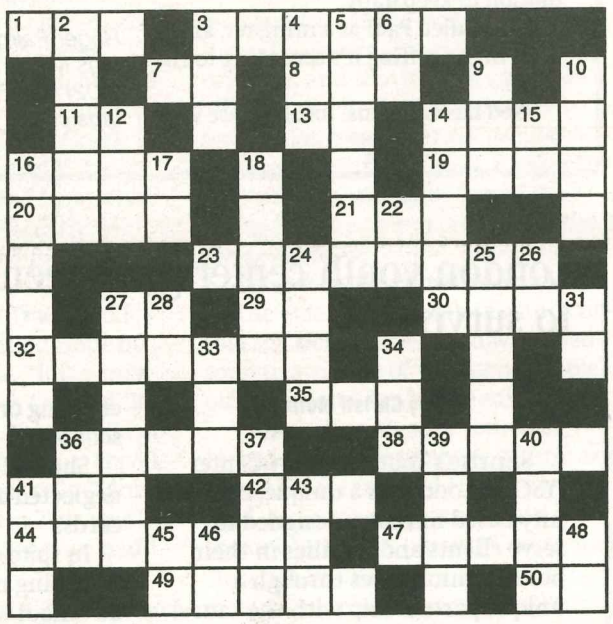
Byrdwell served as a consultant for the Kentucky Baptist WMU from 1967 until 2004 and has served for many years as a member of the Campbellsville University Church Relations Council and as council chair. She has served on the university's Board of Trustees since 2008.

Byrdwell also earned a master's degree in religious education from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1962. She taught music in the LaRue County school system from 1960 until 1962 and also served as elementary director for kindergarten at Campbellsville Baptist Church from 1964 until 1967.

Carter said Byrdwell has been a faithful servant in her church as a Sunday school teacher, Vacation Bible School teacher and choir member and has served in a number of leadership roles with the Long Run Baptist Association and other faith-based organizations. (CU)

Bible Crosswords

By Elizabeth B. Smith



#054

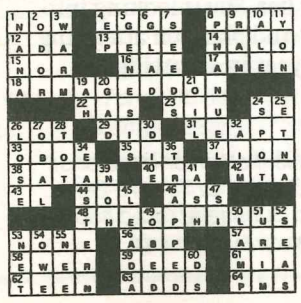
Across

1 Definite article
3 Jewess who became queen (Esther 2:17)
7 Eastern state, abbr.
8 "All that handle the ____, ... shall come down from their ships" (Ezekiel 27:29)
11 "Upon thy belly shalt thou ____" (Genesis 3:14)
13 "Disciples believed ____ him" (John 2:11)
14 "Judah's wife, the daughter of ____" (Genesis 38:12 NIV)
16 Naomi changed her name to ____ (Ruth 1:20)
19 "He said, Behold, I am ____, Lord" (Acts 9:10)
20 Enoch's son (Genesis 4:18)
21 "I ____ no pleasant bread" (Daniel 10:3)
23 Moses' mother (Exodus 6:20)
27 Mid-west state, abbr.
29 "Ye have not chosen ____, but I have chosen you" (John 15:16)
30 "Neither do the ____ understand" (Job 32:9)
32 Wife of Nabal (1 Samuel 25:3)
35 Old card game
36 "The counsel of the Lord, that ____ stand" (Proverbs 19:21)
38 This woman hid spies on her roof (Joshua 2:1)
41 He cried unto the Lord his God (2 Chronicles 14:11)
42 "Father said, "Let us ____, and be merry" (Luke 15:23)
44 Samson told her everything (Judges 16:18)
47 Judah's daughter-in-law (Genesis 38:11)
49 Hodiah was his sister (1 Chronicles 4:19)
50 Short greeting

Down

2 Angel spoke to her (Genesis 21:17)
3 Was made from a rib (Genesis 2:22; 3:20)
4 "Wisdom is ____ high for a fool" (Proverbs 24:7)
5 Mother of Samuel (1 Samuel 1:20)
6 Judah's son (Genesis 38:3)
9 "____ rose up hastily, ... they followed" (John 11:31)
10 Put the nail in Sisera's temple (Judges 4:21)
12 Plural of os
14 Queen of ____ heard of Solomon's fame (1 Kings 10:1)
15 Abraham left the land of ____ (Genesis 11:31)
16 Sister of Aaron (Exodus 15:20)
17 Paid announcement
18 Ruth's mother-in-law (Ruth 1:22)
22 Topographical Engineer, abbr.
24 Single room in prison
25 David's wife (2 Samuel 3:5)
26 Eastern state, abbr.
27 Saul gave her to David (1 Samuel 18:27)
28 King of Bashan (Numbers 21:33)
31 "I ____ set my bow in the cloud" (Genesis 9:13)
33 "God ... rested ... from ____ his work" (Genesis 2:2)
34 "He careth ____ you" (1 Peter 5:7)
36 Wind direction
37 Jacob's first wife (Genesis 29:23)
39 Saul's concubine (2 Samuel 21:11)
40 Esau's wife (Genesis 36:12)
41 "Why make ye this ____" (Mark 5:39)
43 "Let them be desolate ... that say unto me, ____" (Psalm 40:15)
45 "This is the confidence that we have ____ him" (1 John 5:14)
46 Southern state, abbr.
48 Smallest state, abbr.

#053



Classified Ads

SEEKING: Cecilia Baptist Church, Cecilia, Ky., is seeking a senior pastor. For more info check our website: ceciliabaptistchurch.com. Resumés or questions may be sent to: Ceciliapastorsearchcommittee@gmail.com, or P.O. Box 87, Cecilia, KY 42724.

SEEKING: Bi-vocational pastor for small congregation located in DeMossville, Ky. In charge of the welfare and responsible care of the church. Preside at all meetings of the church. Preach at appointed hours of worship on Sunday, lead regular midweek meetings, and administer ordinances as taught in Scriptures. Have general care of the spiritual welfare of the membership of the church. Submit your resumé by mail to DeMossville Baptist Church, P.O. Box 27, DeMossville, KY 41033, or e-mail to dbc@zoomtown.com.

SEEKING: Oakland Baptist Church is prayerfully accepting resumés for lead pastor. Send resumé to Pastor Search Committee, Oakland Baptist Church, P.O. Box 154, Oakland, KY 42159. We will be accepting resumes until Feb. 12, 2016.

SEEKING: Unity Baptist Church in Ashland, Ky., is seeking a full-time minister of music to lead and coordinate an active ministry in a multi-generational church, utilizing a blended style of worship. Average attendance is 250-300. Send resumé to unitymusicsearch@gmail.com. Resumés accepted until Feb. 15.

SEEKING: Full-time music and worship pastor at First Baptist Church of Murray, Ky. Contact Rhonda Roberts at First Baptist Church, 203 South 4th Street, Murray, KY 42071.

SEEKING: Edgewood Baptist Church, Nicholasville, KY is prayerfully seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumé to edgewood@edgewoodbaptistchurch.com. Resumé deadline is Jan. 31, 2016.

SEEKING: Minister to children and family. Part-time position (15-20 hours a week) at Pinckard Baptist Church in Versailles. Send resumé to pinckardchurch@aol or 3401 Pinckard Pike, Versailles, KY 40383.

SEEKING: Columbia Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a part-time minister of music. Candidates must have a minimum of a bachelor's degree with preferred emphasis in music worship. Candidates must have a minimum of 1-2 years' experience in worship leadership, evidence a kingdom focus, and be a team player. Send resumés to: Columbia Baptist Church, 201 Greensburg St., Columbia, KY 42728, or email them to pastorbill@columbiabaptist.com.

SEEKING: Columbia Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a full-time minister of students. Candidates must have a minimum of a bachelor's degree and 1-2 years' experience working with youth. Candidates must have a kingdom focus, be a team player, and evidence a passion for developing disciples and investing in families. Send resumés to: Columbia Baptist Church, 201 Greensburg St., Columbia, KY 42728, or email them to pastorbill@columbiabaptist.com.

SEEKING: Small/medium church looking to grow youth ministry requires full-time youth pastor. Send resumé to Darlene@BBCLife.org.

SEEKING: Small church prayerfully and reverently seeks part-time shepherd meant for our flock. Send resumé, cover letter and references to Corn Creek Baptist Church, 2056 Milton-Bedford Pike, Milton, KY, 40045.

SEEKING: Pastor with 30-plus yrs. experience currently available for interim and/or pulpit supply in Oldham and surrounding counties. (502) 321-1557

SEEKING: Dripping Spring Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a full-time student minister. Send resumés to: Dripping Spring Baptist Church, 4145 Watermelon Rd., Olmstead, KY 42265, or email to jeffnoff72@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Munfordville Baptist Church is seeking its next full-time pastor. Criteria include being a Southern Baptist Convention preacher who adheres to the Baptist Faith and Message and will be supportive of the Cooperative Program for missions. Resumés and sermon DVDs should be sent to the attention of Pulpit Committee Chairperson at P.O. Box 445, Munfordville, KY 42765.

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Chainsaw cross conveys hope after tornado onslought in Texas

By Jane Rodgers

Rowlett, Texas—Three weeks after Shane Pruitt was a guest preacher at Bellville First Baptist Church near Houston, one of its disaster relief teams assisted Pruitt's family in the wake of devastating tornadoes that swept through the metro Dallas area the day after Christmas.

Pruitt, who serves as director of missions for the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, recounted that he was en route to a preaching engagement when his wife called to tell him that tornado sirens were going off in their Rowlett suburb. The tornado, an EF3 in Rowlett, was one of 12 that touched down in north Texas on Dec. 26, killing 11, according to the National Weather Service in Dallas.

"We have four kids under 10, and they all moved to the bathroom to hunker down," Pruitt said. "Five minutes later she called to tell me it was over."

Pruitt returned home to find a 2-by-4 had smashed through a window, showering glass on the sofa where his family sat moments before. Otherwise, the house sustained only minor damage, while residences a few houses and blocks away were destroyed.

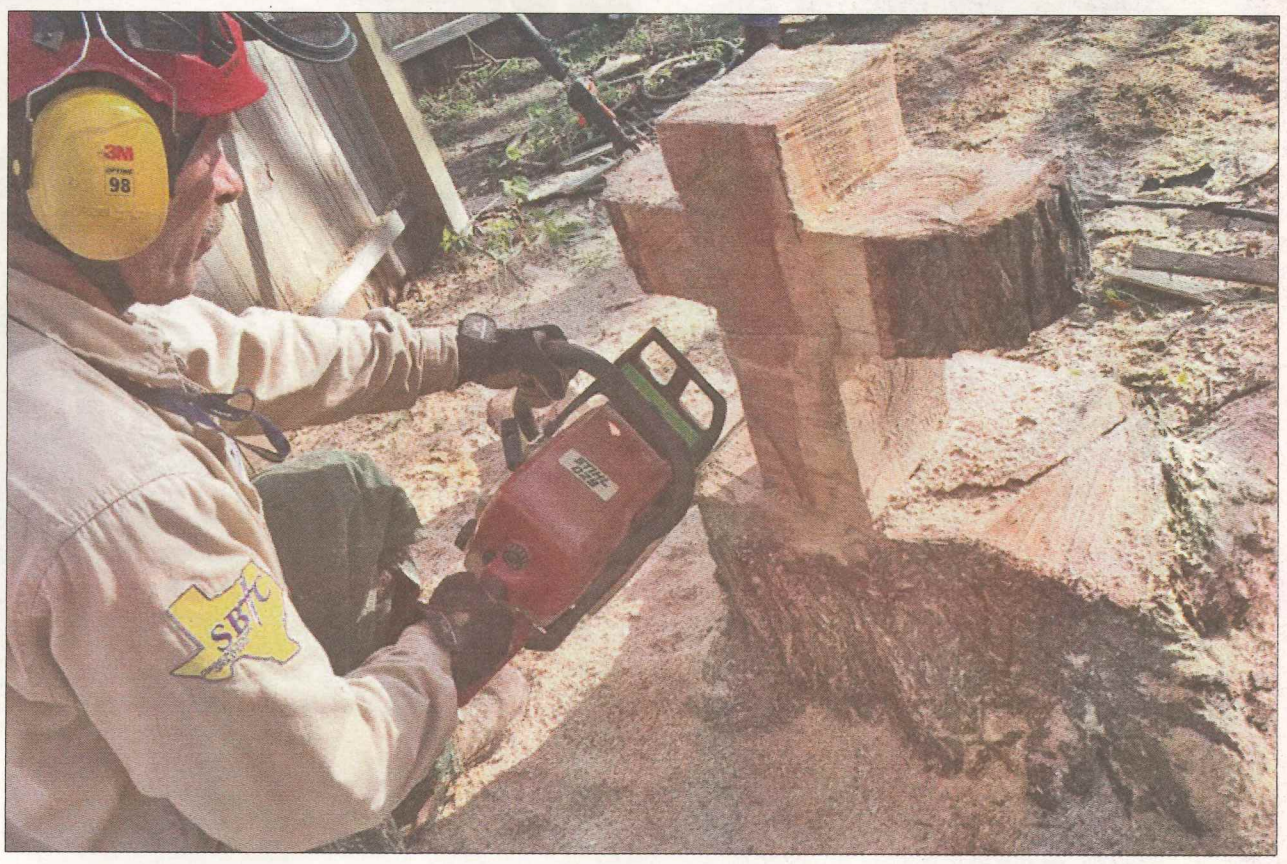
Kay Burns, the widowed grandmother of Pruitt's wife, whose neighborhood is about two miles away, suffered extensive damage to her home. A large piece of plywood pierced her roof and a huge tree was down in her backyard. The next day's rains caused Burns' kitchen and a bedroom to collapse.

"Hey, don't I know you?" an SBTC chainsaw volunteer from First Bellville assisting Burns asked Pruitt, recognizing him from his earlier preaching engagement.

"They came over and began to cut limbs. Some folks from C3 Rowlett (Connection Community Church, where the Pruitts and Burns attend) moved limbs and debris as they were cutting," Pruitt said. When the tree was cut, limbs removed and backyard cleared, First Bellville's Rick Evans offered to cut the remaining part of a stump into a cross.

Burns had talked of selling her home after the storm. "Now she does not want to move," Pruitt said, adding that "the men taking the time to cut that cross offered an extra step of healing. She wants to stay in the house, and she plans to carve the date into the cross, so that the next family will know what that is about."

As Mike Phillips, a chainsaw volunteer, said, "A year from now, we'll be gone.... But the cross will remain."



Disaster relief volunteer Rick Evans of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention carves a cross into the stump of a tree downed by one of the Dec. 26 tornadoes in the metro Dallas area. (Photo provided by Shane Pruitt)

The cross in Burns' yard had an additional impact as crowds of onlookers came to photograph it. Many commented that they planned to do the same with stumps in their yards, Pruitt said. "It was a calming, healing moment. She (Burns) took a deep breath, smiled and laughed. The cross is a reminder of hope."

Rowlett homeowners Dan and Bonnie Rangel were home with three of their eight children when the tornado sirens sounded.

"We grabbed pets and kids and piled into the master bedroom closet," Dan Rangel said. "We felt the pressure and heard the noise like a train. It was all over in 30 to 45 seconds."

Although homes surrounding theirs and one block over were destroyed, the Rangel house suffered minimal damage, yet a towering live oak tree in the front yard was hit hard. Large limbs hung precariously, threatening further damage to the home and the safety of the family.

"I feel guilty that I'm just worried about a tree limb," Rangel, a former Marine, said as DR chainsaw team leader Monte Furrh of Bonham, Texas, confirmed that the situation needed attention.

After the chainsaw team cut and removed limbs, Bonnie Rangel asked if they would cut some pieces of a large limb for her.

"That tree bore the brunt of the storm," Rangel said. At the core of the cut portion of the fallen limb was a heart-shaped ring.

"Miracles do happen," Rangel said, tearfully holding one of the pieces. "God is real. I am going to carve that into the tree." As for the cut pieces with the heart-shaped core, Rangel will use them to remind her family of the tornado and the day they were helped. (BP)

Muslims protect Christians in Kenyan terrorist attack

By Julia Seymour

Kenya—Islamic militants with Somalia's al-Shabaab are suspected of attacking a commuter bus in northeast Kenya. The attack killed two people and injured at least six others in late December.

A group of Islamist gunmen ambushed the bus, boarded it, and attempted to divide passengers into Muslim and Christian groups. But Muslim passengers refused to cooperate, Reuters reported.

Gov. Ali Roba told Kenya's Daily Nation they "told the attackers to kill all passengers or leave," and their courage prevented a repeat of a previous massacre.

One Muslim passenger, Abdi Mohamud Abdi, told Reuters more than 10 al-Shabaab fighters told them to separate from the Christians, but they did not comply.

"We even gave some non-Muslims our religious attire to wear in the bus so that they would not be identified easily. We stuck together tightly," Abdi said of the Dec. 21 attack. "The militants threatened to shoot us, but we still refused and protected our brothers and sisters. Finally they gave up and left but warned that they would be back."

Another passenger said he told the militants, "we are all Muslims," knowing that if he didn't, many people would be killed, Standard Digital Media reported.

Their actions kept the incident from becoming as deadly as a November 2014 bus attack in the same region of Mandera. In that instance, al-Shabaab divided the passengers and killed about 36 non-Muslims, according to KTN News Kenya. Al-Shabaab claimed the attack was retaliation for a raid on two mosques.

"We commend the Muslims who stood by the Christians when the gang attacked," Kenyan Interior Minister Joseph Nkaissery said. "They showed the terrorists cannot separate us using religion. They cannot cause a religious war, and I thank the passengers and locals."

At a news conference, Nkaissery said the Muslims sent a message "for the unity of purpose, that we are all Kenyans and we are not separated by religion. Everybody can profess his own religion, but we see we are one country, we are one people as a nation."

A spokesman for International Christian Concern called it a "great story," the kind the world wants to see.

"Certainly, as Christians we believe that our worldview, that Jesus came to save sinners, is the correct worldview," ICC regional manager Troy Augustine said. "But that doesn't mean we can't live in peace with one another. I think that's what this really shows." (BP)

Julia Seymour writes for WORLD News Service, a division of WORLD Magazine based in Asheville, N.C. Used by permission.

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- Have tax laws changed?
- Have your charitable interests changed?
- Has your marital status changed?
- Has the size of your estate changed markedly?
- Has anything changed in regard to your children's needs or their marital status?

The Kentucky Baptist Foundation has resources to assist you in updating your estate plan.

To learn more:

*Visit **www.kentuckybaptistfoundation.org** and click on "Estate Planning." The Estate Plan Organizer will take you through the estate planning process quickly and easily in about 30 minutes.*

and/or

Contact Foundation Trust Counsel Laurie Valentine for private no cost estate planning consultation.

Let the Kentucky Baptist Foundation assist you in developing an estate plan that provides for the future financial security of your family and advances God's Kingdom.

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Laurie W. Valentine, Trust Counsel

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