

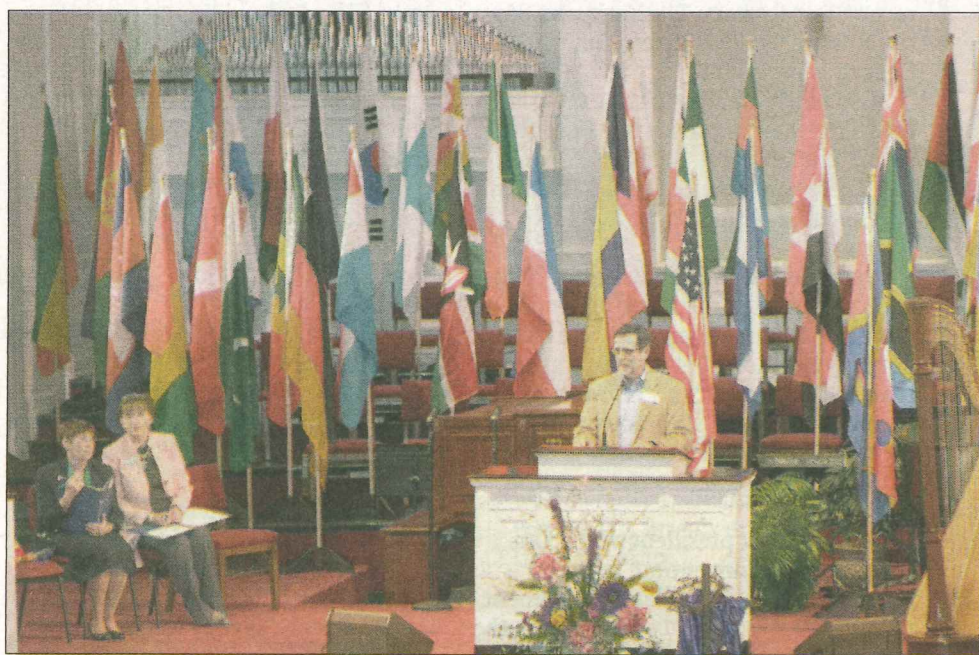
WESTERN Recorder

April 19, 2016

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 190, Issue 8

Woman's Missionary Union Annual Meeting



IMB State, Association and Urban Mobilization Strategies Leader, Terry Sharp, shares a presentation on the internationals in our midst. Joy Bolton and Susan Bryant are on the left.

'The Heart of the Story' focus of state WMU

By Myriah Snyder

Madisonville—More than 600 members of Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union focused on "The Heart of the Story" during their annual meeting at First Baptist Church of Madisonville April 8-9.

"Jesus last words in Matthew 28:19, which we know as the Great Commission, were words to His followers, you and me," began Linda Cooper, national WMU president. "His message was clear. He didn't say, if you want to, or if you feel like it, or if it fits into your busy schedule. He said go!"

Noting that in the original language, the phrase translates "as you are going," she added, "Which says to me, we must go and share Christ every day in our everyday lives."

"As you and I both know, the lost are not knocking our church doors down trying to get in, Cooper continued. "They are out there where we do life every day. We must be alert and look for ways to introduce them to Jesus just living our life as we are going, sharing the heart of the story right here in Kentucky."

Cooper challenged WMU, "Nothing shares the heart of the story, Jesus, better than a life lived in total surrender to Him. Will you be faithful to His call on your life here in Kentucky? Will you go to the people and places where He leads you, knowing that wherever He leads you, He will provide everything you need for the task?" she asked.

"Missions should be a lifestyle," she

said. "I hope it is yours, because missions is for life until the whole world knows the heart of the story, Jesus."

An offering of \$7,855.60 was collected during the weekend event. Additionally, 2,300 food items were donated for Breaking Bread ministry in Hopkins County and 300 buckets were collected for the Baptist Global Relief's Bucket project.

The Bucket project provides overseas missions teams with buckets full of supplies to provide hospice care for HIV patients. The teams take the buckets into homes, explaining how to use them and often gaining an avenue to present the gospel.

Additionally, those in attendance on Friday night were among the first viewers of the documentary, "The Insanity of God." Nik and Ruth Ripkin, missionaries originally from Kentucky, partnered with the International Mission Board to tell the stories of those whose day-to-day lives are surrounded by persecution. The challenge presented to viewers was, "Is Christ worth it?" The video's overarching theme

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New Kentucky missionaries being commissioned during the Kentucky WMU annual meeting.

New state missionaries commissioned; Missionary of the Year recognized

By Myriah Snyder

Madisonville—Seven men and women were commissioned as Kentucky missionaries on April 9 during the Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union Annual Meeting.

John Morris with God's Appalachian Partnership was also recognized as Kentucky's Missionary of the Year.

"Each year this award is given to the missionary or missionary couple that demonstrates commitment to effectiveness in evangelism, church planting ministry, going the second mile, outstanding performance in achieving the assigned task, tenure, unusual commitment to the Lord's service, positive representation of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and North American

can Mission Board, and true reflection of being an on-mission Christian," Teresa Parrett with the KBC's missions mobilization team said before presenting the award.

Morris is the Executive director of God's Appalachian Partnership in McDowell. He assumed that role in 2014, and since that time, the ministry has expanded. In the past two years, the ministry has seen 58 professions of faith.

Morris and his wife Shaughnessy, both Kentucky natives, feel called to work with "our people, who do not know Jesus Christ," he said.

The missionaries commissioned were Jeff Burke with the Kathy J. Strange Answer Center, Joshua and Tasha McWherter with God's

Appalachian Partnership, Joyce Scroggs with Haven of Rest, Allison Norris with Sisters Without Borders, Kimberley Robinson with Hands of Hope for Women, Nelle Thomas with Mission Hope for Kids and Amy Wells with New Heights Church.

Ron Leonard, MSC missionary with NAMB, challenged the newly commissioned missionaries from 2 Timothy 2:1-7,13.

"When the Apostle Paul got radically saved at the road to Damascus, the Apostle Paul had two goals in mind. That was to serve his Lord and be honoring to Him, and to build his life into others so that they would go out and do the same thing. That was his goal. That was his message," Leonard said.

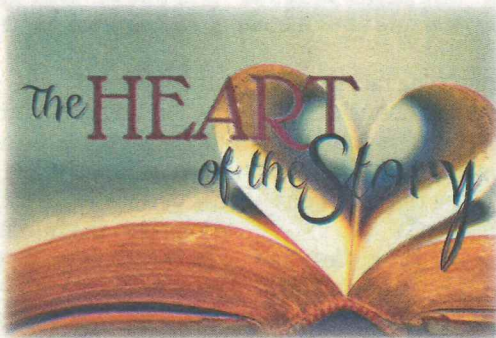
He shared that God is calling the missionaries and all Christians "to commit your life to others," "be a good soldier of your Lord Jesus Christ and take the gospel very seriously" and "simply to be faithful."

"I think if Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong could look through the portals of Heaven today and see this they would say, 'Glory to God! Great things He has done,'" he said.

Leonard encouraged the new missionaries to "let your colors everyday be clear."

"When people bump into you, you don't have to say a word; they are going to know that you have been with Jesus," he said.

"I do not have to remind you that there are many people right here in Kentucky who need the gospel that are hungry for the gospel," Parrett added, as the missionaries promised to be "faithful in Bible study, prayer, to serve in love and loyalty as fellow workers toward the building up of God's church" and the WMU promised to "support and pray for" them. (WR)

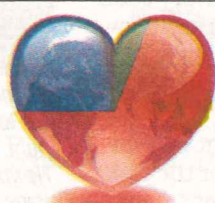


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The Heart of Southern
Baptist Missions and
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WMU Annual Meeting

Continued from page 1

affirms, "If the resurrection is true, it changes everything."

The business portion of the meeting saw Kentucky WMU's missions focus renewed, by each region's representative affirming WMU's mission. Susan Bryant was reelected as the Kentucky WMU president, Cathy Terrell, was elected as vice president, and Marcia Ballard, as recording secretary. The Kentucky Baptist Nursing Fellowship elected Benita Decker as president.

Also newly elected to the executive board for their regions were Margaret Dunn, Linda Egbert, Sharon Gilliland, Lisa Crenshaw, Lorene Heskett, Donna Fegenbush, Roetta Vaught and Joyce Scroggs.

A special guest, Eliza Broadus, born in 1851, attended the meeting, as portrayed by Donna Fegenbush. She shared not only her story, but also all the progress that the Kentucky WMU has made through the years. She encouraged Kentucky WMU to continue their great work in missions across the state and the world.

Kevin Smith, president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, brought greetings and words of encouragement to WMU. "I thank the Lord, I'm with the power trio of WMU," he said,

affectionately referring to Joy Bolton, Susan Bryant and Linda Cooper.

He continued, "There's nothing more important in these days than living on mission for Jesus Christ and showing the contrast between those who have been brought from darkness into the marvelous light and those who need the Lord Jesus Christ."

"We are to be the light of Christ in a dark world. May we meditate upon the reality of Christ Jesus, His work for us, how He was willing to be a suffering servant in order to do the will of His Father," he said.

"Our Lord lived on mission," Smith noted. "WMU is encouraging men and women, boys and girls, to live on mission for the Lord who saved us by his grace."

He urged the WMU to "live on mission, realize you are pushing a ball uphill, but you are pushing uphill empowered by the Holy Spirit. That's all we need!"

Susan Bryant, president of Kentucky WMU, concluded by saying, "If your heart hasn't raced, stopped, expanded, broke, become heavy or palpitated over the last 27 hours, I don't know what to tell you."

"Maybe you are in need of a heart transplant, and you know, I know a really good physician. Our hearts shouldn't be in the same condition when we leave as they were when we came." (WR)

Top: Members of the 2016-17 executive board of the Kentucky WMU. **Middle Left:** Susan Bryant, Kentucky WMU president, addresses attendees. **Middle Right:** WMU pray over the buckets going to assist AIDS sufferers overseas. **Bottom Left:** Kevin Smith, KBC president, encourages Kentucky WMU. **Bottom Right:** Lee Rust, executive director of Freedom Forever Ministries, shares how EBO funds aid her ministry.



Two Kentuckians appointed: Women's roles focus of SBC advisory council

Atlanta—A diverse group of 18 women is studying the perspectives and strategies women in Southern Baptist churches bring to the God-given task of fulfilling the Great Commission.

They comprise the Women's Ministry Advisory Council appointed by Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee. The council joins a list of advisory councils Page has appointed to provide insight into the needs, desires and goals of the many groups represented in SBC life.

"We are excited about encouraging our leaders in women's ministries across our convention," Page said when he announced plans to form the council. "Women, we appreciate you, and you are not alone!"

"In each (advisory council) meeting, we have sought to educate and encourage various demographic subsets about the 'proven and effective cooperative framework' of our Southern Baptist Convention, foster open dialogue, and instill the essence of any and all concerns," Page said. "We have sought to encourage confidence in the SBC way of doing missions."

Advisory council member Chris Adams, senior lead women's ministry specialist with LifeWay Christian Resources and a member of Long Hollow Baptist Church in Hendersonville, Tenn., praised Page's efforts.

"Many women in Southern Baptist churches do not feel valued as leaders though they want to make a Kingdom difference," she noted at the advisory

council's first meeting. "The fact that the SBC Executive Committee has asked about women in our churches is huge. Thank you for affirming the value of women and encouraging the use of our spiritual gifts in ministry."

Rhonda Kelley, an adjunct professor of women's ministry at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary where her husband Chuck Kelley is president, chairs the council.

"While the SBC has always valued the worth of women and followed the biblical guidelines for female roles in the church," Rhonda Kelley said of the group, "there is a sincere desire to increase the involvement of Southern Baptist women in biblically appropriate ways at all levels of the convention and to provide the support services to maximize their service."

Kelley, a member of First Baptist Church in New Orleans, referenced LifeWay Research indicating women comprise about 52 percent of church congregations.

Historically, she said, women have often been the majority in church attendance and in participation in service projects.

Southern Baptist women are encouraged to participate in the advisory council's online survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/SouthernBaptistWomen. In addition, comments may be emailed to sbwomen@sbc.net.

Kelley described input from women across the SBC as "essential for the task force to complete its important

assignment."

The advisory council will work throughout 2016 and present its findings to Page in an official report, expected to focus on ways to increase women's participation in church and SBC life. The inaugural meeting was held Jan. 7-8 in Atlanta, convened by Ken Weathersby, SBC Executive Committee vice president for convention advancement.

Questions considered by the council at the first meeting centered on the ministries, training and resources the SBC provides for women; effective evangelistic methods and resources in reaching women with the gospel; any additional support women might need from the

SBC, and recommendations regarding women's ministry to be made to the SBC Executive Committee.

Women from 14 states comprise the council, representing different age groups, stages of life, ethnic backgrounds, and ministry positions.

Serving on the council from Kentucky are Linda Cooper, Woman's Missionary Union president and a member of Forest Park Baptist Church, Bowling Green; and Mary Mohler, wife of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President Albert Mohler and a member of Third Avenue Baptist Church, Louisville.

For the full list, see www.westernrecorder.org. (WR)



Women's Ministry Advisory Council members in attendance at the inaugural meeting are, seated left to right, Chris Adams, Rhonda Kelley, Rhonda Rhea and Ana Melendez; and standing left to right, Jacqueline "Jacki" Anderson, Brandi Biesiadecki, Lourdes Fernandez, Elizabeth Luter, Trillia Newbell, Davee Ly, Candi Finch, Tabitha Barnette and Ashley Unzicker. They are joined by Frank Page. (Photo by Roger Oldham)

Ga. governor vetoes religious liberty bill

By David Roach

Atlanta—Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal's March 28 veto of the state's religious liberty bill has provoked criticism from social conservatives, including Southern Baptists.

Mike Griffin, public affairs representative for the Georgia Baptist Mission Board, told Baptist Press that Deal, a Republican, "missed an opportunity to stand for Georgia values as opposed to Wall Street and Hollywood values. We certainly respect his right to make that decision, but we also respect the right to voice our disappointment with it."

House Bill 757—the Free Exercise Protection Act—combined elements of a Religious Freedom Restoration Act, a First Amendment Defense Act and a Pastor Protection Act.

Griffin said explicit protections for wedding service providers like bakers and florists were removed from the measure's final version, but one section stipulating no individual would be forced to participate in a same-sex wedding could perhaps be applied to for-profit businesses.

Homosexual rights activists and corporations, including Apple, Coca Cola, Hollywood studios and the NFL, had called on Deal to veto the bill. The NFL suggested adoption of the measure could disqualify Atlanta from contention to host a future Super Bowl.

Deal, in announcing his veto at a news conference, said "there has not been a single instance" to his knowledge of persons or organizations of faith in Georgia being forced to act against their consciences in ways referenced by the bill. He suggested the First Amendment and the Declaration of Independence are sufficient to protect religious liberty.

Griffin countered Deal by providing BP with a document listing 14 alleged "recent examples of religious discrimination in Georgia," including denial of permission to begin a religious student club at an Atlanta middle school and a requirement in Ellijay, Ga., that organizers of a prayer chain obtain a permit before praying on the sidewalk. Griffin conceded that none of the 14 examples pertain to same-sex marriage.

Deal, a Southern Baptist, said of the bill, "This is about the character of our state and the character of its people. Georgia is a welcoming state filled with warm, friendly and loving people. Our cities and countryside are populated with people who worship God in a myriad of ways and in very diverse settings. Our people work side by side without regard to the color of our skin, or the religion we adhere to. We are working to make life better for our families and our communities."

The governor criticized both "those in the religious community" who "have resorted to insults that question my moral convictions and my character" as well as those in business who "have resorted to threats of withdrawing jobs from our state."

To override Deal's veto would require a two-thirds vote in each house of the state legislature—a mark of which the bill narrowly fell short in both the House and Senate. To override the veto prior to the 2017 legislative session, three-fifths of each house must vote to reconvene, Griffin said.

Russell Moore, president of Southern Baptists' Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, tweeted that Deal's "sell-out to big business pressure on religious freedom (is) one more example of what serving Mammon does to the common good." (BP)

Miss. adopts religious freedom bill

By David Roach

Jackson, Miss.—Mississippi Gov. Phil Bryant has signed into law a bill safeguarding the religious liberty of those who refuse to participate in same-sex weddings or gender identity transitions.

Bryant, a Republican, announced on Twitter that he signed House Bill 1523—the Protecting Freedom of Conscience from Government Discrimination Act.

"I am signing HB 1523 into law to protect sincerely held religious beliefs and moral convictions ... from discriminatory action by state government or its political subdivisions, which would include counties, cities and institutions of higher learning," Bryant said in a statement. "This bill merely reinforces the rights which currently exist to the exercise of religious freedom as stated in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution."

Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said he is "proud of Mississippi and Gov. Phil Bryant for being proactive in the defense of religious liberty."

"This bill doesn't discriminate against anyone or imperil civil liberties," said Moore, a Mississippi native. "What it actually does is prohibit the government from taking sides in a culture war and discriminate against those with religious convictions. I'm thankful for Mississippi's example, and pray that conscience freedom would become an even greater priority for governors and legislatures across the country."

Among its provisions, the bill:

- Forbids state government from taking "any discriminatory action" against an individual who declines on religious grounds to provide wedding services for a same-sex marriage ceremony.
- Forbids state government

discrimination against any person who establishes, on religious grounds, "sex-specific standards or policies" concerning access to restrooms or locker rooms.

- Permits any person authorized to license or perform marriages to seek recusal from same-sex weddings on religious grounds. The bill also requires state representatives "to ensure that the performance or solemnization of any legally valid marriage is not impeded or delayed as a result of any recusal."

- Forbids state government discrimination against adoption agencies that decline, based on religious convictions, to allow same-sex couples to adopt.

- Forbids state government discrimination against religious organizations that decline to solemnize same-sex marriages or make employment decisions based on religious beliefs concerning marriage.

The bill specifies that "the sincerely held religious beliefs or moral convictions protected by this act are the belief or conviction that: Marriage is or should be recognized as the union of one man and one woman; Sexual relations are properly reserved to such a marriage; and male or female refer to an individual's immutable biological sex."

William Perkins, editor of Mississippi's Baptist Record newsjournal, said, "The Governor is a strong believer and should be applauded for his courage. The pressure on him has been enormous, and the insults are about to get personal. This is what the LGBT political machine has wrought. Religious people have constitutional rights, too. In their zeal to deprive us of those rights, the LGBT political machine has made such legislative actions necessary."

The bill passed the Mississippi House of Representatives 69-44, and the Senate by a 32-17 margin. (BP)

Bans on travel to Miss., N.C., called 'ridiculous'

By David Roach

Nashville—At least nine U.S. cities and five states have banned non-essential travel by government employees to North Carolina, Mississippi or both, claiming religious liberty bills adopted there discriminate against homosexual and transgendered persons.

A Mississippi pastor told Baptist Press he's proud of his state legislature's courage and confused by the seeming hypocrisy of some critics.

Pastors in Vermont and Washington—two states to enact bans—said such actions are a predictable outworking of the secular worldview that dominates their local cultures.

Joining Washington and Vermont in instituting travel bans were the states of New York, Minnesota and Connecticut. Cities to institute bans included Atlanta; Boston; Chicago; Portland, Ore.; San Francisco; Santa Fe, N.M.; and Washington, according to USA Today.

Chas Rowland, pastor of Bovina Baptist Church in Vicksburg, Miss., noted he was "proud of our state officials for making a stand for what is right in the face of the threats."

"I think our major problem has been for far too long in America in general

that we are so dominated by money," said Rowland, a member of Mississippi Baptists' Christian Action Commission. "It's about time we started making decisions based on what's right and wrong objectively as opposed to what profits our bank accounts."

In addition to state and local governments, corporations have responded to the religious liberty legislation.

In North Carolina, PayPal cancelled a \$3.6 million expansion plan, Braeburn Pharmaceuticals said it was reconsidering plans to build a \$50 million facility and the NBA suggested it might not follow through with plans to hold the 2017 all-star game in Charlotte, the Associated Press reported.

Rowland said at least some state and local government travel bans appear to be cases of selective outrage.

"I see a lot of hypocrisy that's behind some of it," Rowland said, "because there's this idea we're going to not travel to these states that have passed these laws, and yet there's travel to other (countries); that are committing serious human rights offenses."

North Carolina's law requires individuals in state government buildings to use restrooms designated for the gender indicated on their birth certificates and

institutes a statewide nondiscrimination law that does not include protections based on sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

Mississippi's law forbids discrimination against individuals and businesses that hold traditional views of marriage and gender.

The measure includes a ban of forced participation in same-sex weddings.

Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin told NPR April 7 that the travel ban he imposed against Mississippi and North Carolina is designed to combat "extreme hatred and bigotry" cloaked with language of religious liberty.

To argue that the Mississippi and North Carolina laws protect religious liberty is "exactly the same argument that was made by some when we ended slavery," Shumlin said.

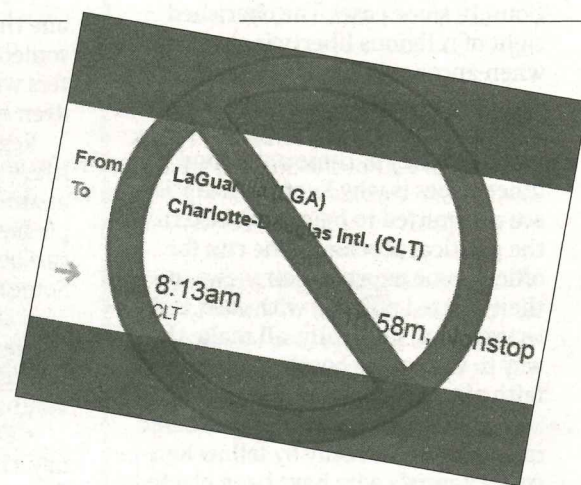
"This is no different. And I never thought in my lifetime that I would see this kind of extreme hatred and bigotry being played out in states where governors are literally signing laws that are no different than saying to people of

color, 'You shall not eat here. You shall not drink out of this water fountain,'" Shumlin said.

Chris Goeppner, pastor of Riverbank Church in White River Junction, Vt., told BP Shumlin's comments illustrate a sense of "social consciousness" among Vermonters that does not include any consideration of religion.

"The typical Vermonter or left-of-center northeastern person doesn't even consider the religious aspect of the decision" to institute travel bans, Goeppner said. "It's not even in play. They're considering the absolute civil liberty and freedom of the 'affected,' which in this

□ See Travel bans... Page 7



More than budgets, elections

The end of the 2016 legislative session in Kentucky came with drama about the state spending budget but little else in terms of last-minute legislation. Regarding the session as a whole, we are grateful for small victories like the expansion of the Kentucky Safe Infants Act to include churches as locations where unwanted babies can be dropped off during the first days of life without consequence for mothers.

Together
We are the KBC

Paul Chitwood

We also celebrate the creation of a marriage license that omits the county clerk's name, thus not requiring an endorsement of same-sex marriages by the clerks. This matter was rightly perceived as a religious liberty issue for county clerks who hold to a biblical definition of marriage.

Another important piece of legislation signed into law by Gov. Matt Bevin is a change to Kentucky's informed consent law that now will require a woman to meet in person or by video with a physician before having her baby dismembered and killed through abortion. It was the first piece of pro-life legislation to be passed in Kentucky in several years. We pray and trust that at least some of the mothers who take time to reflect upon what actually takes place during an abortion procedure will feel compassion for the baby and seek one of a host of options available during a crisis or unwanted pregnancy rather than taking the life of a child.

As these issues illustrate, politics is a lot more than budgets and elections. In some cases, the cherished right of religious liberty is at stake when another bill makes its way to Capitol Hill. In other cases, votes literally are about life and death.

The gravity of these and many other issues is why Kentucky Baptists are committed to being involved in the political process. Some run for office. Some express their views to their elected officials with calls and letters. And, hopefully, all make their way to the voting booth, taking their faith along with them.

Kentucky Baptists are represented in Frankfort, not only by fellow Kentucky Baptists who have been elected to office, but also by a state minister who shares the gospel and equips believers in the Capitol. In that role, Rev. Steve Weaver, Ph.D., is doing a great job connecting with elected officials and employees in Frankfort, helping to create a better spiritual climate in our government.

Rev. Tom Troth is also proving to be a tremendous help for the causes of justice and righteousness as he lobbies on behalf of Kentucky Baptists.

These brothers, along with the reporting of the Western Recorder and Kentucky Today, are not only helping us stay better informed on the issues, they are helping us use our voice to make a huge impact on issues that matter to people of faith.

Hurting ourselves in the end

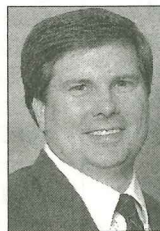
Do you know what this is a picture of? It's one of the earliest copies of the predecessor of the Western Recorder that still remains. It's dated June 24, 1826. Edited by George Waller and Spencer Clack, The Baptist Recorder would be renamed a quarter of a century later as The Western Recorder. So, your Kentucky Baptist newspaper has a long heritage of encouraging Baptists of the Commonwealth to "prove all things: hold fast that which is good."

We've been telling the story of Kentucky Baptists for more than 190 years now. As one of the first denominational newspapers, it would be tragic for Kentucky Baptists to lose one of their oldest treasures. But that could happen ... unless more Kentucky Baptists rise up, recommit themselves to supporting their newspaper, and "hold fast that which is good."

For several years now, the Western Recorder's Cooperative Program allocation—as that of other state convention-supported institutions and agencies—has fallen. Once in excess of \$400,000, today it barely exceeds \$259,000 as more is being sent to reach the nations with the gospel. That's a worthy objective—one which we, as Baptists, fully support.

Yet, for some time, despite our continual efforts at improving the quality of the paper, circulation has been eroding, too. As our churches faced some tough economic days, that impact often was felt in reduced ministries. Unfortunately, one of the first ministry areas that church treasurers and budget committees nix is their subscriptions to the state Baptist newspaper. It's a move that in the end has much bigger, unintended ramifications.

First, without a state Baptist newspaper to continually place before their people our Great Commission ministries, in which they partner with other Baptists across Kentucky and the nation, they may quickly grow myopic—seeing mainly a few, favored local ministries and the upkeep of buildings. It should come as no surprise to the church staff if Cooperative Program gifts and church receipts dwindle further, for without vision, people—and churches—eventually perish.

After
Thought

By Todd Deaton



Second, our marvelous shared ministries such as Sunrise Children's Services, Crossings Ministries, Oneida Baptist Institution, Clear Creek Baptist College, University of the Cumberlands, the Baptist Foundation, Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union and the Western Recorder all depend on Kentucky Baptist churches for support. Without you, all our ministries suffer. We all lose.

Publishing is a costly enterprise. Your financial support enables the Western Recorder not only to pay those who write news stories and features and the graphic artists who design its pages, but also to keep the presses rolling and the news being delivered right to your doorstep, computer screen, tablet or phone. It takes your subscriptions to do all this.

In the end—if you believe a well-informed Baptist makes a better Baptist—when a church fails to encourage its members to subscribe to their state Baptist newspaper, we may just be hurting ourselves.

The Western Recorder and Kentucky's churches lose, for without your continued support, one day soon there may no longer be a state Baptist newspaper to tell your story. Without that vision, your church and others may lose sight of the bigger story of Southern Baptists cooperating together to take the gospel to the nations. If that happens, we all lose.

Help your people see clearly all that Kentucky Baptists are doing together to advance the Kingdom. Support the Western Recorder! We're in this ministry together.

Perception vs. reality

By Kristen White

People say, "Get it in writing," but one thing we rarely get on paper is what someone thinks of us. We have encounters with co-workers, friends, and children each day.

Regardless of our stage in life, we sometimes make assumptions about how people feel about us. These assumptions can be accurate, but often they are not. Some examples:

- Depending on your day and how you feel about your performance and "place" in the world, you may quickly assume people dislike or reject you.
- Depending on another person's day, they may too quickly communicate frustration or disgust—but it has nothing to do with how much they like or accept you.
- Depending on how important a positive interaction or a person's approval is to you, you may look for or expect warm words or expressions that end up being absent—and your perception becomes skewed about both your

value and the other person's heart.

The reality is that our perceptions get mixed up. We can change what we think of our value several times a day based on people's responses to us—and we can jump to some pretty nasty conclusions about our unsuspecting associates, too. It is sad when our perceptions affect our personal joy and self-acceptance and when they break down relationships.

FIRST PERSON

Unfortunately, we can't walk around with giant placards: "These are my love languages.... Here are past wounds I deal with.... This is what happened today.... Please communicate to me like this so that I can receive what you are saying...." Maybe that would help us relate to one another better, or maybe not, since it is a rare companion who cares enough to see what is really happening on the inside, to value your heart, to understand and encourage.

I hope we work to be friends like that, people who offer others the great treasure of grace.

Far more important than how we perceive others' response is learning to live without dependency on them.

Your heavenly Father has written

down what He has decided about your value and place in this world: He decided you were important and loved enough to endure the cross for and to make a present and future plan for. He didn't leave anything in your life untouched by His grace or His Word. That's why we must read the Bible, so that we will know the reality of the immeasurable worth He bought for us.

In Luke 10, Jesus listened to the disciples report their successes. They had been traveling in pairs, preaching. The disciples were excited they had authority over demons. In verse 20, though, Jesus told them to be more grateful and aware of their identity as God's beloved children than as preachers or even as those to whom demons submit.

I think Jesus wanted them to know the most important thing we can learn to call ourselves is *His*. This identity is more powerful and lasting than any other relationship or achievement.

You have a Father and Friend far superior to anyone else in existence who says you are special.

He wrote it down, so there would be no question. (BP)

Kristen White is a freelance writer in Shelbyville.

WESTERN Recorder

Shine Like Stars *Philippians 2:15

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Western Recorder is published bi-weekly by Western Recorder Inc., the news agency of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, 13420 Eastpoint Centre Dr., Louisville, KY 40223. Periodicals postage paid at Louisville, Ky. (USPS 679-380)

For general information or to give news tips, call (502) 489-3535; email: news@westernrecorder.org.

POSTMASTER: Send address corrections to: Western Recorder, 13420 Eastpoint Centre Dr., Louisville, KY 40223.

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



Leaders: Great demand, short supply

By Terry Dorsett

Everywhere we look leadership is in great demand but short supply.

Among the reasons we need to nurture leaders:

Families are in trouble

Though many factors contribute to that stress, what is missing most are fathers who are willing to lead their families in the way God intended.

Thank God for all the single moms who are making things work. But I think every single mom would agree that if the Lord gave her a good man who would be the kind of husband and father that was really needed, her family would become stronger.

Churches are in trouble

Though many factors contribute to the decline of church attendance in our culture, what is most missing are deacons, elders and pastors willing to lead.

Many want a position of leadership, but few want to do the work of being a leader. Thank God for the older generation that has led for so long, but if a new

generation does not step up to the plate and lead, a large number of churches will not exist in the next decade.

Churches need leaders willing to do the work that is required of leaders.

Economies are in trouble

Though many factors contribute to the financial challenges that families, organizations and governments are experiencing, what is most missing are leaders willing to make the hard choices that will provide for long-term financial security.

Families that do not save for their future are unlikely to ever get to the future they want. Organizations that use money in unwise ways will experience a crisis of donor confidence that eventually lowers giving.

Governments that cater to special interest groups instead of making decisions that are best for the larger group become paralyzed.

We need leaders willing to make the hard choices even if not everyone agrees with those choices.

As I pondered this, I found these verses of Scripture that describe the kind of leaders we need:

Philippians 2:3: "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves."

Luke 6:31: "Treat others the same way you want them to treat you."

Matthew 20:26: "It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant."

John 3:30: "He must increase, but I must decrease."

Proverbs 29:2 "When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, But when a wicked man rules, people groan."

Men and women who lead like this will know who they are and where they need to lead us. They can save families, churches and economies.

FIRST PERSON

Strengthening your commitment in marriage

Q: Marriage sometimes seems to be so not worth it when you have much frustration on both sides. When people are reared in families where commitment was not well practiced, it sometimes almost seems easier to quit. What do we need to think about to strengthen our commitment?



James Stillwell

A: First, get some encouragement by getting a referral to a good marriage therapist, one who is skilled, competent, connecting and pro-marriage, who can help you learn communication and conflict resolution skills.

Second, contemplate the reasons to stay in a committed relationship that are taught by both

Old and New Testaments. The marriage research team headed by Scott Stanley at the University of Denver gives the following biblical motivations (A Lasting Promise: A Christian Guide to Fighting for Your Marriage):

(a) We are to have as our family agenda the other person's welfare: Ruth and Naomi modeled this kind of relationship. They would have been within their rights to separate, but they put the other person's needs before their own (Ruth 1:16-23).

(b) As a couple, we have a shared story and identity: Jesus talked about the two becoming one. Part of this means that, as a rule, staying within that shared identity is advantageous for both. (Matt. 19:6)

(c) As God's people we desire to honor a sacred covenant. Malachi 2:13-16 describes a time in Israel's history when covenants were discarded on a whim and idolatry was the result. Covenant agreements are sacred in part because our welfare is a consideration in the wise plan of a loving God.

(d) We are given the example of Christ. Philipians 2:3-5 explains how Christ models for us sacrificial living for others, and this is crucial in our relationship with our spouse.

(e) The fuel for marriage to get you through hard times is agape love (1 Cor. 13:4-8). Lean into Christ's love during the tough times.

(f) We succeed best when we take the long view. We are able to weather the inevitable storms, the ups-and-downs of life, when we keep in mind the long-term goal of a lifetime of friendship with our beloved. When we see it as a long-term investment, we will be more motivated to making daily deposits of love.

Choosing a trustee

A trust can be a helpful estate planning tool.

Whether you are using a revocable living trust as part of your plan for management of assets in the event of incapacity or an irrevocable trust for tax planning, one of the most important decisions is your choice for trustee.

Under Kentucky law, the trustee may be an individual or a bank, trust company or other entity that has trust powers. An individual serving as trustee does not have to be resident of Kentucky, nor do they have to be related to you.

Think about the types of assets that are, or may be, in the trust. Name a trustee that understands the management of those types of assets, knows about taxes, investments and financial matters.

The trustee should be a self-starter. There is little supervision of the management of a trust. Your choice should be someone that will not neglect their responsibilities.

Don't just assume the person or entity you wish to name as trustee is willing to serve. Ask before you complete your planning and, if possible, allow them to review the trust agreement before it is signed.

Finally, make sure you have selected a trustee who can be objective. Trustees must make decisions that affect the interests of both the income beneficiaries and the remainder beneficiaries. While family members may be appropriate choices, in some cases you may need to consider a professional, corporate or institutional trustee. Corporate trustees are accountable not only to the beneficiaries of the trust, but also to their own management, directors, auditors and other examiners.



Laurie Valentine

Search committees and the challenges they face

Wake Forest, N.C.—I've worked with a number of pastor and staff search teams as they vet possible candidates for their open positions. These folks typically are God-seeking believers who want nothing but God's will to be done.

Churches and their search committees face an array of challenges. Among them:

1. Making wise choices for committee members.

Just because a person is viewed as a leader doesn't make him or her a good search team member. These ought to be godly, prayerful, trustworthy believers and good team members.

2. Consistent prayer.

I've seen some committees that prayed a lot when their work started, a little during the actual search process, and a lot more once they'd narrowed their search to one person. Significant prayer is essential during the entire process.

3. Checking accuracy of resumes.

You'd hope that all Christian candidates have only truth on their resume, but that's not always the case.

4. Doing background and credit checks.

Again, I wish neither of these reviews was necessary, but we live in a fallen world.

5. Asking theological questions.

I'm amazed by the number of candidates I know who are asked only one or two questions about what they believe. A general, "Do you believe the Bible?" is not sufficient. And these questions should be asked early in the process; otherwise, if strong relationships have begun to develop, it's too easy to let debatable responses pass.

7. Checking references.

While few people include negative references on their resume, you can still learn about a candidate from others.

8. Patience.

In my experience, it's taking longer and longer to find pastors and staff members. The longer it takes, the likelier it is that the committee will want to settle.

That's dangerous.

9. Being honest with the candidate.

Most churches as not as healthy as search teams seem to think they are. Withholding significant information in the search process will only breed frustration later.

10. Spending ample time with the candidate.

Sometimes this issue is the result of an overall faulty process, but the more time the search team spends with the candidate, the better.

11. Involving the candidate's family in the process.

The candidate may become the church's leader, but he likely comes with a family. To ignore them in the process is to send the wrong signal to them from the beginning.

12. Keeping the church informed.

The work of the committee is to be confidential, but the committee should still keep the congregation in the loop. At a minimum, they can then pray more pointedly.

13. Keeping the candidates informed.

Even if the committee decides not to pursue a particular candidate, they still owe the candidate a response. Leaving people hanging is unkind.

14. Guarding against overreacting to the previous leader.

If, for example, a church has had a positive experience with a leader, or a negative one, they must be careful in setting realistic expectations.

15. Expanding the search beyond those who've submitted a resume.

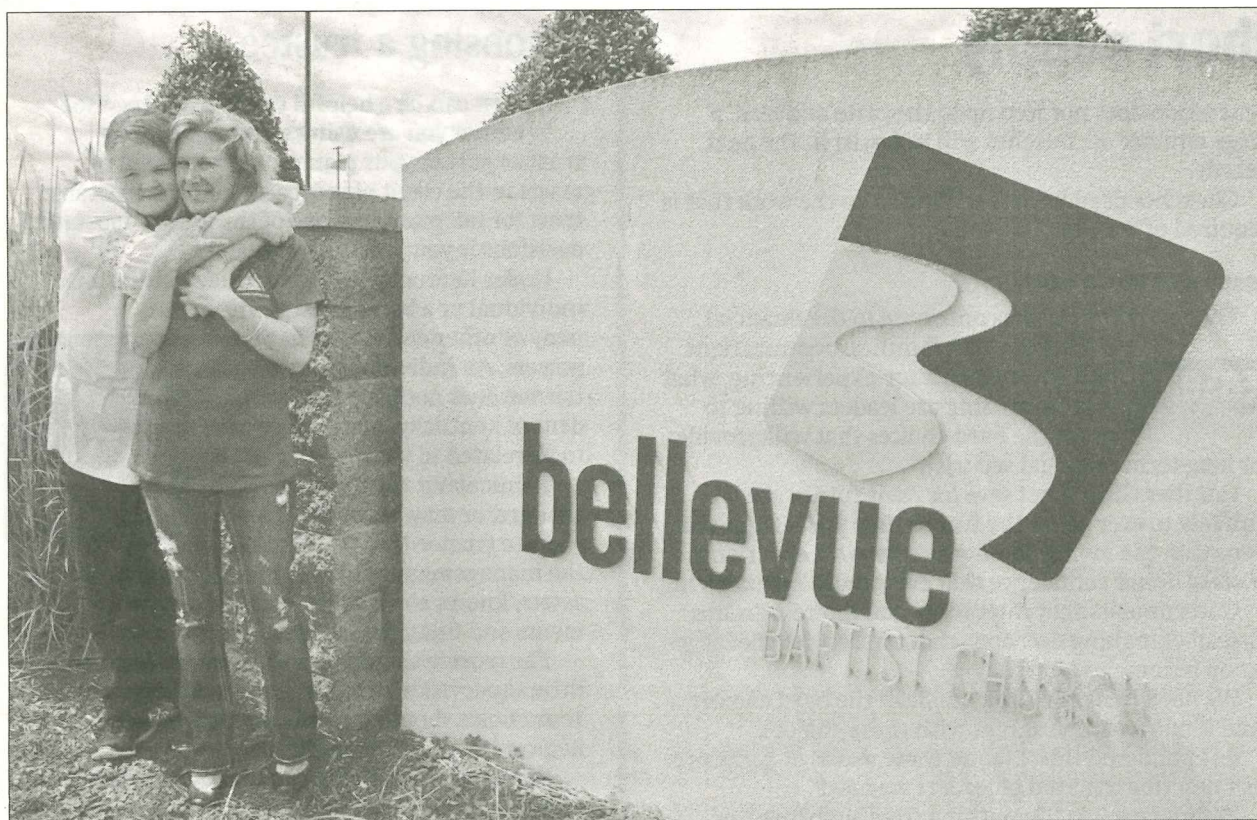
God might be working in someone whose resume is not yet available. Committees that don't consider asking someone whose name has not been submitted might miss an opportunity.

Calling a new spiritual leader is one of the most significant decisions a local congregation makes. I don't know any churches that take that process lightly, but I do know churches that don't do that process well. Don't be one of those churches. (BP)

First Person



Chuck Lawless



Gloria Lewis, hugging her mother Lori Lewis outside Bellevue Baptist Church in Owensboro, was left at a Florida fire station when she was 4 days old. Now she's part of a loving Kentucky Baptist family. (KBC)

Newborn left at fire station now 12, living good life in Owensboro

By Roger Alford

Owensboro—The cheerful smile is proof enough that life is good for Gloria Hope Lewis.

The 12-year-old Owensboro girl has become a face for the hundreds of newborns who have been left at fire stations, hospital emergency rooms and other designated places across the country since states began enacting laws aimed at preventing the all-too-frequent cases of infants being tossed into dumpsters.

Those laws allow new parents to drop off their newborns at certain locations without fear of prosecution.

Gloria was 4 days old when her birth mother took her to a Florida fire station. She accepts what happened to her with a maturity beyond her years.

"If you have the choice between leaving a baby in a dumpster, keeping the baby and not being able to raise her, or giving her to a good family you know can raise her, which one would you choose?" Gloria asks. "That's basically the question. It's out of motherly love that they give their babies up."

Gloria has grown into a blonde dynamo cherished by her adoptive parents, Mike and Lori Lewis, and her older sister, Erika. Gloria is a voracious reader, a key member of her school's academic team and active in Bellevue Baptist Church where she assists her mother as a Sunday school teacher.

More than that, Gloria, working alongside her mother, has gotten involved in educating the public about Kentucky's so-called Safe Infants Act, which is receiving a makeover from the Legislature this year to add churches to the places where parents can turn over their babies. Already in Kentucky, babies could be taken to fire, police and ambulance stations and hospital emergency rooms.

The legislation has cleared the House and Senate and is expected to be signed into law soon by Gov. Matt Bevin.

"The governor supports churches being safe havens for infants," said Bevin's spokeswoman, Jessica Ditto. "The bill is under review by the governor's legislative team and will be sent to his desk in coming days."

Gloria considers the addition of churches, which typically are in even the smallest communities, a good move by state lawmakers.

"A church usually is closer, less intimidating, and people feel like they can trust the church," she said. "I know I do."

The legislation would allow newborns up to 30 days old to be dropped off without fear of parents being criminally charged.

Rep. Donna Mayfield, the Winchester Republican who originally proposed the idea of adding churches to the list of safe havens, said she's convinced the legislation can save the lives of innocent babies.

"I remember seeing over this past Christmas that a baby was surrendered at a manger scene in a church," Mayfield said. "That just tells me that people are still drawn to churches and feel like that's a place of safety and no judgment."

Under current Kentucky law, parents can anonymously surrender their babies at police, fire and ambulance stations and hospital emergency rooms until they're 3 days old without fear of prosecution.

Since the law was adopted in 2002, 38 infants have been dropped off at medical facilities in the state, according to the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

As long as the baby is not injured, the law ensures that the parent or person acting for them will not be criminally prosecuted.

Churches wanting to participate in the Safe Haven program would have to display signs specifying the hours during which staff will be present.

When an infant is dropped off, the legislation would require church staff to immediately contact 911 to transport the baby to the nearest hospital emergency room.

Lori Lewis said she and husband, Michael, made the decision to go public as the adoptive parents of a safe haven baby. They'd heard about so many instances in which a birth mom, feeling helpless and hopeless, took their baby to a dumpster. Lori Lewis said she wanted moms in such circumstances to realize there was another option.

Both she and her husband have devoted themselves to educating birth moms about safe haven laws.

"We knew that by speaking out we could raise awareness," she said. "We're always trying to do whatever we can to educate these mothers there are options."

The Lewis's have become regulars in print and broadcast news. They often get calls when states institute or revise infant safe haven laws. Lori Lewis offers nothing but encouragement to birth moms who find themselves in dire circumstances, including the one who gave Gloria.

"She knew that, at this point in her life, she couldn't parent children," Lori Lewis said. "She loved her child so much—enough that she was able to give her to the firemen to make sure she could be part of a forever family."

Lori Lewis is bent on saving other babies, and, for her, that means educating birth moms about safe haven laws. She is working with the organization A Safe Haven for Newborns to raise awareness.

It's crucial, Lori Lewis said, that birth mothers see this as a viable option.

"I have compassion for them," she said. "I understand that life has dealt them some hard knocks. We're not walking in their shoes. We can't know where they're at in their lives."

Lori Lewis said it's vital that birth mothers understand that the babies they give up must be handed over to an actual person, not outside a door. That's especially crucial when it comes to churches that may not be staffed regularly.

"The baby must be handed to a person," she said. "Placing them on a step and leaving is abandonment. You must put them in someone's arms."

Gloria would offer encouraging words for other children who have been given up at safe havens for infants.

"I would tell them that their mom loved them enough to give them up," she said, "and that they can be happy because their moms chose life instead of abandonment."

To learn more about A Safe Haven for Newborns call 1-844-767-2229 or visit www.asafehavenfornewborns.com. (KT)

Ky. governor signs single marriage license legislation

By Todd Deaton

Louisville—"We celebrate the creation of a marriage license that omits the county clerk's name thus avoiding the perception of an endorsement of same-sex marriages by the clerks," said Paul Chitwood, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, after Gov. Matt Bevin signed the measure Wednesday in his state Capitol office in Frankfort.

The legislation, which creates one marriage license form for both homosexual and straight couples, was enacted to resolve an issue created when Rowan County Clerk Kim Davis was jailed five days for refusing to issue licenses to same-sex couples. Because of her sincerely held religious beliefs regarding the traditional view of marriage, Davis said she couldn't issue the licenses since the form had her name on them.

"This matter was rightly perceived as a religious liberty issue for county clerks who hold to a biblical definition of marriage," Chitwood said.

The new law does not require the county clerk's to sign and issue the licenses, and applicants will have an option of checking "bride," "groom" or "spouse" beside their name.

The bill's final version passed the state's General Assembly without any opposition, clearing the Democratic-led House on a 97-0 vote and the Republican-controlled Senate by a 36-0 vote.

"Everyone benefits from this common-sense legislation," Bevin said in a statement. "There is no additional cost or work required by our county clerks. They are now able to fully follow the law without being forced to compromise their religious liberty."

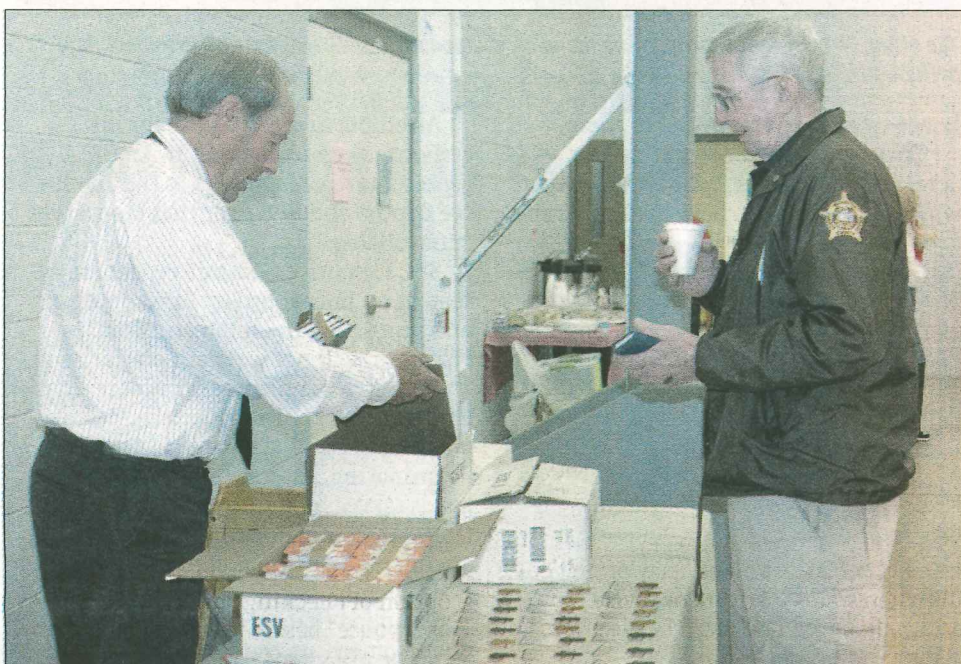
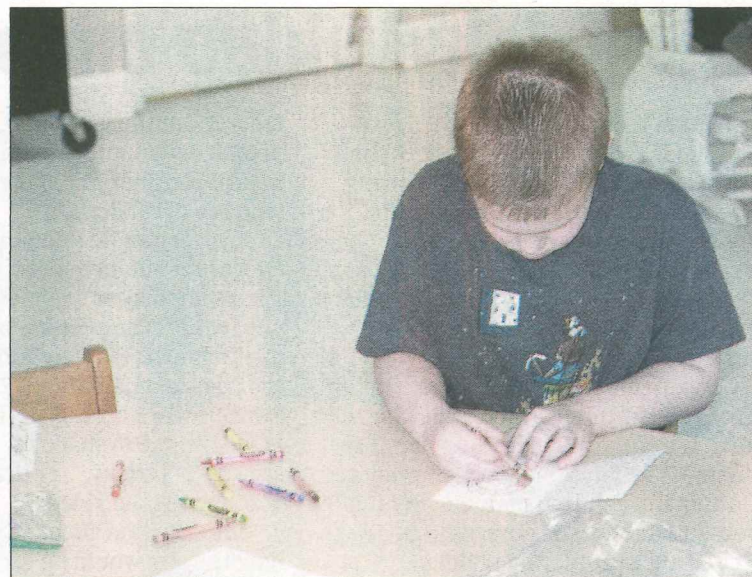
The legislation, which takes effect this summer, drew praise from Kentucky Baptist leaders.

"As Kentuckians, we stand with our Governor as a people desiring to fully express our religious liberty without risk of violating law or conscience," said Neal Thornton, chairman of the KBC Public Affairs Committee.

"As Kentucky Baptists, we applaud our Governor's legislative decision," added Thornton, pastor of First Baptist Church of Mt. Vernon. "His position and posture help create a commonwealth conducive for the spreading of the gospel and the legal protection of our churches."

The Supreme Court has redefined marriage, making gay marriage legal, KBC President Kevin Smith observed, "so states and municipalities are having to work through the bureaucratic paperwork of that" decision.

"I'm glad it's done (in Kentucky), but our society will reap the fruits of SCOTUS's ruling," added Smith, teaching pastor at Highview Baptist Church in Louisville. (WR)



Honoring Helpers

For Central Baptist Association's Children's Ministry Day, the focus this year was Honor Community Helpers Day.

Top Left: Steve Skaggs of Muldraugh Hill Baptist Church leads the children in a song prepared in honor of the first responders.

Top Right: Jacob, grandson of Central Association DOM, colors a card to present to the first responders.

Bottom Left: Each child and first responder present received a Gideon's New Testament.

Middle Right: While the children were completing their activities, services were offered to the first responders present. Here, a member of Washington County Fire and Rescue is discussing health with a nurse.

Right: The children made cards and presented them to the first responders present. "A lot of times this is a thankless job. It's nice sometimes to just have people say thank you," a Washington County EMS representative said.



Travel bans

Continued from page 3

case would be the transsexual."

Dale Braswell, pastor of LifePoint Church in Seattle-area Lynwood, Wash., agreed. He said Washington state political leaders "genuinely believe they are doing what is right" but lack a Christian worldview to guide them properly.

Braswell does not believe the secular mindset among his local and state government leaders will result in a widespread threat to religious liberty within the next decade.

Yet even if it does, he said it won't change the way he does ministry.

"The only thing that will really change is maybe the consequences we face for being obedient to the Word. But none of this has affected our call," Braswell said, adding, "The gospel is no stranger to persecution and difficulty. In fact, sometimes the gospel flourishes better in those environments."

Even so, Christians in the Bible Belt hope to preserve their remaining religious liberty and the residual influence of Judeo-Christian morality in their culture.

Lonnie Wilkey, editor of Tennessee's Baptist and Reflector newsjournal, advised pro-gay and pro-transgender activists in other states, "Mind your own business."

North Carolina's restroom privacy bill "sent supporters of the LGBT population into a tailspin," Wilkey wrote in an April 7 editorial. "It never ceases to amaze me how this group always lambastes those who disagree with their lifestyle as 'intolerant' when they are the most intolerant group on our planet today. They won't be satisfied until everyone welcomes and supports their lifestyle."

"Breaking news—that's not going to happen," Wilkey wrote. "There is still a remnant (although it appears to be growing smaller) of people who still believe in morals and biblical values."

USA Today speculated the travel bans may be "largely symbolic in their economic effects." (BP)

Governor vetoes Bible as Tennessee state book

By Lonnie Wilkey

Nashville—Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam vetoed a bill April 14 that would have made the Bible the official state book, but the measure's sponsors are hopeful a veto override will occur.

Rep. Jerry Sexton and Sen. Steve Southerland, both Republicans, told The Tennessean they plan to lead an override effort, which would require only a simple majority in both chambers. The bill passed earlier this month by a 55-38 margin in the state House of Representatives and a 19-8 margin in the Senate.

An override likely would have to take place the week of April 18, which is expected to be the Tennessee General Assembly's last week in session.

If the veto is overridden, Tennessee would become the first state in the nation to make the Bible its official state book, according to The Tennessean. A similar bill in Mississippi has

died in committee each of the past two years, according to information on the state legislature website.

Randy Davis, executive director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, said he is "disappointed with the governor's veto" though "Holy Scripture needs no human affirmation."

"The authority of the Word of God has not been diminished because a state hasn't declared it 'official,'" Davis said. "Personal affirmation of the Bible and regularly reading the Bible is far more important than state-sanctioned recognition of the Bible. Living by the principles and precepts of the Bible and knowing the Jesus of the Bible brings purpose, peace and joy."

According to The Tennessean, Haslam, a Republican, defended his veto by citing Attorney General Herbert Slatery's 2015 opinion that designating Scripture as the official state book could violate the state and federal constitutions. (BP)

'It's Tricky' video endorsing Greear raises questions

Durham, N.C.—A YouTube video promoting J.D. Greear for president of the Southern Baptist Convention is raising concerns. In question is the participation of three SBC entity presidents who appear to be endorsing Greear's election.

The video, "It's Tricky," is a parody of the late 80s rap song with the same name by Run-DMC.

Concern emerged when Greear—pastor of The Summit Church in Durham, North Carolina, and a leading member of Acts 29, a church network that rejects non-Calvinist church planters and solely promotes Calvinistic governance—began circulating a promotional video in March as a campaign ad for SBC president.

SBC presidential nominees using social media is a relatively new move, as is endorsements by entity heads on social media.

Greear will be nominated by Jimmy Scroggins, pastor of First Baptist Church of West Palm Beach, Fla., at the 2016 SBC Annual Meeting to be held in St. Louis, Mo., June 14–15.

Also being nominated are Steve Gaines, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn.; and David Crosby, pastor of First Baptist Church, New Orleans. Gaines will be nominated by Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Ga. Crosby will be nominated by Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church of New Orleans.

While a number of Southern Baptist personalities appear in Greear's video, it is David Platt, president of the International Mission Board; Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious

Liberty Commission; and, Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., who are of concern.

Platt denies he knowingly endorsed Greear for SBC president, stating he was not aware Greear's request for a video clip was for the purpose of creating a campaign ad. Platt responded to an IMB trustee via email March 23, explaining, "while I was overseas in the Middle East, J.D. asked me to shoot a 2-second video saying, 'It's tricky,'" a phrase repeated throughout the video.

But Platt said Greear did not divulge how the clip would be used.

"I had no idea what it was for," Platt clarified, although he said he knew beforehand Greear had been nominated.

Platt said it was only when he came back into the United States that he heard Greear used his image and words for the electioneering piece.

"Please be assured (and please assure anyone who asks you about it) that I am not personally (and we are certainly not organizationally) endorsing anyone for SBC president," Platt wrote, noting he would "be thrilled" to serve alongside any "faithful Southern Baptist pastor who might be nominated to serve in this important role."

Platt also noted disappointment with how Greear's use of him in a campaign video had created an unnecessary distraction, saying "It's definitely frustrating to come back to issues like this after a couple of weeks overseas, seeing massive needs among unreached refugees who are suffering and dying, and spending concentrated time with our front-line leaders around the world discussing



The video, "It's Tricky," which may be found on youtube as "J.D. Greear for SBC President Rap," is performed by rap star, Ashley.

how we can take the gospel to them.

"May God give us grace together across the SBC to keep our focus on that which matters most, here in the U.S. and around the world."

Akin said he did not think "being an entity head" should prohibit or prevent anyone "from expressing their support of a candidate or several candidates."

"I told J.D. ... I thought he would do an excellent job," Akin explained to The Alabama Baptist, noting that at the time of his endorsement no other candidates had been declared. Greear was announced as a candidate March 2, Gaines March 9, and Crosby March 24.

Akin said his top priority is that the SBC president be "passionately committed to theological integrity, as embodied in the Baptist Faith & Message 2000, North American church planting and international missions."

Attempts to reach Moore for his response were unsuccessful. An ERLC representative responded to the Tennessee Baptist and Reflector that Moore was "unavailable."

SBC Executive Committee, generally seen as an honest broker for promoting and protecting the interests of SBC churches, will not weigh in on the issue.

Executive Committee President Frank Page told the Louisiana Baptist Message via email, "Southern Baptist history is illuminating. At various times, entity heads served as SBC president. At other times, they nominated SBC presidents or commented on SBC presidential nominees."

He added that it was a free speech issue, something the Executive Committee had "never attempted to regulate" to his knowledge. "I don't anticipate that changing anytime soon." (ASBP)

LifeWay moves swiftly toward new Nashville headquarters

By Lisa Green

Nashville—LifeWay Christian Resources left little doubt of its aggressive timetable for construction of its new building, breaking ground for new headquarters just hours after closing the purchase of the property on April 6.

Within two years, LifeWay expects to move 1,100 employees into a new office building on 2.5 acres in Capitol View, a mixed-use urban development in Nashville's central business district.

The future site of the nine-story, 250,000-square-foot building was primarily dirt and gravel, with front-end loaders waiting idly beside a huge white tent. Hundreds of employees gathered for a brief ceremony to pray and dedicate the new location.

"There's really a singular purpose to this—to celebrate through prayer," LifeWay President and CEO Thom Rainer told the assembled employees.

Describing the future of the new property, Rainer said, "It's going to be amazing to see what will happen. Lives will be changed and people will come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. The only thing we can do in response is say, 'God, to You be the glory,' and pray that every day we will be used by Him."

Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, expressed thanksgiving for LifeWay's legacy of commitment and quality.



LifeWay employees gathered under a large tent on the wind-swept site of the ministry's new headquarters building in downtown Nashville to pray and dedicate the location.

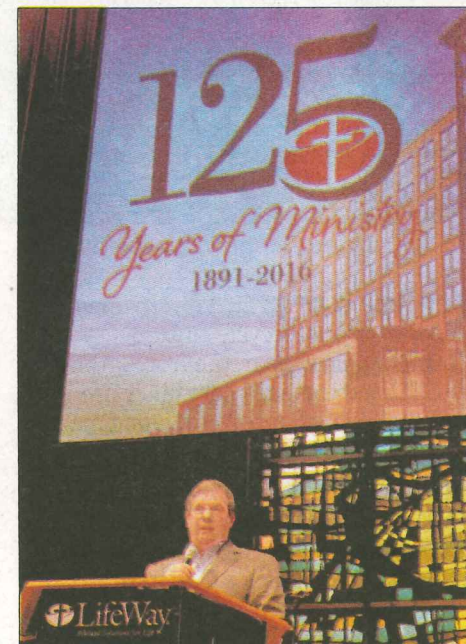
"We are proud to be partners with this organization," he said.

The groundbreaking ceremony coincided with a celebration of the 125th anniversary of LifeWay, established in 1891 as the Baptist Sunday School Board. Its downtown Nashville campus eventually expanded to 14.5 acres, more than the ministry needs today.

In November 2015, LifeWay sold the property to San Diego-based Southwest Value Partners, a private real estate investment firm. The new owner plans to redevelop the site, but LifeWay will

continue to occupy part of the property until its new building is complete.

In a chapel service before the groundbreaking, Rainer outlined LifeWay's 125-year history through the accomplishments of its eight previous presidents, from entrepreneurial founder J.M. Frost, "one of my heroes of the faith," to Rainer's immediate predecessor, James Draper. Rainer noted a worldwide shift toward digital technology since his tenure began in 2006. Preparing to move to a new location during these years "has been a God-infused effort," he said.



LifeWay president and CEO, Thom Rainer, led employees in a chapel service celebrating the ministry's 125-year history prior to a groundbreaking and prayer service for the ministry's new building.

"Remember this place fondly—remember how God has worked in this place—but remember that the God of the Old and the New Testament is not limited to a place," Rainer told employees. "As we move to Capitol View, the God who has been with us for 125 years will be with us in the future." (BP)



Set Free Daytona holds a service at Boot Hill Saloon, a popular biker bar, once a month.

Kentucky native leading Set Free Daytona to reach bikers

By Keila Diaz

Daytona Beach, Fla.—At first glance Jim “Cochise” Powell looks like one of the hundreds of bikers from the Daytona Beach, Fla., area.

His white mustache and beard, long hair pulled back into a ponytail, tattooed arms and boots certainly seem to identify him as a biker. But those who know him personally know him as Pastor Cochise Chops or Brother Jim.

Powell pastors Set Free Daytona, a church with a mission to reach the biker community in Daytona with the gospel. Powell knows the community well, as he spent many years deep within its culture.

A native of Kentucky, Powell says he grew up in a poor home—something he didn’t realize until he started school.

When Powell was young his father had an epileptic seizure that left him unable to work and put the family in a government assistance program.

“Because I was so poor I tried to make up for it with my personality,” he said. “I tried to get people to like me by being likable.”

When Powell was 10 he saw, for the first time, a Harley biker ride through his town. At that moment he decided he, too, wanted to be a biker.

When he turned 25, Powell joined the Iron Barons motorcycle club.

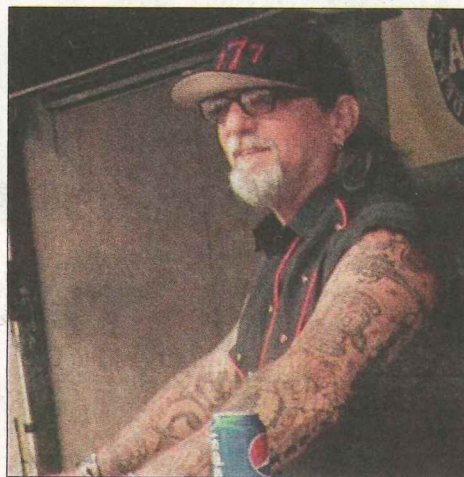
During his time in the Iron Barons, Powell lived the hard-core biker lifestyle, which consisted of traveling long miles in large packs of bikers to places to party and drink.

But Powell said that on one Fourth of July he felt God tug at his heart and that was the beginning of a journey to become the pastor he is today.

That journey, which wasn’t always a smooth ride, and how God was at work in each part of it, is detailed in Cochise’s new autobiography, “Outlaw Chapel: I’m Still A Rebel.”

“I’m very impressed with Cochise and his radical, fanatical spirit for the Lord and his commitment to pushing back the evil and the darkness in Daytona,” said David Burton, founder and director of David Burton Ministries and a Christian biker.

Powell is one of the few pastors who “has the ability to communicate with bikers because he has grown up in that



Jim “Cochise” Powell, a native of Kentucky, is pastor of Set Free Daytona, a church with a mission to reach the biker community in Daytona with the gospel. Powell shares about his life and ministry in his autobiography “Outlaw Chapel: I’m Still a Rebel.”

mindset. He’s been able to get (into) some areas of ministry that many wouldn’t be able to get into,” Burton said.

Martin Beall, director of missions for the Halifax Baptist Association, said Powell “is an outspoken evangelist who’s not afraid to get his hands dirty in ministry.”

Beall also feels that the ministry Powell is carrying out is a difficult one.

“He’s ministering to people that don’t feel comfortable in the traditional church setting,” he said.

Set Free, an almost three-year-old church plant, started out meeting in the Halifax association building but now meets in one of First Baptist Church of Daytona’s buildings on Saturday nights.

Once a month, Set Free—made up of approximately 40 members—holds a service at Boot Hill Saloon, a popular biker bar in Daytona.

“We take popular songs and change the lyrics into Christian lyrics, and I preach a short sermon,” Powell said.

Bikers come to the bar and listen and even join in the worship, he said.

The church also sets up a table at a nearby Harley-Davidson dealer to pass out tracts and talk to people about the Christ.

In his book Powell is open about his life as a biker, his divorce and his ministry. He said the book was difficult to write, but it was something he wanted to share in order for people to see how God has shaped him into who he is today. (BP)

Jones, former Ky. pastor, DOM dies

Hendersonville, N.C.—George Alexander Jones, 95, a former Kentucky pastor and director of missions, died at his home in Hendersonville, N.C., on Feb.

12—the same day that his wife of nearly 67 years, Evelyn, died five years earlier.

A graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Jones was appointed as a U.S. Army Chaplain in 1944.

He returned to serve as pastor of Victory Baptist Church in Shepherdsville and later became pastor of First Baptist Church of Lawrenceburg.

In 1955, Jones was called to the Baptist Church of Beaufort, S.C. An active leader in the South Carolina convention, he served many years on its executive board.

He also was involved in moving Furman University to its new campus in

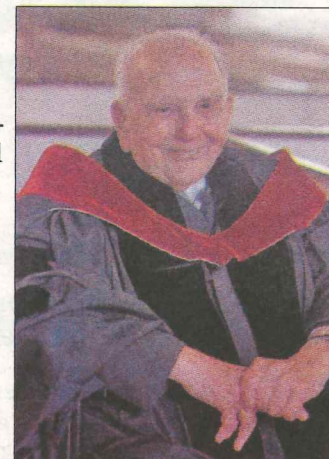
Greenville, and he was a member of the founding board of the Baptist College of Charleston, now Charleston Southern University.

Jones returned to Kentucky in 1970 as director of missions for Northern Kentucky Baptist Association.

His responsibilities included a convalescent center, college ministry at Northern Kentucky University, inner-city ministry and serving 60 churches. He also taught for Boyce Bible School.

After 15 years, Jones, who was born in Saluda, N.C., returned to his native state, where they joined First Baptist Church of Hendersonville, and he continued to serve interim pastorates.

Missions was a lifelong interest, and he and Evelyn made several mission trips to China and Wales and accompanied the Billy Graham Crusade to Russia.



George Alexander Jones

ERLC President Russell Moore, left, and Focus on the Family President Jim Daly, right, interview David Daleiden of the Center for Medical Progress which produced and released a series of videos last summer outing Planned Parenthood’s sale of baby body parts and general callousness toward aborting children. (BP file photo)



Undercover videos seized from Daleiden’s home

By Bob Brown

Orange County, Calif.—Center for Medical Progress director David Daleiden revealed on April 5 that agents from the California attorney general’s office searched his Orange County apartment, seizing “all video footage” related to CMP’s investigation into Planned Parenthood’s involvement in the fetal tissue trade.

Reporting the raid on CMP’s Facebook page, Daleiden characterized the search and seizure of the videos as an “attack on citizen journalism.” He blamed the decision for the raid on the close alliance between California Attorney General Kamala Harris and Planned Parenthood.

“Kamala Harris, who was elected with tens of thousands of dollars from taxpayer-funded Planned Parenthood ... has steadfastly refused to enforce the law against the baby body parts traffickers in our state,” Daleiden wrote. On several occasions, Harris has publicly defended Planned Parenthood, and the abortion industry giant donated thousands of dollars to the Democrat’s successful 2014 re-election bid.

Daleiden noted on Facebook that the state attorney’s agents left behind documents that he alleges show the “illicit scheme between StemExpress

and Planned Parenthood.”

Harris, who last year announced her candidacy for the Senate seat that 75-year-old Barbara Boxer will vacate when she retires at the end of this term, pledged in July to investigate CMP. The timing of the search of Daleiden’s apartment might be a response to mounting pressure against Harris: A Los Angeles Times columnist recently accused her of inaction in the CMP investigation.

This is not the first time a government lawyer has gone after Daleiden.

In January, a Houston grand jury charged Daleiden and CMP employee Sandra Merritt with illegal acts stemming from CMP’s undercover investigation of the Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast (PPGC) abortion center. In that case, pro-lifers questioned Harris County District Attorney Devon Anderson’s ability to conduct an impartial investigation. One of Anderson’s assistant district attorneys held a position on PPGC’s board of directors. While indicting Daleiden, the grand jury seemingly overlooked video evidence of Planned Parenthood aborting babies alive to obtain valuable “intact fetal cadavers.”

Daleiden also faces two lawsuits in California, filed last year by the National Abortion Federation and Planned Parenthood. (BP)



Far left: Ethiopian President Mulatu Teshome sat down with SBC President Ronnie Floyd, second from left, during Floyd's trip to the country. Also shown is Cross Church missions pastor Doug Sarver, left. **Left:** Cross Church laymember Haileyesus Abate, at left, prays with his pastor and SBC President Ronnie Floyd, second from left, during the Christian Orthodox Epiphany festival in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. About 500,000 Ethiopians attended the celebration marking Jesus' baptism but steeped in false theology. At right is Cross Church global missions pastor Doug Sarver, joined by another Cross Church member. **Below:** Cross Church of Arkansas laymember Haileyesus Abate, far left, and global missions pastor Doug Sarver, far right, with male youths from the Mursi tribe in southwestern Ethiopia. **Bottom:** Women of the Mursi tribe in southwestern Ethiopia wear mouth plates in their lower lip in an effort to signify beauty. The lip is pierced with a stick and the hole is stretched by progressively larger plates. (Cross Church photos)

Arkansas layman plans for 50,000 churches in Ethiopia

By Diana Chandler

Rogers, Ark.—Arkansas corporate executive Haileyesus Abate cries, he says, for the people of his native Ethiopia, a majority Christian nation where numerous primitive tribes still worship nature as deities and have never heard the gospel.

Typical is the nomadic, animistic Mursi Tribe in southwestern Ethiopia, whose men don't wear clothing. Instead, they use clay and natural pigments to paint intricate, colorful patterns on their bodies to attract a bride, who likely will have had a hole punched just below her lip before puberty; the hole is stretched by the insertion of progressively larger, round, flat, decorated wooden plates. The larger her plate, the larger dowry the groom's family pays in negotiating a union, according to custom.

Mursi and other tribes are vulnerable to Muslims working to build mosques in their villages and who convert them to Islam, Haileyesus noted, sharing with Baptist Press a vision and urgency to see 50,000 evangelistic Christian churches planted among the tribes.

"I actually weep about that," he told BP. "We are not from the same tribe, but just God put a burden on me to make a difference for them."

That is why he arranged for his pastor, Southern Baptist Convention President Ronnie Floyd, to visit Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and meet with top political and Christian leaders.

"I was able to lift up the Word of God," Floyd said. "The Lord gave us an open door. Our ultimate purpose was to get the gospel there."

Ethiopian leaders seemed interested in the tide against religious freedom in the U.S., new laws protecting gay marriage here, and religious persecution worldwide.

"I was able to talk to them about holding tight to the line of the biblical Christian worldview," Floyd told BP. "Also, we talked about matters relating to the religious persecution that goes on in the world. I was able to talk to them about religious freedom throughout the world, the evil that's existed in our day relating to all of that, and to really just encourage them to stand strong for the cause of religious liberty."

While there, Floyd viewed the annual Epiphany celebration held by Orthodox Christians to mark Christ's baptism, and met with International Mission Board workers already helping spread the gospel in Ethiopia and throughout the Horn of Africa. He discussed with IMB workers Haileyesus' plan to spread the gospel

even further by recruiting Southern Baptist congregations to plant churches within unengaged, unreached tribal groups.

"They were stunned that I was able to meet with the president of Ethiopia and the speaker of the House (Abadulla Gemeda)," Floyd said of the IMB workers, "because in Ethiopia the speaker of the House is the most powerful man in government."

Upon his return to Arkansas, Floyd told his church how impressed he was to see Cooperative Program dollars—that help support SBC ministry and missions—at work.

"And I wanted to thank them for the privilege of what they've given through the Cooperative Program, what we as a church do through giving to the Cooperative Program, that I saw it with my own eyes," Floyd said. "We are taking the gospel to an unreached country in this world ... and we have people on the ground and they are seeing life change occur."

But Floyd's visit was only the first step in Haileyesus' plan to spread the gospel further within Ethiopia by planting churches within tribal groups. Doug Sarver, Cross Church's minister of global missions, is working with Haileyesus to recruit Southern Baptist churches to partner with Cross Church to take the gospel to unengaged, unreached tribes in Ethiopia, and train tribal members as Baptist pastors and teachers.

Sarver noted he is impressed by Haileyesus' initiative in arranging for Floyd to visit the country, recalling the meeting Haileyesus requested with Floyd to discuss his inspiration for church planting there.

"And out of that vision flowed, 'Pastor, will you come to Ethiopia. I will arrange for your meetings with these dignitaries,'" Sarver said of Haileyesus, pointing out the unique opportunity Haileyesus provided.

"Because Haileyesus is Ethiopian, and because his childhood friends are the prime minister, the president, the ambassadors, the ministers, he has been able to be used by God as just, what we would call, the person of peace, to open up doors of opportunity for us to get in front of the people at the top and not the bottom."

Ethiopian leaders welcomed Floyd and embraced Haileyesus' evangelistic vision, Sarver said.

"So now we have favor in that nation from the top level leadership."

Floyd's five-member delegation also met with leaders of Ethiopian Airlines, a company that routinely brings



humanitarian supplies back to Ethiopia when transporting newly purchased Boeing 777s to Ethiopia from Seattle, Wash. More than 820,000 refugees and asylum seekers are camped in Ethiopia, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

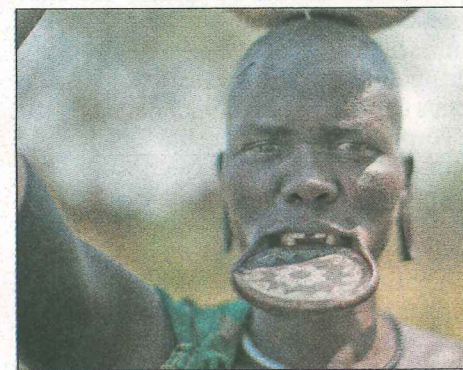
"Think what kind of impact (Southern Baptist churches) could have if we rallied around and said there are 800,000 refugees, Muslims, inside of Ethiopia," Sarver said. "The president, the speaker of the house, the minister of foreign affairs, minister of defense, have all said we want your help. The airline says we'll pack out a Boeing 777 with humanitarian supplies from Seattle and ship it over here to Addis Ababa free. Now we just have to use it as a platform for ministry to help people, and to plant 50,000 churches."

Haileyesus, from the same village and tribe as Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, said now is the perfect time to take the gospel to Ethiopia.

"For the first time in 3,000 years, it is the first time an evangelical, a Protestant person is the ruler of the country," Haileyesus said. "This is the best opportunity to get (the gospel) there. It is up to us to use this opportunity as quickly as possible."

Haileyesus began attending the Pinnacle Hills campus of Cross Church in 2008 when he moved to Arkansas from Pennsylvania as a global program leader for a major corporation. He had grown up a Protestant Christian in Ethiopia, and as a top academic student, had been privileged to attend The Bible Academy of Ethiopia, a selective, private boarding school run by American missionaries. Many who attended the academy, now closed, are either top executives or leaders in Ethiopia. Haileyesus also attended Addis Ababa University before continuing his education in America 26 years ago.

He was in the same high school class



as Ethiopian Ambassador to the U.S. Girma Birru, a longtime friend, and secured Floyd's invitation to Ethiopia through the ambassador.

Haileyesus explained his burden to help unengaged, unreached people groups in Ethiopia, including more than 10 tribal groups.

He began thinking beyond his own capabilities, he told BP, and considered what God could do through him, especially as a connection point between the leaders of Ethiopia and the leaders of Cross Church.

"God blessed me a lot," Haileyesus said. "I see that I can be a connection point, for the leaders in Ethiopia and the leaders in this church. God placed me in the middle, and this vision came because I know both sides."

Seeing the Mursi left Haileyesus speechless with tears, he said.

"I have no words other than crying," he said. "I still feel it's my failure not having a church there. I just pray that we can do something as quickly as possible."

Those interested in partnering to plant churches in Ethiopia may contact Sarver at dougs@crosschurch.com, or Haileyesus at hyabate@yahoo.com.

"I need churches from here, ... to partner with me, take one village at a time, train those individuals ... and then build a small church—it's not very expensive—and just grow and reach out to all," Haileyesus said. "If not us, then who? If not now, then when?" (BP)

Chinese scholar finds Bible 'persuasive, beautiful'

By Erich Bridges

Richmond, Va.—Tao Lu never laid eyes on the Word of God until he came to the United States to study advanced computer engineering.

That's not unusual in China where Tao grew up, even though his father taught English in a major city. The Chinese Christian movement may be growing rapidly amid periodic crackdowns, but it has yet to reach hundreds of millions of people in the communist nation.

"Not only did my father never mention the Bible to me, but as far as I can remember my high school and college English teachers never talked about it either," recalls Tao, 30, now a doctoral student at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Va., where he lives with his wife and 2-year-old daughter.

"As a result, in the first 26 years of my life ... I never even saw a Bible."

One of his English textbooks mentioned Christmas and Christianity as a part of "Western festivals," but that was about it. Tao wasn't hostile toward Christianity or any other religious faith; they just seemed irrelevant to his life.

"Marxism is the dominant philosophy of China," he explains. "Believing in God was beyond my understanding and even considered ridiculous. I didn't try to seek God because I didn't realize that I was a sinner or that I needed a Savior. You tell me there's a God? Unbelievable."

When Tao arrived in Richmond, he

sought out a Chinese Baptist church and began attending a Bible discussion group near the university—but only to practice his English and socialize with other Chinese.

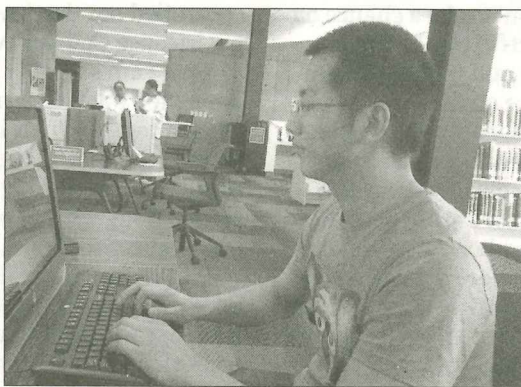
Or so he thought. The more he read the teachings of Jesus Christ, the more intrigued he became.

He was amazed by Jesus' command to "love your enemies and do good" to them (Luke 6:35). The question Jesus asked in Luke 6:41—"Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?"—challenged him to stop judging others harshly. He was moved deeply by Christ's teaching not to be anxious, since God arrays the lilies of the field in grandeur and loves us much more (Matthew 6:28-32).

"These teachings are not only persuasive, they are beautiful!" Tao marvels.

But becoming a believer is not easy for a modern Chinese scholar.

"If Christianity is correct, that means the things we learned in China are



Chinese scholar Tao Lu never laid eyes on a Bible until he came to the U.S. to study computer engineering. Once he studied it, everything changed. (Photo by Erich Bridges)

wrong," he says. "They are two totally different systems. One claims Marxism and atheism. The other claims (Jesus is Lord)."

Tao studied apologetics. He examined the lives of the disciples before and after Jesus' resurrection. He read "From Pagan to Christian," a book by Lin

Yutang, a renowned Chinese author who embraced faith in Christ. He systematically listed the teachings of Jesus and found he agreed with all of them.

He also experienced the love of God in the lives of people who had befriended him: a pastor at the Richmond church where the Chinese fellowship meets; a Christian couple who welcome and mentor Chinese students at Virginia Commonwealth University; and a Christian lawyer, Jim Fiorelli, who volunteered weekly to help hone his English. Their textbook: the Gospel of John.

"He was obviously a very sharp guy," Fiorelli recalls. "He was ready to grab hold of the truth. There's almost no substitute for giving someone the chance to read Scripture, think about it and talk

through it. If you can get people into the Word, to read it for themselves, the Word will speak for itself and go deep into a person's heart."

The time had come for Tao to make a decision. In June 2015, he made it.

He prayed the sinner's prayer with his pastor friend and immediately shared the news with the couple who welcomed him and with Fiorelli, who led him through a series of lessons on assurance of salvation.

"Now I realize that it was the Holy Spirit's work that helped me finally decide to follow Jesus," Tao reflects. "It was not based purely on my rational, logical consideration. There was also emotion. I knew that I was a sinner. I believed that Jesus is the Son of God, that He died for me and His blood cleansed my sins, and I accepted Jesus as my Savior. I was sure that I had eternal life."

Meanwhile, his day-to-day life has changed radically. He hungers for prayer and has seen his prayers answered. He helped lead his wife to faith in Christ. Their marriage has become stronger. His studies are more fruitful. And he is discipling other young Chinese believers in Richmond.

Whether Tao returns to China or stays in America, he's now a committed follower of Christ. There are hundreds of thousands of other international students like him on U.S. campuses, waiting for someone to tell them spiritual truth. (BP)

Christians call 'payday loans' sinful in new LifeWay survey

By Bob Smietana

Nashville—Self-identified Christians in 30 states—from Alabama to Wyoming—say it's a sin to lend money to someone who can't afford to pay it back.

Most want the government to protect consumers from loans with excessive interest. Still, 1 in 6 Christians has taken out a high-interest payday loan, while few fellow believers know how these loans work. Those are among the findings of a new online survey of Christians' views of payday lending from LifeWay Research. The Nashville-based research firm surveyed 1,000 self-identified Christians in 30 states, all of which have little or no regulation of payday loans.

Most Christians find payday loans impractical and morally questionable, said Scott McConnell, vice president of LifeWay Research. Many seem unaware the Bible addresses lending practices.

"Ask people if charging high interest is wrong, and they'll say yes," McConnell said. "They forget the Bible calls it 'usury' and condemns it as sinful."

The survey, conducted Feb. 5-17, was sponsored by Faith for Just Lending, a national coalition of nonpartisan faith leaders opposed to predatory loans.

Among the key findings:

- Christians are no strangers to payday loans. Overall, 17 percent of Christians have taken payday loans—20 percent of Protestants and 12 percent of Catholics. Half of African American Christians (49 percent) and a quarter of Hispanic Christians (24 percent) say they've taken out a payday loan.
- Most believe taking advantage of

borrowers is sinful. But few say payday loans are immoral. Three-quarters (77 percent) of Christians say it's sinful to lend money in a way that harms the borrower financially. They also describe payday loans as "expensive" (62 percent), "harmful" (37 percent) and "predatory" (33 percent). Still, more Christians say such loans are "helpful" (16 percent) than "immoral" (11 percent).

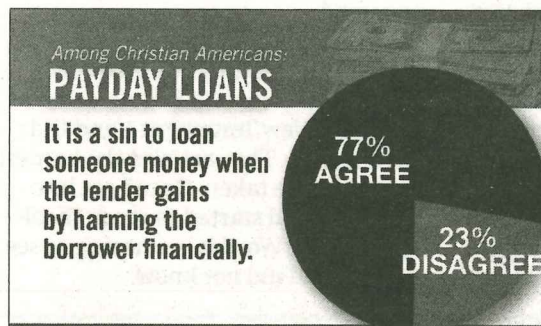
- About half (55 percent) say the "maximum reasonable" annual percentage rate (APR) for loans should be 18 percent or less. That includes 37 percent who say APR should be capped at 12 percent interest or less and another 18 percent who want to see a cap at 18 percent interest. Five percent say interest should be capped at 36 percent.

A typical two-week payday loan charges the equivalent of a 400 percent APR, according to the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau (CFPB), a federal government agency tasked with consumer protection in the financial sector.

- Few Christians see a connection between faith and fair lending. Nine percent say the Bible has the most influence on how they view lending practices. That's less than the news media (14 percent) but more than their church (1 percent). Politicians (1 percent) and national Christian leaders (less than 1 percent) have little influence on fair lending.

Instead, Christians most likely rely on their personal experience (28 percent) or haven't given much thought to the fairness of lending practices (23 percent).

- Most Christians believe the law should protect borrowers. Eighty-six percent agree when asked, "Do you believe

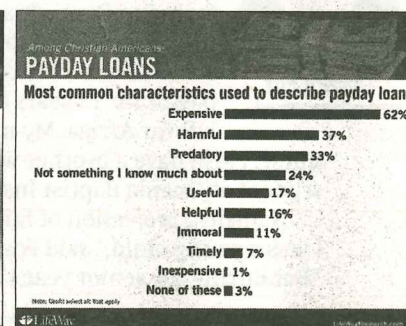


laws or regulations should prohibit lending at excessive interest rates?" A similar number (94 percent) say lenders should only make loans with reasonable interest that can be repaid within the original loan period.

According to the CFPB, 4 out of 5 payday loans are rolled over for an extended time. In the LifeWay Research survey, 85 percent of Christians underestimate how often such loans are repeated.

- Few Christians say their church has a plan to help those who turn to payday loans. Only 6 percent of Christians say their church offers "guidance or assistance related to payday loans." A third (34 percent) say their church offers no help. Six in 10 (61 percent) don't know. Protestants (7 percent) are more likely to say their church offers help than Catholics (2 percent). Those who have taken a payday loan are more likely to say their church offers help (10 percent) than those who haven't (5 percent.)

- Christians say churches should give counseling about payday loans. More than half (56 percent) want to see their church offer guidance to those with financial needs. More than a quarter (27



percent) want churches to give gifts or loans to those in a financial crisis. But Christians are less interested in sermons about fair lending (17 percent) or advocacy (18 percent) for changes in laws or regulation.

Some Christians are interested in sermons about biblical principles for fair lending. They include those with evangelical beliefs (31 percent), African Americans (24 percent) and those who go to church once or more a week (24 percent).

Most Christians seem to want churches to offer a mixture of counseling and practical help. Eighty-three percent agree churches "should teach and model responsible stewardship, offering help to neighbors in times of crisis."

McConnell suggests churches can play a key role in helping those who are caught in a cycle of payday loans. After all, he said, there's likely someone in most churches who has taken out a payday loan in a time of crisis.

"Anyone can encounter financial hardships," he said. "The question is whether the destitute are met with support or someone intent on profiting from their situation." (BP)

A life saved; a life changed

The following was written by 1982 Oneida graduate, David Robinson. I asked him to write the letter that will be sent with our Father's Day Offering materials in the coming weeks, but it is so moving that I couldn't quite wait until then to share it with you.

This is Oneida



Larry Gritton

In 1986, Barkley Moore wrote an article in the Western Recorder entitled "A Rude Disrespectful Punk." In this article he gives this account: "David was one of seven children born of a prostitute, given as an infant to a babysitter who, in turn, gave him to the Robinsons. When given to the sitter, he was suffering malnutrition and was nearly blind from physical abuse."

As I read that article on the wall of my office at Oneida, a tear came to my eye. It is not because of my struggles as a young, hurting boy, but because the article reminded me of the time

when no one else wanted to help me, when no one would take a chance on a rude disrespectful punk. Oneida Baptist Institute and Barkley Moore did take a chance on me.

At age 9, I was involved in a gang and began using drugs and alcohol. As this lifestyle continued, my life spun out of control as a teenage alcoholic and drug addict. At age 13, my life turned even more dismal. Due to my choices, my family was forced out of their home due to an attack by the gang in which I had belonged, who eventually burned down our home. I left Cincinnati under darkness, in fear for my life.

I remember the day I came to Oneida, thinking this was the end of the road, but to Dr. Moore it was only the beginning. Dr. Moore saw potential for my life where I had only seen failure. Dr. Moore saw a young boy that Jesus Christ loved and died for; therefore, he would love me as Jesus did. Dr. Moore always refused to believe that our past dictates our

future, that our failures somehow controlled our destiny. He believed in me because God believed in me.

Now I am so richly blessed. God has called my family and me back to Oneida to serve. This is the place where I found and began to understand the Lord through the love of Dr. Moore along with so many other fellow workers in Christ.

Please remember the ministry here in this little place called Oneida. Each day we strive to carry on the work that Jesus Christ has called us to complete and that Dr. Moore showed us how to do so well.

There are so many more "Davids" out there who need Oneida, who need fatherly love, who need someone to see their potential, to show the love of Jesus Christ. This is what we do each and every day in this little place called Oneida.

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

International student enjoys challenge of his studies

Clear Creek is glad to have a tuition agreement with Oneida Baptist Institute where students who are called to do ministry can get a discounted tuition rate when they continue their studies with us.

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

Sam Fonseca is one of our Oneida students who is enjoying his studies at Clear Creek.

"My family is originally from Sao Paulo, Brazil, but we moved to Africa in 2009" said Fonseca. "My dad was a pastor for 13 years before we left for Africa. My mom is a nurse. I also have a brother who is a student at Oneida Baptist Institute."

"I made a profession of faith when I was a young child," said Fonseca. "But during my senior year I realized

that I was really lost, and I recognized my need for a Savior. I repented from my sins and then surrendered my life fully to Christ. I am thankful to God for opening my eyes to my need for salvation.

"I know God has placed a calling on my life to be a missionary," said Fonseca. "I am thankful for a place like Clear Creek where I can be equipped for that ministry. Clear Creek is definitely not an easy school to attend."

"The work load is heavy and the tests are substantial but it has definitely helped me. My favorite courses so far are New Testament 1 and Old Testament 1. They are also the hardest classes I have taken. Once I got into the Bible, and started to study theology and the Word it is amazing to see how much I did not know."

"The coursework is definitely challenging, but I wouldn't trade it for anything," he said. "It helps me in the ministry because you start reading for yourself and really understanding what is being read. That is important especially for ministry leaders who are responsible to teach others."

"I would recommend Clear Creek to anyone who is called to do ministry," said Fonseca. "It will be challenging and you have to study hard. You will be taught the Bible, how to be a leader in the ministry, and how to deal with other leaders in the ministry. If God has called you, don't wait; the longer you wait, the more you miss."

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

Using horses to share the gospel

Kentucky is known for horses. From the famed Kentucky Derby to the horse farms that grace our landscape, horses are part of our state culture. Happy Trails Ministry, led by Kentucky missionary Chris Clarke, uses the love of horses to share the gospel.

EBO at Work



Joy Bolton

EBO helps this ministry purchase truck fuel, Bibles, and other ministry supplies. Chris wrote in a recent report, "Thanks to EBO, we were able to travel to 12 ministry locations and engage individuals in various equestrian ministries, including Cowboy Church services, scripture distribution (Cowboy New Testaments), witnessing tract distribution

("The Simple Plan of the Master Horseman," provided by the KBC), and bottled water distribution."

All of this is provided free to people in the equestrian community as a way to engage them in meaningful

conversations and offer spiritual guidance and support. Chris is in his 13th year of equestrian ministry and finds this ministry helps him share faith in Christ in a non-threatening way. As Chris meets people, he encourages the lost to turn their lives over to Christ and begin living for Him. Due to the rapid growth of cowboy churches across the country, many of those Chris reaches join a cowboy church. If they live in western Kentucky, Chris invites them to Kentucky Lake Cowboy Church in Draffenville.

In an email last December, Chris wrote me about the Kentucky Lake Cowboy Church. "I am so proud of our folks.... Many of them have little to no church background when they become part of our fellowship. I tell them often that I am going to preach tithing and giving because Jesus did and it's in the Bible.... They haven't had many years of stewardship education on which to build a firm foundation. They simply want to be faithful

to the Lord. So I challenge them, I teach them, I show them the videos, I pass out the prayer guides, I pray, I do everything I know to do ... then the Holy Spirit does the rest!

"Giving is only a part of their commitment. Once each month a group of 10-12 will go to our local food kitchen to prepare and serve a meal, then clean up after the meal. I've challenged them to embrace the teaching of James and prove their love by their deeds. They love those folks at the food kitchen and enjoy serving the Lord by serving the less fortunate. In fact, some of the folks from the food kitchen are now attending our church. I recently baptized two of them and two others joined."

EBO is at work sharing Jesus through equestrian events in Kentucky. Many of those people are now giving back through the Cooperative Program and Eliza Broadus Offering.

Joy Bolton is executive director-treasurer of Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union, P.O. Box 436569, Louisville, KY 40253; (502) 489-3534; kywmu.org

Ill. inn owners ordered to host same-sex wedding

By Bonnie Pritchett

Paxton, Ill.—An Illinois administrative judge has given the owners of a bed and breakfast a year to provide their facility to a gay couple "for an event celebrating their civil union." The order, part of a decision handed down March 22 in a discrimination case filed by the two men, also includes an \$80,000 fine.

In September, Illinois Human Rights Commission Judge Michael Robinson declared Jim and Beth Walder, owners of Timber Creek Bed and Breakfast near Paxton, Ill., in violation of the state's Human Rights Act, which bans discrimination in public accommodation based on sexual orientation.

In a 2011 email exchange with Todd Wathen, Jim Walder said because the Bible "contains the highest laws pertinent to man," his inn would never host a same-sex wedding or civil union. Walder's attorney, Jason Craddock, said compelling the couple to do what it had refused to do out of Christian conviction is "out of bounds."

"I was disturbed... that someone practicing their faith could be seen as an outrageous act," Craddock said.

Craddock will request a stay of the penalties while his clients appeal the case to the full commission. The \$80,000 fine includes \$15,000 each to Todd and Mark Wathen for emotional distress and \$50,000 in legal fees. The American Civil Liberties Union is representing the gay couple. The decision also requires the Walders to "cease and desist" their continued violation of the non-discrimination statute and begin accommodating weddings and civil unions for same-sex couples. But Walder insisted they wouldn't comply.

"To be absolutely clear, we cannot host a same-sex wedding, even though fines and penalties have been imposed," he wrote in a response to the ruling.

The Wathens filed the discrimination complaint in February 2011 following the email correspondence with Jim Walder. During testimony, Todd Wathen said he and his partner were looking for a venue once the Religious Freedom Protection and Civil Union Act went into effect June 1, 2011.

In his client's defense, Craddock argued Todd Wathen only made a general inquiry about civil unions hosted at Timber Creek and never requested a reservation. Walder told him the inn only hosted weddings. Wathen then accused the proprietor of discrimination based on sexual orientation. Walder responded that his convictions were grounded in what the Bible, not human law, says about sexuality and marriage and for that reason the inn could not host same-sex wedding ceremonies. (BP)

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CHRISTIAN STORES

Sunrise joins Owensboro groups in calling for end to child abuse

Owensboro—Each year, thousands of children in the Owensboro area fall victim to child abuse and neglect. Sunrise Children's Services, Kentucky's oldest provider of support services for abused and neglected children, joined with other child advocacy agencies April 14 at the Stand Against Child Abuse, an event that's become the focal point of National Child Abuse Prevention Month in the Owensboro community.

According to the Kentucky Department for Community Based Services, more than 2,700 cases of abuse were investigated in Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, McLean, Ohio, Union, and Webster counties in 2014.

The investigations led to 996 substantiated cases.

"Statistics reflect the scope of the problem but don't reveal its human cost, the day-to-day physical and emotional toll it takes on children," said Dale Suttles, president of Sunrise Children's Services. "We confront the effects and see the consequences of child abuse and neglect every day. It destroys families and reinforces a cycle of hopelessness that no child should have to face."

"The numbers tell the story: more than 900 substantiated cases of child abuse prove that not enough is being done to protect our children," Suttles said. "That's the message we want to get across."

Businesses along Frederica Street helped communicate that message with signs and blue pin-wheels, which symbolize hope for an end to child abuse.

Stand Against Child Abuse is sponsored by DCBS and the Green River Area Development District's Community Collaboration for Children. (Sunrise)



A story of revitalization: One Alabama church brings new life to another

By Anna Keller

Athens, Ala.—Clements Baptist Church, Athens, had been familiar with the city's Poplar Creek Baptist Church for some time. The churches are located five miles from each other. But it wasn't until the Poplar Creek Baptist congregation started to wane significantly that the churches decided it was time to partner.

"The Poplar Creek congregation has been declining for several years and they were down to just seven people last fall—all senior adults," said Tim Anderson, who has served as Clements Baptist's pastor since it was planted 21 years ago. "I knew of their struggles and approached them about the possibility of us taking the church over and they were more than ready to do so." They'd been without a pastor for eight months.

Not only did Anderson feel the church needed support from Clements Baptist's congregation, he and his church also felt the Poplar Creek building needed renovation. Clements Baptist purchased the building and financed its renovation and Anderson became pastor in August 2015.

"The church was in need of major repairs and now they have been made," Anderson said, noting that renovations began in October 2015.

Clements Baptist then turned their attention to other ways to support the growth of the new campus. The church identified 60 members who would be missionaries at the Poplar Creek campus for one year. While the missionary program was officially kicked off on Easter,

a "trial run" took place March 13. The trial run gave members a chance to "celebrate the opportunity to be a part of keeping a church open," Anderson said.

"The 60 Clements Baptist missionaries are all people that felt the leadership of the Lord to move over to the Poplar Creek campus when I first cast vision of this project," he added. "Those 60 people consist of pre-school teachers, children's teachers, adult life group leaders, praise team, greeting team and more."

Brian Murphy, education and campus minister at Clements Baptist, said one thing that's been interesting throughout the process has been uncovering the strong ties that already existed between the two congregations.

"We were shocked at the number of people who are members of Clements who at one point were members of Poplar Creek," Murphy said. "They were baptized there, married there, their parents were members there. We're hearing things like, 'I left my home church but now my home church has come back to me.'"

For now, Anderson will lead both church campuses as pastor.

"The entire process has been a real joy and a sweet process over the last six months," Anderson said. "Our people have been absolutely wonderful and the community was buzzing to see the church reopen March 27. (BP)

This article appeared in The Alabama Baptist (thealababaptist.org), newsjournal of the Alabama Baptist Convention.

Diary of a camp staffer

By Breanna Shelton

As a college graduate and someone working towards her master's degree, I never imagined I would take time off of school to work for a camp ministry as an intern. I felt above the work, above the pay grade and above the living conditions. But regardless of my selfishness, the Lord led me back to Crossings.

I worked as a summer staffer twice for Crossings, so I wasn't new to camp life; however, life as a summer staffer proved to be vastly different from life as a year-round intern. Being a summer staffer is instantaneously rewarding. I saw students accept Christ for the first time and accept the call to full-time ministry. I watched people overcome their fear of heights on the zip lines and atop the blob tower. Sure, I worked hard, but the fruit of my labor was very evidently not in vain.

Life as an intern was not so glamorous. At times, I felt like my work went unnoticed and unappreciated. After all, rarely are you praised for cleaning a toilet well. Months went by doing the same monotonous work, with little-to-no affirmation, and I was tired. Physically tired, emotionally tired and, most importantly, spiritually tired. I understood that my work allowed groups to use our property to its maximum potential, which resulted in successful retreats where students and adults furthered their relationship with

the Lord, but I didn't get to directly help that happen.

You can feel the selfishness permeating through every word in this story.

Thankfully, we serve a loving Father who deems nothing pointless and all things beneficial. Through my relationships with fellow interns, I saw the fruit of my labor. Only it wasn't my labor that was bearing fruit—it was the work of the Holy Spirit moving in me. He had gradually softened my heart to be a better listener, a better receiver of criticism, a better worker, and a better servant. He graciously showed me that servanthood is about willingly submitting to the will of the master, the will of the Lord.

So what does all of this mean? It means the gospel is not too big for the little things or too small for the big things. It means that everything—leading a Bible study, cleaning a toilet, sitting behind a computer screen—is an opportunity for the Lord to sanctify His children. In all things and through all things He is working for our good, and our good is to look more like His Son, Jesus.

Breanna Shelton currently serves as a guest relations coordinator in the Crossings central office.





April

- 22-23** Women's Regional Retreat, Laurel Lake Camp, Corbin
- 22-24** All-State Children's Choir, Cedarmore Camp & Conference Center, Bagdad
- 25-28** Boston Vision Tour, Boston, Mass.
- 29-30** Women's Regional Retreat, Camp Schafer, Hawesville
- 30** State Bible Drill & Speakers' Tournament, Northside Church, Elizabethtown

May

- 3** Power Lunch, Baptist Building, Louisville
- 9-10** KBC Mission Board, Baptist Building, Louisville
- 12** LIFE Tour, Southern Heights Church, Lexington
- 13** Youth Evangelism Conference, Exposition Center, Louisville

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

FREDONIA—Walnut Grove Church will hold revival services April 29-May 1 with **Jim Lantrip** as evangelist.

GRAHAM—Graham Missionary Church will hold revival April 22-24 with **Jeremy Jessup**. Singing led by George and Connie Thompson. Services on 22-23 at 6 p.m.; 24 at 11 a.m.

GREENVILLE—Unity Church will hold revival April 22-24 with **Vernon Cook**, Fri.-Sat. at 7 p.m.; Sunday at 11 a.m., 6 p.m.

HICKORY—Liberty Church will be in revival April 24-27. Evangelist is **Todd Gray**, KBC regional ministry consultant. Sunday services are 11 a.m., 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed. at 7 p.m. **Wayne Berry** is pastor.

MAYFIELD—Open Door Church has called **Tanner Dikin** as pastor. He was ordained March 13.

MELBER—New Concord Church has called **Greg Winn** as pastor. He was ordained March 27.

POWDERLY—"Origins: How the Beginning Changes Everything," April 29-30 at Woodson Church, 6:30 p.m. nightly. Guest speaker: **Brandon Boone** from Edgewood Church in Hopkinsville.

PRINCETON—Calvary Church will host the **Inspirations** in concert on April 28 at 7 p.m. **John Hagan** is pastor.

Midway Church will host the **Anchormen** on April 29. For information, call (270) 365-6905. **Duane Burden** is pastor.

Southside Church has called **Baxter Boyd** as pastor.

SEDALIA—Sedalia Church will be in revival April 24-27. **Randy McPherson** of Touch of Hope Ministry will be evangelist. Service times are Sunday, 11 a.m., 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 6:30 p.m. **Bradley Hall** is pastor.

SOMERSET—Pulaski Church will hold its semiannual meeting at Lakeside Church on April 28 at 7 p.m.

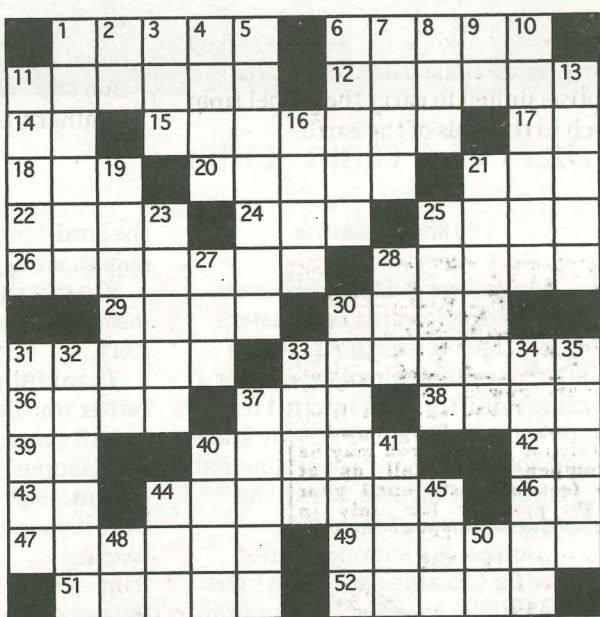
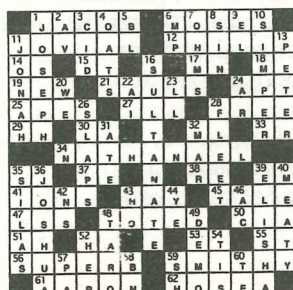
Bible Crosswords

By Malina English

Across

- 1 Bottommost parts of faces
- 6 Having to do with either the North or South Poles
- 11 The sister of Tubal-cain (Genesis 4:22)
- 12 Lets up
- 14 Preposition
- 15 "The soldiers ... his side" (John 19:34)
- 17 Military police, abbr.
- 18 Man's name
- 20 Not the clergy
- 21 7, Romans num.
- 22 Paul's original name
- 24 Root-mean-square, abbr.
- 25 One hundredth of a dollar
- 26 Motors
- 28 "The ____ of the wicked have robbed me" (Psalm 119:61)
- 29 "I will surely do thee ____" (Genesis 32:12)
- 30 Steal
- 31 Mix together
- 33 "The ____ of death are fallen upon me" (Psalm 55:4)
- 36 Rodents
- 37 Jesus is the ____ of man
- 38 Chocolate sandwich cookie
- 39 Article that precedes a vowel
- 40 "I have ____ ashes like bread" (Psalm 102:9)
- 42 Astronomical unit, abbr.
- 43 Selfish part of the psyche, according to Freud
- 44 "We were ____ of God to be put in trust with the gospel" (1 Thessalonians 2:4)

#60



#61

- 46 Physician, in other words, abbr.
- 47 "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a ____ than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom" (Mark 10:25)
- 49 Washes away
- 51 "The angel appeared to (Joseph) in a ____" (Matthew 1:20)
- 52 Person who gives something
- 11 "Make a joyful ____ unto God" (Psalm 66:1)
- 13 Expels saliva
- 16 Edges
- 19 Small chunk of gold
- 21 Seller
- 23 "Faith ... stopped the mouths of ____" (Hebrews 11:33)
- 25 Egyptian capital
- 27 Biblical land (Genesis 4:16)
- 28 Rod
- 30 Made fresh
- 31 Organ of thought
- 32 Alit
- 33 Dorothy's dog
- 34 Peruser of books
- 35 Turns acid
- 37 Melchizedek was king of this (Genesis 14:18)
- 40 Girl's name
- 41 Roman emperor
- 44 Lemon drink
- 45 Donald, for short
- 48 More, suffix
- 50 "____ thou that which is good" (2 Kings 10:5)

CLASSIFIED ADS

SEEKING: Cornerstone Baptist Church is seeking a senior pastor. A young church between Lexington, Ky., and Winchester, Ky. Send resumés to 4451 Winchester Rd., Lexington, KY 40509.

SEEKING: New Bethel Baptist Church, 504 Highway 2779, Hardinsburg, KY, 40143, is seeking a part-time youth/children's minister. Please contact Bro. Jeremy at (270) 925-5875 or HardinsburgNewBethel-Baptist@gmail.com

SEEKING: Southside Baptist Church, Princeton, Ky., is now accepting resumés for a full-time youth and children's minister. Bachelor's degree, seminary training and experience is preferred, but not required. Please email resumés to: youth-searchteam@southsidebaptist.com or mail to: Southside Baptist Church, Attention: Youth Search Team, P.O. Box 684, Princeton, KY 42445.

SEEKING: Olivet Baptist Church is a community oriented church located in Paducah, Ky., with Southern Baptist affiliation. We are seeking an associate pastor of family ministries to join our team. This is a full-time position ministering to the families of youth and children. The qualifications include: Seminary degree and/or theological education. Ministry experience preferred. Demonstrated leadership and organizational skills. A desire to be a team player. The primary responsibilities are, but not limited to: oversee the discipleship of our families, lead and oversee the spiritual training of our children and students from birth through college. The primary emphasis will be 7th-12th grade. Plan and coordinate a comprehensive student ministry. Please send a resumé and photo via mail or email to: Olivet Baptist Church Personnel, Associate Pastor, 5186 Hinkleville Rd., Paducah, KY 42001. Email: office@obc-paducah.org.

SEEKING: Union Baptist Church in Northern Ky., is seeking a part-time director of children's ministry. Please submit resumé with references to ubcchildrensearch@gmail.com or Union Baptist Church, P.O. Box 194, Union, KY 41091. Deadline for resumé submittal is April 30.

SEEKING: Bagdad Baptist Church is seeking a person to fill the position of minister of discipleship and family. This person would be helping new believers and long-time church members grow in their walk with Christ. If interested in applying please send your resumé to kwiley83@att.net.

SEEKING: Franklin Crossroads Baptist Church in Cecilia, Ky., is looking for a worship pastor to lead all components of worship programming, including music, audio, video, lighting and creative elements. Responsibilities will include, but not limited to: worship preparation, leading worship, pastoral responsibilities, and administrative duties. Resumés will be accepted until 4/25/16. Please send resumé and audio/video sample to bonnierushing13@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Hunsinger Lane Baptist Church. Office administrator. 20-25 semi-flexible hrs/week. \$10-\$14 hr. Holiday, vacation and sick pay. Requirements: friendly, able to multitask, self-starter, MS-Office and computer proficient. Email resumé to andrewballitch@gmail.com

SEEKING: Concord Baptist Church is seeking God for our next senior pastor. Our senior pastor will be responsible for leading the church in functioning as a fully equipped, evangelical, New Testament Body of Christ. He will also lead the congregational organizations and staff in achieving the mission of the church as lead by the Holy Spirit. Concord Baptist Church is an evangelical, missions-minded congregation adhering to the Baptist Faith and Message. After prayerful consideration

please send resumé and sermon DVDs to Pastor Search Committee Chair, Concord Baptist Church, 1945 Concord Lane, Hopkinsville, KY 42240.

SEEKING: Senior pastor, Ridgecrest Baptist Church, St. Charles, Mo. See blog. ridgecrest.org for details.

SEEKING: Franklin Baptist Association is accepting resumés through May 15 for a part-time director of missions. Please send resumés with a cover letter and 3 references to searchfba@gmail.com. For more information contact Kyle McDanell at (502) 695-3851.

SEEKING: Great Crossing Baptist Church in Georgetown, Ky., has a part-time position open for a youth leader. Great Crossing is a Southern Baptist church with an attendance of about 100. The youth leader must be well grounded in the Christian faith with a firm belief that the Holy Bible is God's revelation of Himself to man, is complete and without error. This person should have a spiritual gift for working with and teaching young people. Salary range is \$10,000-\$12,000 per year. Inquiries and resumés may be sent to 421wrobey@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Tunnel Hill Baptist Church in Elizabethtown, Ky., is seeking a part-time youth director. Approx. 20 hours a week. Please submit resumé to tunnelhillbaptistchurch@gmail.com no later than July 1st.

SEEKING: Christian County Baptist Association in Hopkinsville Ky., will be accepting resumés for the position of director of missions. CCBA consist of 44 churches and 1 mission. Any interested candidates should submit a resumé to ccbadomsearch@gmail.com by June 15.

SEEKING: Turner Ridge Baptist Church is offering an opportunity to an enthusiastic young adult for ministry among young people through a well-established youth program. Send resumé Turner Ridge Baptist Church, Phone: (859) 654-8707, 60 McGraw Rd., Falmouth, KY 41040.

SEEKING: FBC Somerset is seeking a part-time middle school pastor. This position requires attendance/involvement in all Sunday and Wednesday services/activities and to be involved in weekly outreach. Requirements: College Degree preferred but not required, administrative skills, love for middle school students, growing and working disciple of Jesus Christ. Send resumés bcrews@fbc-somerset.org.

SEEKING: Part-time music minister at Sharon Baptist Church, Mayfield, Ky. Please see our website for job description/qualifications at www.sbcmayfield.org or send a resumé to Sharon Baptist Church, 3586 State Route 303 Mayfield, KY 42066.

SEEKING: Eagle Heights Baptist Church is accepting resumes for a full-time student pastor. Send resumés to EHBC, 703 E. Walters, Harrison, AR 72601 or email to ehbcadmin@eagleheightsharrison.org. Job description is available @ehbcharrison.org.

FOR SALE: 2000 Ford E-450 26-passenger church bus. 55,673 miles. Diesel V-8. 1 owner. Excellent condition. 16k. First Baptist Church, Whiteville, Tenn. Contact fbcwhitevilletn@gmail.com.

FOR SALE: Interested in purchasing one to two octaves handbells. Contact Helen Morgan at (859) 351-0086 or (859) 885-3249.

To place an advertisement in the Western Recorder:

Rates are available upon request

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



Cooperative Program's broad reach for the gospel

Southern Baptist churches are advancing the gospel state by state—and around the world—through their commitment to the Cooperative Program.

From national and international mission boards to church-hosted evangelism training—amid a multitude of mission and ministry initiatives—the Cooperative Program plays a key role in introducing people near and far to Jesus.

Among those with a grassroots vantage point to see the broad scope of Cooperative Program outreach are many state convention leaders, to whom Baptist Press turned for their insights. Here are some of these state leaders' reflections.

'Stabilizing ministry' in today's 'chaotic world'

Since its inception in 1925, the Cooperative Program has provided a consistent channel of both financial and strategic opportunities for Southern Baptists to impact the world with the gospel. Our culture is marked more and more by change, and in many ways, chaos. Kingdom partnership through the Cooperative Program brings stability into our ever-changing world. Here in South Carolina, the Cooperative Program allows churches to do more together than any one of them could ever do alone. The genius is that regardless of the size, style or setting, every church can be a part of getting the gospel to every person, beginning at home and stretching across the globe. I personally thank God for the many ways the Cooperative Program has impacted my own life and ministry and pray that future generations of Southern Baptist ministers and leaders will see the value added by heartily supporting the Cooperative Program. While we know God never changes, the world does, and the Cooperative Program is a stabilizing ministry factor in today's chaotic world.

Gary Hollingsworth, executive director,
South Carolina Baptist Convention



Gary Hollingsworth

Skiers on Colorado slopes encounter witness

Colorado is arguably one of the most beautiful states in the country. Each winter visitors flock to Colorado to enjoy our world-class skiing. One of the ministries we are able to fund thanks to the Cooperative Program is the outreach of ministers to those who come from all over the country to ski.

We have 23 ski areas in the state. On any given week worship services are held on the slopes at most all these ski areas. At a given time skiers gather around the missionary, leaning on their poles and shuffling their skis back and forth. The minister reads a Scripture, briefly shares his or her faith and closes with a prayer and an invitation to stay and visit if anyone has questions. In addition, the lift personnel are visited by our ministers as they work. They give a greeting and a baggie of cookies for the operators to enjoy—all in Jesus' name. Only through the Cooperative Program are we able to take advantage of the beauty of our state by funding these ministries.

Mark Edlund, executive director,
Colorado Baptist General Convention



Mark Edlund

900 hurting kids touched

Orphan care is only one ministry in a very long list of all the mission work accomplished through Cooperative Program offerings from Kentucky Baptist Convention churches. But the plight of orphans is no trivial matter in the eyes of God nor in the eyes of Kentucky Baptists. Currently more than 900 hurting kids in Kentucky are touched by the orphan care ministry we call Sunrise Children's Services. While most of these 900 aren't orphans in the traditional sense, their plight may be worse. Rather than experiencing their parents' loss of life, the lives of these children

were at risk at the hands of their parents, so much so that Child Protective Services determined these kids are no longer safe in their parents' care. Yet, true to His nature, God has answered the cries of the fatherless and, through every church that gives through the Cooperative Program, provided a loving touch to heal the brokenhearted.

Paul Chitwood, executive director,
Kentucky Baptist Convention



Paul Chitwood

Collegians, youth weigh missions

The sun never sets on the work of the Cooperative Program, thus never setting on the ministries of churches that give through the CP. Oklahoma churches are making Kingdom differences. For example, together these churches fund Baptist Collegiate Ministry on 36 campuses across Oklahoma, reaching and developing the next generation for Kingdom impact. Or consider that each summer, 52,000-55,000 students and sponsors attend Falls Creek during eight weeks of camp; each year, 2,200-2,500 of those students come to faith in Christ with more than 1,000 committing to missions and ministry. Leaders of the IMB have said repeatedly that there is no place on earth where more missionaries have been called. Without question, Oklahoma Baptists can do more together than we can ever do alone. The Cooperative Program is Oklahoma Baptists united to carry the gospel from the front door of the church to the ends of the earth.

Anthony Jordan, executive director,
Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma



Anthony Jordan

Enables third grade boy's faith to blossom

The Cooperative Program is gospel partnership. It is a strategy for a coalition of churches. We unite for Immediate Impact. We unite for Mutual Support so missionaries and seminary students can focus on their calling. We unite in Global Strategy. The sun never sets on Southern Baptist ministries. It is personal, even though it is comprehensive. It is as personal as the boy who came to your church in third grade, heard the gospel, went on a high school mission trip, was called to ministry, went to seminary, planted a church—it is as personal as me.

Brian Autry, executive director,
SBC of Virginia



Brian Autry

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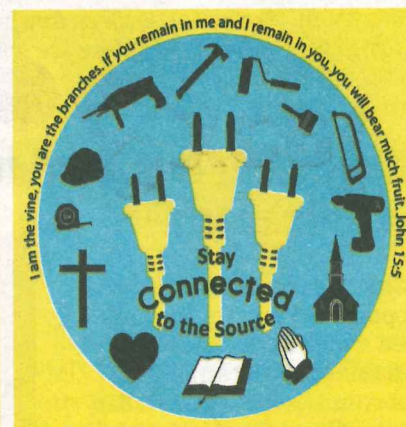
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June 23-25, 2016, Bowling Green, KY

For boys and girls
in grades 4-6

kywmu.org/missionadventure

Kentucky Changers 2016



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Project Calloway Co:
June 18-24 **FULL**

Project Greensburg:
July 2-8

Project Frankfort:
July 9-15 **FULL**

Hurry! - You can still
register for open projects:
kywmu.org/changers

For girls in grades 1-6

Overnight at Cedar Crest

July 1-2, 2016, Bagdad, KY

Overnight at Jonathan Creek

July 8-9, 2016, Hardin, KY

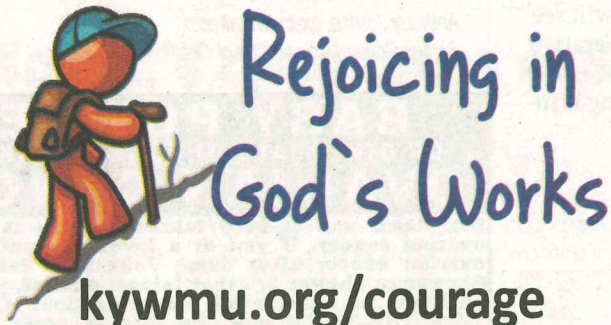


kywmu.org/overnights

For boys in grades 1-6

Camp Courage

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kywmu.org/courage

Acteens Quest

The Power of a Girl to Change the World

July 8-9, 2016

Jonathan Creek Baptist Camp

kywmu.org/quest



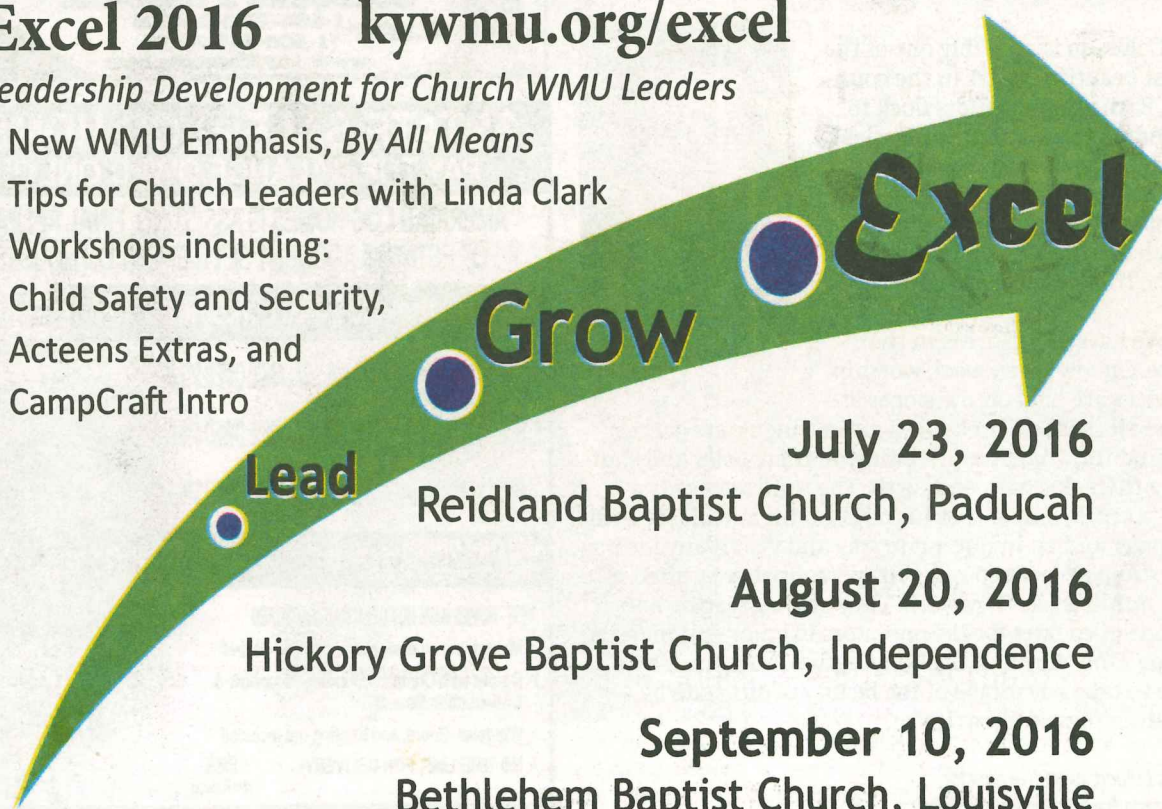
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- Crafts! - Missions!
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- Christmas project for TCKs!

For girls in
grades 7-12

Excel 2016 kywmu.org/excel

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July 23, 2016

Reidland Baptist Church, Paducah

August 20, 2016

Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Independence

September 10, 2016

Bethlehem Baptist Church, Louisville