



WESTERN Recorder

May 31, 2016

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 190, Issue 11

103 make decisions at Louisville archery tournaments

By Robin Cornetel

Louisville—Young archers met with more than tough competition over last weekend as hundreds encountered Christ at an evangelistic outreach in Louisville.

"We can no longer sit in our churches and wait for our young people to come to us to hear the gospel. We must engage them where they are," said Chuck McAlister, evangelism team leader at the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Sandwiched between two national archery tournaments at the Kentucky Fair and Expo Center, "Engage! YEC (Youth Evangelism Conference) attracted more than 400 people with Brock Gill's gospel-centered illusions.

McAlister said 103 young people made faith decisions.

KBC Affinity Evangelism Strategist Andy McDonald described one of the illusions as especially powerful.

While telling the story of Jesus meeting the woman at the well, Gill slowly poured water from three silver jars into a large bucket placed at the center of the stage. As he talked about the living water of Jesus that never runs dry, the illusionist returned to the first jar and emptied it again, doing the same with the other

two vessels.

Three times Gill poured what appeared to be the entire liquid contents of the jar—all the while repeating the words, "You'll never thirst again."

"I've heard that story a hundred times. I've even preached it myself, but his presentation was so powerful," McDonald said. "I think the light and the truth of the gospel became understandable for people in that moment. I know it did because they responded."

McDonald said the Kentucky Baptist Convention plans to follow up with everyone who prayed to receive Christ and connect individuals with Bible-believing churches in their hometowns.

About 13,000 people traveled to Louisville during the three days of national competitions offered by Centershot and the National Archery in the Schools Program.

McDonald expressed gratitude to Kentucky Baptists for their part in making Engage! YEC possible.

"When they give and they pray, and when they give to the Cooperative Program, Kentucky Baptists have a hand in those decisions," he said.

The Kentucky Baptist Convention has a new resource called LIFEproject that guides churches in reaching affinity or



Christian illusionist and evangelist Brock Gill shares the message of Christ's living water at "Engage! YEC" in Louisville May 13. (Drew Nichter/KT)

need-based groups in their communities.

For more information about LIFEproject visit <http://www.kybaptist.org/lifeproject>, and plan to attend LIFE Tour, www.kybaptist.org/lifetour, to learn

more about how your church can be a Great Commission driven church.

The next LIFE Tour is June 9 at Flemingsburg Baptist Church in Flemingsburg. (KBC)



Ky. Disaster Relief crew clears 45 trees for Boone's Creek Baptist Camp

By Myriah Snyder

Winchester—Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers spent May 19-20 cutting down 45 trees at Boone's Creek Baptist Camp, effectively saving the camp as much as \$100,000 and preparing the campground for ministry this summer.

"Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief chainsaw volunteers were glad to assist Boone's Creek Baptist Camp in needed tree removal on their camp property," said Coy Webb, state Disaster Relief director.

"This ministry project was able to save the camp thousands of kingdom dollars that can be used for ministry at the camp," Webb said. "We saw this as an opportunity to assist a partnering Kentucky Baptist ministry in reaching our world for Christ."

The work request came from Paul Atchison, 72 year-old volunteer with disaster relief and member of Central Baptist Church in Winchester. Boone's

Creek Baptist Camp is dear to Atchison's heart as he is on the board of directors for the association and helped build many of the camp cabins. He worked alongside the relief crew as they fell the trees (see related story on page 8).

Boone's Creek Camp has been a part of Boone's Creek Association since 1954. During its years of operation, more than 21,200 campers have been through and over 2,700 children and teens have made decisions for Christ.

Many of the trees in need of removal were becoming a threat to structures around camp. By saving the camp the cost of a professional service, volunteers have enabled the camp to focus this summer on investing in underprivileged children.

"We view this as a good opportunity to apply skills learned in our chainsaw and storm cleanup training while helping a local ministry meet a need," Keith Stinson, a DR project leader, said.

See Disaster Relief... Page 8

Everhart named campus missionary at Cumberlands

Louisville—College professor and administrator Chad Everhart joins the Kentucky Baptist Convention personnel as campus missionary to the University of the Cumberlands and the Williamsburg region.

Everhart, who is pursuing a doctoral degree in education at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., will begin July 1.

"Chad brings a wealth of experience and expertise in the post-secondary arena and will be a tremendous resource to the University of the Cumberlands and Kentucky Baptists in the Williamsburg region," said Brian Combs, Kentucky Baptist Convention Collegiate Ministry Strategist. "I'm excited to see how God works in and through Chad, UC, and the many churches in the region to help more in the Twelve24 window encounter Jesus and experience life to the full."

As a campus missionary, Everhart will be responsible for not only directing Cumberlands' Baptist Campus Ministry, but also consulting with associations and churches in the region about ministering to middle and high school students.

An architect, Everhart taught building science at Appalachian State University and served as chairperson of the school's Sustainable Technology and the Built Environment Department. He also runs his own business in Boone, N.C., offering architecture services to residential and small commercial clients.

Combs said Everhart's strategic thinking and creative problem-solving skills will go a long way in executing the Twelve24 vision.

"An integral part of Chad's job will be helping churches lead the massive numbers of lost youth and young adults to encounter Christ," Combs said. He estimated that only 5 percent of Kentucky's 12- to 24-year olds have a personal relationship with Jesus and that it will take all 2,400 Baptist churches in the state working together to change that statistic.

Everhart described himself as an "atypical" candidate having not risen through the ranks of campus ministry.

"I believe God has given me a unique perspective," Everhart said. "Since getting the call from the Lord to full-time ministry, I have been preparing myself for the commission to make disciples of all nations."

Everhart said he worked with a Baptist campus missionary at Appalachian State to engage what he called an "often untapped" group: university faculty and upper administration.

He was ordained as a deacon at Bethel Baptist Church in Vilas, N.C., where he also served as a young adult/college Sunday school teacher and men's ministry leader. (KBC)



Chad Everhart

Eighty students with Kentucky ties graduate from Southern Seminary

Louisville—Eighty students with ties to Kentucky graduated from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Boyce College in the spring commencement ceremonies.

Southern Seminary conferred degrees to 284 Southern master's and doctoral students May 20, and 150 Boyce College students May 13. In his commencement address, President Albert Mohler Jr. charged the new Southern graduates, "Take your place in line and fulfill your ministry with eyes wide open, knowing your destiny in Christ. May the Word of the Lord speed ahead and be honored."

Following are the students from Kentucky:

AA in Biblical and Theological Studies: Haley Stauffer, Louisville, Ninth and O Church (Boyce); H. Rebekah Stauffer, Louisville, Crossing Church (Boyce).

Advanced Master of Divinity: Joshua LaValle Harmon, Louisville, Clifton Church.

BA in Biblical and Theological Studies: Jacob Wesley Adams, Somerset, Grace Church (Boyce); Nicholas A. Campbell, Danville, Indian Hills Christian Church (Boyce); Joshua Lawrence Reichard, Mechanicsville, Va., Kenwood Church, Louisville (Boyce); Carson E. Troutman, Louisville, Forestpark Community Church (Boyce).

BS in Counseling: Taron B. Defevers, Munfordville, Immanuel Church, Louisville (Boyce); Brandon Carson Holeman,

Madisonville, Grapevine Church (Boyce); Olivia Kaitlin Mitchell, Crestwood, Southeast Christian Church, Oldham Campus, (Boyce); Christa Moxon, Louisville, Christ Community Church (Boyce).

BS in Elementary Education: Mallory Evans, Louisville, Highview Church (Boyce); Christine Michelle Fuller, Louisville, Ninth and O Church, (Boyce); Whitney Webster, Greenville, Ind., Ninth and O Church, Louisville (Boyce); Christa B. Wing, Glasgow, Calvary Church (Boyce).

BS in Global Studies: Zachary Kyle Rankin, Midway, Midway Church (Boyce).

BS in Humanities: Samuel H. Burke, Henderson, Ninth and O Church, Louisville (Boyce); Christopher Seth Carter, Prestonsburg, First Church (Boyce); Helisha Christian Smith, Taylorsville, First Church, Fisherville (Boyce).

BS in Music Ministry: Joseph Bartholomew Ficarra, Idaho Falls, Ind., Sojourn Community Church, Louisville (Boyce).

BS in Youth Ministry: Ezra Thomas Palmer, Louisville, Highview Church, Valley Station Campus (Boyce).

Certificate-Seminary Wives Institute: Jennifer Perron, Nashville, Tenn., Kenwood Church, Louisville (Boyce).

Certificate-Worldview: Chandler Stephen Dawson, Lexington, New Life Church (Boyce); Jon Austin Dibble, Louisville, Highview Church (Boyce); Allison Madden, Pewee Valley, LaGrange Church, LaGrange

□ See Graduates... Page 3

Record 150 Boyce degrees awarded

Louisville—A record 150 students graduated from Boyce College, the undergraduate school of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, in a May 13 commencement, surpassing the previous mark by more than 40 percent.

Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Seminary and Boyce College, told the graduates of the job description the apostle Paul set forth for Christians when he wrote, "Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good" in Romans 12.

"Your graduation from Boyce College is not a down payment in order that at some point in the future you might fulfill your function and calling in the church," Mohler said.

"(T)he church of the Lord Jesus Christ in this generation needs the graduating class of Boyce College of 2016 to show up ready for action now," he said. "Show (your faith) to the world in order that they will see Jesus and desire Him. ... In so doing ... you will bring honor upon this institution, who rightly honors you today, and you will show all Christians how to fulfill this job description given to us all."

Founded in 1974 as Boyce Bible School, named for the founder and first president of Southern Seminary, the school began offering bachelor's degrees as James P. Boyce College of the Bible in 1998 under Mohler's leadership. Later, its name was changed to Boyce College. Information about Boyce College is online at www.boyce-college.com. (BP)

Fire nothing but bump in road for Owensboro church

By Cary Donnell

Owensboro—The offices of Life Community Church in Owensboro were badly damaged by a fire, which was reported about 7 a.m. Wednesday morning, according to an article in the Messenger-Inquirer, but don't expect the mission or vision of the church to be deterred.

"They are going to continue being Life Community to the Owensboro community. They will continue to worship the name of Jesus," said Jerry Tooley, director of missions of Daviess-McLean Baptist Association.

Having to move from place to place and relying on generosity from other churches is nothing new to Life Community Church. The church, which began almost four years ago as a Kentucky Baptist Convention high-impact church, had to use community centers and school gyms for its meeting places and offices early on in its life.

"This is nothing new for us," said Kenny Rager, pastor of Life Community Church. "We had to continue to stay mobile."

Despite losing its offices and classrooms to the fire, the church did not lose



Life Community Church's pastor, Kenny Rager, left, and his wife, Taran, and building owner, Tammy Hale, right, stand outside the fire and smoke damaged building that housed the church's offices and classrooms on Veach Road in Owensboro. (Photo compliments of Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro.)

its trailer that contained curtains, sound equipment, children's ministry supplies and coffee pots for Sunday morning worship. "Lots of things that made Sunday mornings happen. We were fortunate in that regard," explained Rager. "We will continue forward without a ministry center but still doing ministry."

For now, the church will continue to

hold services at Owensboro Community and Technical College, but their vision and purpose is still the same: connecting people to Jesus, caring for people and changing the world.

"It was kind of a bummer, but we believe God has a plan for this," said Rager. "We will continue to press forward by the grace of God." (WR)

Drill winners



Kentucky State Youth Bible Drill Winners (l to r): Aaron Cundiff, Austin Feck, Morgann Rowe and Zack Rowe, all of Pulaski Association; Rebecca Mays and Samantha Hinkle, of Laurel River Association; Jacob Hobbs, of Severns Valley Association. Not pictured are Patrick Garcia, of Severns Valley, and Hannah Greenfield, of Little River. The National Representatives for Youth 2016 are Morgann Rowe and Zack Rowe, who tied for first place.

Graduates

Continued from Page 2

(Boyce); Cody David McKenney, Petoskey, Mich., Emanuel Church, Louisville (Boyce); Maria Jose Reyes, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, Iglesia Bautista Internacional, Santo Domingo (Boyce).

Doctor of Missiology: Anthony Steele, La Center, Trace Creek Church, Mayfield.

Doctor of Philosophy William J. Brooks Jr., Louisville, Clifton Church; Jamus Edwards, Owensboro, Pleasant Valley Community Church; Jennifer R. Garrison, Williamsburg, Campbellsville Church, Campbellsville; Hongkil Lee, Seoul, South Korea, Jiguchon, Seoul, South Korea; Matthew L. Pierce, Murray, Hardin Church, Hardin; Larry W. Sowders, Jr., Barbourville, Cedar Grove Church, Shepherdsville.

Southeastern Seminary graduates: Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. also held spring graduation May 21.

Two graduates were from Kentucky: **Master of Arts in Church Planting:** James T. Disney, Barbourville.

Bachelor of Arts in Christian Studies: Richard Arlin Reynolds, Madisonville (College at Southeastern). (WR)

King, Lincoln County DOM, committed to serving needy

By Cary Donnell

Stanford—Gary King, director of missions at Lincoln County Baptist Association, leads an association that includes 27 churches and one mission church. They operate a homeless shelter, in Stanford, and a community center, and they seek to aid the homeless and drug-addicted people they encounter to not only better their lives, but also come to faith in Christ.

"We want to be available, as an association, to do God's work, to reach people for Christ, to help people with addiction," King said.

They upgraded the Lincoln County Community Center, formerly named the Kings Mountain Community Center, which is used as part of their ministry.

"It is exciting to see churches partner together through the Lincoln County Community Center, and I can't wait to hear how God blesses their efforts," said Eric Allen, leader of the Missions Mobilization team at the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

They've had 38 homeless people, 10 of whom have professed faith in Christ and have been baptized at local churches.

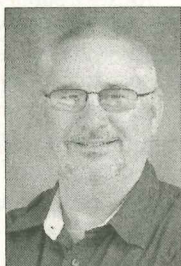
"Many of the homeless we have served have found employment," King added.

Lincoln County Baptist Association isn't able to operate alone. It takes many parties working together to make what they do happen.

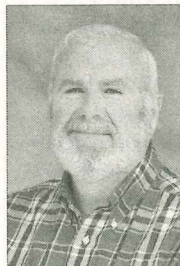
"The WMU has been very helpful through the years. We thank them for their service," King said.

"Gary (King) is a creative leader and has challenged the association to take on several different kinds of ministry as a platform for sharing the gospel," Allen said. "Gary is modeling what a missionary does by identifying needs, casting vision and equipping the association to meet those needs in the name of Christ." (WR)

Associational Emphasis



Gary King



Tim Cole

Hardin—Two 15 passenger vans, a barbecue trailer and a block party trailer are just a few of the unusual resources that western Kentucky-based Blood River Baptist Association and its Director of Missions Tim Cole provide their 46 churches as a means of staying engaged.

"We only have one goal, and that is to win souls to Jesus Christ, obviously. What we do is evaluate ourselves each year to win more and send more in order to reach that goal. Our goal is to work together to do something that we can't do by ourselves," said Cole, who has been DOM at Blood River for 10 years.

"We help each other out," he continued. "Our largest church may contain 250 members, so we're pretty much all small churches. That is why we have all of these things that we do together."

In addition to the items that Blood River provides to its churches, they band together for a community pantry, the Jerusalem Project, a WIN (Widows in need) program, and Baptist Builders.

The community pantry provides food, clothing, furniture and personal hygiene products to families in need. The WIN program builds ramps and repairs doors and windows on homes of widows. Baptist

Cole's enthusiasm for missions spills over into Blood River churches in western Kentucky

By Myriah Snyder

Builders assists churches with projects like Sunday School room additions within the association.

"With our Jerusalem project, we go into the local housing projects within the community where the association is, and we do Vacation Bible Schools and block parties. We do a backpack program, where we get backpacks for all the kids in the community. We do a grill out. We do all those things that you'd normally do on a mission trip," Cole explained.

Blood River is also involved in Kentucky Changers and hosts an On Mission Celebration for the associational WMU. These are just a few of the many mission endeavors the association participates in and hosts.

Holly Hills Baptist Church in Calvert City has only been cooperating with Blood River Baptist Association and the Kentucky Baptist Convention since 2011, but "they began immediately to support the Cooperative Program and the association and have supported various mission offerings that Southern Baptists do," Pastor Dewayne Holland said.

"The fellowship with the other churches has been great," he said. "They are just very happy to learn about Kentucky Baptists and Blood River Association and Southern

Baptists, and they are really enjoying themselves.

"Blood River is an extremely missions-active association. There are a number of local programs that we're involved in. The church is excited to have a hands-on mission endeavor in that way," Holland added.

Owen's Chapel Baptist Church's pastor, James Stone, said, "We would not be able to do what we are doing without having the association. By being able to pool our money with other churches, we are able to do more and reach more people and meet the needs of people."

Stone believes that being part of the association has benefited the church because

it is more involved and able to make a bigger difference in the area.

"Since Tim (Cole) has come on board as our DOM, we've been more involved in a lot of different things—a lot of projects, mission trips, local ministries and

things like that," Stone continued. Cole becomes really excited about missions projects, and his excitement passes on to the pastors and members of all of the churches, he said.

"We can't do it by ourselves as a single church," Cole continued, "and that is why we do it together. Anytime any church needs anything, we pull together. It's pretty cool." (WR)

"We only have one goal, and that is to win souls to Jesus Christ. ... Our goal is to work together to do something that we can't do by ourselves."

Tim Cole, Blood River Baptist Association Director of Missions

Syncing churches in ministry

Guest post by KBC President Kevin Smith.

As a pastor, I stand with the 3,500 Baptists in my local church. As president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, I stand with 750,000 Baptists in my state convention. Together we desire to see the Great Commission pursued in our commonwealth and beyond! No individual congregation can accom-

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

plish this task alone. The 42 state conventions are the primary, relational promoters of cooperative ministry and the Cooperative Program. Whether associations, state conventions, or national mission boards, Baptists have always understood we are better together.

State conventions have the capacity to pursue ministries beyond the ability of individual congregations and the scope of our national mission boards. Southern Baptist Disaster Relief teams, for example, show the love of Christ to hurting families in times of crisis. "Yellow Hats" are on the scene often before government assistance. This ministry is the collective effort of Baptists at the state convention level.

State conventions also have other distinct ministries that provide opportunities for evangelism:

- **Camps/retreat centers**—researchers regularly note the percentage of Christians that begin to follow Christ as children. Notable portions of these students make commitments to Christ in camp settings.

- **Children's homes/orphan care**—state conventions coordinate Baptists' efforts to love orphans. For example, in Kentucky, we care for over 1,000 abused and neglected children that desire a "forever-family." Again, the facilities, expenses, and compliance with state laws put this biblical ministry beyond the scope of individual congregations.

- **Colleges/universities**—although Christian higher education is facing some challenging days, the remaining colleges that stand upon biblical fidelity were often founded and are presently supported by Baptists in various state conventions. This ministry is still vital in many contexts and many Baptists are still committed to supporting these institutions.

- **Campus missionaries**—state conventions galvanize the local church to reach high school and college age students through campus ministries.

- **Christian witness at state capitols**—state conventions have the ability to muster the collective voice of Baptists in the state concerning pressing issues that enliven Christ-followers. For example, for several years, Baptists in Kentucky have rallied against political efforts to expand gambling in our state by placing casinos in area of great poverty.

- **Church revitalization and care for pastors**—many pastors in America are discouraged or overwhelmed. State

The First Fifty: A tale of Kentucky's churches

Mickey Winter loves history—especially Baptist history. That much is obvious. A member of the J.H. Spencer Historical Society, Winter spent two years traveling our state gathering materials and writing an engaging book titled "The First Fifty Baptist Churches in Kentucky."

The First Fifty is a fascinating read as some of these churches still exist today as Kentucky Baptist congregations, while others have disbanded and some became Disciples of Christ congregations through Alexander Campbell's influence, according to Ben Stratton, the historical society's president and pastor of Farmington Baptist Church. "It's interesting to see how quickly new Baptist churches were being started in Kentucky and then to see what has happen to these churches 200 years later," he says.

Stratton, who is not aware of any previous books being written on the subject, observes, "The content is solid." In breathing new life into the stories of early Baptists, Winter's prayer is "present and future generations will be moved by the faithful and sacrificial laborers of the first generation of Kentucky Baptists and be inspired to emulate their zeal, advance their principles and extol their memories."

Winter says his love of history began 20 years ago after meeting Jeff Faggart, a pastor in Rockwell, N.C., who is founder of the Baptist History Preservation Society. "Every year he takes a number of preachers on history tours throughout the country, teaching Baptist history that is pertinent to a region. They visit graves, churches, homes and often erect memorials to individuals," he explains.

Winter has been on a number of these tours and did some of the research. He soon realized that the western movement brought many to Kentucky, and yet many Baptists are not aware of their story. So, he decided to write a book about the churches in Kentucky prior to 1792 when it became a state. "Research led me to believe it was 50," he said.

Among his surprising findings in writing the book was the fact that so many personalities which are linked to the East Coast are also linked to Kentucky, Winter says. Names like Gano, Washington, Jefferson, Henry, and others surfaced in his



After Thought

By Todd Deaton

research. "There are a number of personalities interwoven in the church histories," he says, so he decided to include profiles of those associated with particular churches.

"History itself can be quite boring. It is the people involved that make it interesting," Winter explains.

"I don't think the average Baptist is concerned about the minutes from the monthly meetings or what association they belonged to," he continues. "They are interested in the people and what happened to them."

Among some of the questions answered in his book: Where is the oldest Baptist meeting house still standing in Kentucky? ... What Baptist preacher baptized Isaac McCoy, the greatest Indian missionary who ever lived? ... What Baptist preacher is given credit for baptizing George Washington? ... What Baptist preacher became governor of Kentucky? ... Who baptized Abraham Lincoln's father?

Modern church members may find it exciting to trace their ancestry back to these Baptist pioneers and their congregations, Winter suggests. "A person will remember a name and tie it to a church," he notes. "If they do that then they may want to 'dig deeper' into that particular person or church."

Now a member of Saline Baptist Church in Somerset, Winter is a former pastor, having served Ferguson Baptist in Ferguson and Maranatha Baptist in Somerset, among other churches. When he and his wife Sharon moved back to the Bluegrass State in 2010, he saw a need to inform Kentucky Baptists of their rich history. The Baptist History Preservation Society, he notes, has placed a number of monuments for preachers in Kentucky, including John Taylor at Clear Creek Baptist Church in Versailles, Andrew Tribble at Tates Creek Baptist Church in Richmond, and John Gano and William Hickman at the Frankfort Cemetery.

In addition to doing revivals and supply work, Winter enjoys teaching Kentucky Baptist history to church groups. A copy of his book is definitely one that should be in every church library. The cost of the 223-page hardback is only \$8, plus shipping, because it "was never meant to be a money maker, but a tool to inform others of their Baptist heritage." To order, call (606) 386-1453 or email Winter at Kentuck195002@yahoo.com.

Hurrah for Disaster Relief helpers

As director of mission for Graves County Association, I want to thank those who volunteered in the clean-up of damage done to homes and property by the tornado that touched down near Fancy Farm and stayed on the ground through Graves County into Marshall County.

First, I want to thank "Team Hope" from Presbyterian churches that set up their feeding trailer at the associational office and fed volunteers breakfast, lunch and dinner. They did a great job seeing no one left hungry. Cooking seems like a drudgery job to so many, but not to these men and women. They were smiling every time I saw them.

Second, I want to thank "Team Rubicon" for their volunteer work. They were ready to work, and when it was raining, they were going over plans and where they needed to continue working. I had not heard of Team Rubicon before. They are veterans who do disaster relief work. Thanks to Jimmy, their leader who lives in Lexington, and all who spent over

a week with us. It made me proud to be an American and know our armed forces produced such quality individuals.

Also, I want to thank our Baptist disaster relief teams from Kentucky, Illinois and Tennessee.

We were happy to have them come and sleep, eat and lead us in clean-up efforts. Thanks to dedicated Christian men who want no glory, but just to be of service to their fellow man.

Finally, I want to thank the Graves County, West Kentucky and West Union Baptist churches who ran chain saws, pulled limbs, cooked, and gave supplies and money to help those who needed their yards cleaned up and debris moved. I received repeated comments about how Graves County people pitched in to help their neighbors. Hurrah for Graves County and disaster relief helpers!

Glynn Copeland
Graves County DOM

Entertaining the goats

Recently I read a quote from a pastor in Plano, Texas. He said, "We have invited the devil into our sanctuaries, and now we are entertaining the goats instead of feeding the sheep." This quote said a lot to me as an older Christian.

I read the Western Recorder regularly, and like many older Christians I wonder how our faith has changed. I reflect on my early faith. I attended revivals, conferences

and prayer meetings. My pastor read and taught from God's word. We attended church as a family. Today, this is not happening.

Young people are entertained in separate buildings, and the only time you see them is when they need money for summer camp. They are not taught the service of the Lord.

Vacation Bible Schools are large productions. Missionaries are spoken of lightly. The only time we hear about them is when we collect for annual funds, and then we see a two-minute video.

Many churches no longer have a serious outreach program, nor are they concerned about mission work. The only time we hear about Christians in the media is when a goat in the congregation does a grievous act.

I am tired of self-help books taught as truth and in place of the Bible. The authors become wealthy, and the congregation is being malnourished.

Mary Herald
Petersburg

WESTERN Recorder

Shine Like Stars *Philippians 2:15

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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.



SBC president: Unity is one of our greatest needs

Unity demands we accept one another in love. Unity requires work—hard work. Unity is an act of humility.

In a convention of over 51,000 churches and congregations, 11 national entities and our Executive Committee, 42 state conventions, and more than 1,000 associations, unity does not happen without intentionality.

A brief look back

As a young pastor in seminary, I remember the beginning days of the conservative resurgence. These were very difficult and tumultuous times. When the movement was declared successful, most were hopeful we could enter into more peaceful days together as a convention. Unknown to us then, we were entering one of our most challenging seasons as a convention of churches.

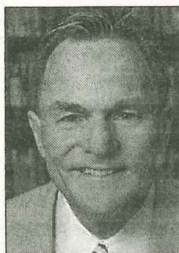
A present reality

Southern Baptists are no longer in a battle for the Bible, but in a battle with one another. The very soul of our convention is at stake.

Almost two years ago when I became president, I was determined I would do all I could to bring us together. I have given myself to this task, not just in words, but also in deed. I have gathered groups from all sizes of congregations, groups of church leaders and convention leaders, state leaders and national leaders, and members from different ethnicities and generations. Yet, we find ourselves in a continual struggle to come together in unity. Why?

Unquestionably, we are affected by the culture we live in today.

Narcissism and independence infects us and challenges our paradigm of working together. Transition within our national entities and state conventions is occurring, and adjusting to change can be uncomfortable.



Guest Viewpoint

By Ronnie Floyd

If this was not enough, America is in an election for the office of president of the United States. Way beyond usual, opinions on the election are not just felt, but are being expressed publicly and demonstratively.

Each of these things challenge the very soul of our unity together.

Five intentional actions for unity

The amazing thing through this season is we are still seeing so many wonderful things occurring. Yet, threats to our unity are undeniable. If the enemy cannot destroy us from the outside, he will attack us from the inside. I want to challenge each of us to take five intentional actions relating to unity within our convention:

1. Accept one another in love.

None of us is alike. The Divine imprint upon us causes us to be unique. Unity is not uniformity, but intentionality. Unity will not happen without accepting one another in love.

We need to love people like Jesus does: willfully, sacrificially and unconditionally. None of this is possible without personal humility, gentleness of spirit, and patience with one another.

Accepting one another is holding on to each other, enduring our differences, and bearing up under the relationship to seeing it through and sustained for the glory of God. This takes the discipline of intentionality.

The next time you are challenged to love a brother or sister in Christ, ask God at that very moment, to give you the power to love them willfully, sacrificially and unconditionally.

2. Work toward unity.

We need to earnestly and promptly take actions to guard our unity. This may require each of us to take action—conduct a phone call or visit, write a genuine email, letter, or text to someone or a group of people.

□ See Unity... Page 6

10 financial things to do for kids

Some of the most important financial moves you can make on your kids' behalf may affect them well beyond childhood. Many cost little or nothing in cash, just some time and thought.

1. Get your child a Social Security number. You don't have much choice, but you can add meaning by considering it a time to address opening an account for the child.

2. Make a will and name a guardian. In case of your early death, make sure your children are protected by naming a guardian rather than relying on a court appointed guardian.

3. Buy adequate insurance. This is critical to protect your family.

4. Start saving for college. College costs keep rising. Start saving at least a little toward those expenses.

5. Talk about money. With young children, look for ways to help them learn hands-on how to manage money. This may include allowances.

6. Revise your will and beneficiary arrangements. This should be done periodically. But as your children mature, this will likely have an impact on these documents.

7. Save for retirement. Being financially independent in retirement is one of the greatest gifts you can give your kids and requires planning.

8. Give some money to your kids. If you anticipate passing along significant assets to your children, consider giving some of that to them while you are still living. It may provide needed help for a home, college costs for grandchildren, etc.

9. Spend some on yourself. Most children are pleased to know their parents are financially able to buy and do things in their senior years.

10. Teach charitable giving. These lessons by example and through encouragement should be woven into all of the items listed above.



Don Spencer

Why is anger so bad?

Anger itself is not bad. God has given this strong emotion to help us in several important areas of life: to recognize injustice, to right what is wrong, to repair what is broken or damaged in relationships, for purposes of self-examination and reflection to promote growth and maturity in our faith, as well as to better understand who we are and how we are to live in comparison to Jesus Christ.

The problem lies with our failure to reflect and respond to the source of our anger. Instead we often react on impulse and without thought. We take action without using our brains to understand what we are experiencing and why. This usually allows no room for the Holy Spirit to teach us and transform us.

It is helpful to begin by acknowledging anger. It is not helpful to deny or dismiss anger without reflection.

Consider the source of the anger. Where is the anger coming from? Are you angry with someone or about something? What is the anger about? Have you felt like this before? These are some questions that might help you explore your own anger.

Then explore productive options for dealing with the anger. You may want to review past patterns for dealing with anger. Avoid reactive or explosive patterns, quietly seething, keeping score, cutting off others in relationship or simply "swallowing" your anger by ignoring it.

Allow your anger to inform you and allow God to use this understanding to grow you personally, spiritually, and relationally. If dealing with your anger continues to be difficult and causes problems in relationships, consider seeking the help of your pastor or spiritual mentor.



Valerie Vincent

Never retire! Finish with a flourish!

By Joe McKeever

New Orleans—Never stop doing what God put you on earth to do. For seniors, this is no time to slack off. It's just getting good.

Congratulations on two of the biggest blessings in your life. One, if you are born again, your name is written in the book of life. You are going to heaven. And two, you're old.

You may not think of getting old as a blessing, but it is. We all have had friends who yearned to live as long as we have, to see their kids grow up and get married, to hold their grandbabies. Some of us have even had the privilege of watching our grandchildren grow into young adulthood.

I hear people say, "There's no retirement in Scripture." Actually, there is. Numbers 8:25 says the Jewish priests retired at the age of 50. Thereafter, they could volunteer to assist if they chose, but this was a young man's profession, manhandling all those animals for sacrifice, that sort of thing.

Even so, there is no retirement from serving the Lord. After all:

- You may be doing your best work right now.
- God may be using you in ways you cannot imagine. Whether you see what He is doing or not makes no difference. After all, you are not the judge of your own work. None of us is.
- People coming behind you are watching to see how you handle the challenge of seniority in these last decades. Your influence is phenomenal.
- You're almost home now. You can see the house from here. Just a little longer.

I've heard tightrope walkers are at their most precarious in those final steps. They've walked high above the crowd, risked their lives, and now they're done. Almost. Just another step or two. What they must not do is relax too soon. To do that can be fatal.

The apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:1, "Therefore, since we have received this ministry, as we have

received mercy, we do not lose heart (and quit)." He looks back and sees two overwhelming reasons to stay faithful: mercy and ministry—God's mercy upon us and His calling for us.

In the same chapter, verses 16-17, the apostle writes, "Therefore we do not lose heart (and quit). For even though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For this momentary light

affliction is working for us an exceeding weight of glory far beyond all comparison."

This time, Paul looks to the future and gives two more great reasons for not quitting: growth and glory—God is making us into the image of Christ here in this life and His great rewards are just ahead.

When you get to heaven, you will find just how precious was your service for the Lord. You will see what you have achieved. And you will be so grateful you were faithful.

To seniors who are away from God, who have not yet given your hearts to Jesus: What are you waiting for?

Some will say, "I'm too far gone; there's no hope for me." Others may say, "I'm going to do it ... one of these days." Let me tell you a story.

A preacher told how when he was little, his mother taught him piano. Once in a recital, he was on stage playing his little piece when he froze up. His mind went blank and he could not recall a thing. He walked off the stage in humiliation. Later, his mother gave him some great advice.

"Honey, any time you mess up in the middle, always end with a flourish. If you end with a flourish, no one will remember what you did in the middle."

You may have messed up in the middle of your life. But my friend, it's still possible to end with a flourish.

Will you do it? Will you invite Jesus Christ into your life today and let Him start a new thing in you?

You will never be any younger than you are. You will never be able to go back and start over, or undo what you have done. But you can begin today to get this right and end with a flourish. (BP)

FIRST PERSON

Motorcycle rally set for June 12

Mount Washington—Bikers with big chrome-plated hearts will offer hope to Kentucky's abused and neglected kids when they saddle up for the Ride & Shine motorcycle rally June 12. Sunrise Children's Services hosts the third annual motorcycle rally that takes bikers through 120 miles of scenic central Kentucky.

"This has become one of our most eagerly anticipated outreach activities," said Christi Moffett, Sunrise's senior director of marketing. "We've gotten tremendous responses the first two years, and we fully expect that the folks who have made past 'Ride & Shines' successful will turn out again to help benefit Kentucky's most vulnerable children."

Registration is 10 a.m. at Junction City First Baptist Church in Danville, followed by a worship service. The ride begins at 12:30 p.m. as bikers head for Sunrise's Cumberland Adventure Program near Bronston before returning to Danville for a visit to the agency's Woodlawn Center campus.

A registration fee of \$20 includes a Ride & Shine T-shirt, with all proceeds going to Sunrise. Participants can register at www.rideandshine.org. (KBC)

Unity

Continued from Page 5

Refuse disunity within our ranks! There is nothing biblical or godly relating to creating disunity.

In this social media world, we need to cease writing or saying things that can be misunderstood easily. We need to understand that one day we will answer to God for every blog, article, tweet and conversation we have with one another.

Romans 14:12-13, "So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore, let us no longer criticize one another. Instead decide never to put a stumbling block or pitfall in your brother's way."

We need to denounce the personal temptation to be motivated by the praise of others, their comments and retweets rather than being motivated to live holy, because one day we will answer to God Himself. Yes, unity is work. Work takes discipline. Every day.

3. Be humble before God and others.

A runaway, unaccountable church lay leader, pastor, or a leader in our convention poses a major threat to unity among us. Humility is not just a description we should have, but the prescription for us to become what God wants us to be as Christians and Southern Baptists.

A lowliness of mind about ourselves is hard to find in a world where we think more about ourselves than we should. Remember these words: A person who is not humble before others is a person who is not humble before God.

Humility before God demands He is first every day of our lives. Humility before God is a voluntary and willing action, surrendering to Him even in seasons of prayer and fasting periodically. Personally, I am convinced more than ever before, church leaders and convention leaders need to spend time praying and fasting.

4. Pray for unity.

The walls come down between people and groups when we pray for and work together toward unity. Prayer crosses over the perceived barriers of ethnicity, race and generations, bringing down the walls that divide us. Regardless of your political party or personal feelings, we need to navigate through these turbulent times together. Regardless of what you think about who should become the next president, it is incumbent on us to pray for and work together toward unity.

5. Come in a spirit of unity.

I have said this over and over again across this nation: I am bringing people together so we will start talking to each other and praying for each other rather than talking about each other. The Southern Baptist Convention is your family. We are family.

On June 14-15, our family will reunite in St. Louis. It may not be convenient for you to attend, but we need you there. For the sake of unity, come to St. Louis. Nothing brings us together more than when we gather, pray together, and leave on mission together. (BP)

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

Harrodsburg business donates full day's profit to international missions work

By Myriah Snyder

Harrodsburg—Robert Johnson of Johnson Small Engine and Farm Supply in Harrodsburg donated all of the profits his business earned on Friday, May 6, to the International Mission Board. The day's total: \$2,100.

Response from the community was great, Johnson said. "We had people coming in who had to tell their story, too—how they wished that they could always do something, and how they admired us for doing this. We really had a good turnout."

A lady who was going on a mission trip to Southeast Asia came all the way from Louisville to make a purchase because she knew the money was going to help missions. The business even received a letter of encouragement from an overseas missionary who was appreciative of Johnson's efforts.

"We had people from Salvisa Baptist Church come. We had people from Burgin Baptist Church come. Even my help in the back donated some money to it," Johnson said.

In addition, a local furniture maker donated a picnic table to be sold for the cause. The community at-large also responded well—many bringing in donations without making purchases. One man paid \$100 for a \$30 bag of dog food.

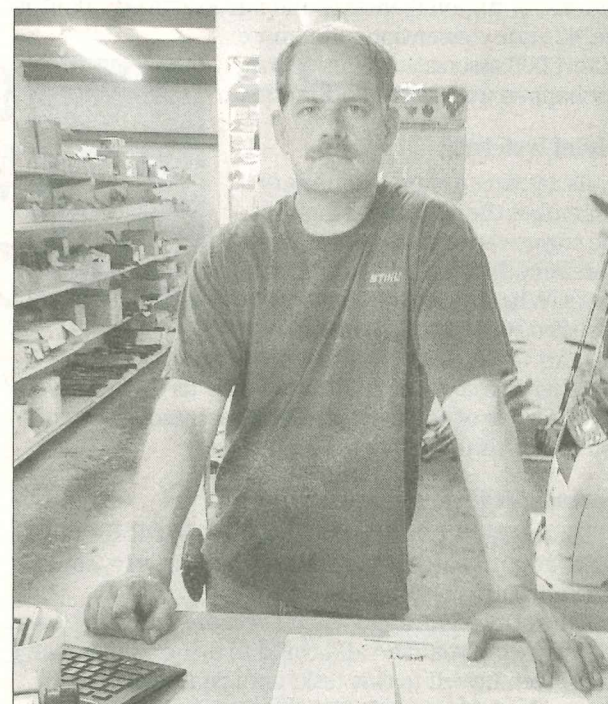
"We're going to do this again next year. I'm so tickled to death that I got the fire in me. We're going to make this an annual thing on the first Friday of every May," Johnson added.

He was inspired by a sermon from his pastor, Jonathan Jones of Salvisa Baptist, on "doing more for God." Johnson's business has been doing well, and therefore he was, too. He wanted to find a way that he could do something for God at this point in his life.

Johnson was saddened by the IMB's situation, and decided that this was where he would help.

"I just really had a heartfelt desire to do something more," Johnson told Kentucky Today. "Why couldn't we just take a day and devote it to foreign missions and donate all the profits for that day for that purpose."

"He has a heart for missions," Pastor Jones said of



Robert Johnson

Johnson. "His heart is that he doesn't want people to look at him. He wants them to see the importance of mission work."

Jones continued, "He wants to inspire or challenge others in missions giving, to continue to increase their giving. For those who aren't giving to encourage them to give toward mission work, whether it is financially or on an international mission trip."

"That is one of the things our church is doing. It's spilling out from what Robert (Johnson) is doing into the congregation and even into our community," he said.

Jones is excited to see how this attitude has snowballed.

"It just shows me that people still have a deep concern for and affection for international missions and mission work, and they see the need for it," he concluded. (WR)

Foundation's Valentine elected as lead co-chair of American Council on Gift Annuities board

By Myriah Snyder

Louisville—Laurie Valentine, trust counsel and chief operating officer of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation and member of the American Council on Gift Annuities board, was elected supporting co-chair of the ACGA board and will become lead co-chair next April. She is the first woman to serve in the position.

The ACGA was founded in 1927 to promote responsible philanthropy by suggesting maximum gift annuity rates. Additionally, the ACGA holds a conference biannually for staff of non-profits and charities.

Valentine's roles with the ACGA complement her work with the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, which offers gift annuities in its work with charitable gift consultation services for Kentucky Baptist-related causes.

"The ACGA is led and governed by professionals active in the field of planned giving with the most well respected charities in the U.S.," Barry Allen, retired president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, said.

Allen continued, "When I became aware of an impending vacancy on the board due to the retirement of someone I knew, who was an employee of the Annuity Board, SBC (now GuideStone), I recommended Laurie to fill the vacancy."



Laurie Valentine

"I knew Laurie had all of the credentials to qualify, and that she would enhance the synergy of the board in fulfilling its mission and grow in her knowledge and leadership, and in her service to Kentucky Baptists," he said.

"History has confirmed my instincts, and now her fellow board members have recognized what I have known all along as they have elected her as the new board chair," Allen added.

Valentine has held various positions on the ACGA board, including serving on the conference, nominating, membership, communications and executive committees, and serving as secretary of the board before being elected as vice chair, among other roles.

"It's been very much a great experience for me to serve on this board," Valentine said. "I have gotten to know leaders in the field," she mentioned, before humbly commenting, "And I do not at all count myself one of them, but a lot of the people who have been on this board are literally people who speak at national conferences all over the country and are very much regarded as experts. To be rubbing shoulders with them is fantastic."

"Just the comradery of working with people in all sizes of charities all over the United States that serve as members of our board has really just been a nice opportunity for me," she concluded. (WR)

Shelbyville church 'fills in the gaps' for the hungry

By Kristen Lowry

Shelbyville—As she serves up oatmeal and sausage casserole, Susie Stivers sings an old Gospel hymn in a strong voice.

It's a bright Thursday morning; light streams in through the storefront windows of Victory Baptist Church in Shelbyville.

This is not your typical Southern Baptist Church. There are no stained glass windows, no baptismal, no steeple.

Instead, there are plastic tables with mustard bottles and Styrofoam bowls filled with onions.

Stivers greets each person who walks in the door by name. She has served as co-director of God's Kitchen in Shelbyville since the ministry reopened in August of 2015.

"People are hungry, and sometimes this is the only meal they get in a day," Stivers said.

According to data compiled by the University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research, 19 percent of Kentuckians were "food insecure" in 2014, the last year of available data. That means they were limited in their ability to acquire adequate food and may have gone hungry because there wasn't enough money for food.

God's Kitchen provides free breakfast and lunch for people in the Shelbyville community three days a week. The ministry is a partnership between 12 area churches that work together to provide meals, as well as a short devotion, every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday.

The ministry, which serves an average of 30 to 40 people each day that it's open, operates out of Victory Baptist Church, a storefront church on Main Street. With the help of the other churches, Victory also runs a clothes closet and food pantry.

"People are hungry, and sometime this is the only meal they get in a day."

Susie Stivers



Pastor Marc Webb shares the gospel with people at Victory Baptist Church during a Sunday service. (Photo by Kristen Lowry/KT)

Many of the people who drop in for a meal struggle with homelessness, mental disabilities or financial hardships. Many of them work, but can't seem to make ends meet. Many of them are also members of Victory Baptist.

As people are finishing up their breakfast, a young preacher walks through the front door. Marc Webb is wearing jeans and a t-shirt, and he carries a well-worn Bible under his arm. He begins at the front of the room, greeting

each person, taking time to chat about their lives.

When he reaches an unfamiliar face, he asks if he has a church home. He invites him to Sunday worship at Victory.

Webb has served as pastor of Victory Baptist Church for the last three-and-a-half years.

He says he is thankful

for the opportunity to minister to many people who would otherwise never step into a church.

"With some that come in, it's not only food needs," he said. "There are physical needs, mental needs, emotional needs and spiritual needs."

And the community at Victory Baptist

is committed to meeting those needs.

Many of those who come for meals at God's Kitchen receive government assistance. Others would qualify, but don't receive benefits.

Webb estimates that as many as two-thirds of his own congregation receive some sort of government assistance.

The latest data from the Kentucky Cabinet of Health and Family Services shows 697,056 Kentuckians received food stamps in 2015, with an average benefit about \$250 a month.

Still, some people are going hungry. "Victory Baptist is here to fill in the gaps," Webb said.

Stivers recalls one of the regulars at God's Kitchen.

"He never makes it through a whole month with groceries," Stivers said.

"He's so embarrassed. He will say, 'I'm so sorry, I hate to bother you.' It just really humiliates him to say anything."

Stivers began giving him leftovers from the meals the church services. He had to eat them cold because he doesn't have any way to heat them.

Now she's hoping she can help him get a microwave.

"We've noticed in talking with people on food stamps that they will be fine at the first of the month, but the further

into the month, the harder and harder it is," Stivers said.

Many people who receive meals at God's Kitchen don't receive any government benefits—even though they could easily qualify.

Christopher Bollinger, director of the Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Kentucky, said a variety of reasons keep people who qualify from receiving food stamps.

"Sometimes it's pride, sometimes its political views," Bollinger said. "The second reason is often lack of knowledge of how to navigate the system."

Getting—and keeping—food stamps can be a complicated process for many.

In order to qualify for food stamps, you have to prove you don't make enough money or have enough assets.

"For some people it's really a big burden to prove that you don't have anything," Bollinger said. "It can become onerous for those who legitimately need the help to sometimes get it."

In 2013, the latest year with available data, only 88 percent of Kentuckians that were eligible for food stamps actually received them.

Webb says that often the church is the first place people will turn in a difficult situation.

"It really is a perfect example of people bearing each other's burdens," Webb said. "You could literally pick out any single person that comes and they are probably battling something pretty serious at the moment. There really is an atmosphere of people being there for each other, knowing that they are not alone in whatever they are struggling with. They can lean on, not only the leaders here, but the fellow believers as well."

As the last of the visitors leave on Thursday afternoon, Stivers is still singing:

"As I climb this gospel ladder always heeding every sign, I know my Savior's with me and He's teaching me to climb. Every day that I'm climbing there's a battle for me. Every step on this ladder is another victory." (BP)

Disaster relief teams aid in repair of church roof after storm

By Cary Donnell

Olaton—Kentucky Baptist Convention's Disaster Relief and the Ohio County Baptist Association's Disaster Relief team were a part of many volunteers that responded to the tornadoes of eastern Ohio County. The teams aided in the repair of the roof of Cedar Grove General Baptist Church, which had been damaged by the storm.

"They could not have been more helpful," said Larry Embry, pastor of Cedar Grove General Baptist Church, Olaton.

The tornado struck Ohio County on Tuesday afternoon. Both teams arrived by evening and began the cleanup efforts. They were tasked with clearing out debris, cutting down and hauling off damaged trees and repairing the church roof.

The relief efforts also marked the first time the Ohio County Baptist Association used their tarping trailer, which they purchased in April 2014. "We were fortunate to receive some financial

assistance from the KBC Missions Mobilization Team as well as the state WMU," said Matthew Sickling, director of missions for the Ohio County Baptist Association, with regards to purchasing the trailer.

Amazingly, Cedar Grove Church held Wednesday evening services the following night. Embry said it wouldn't have been possible without the disaster relief responders.

The disaster relief teams used roll tarps from the North American Mission Board as part of the roof repair. This allowed the church time to decide whether to replace the damaged shingles or to replace the entire roof.

"It is amazing that we were able to have a service the following night. God was definitely at work," said Embry, "Without the disaster relief responders none of this would've been possible."

Sickling, since becoming director of missions, has made it a point to become more involved in hands-on missions and ministry. "One of the ways I wanted to



Disaster relief crew members improvise with a trailer to cut boards for repairing the roof of Cedar Grove Baptist Church.

do this was through disaster relief," explained Sickling. "I had several conversations with Elvis Brown and other members of our disaster relief team about this and they agreed."

Coy Webb, Disaster Relief team leader at the Kentucky Baptist Convention, said "We were glad our teams could help people that were hurting, and for their ministering in the name of Christ." (WR)

National award recognizes Southern Baptist DR

By Josie Rabbitt

Minneapolis—When devastating floods hit the Houston area in April, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers did what they normally do in the face of crisis. They responded.

Those efforts were recognized May 20 when several disaster relief teams were acknowledged during this year's National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (National VOAD or VOAD) conference in Minneapolis. The organization presented SBDR with its National Member of the Year award.

"I am honored that the North American Mission Board allows me to serve this incredible organization," said Mickey Caison, accepting the award. Caison serves as executive director of disaster relief for the North American Mission Board. "On behalf of the North American Mission Board and the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief network, I would like to express our gratitude to the membership of the National VOAD for this recognition of our work."

For 46 years, more than 100 organizations like NAMB and the SBDR have cooperated through VOAD to serve people and communities impacted by natural disasters. Initiatives within each disaster relief organization, like the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program (the SBC's unified channel for funding missions and ministry), have helped bring even more aid to disaster-stricken communities during the last half-century.

"It is a privilege to bear witness to the willingness of our volunteers to provide



Avery Fox (right), South Carolina Southern Baptist Disaster Relief team leader, prepares a solution used to kill mold after a mud-out job. (NAMB photo by Laura Sikes)

help, healing and hope to individuals, families and communities everyday as they serve as the hands and feet of Jesus," Caison said. "The love and compassion expressed by our volunteers' hard work, along with emotional and spiritual care, are used by our Lord not only to assist in recovery following a disaster but also to impact eternal relationships with Him."

The National VOAD was founded in 1970 in response to the challenges many disaster organizations experienced in 1969. Until that time, numerous governmental, private sector and nonprofit organizations served disaster survivors independently of one another. As a result, help often came to the survivors haphazardly. Unnecessary duplication efforts occurred, while at the same time, other needs went unmet.

Now, the National VOAD can depend

on committed member organizations like NAMB and the SBDR network of 42 state Baptist conventions' thousands of volunteers—including chaplains—to meet the needs for survivors of disasters.

"I am so honored to see how Southern Baptist Disaster Relief has been recognized by the National VOAD," said David Melber, vice president of NAMB's Send Relief network. "Such recognition speaks to the very heart of the Cooperative Program. For 50 years, members from our Southern Baptist churches have been faithful to serve people in their most desperate times for the sake of proclaiming the gospel in word and in action. We, at the North American Mission Board, are thankful for the testimonies of churches across this nation that led us to accept this honor and recognition on their behalf," Melber said. (BP)

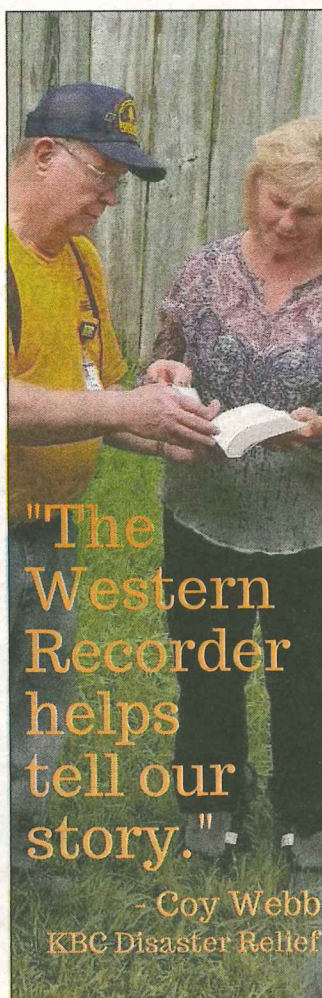
Syncing churches

Continued from Page 4

conventions intentionally, as part of their ministry assignment, seek to address these two concerns. While our national missions boards focus on international missions and church planting/re-planting, state convention staff seek to intentionally support and resource pastors, especially the vast majority of SBC pastors that are single-staff or bivocational.

State conventions sync our 45,000 congregations into one Southern Baptist national/global disciple-making effort, while simultaneously providing focus and strategy for our distinct mission strategy. They conduct thousands of presentations/consultations with pastors, churches, and associations to make them more effective Great Commission Baptists through evangelism training, revitalization support, strategic planning and leadership development, worship/music consulting and training, assistance in handling church conflict, pastor search team training, training in church technology and security matters, etc.

Our Baptist cooperation, at the state convention level, allows the majority of our churches to experience a capacity of ministry and mission that is well beyond their individual ability resulting in a greater impact with the message about the Person and work of Jesus Christ.



"The Western Recorder helps tell our story."

- Coy Webb
KBC Disaster Relief



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Retirement doesn't mean ceasing work for volunteer

By Cary Donnell

Winchester—Paul Atchison may be retired, but you wouldn't know it. The 72-year-old Winchester resident repairs roofs, builds handicapped ramps, or does whatever needs to be done to serve churches and the surrounding community.

"I don't want to sit down," said Atchison, a member of Central Baptist Church in Winchester.

"He...is like the Energizer bunny; he is always on the move," said Keith Stinson, a disaster relief crew chief.

Atchison serves as a deacon at his church, as a crew leader for Kentucky Changers and is on the board of directors for Clear Creek Baptist Bible College.

He and other volunteers installed a bathroom in a church near Stanford that had never had an indoor bathroom. Just a few weeks ago, he helped take a roof off a house in Lexington to be used for women veterans.

"I want to help people and glorify God," added Atchison. "We're here to serve other people."

Atchison was part of a relief team tasked with cutting down and hauling 45 trees. The team allowed three days for the project and weren't sure that was enough. The project was done in a day and a half.

"All glory goes to God. He's the one who gives us the physical ability to work," Atchison pointed out.

The biggest project Atchison was a part of helped build three 1,000 square-foot cabins at Boone's Creek Association Camp in Winchester.

Atchison has heeded a call from Matthew 25:40. "And the King will make answer and say to them, Truly I say to you, because you did it to the least of these my brothers, you did it to me" (BBE).

And don't think Atchison takes sole credit and responsibility for projects in which he's been involved.

"We've got a lot of good volunteers in our city and association." (WR)

Disaster Relief

Continued from Page 1

The project was not only a blessing to the camp, but was also a blessing to disaster relief workers. It provided hands-on training in a more controlled environment than usual storm cleanup.

"It was a good opportunity for folks to come in and apply the skills they had learned from the training we provided," Stinson said. "If they ran into something that was a little more difficult than they felt like handling, the trainers were on site" to ask for advice.

Two of the 32 volunteers brought their tractors to assist in hauling trees.

"It's a ministry for kingdom work, and they had a (safety) issue there. DR personnel had the training and equipment, and we were able to help them out," Stinson said.

"Our prayer is that our work will be used by God to reach and disciple young people for Christ who will come to camp at Boone's Creek," Webb added. (WR)

Hobbyist using auto restorations to nurture BCM students

By Scott Barkley

Gray, Ga.—For seven days, up to 12 hours a day, several Baptist Collegiate Ministries students took the rough places and made them new, fashioning what began as junk into something special.

Working under the watchful eye of John Albrycht, the group restored a 1974 Volkswagen Super Beetle, winning Best in Class at the Classics in the Country Car Show in Watkinsville, Ga., on April 23. The like-new VW will be sold to raise money for SendMeNow missions for BCM students at Georgia College in Milledgeville to share the gospel in the U.S. and throughout the world.

Two of Albrycht's daughters served through SendMeNow, so the program is close to his heart. Though this is the first time the hobbyist has guided the restoration of a car to directly benefit missions, he's been using an auto shop environment to build up young men for years, going back to his youth minister days at Plentitude Baptist Church in Jones County, Ga.

"We had quite a few junior and senior guys involved in the program," Albrycht recalled. "A volunteer, Jeff Weeks, suggested we find a way to develop relationships with them outside of the church before they headed off to college."

They determined the shop was the best place, where spiritual applications come easier than you'd think. In the end, it's just guys talking while they work. Their first project was a '71 Volkswagen Super Beetle that had been shut up in a student's barn.

It's been 10 years since Albrycht and

others began restoring cars for high school students, migrating toward college students, as a mentoring ministry. As word got out, more men wanted to be involved; today more than a dozen men from 30-60 years old and stretching across denominations serve as mentors. Although projects often take place in a group setting, growth occurs in the one-on-one conversations sure to follow.

"I like to apply Scripture (while we work) and ask guys how they're going to use truths in the Bible in everyday life," Albrycht said. "Before establishing the ministry, he had noticed how his students were having trouble applying the scriptural truths taught at church to their lives. 'Follow-up was missing,' he realized.

"One Friday around midnight a guy showed up at my house and said, 'Mr. John, I need to go work on the car.' At church, we'd been talking about sex and marriage. After 20 minutes he admitted to me he'd had sex with his girlfriend that night. Now, he wanted to know what he should do.

"I'd been involved in youth ministry for 20 years at that point and I'd never had a question with that much honesty. It's not a question you get at church. Working on the car had created an environment where he felt safe to ask. It really opened my eyes that we're not doing cross-generational ministry like we should."

That openness isn't confined to the younger crowd either. "Older guys, especially those saved later in life, are honest about their scars," said Albrycht, now a member of Northside Baptist Church in Milledgeville who works as a real estate



Left: John Albrycht, who leads the nonprofit Bugs 4 Christ ministry, sits in the 1974 Volkswagen Super Beetle that he and others, including BCM students from Georgia College, were in the process of restoring. (Bugs 4 Christ photos) **Below:** Discipleship, not just physical labor, was involved in the restoration of this '74 Volkswagen Super Beetle to be sold to support missions outreach by the Baptist Campus Ministry at Georgia College.

appraiser, negotiator and project manager.

A father of five, Albrycht speaks in churches on the importance of men being the spiritual leader in the family. At last count he's been part of restoring/rebuilding 26 cars and giving them to young men and women in need. He sees a direct spiritual association with the process.

"Restoring cars is like restoring lives through Christ," Albrycht said. "I'll use the repair manual of the car to show how when we live apart from the Bible we mess things up. To rebuild and repair the car, we need to be familiar with the manual. We have to be ready and understand it, the same way we study and apply Scripture."

Though Albrycht is partial to Volkswagen Beetles, as shown by his Bugs 4 Christ nonprofit ministry, various models have been rebuilt over the years. Currently he's overseeing a restoration for Jay's Hope, a Macon-based organization devoted to fighting childhood cancer.

Funding for each project is largely



attained through donations of materials, time, even food brought to workers. For the Georgia College BCM rebuild, meals were provided by Haddock, Gray and Northridge Baptist churches, among others.

Though the mentoring is geared toward the young, older generations get just as much out of it, Albrycht noted.

"The enthusiasm and zest for life from these young guys is passed along to the others. The guys from Georgia College were such strong Christians they helped us live at a 'younger level' that week."

And that generational highway goes both ways. (BP)

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2016 SBC Presidential Nominees

Three pastors will be nominated for Southern Baptist Convention president in June. The following is some background information on each candidate.

North Carolina pastor J.D. Greear's nomination was announced March 2 by Jimmy Scroggins, pastor of Family Church in West Palm Beach, Fla.



J.D. Greear

During the 14 years Greear has pastored The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, N.C., worship attendance has grown from 350 to just under 10,000, Scroggins said in announcing the nomination.

The Summit's total baptisms increased from 19 in 2002 to 928 in 2014, the last year for which statistics are available.

Among Greear's work in the SBC, he has led The Summit to plant more than 20 churches in North America in

conjunction with the North American Mission Board. When Greear's nomination was announced, The Summit had more International Mission Board missionaries on the field than any other congregation in the convention. Greear himself served two years with the IMB before being called to The Summit.

Greear holds doctor of philosophy and master of divinity degrees from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

Tennessee pastor Steve Gaines' nomination was announced March 9 by former SBC President Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church in Woodstock, Ga.



Steve Gaines

Among Gaines' leadership roles in the SBC, he has served as a member of the SBC Committee on Nominations, a trustee of LifeWay Christian

Resources, a member of the committee that proposed a revision of the Baptist Faith and Message in 2000 and chairman of the SBC Resolutions Committee. He preached the SBC convention sermon in 2004 and served as SBC Pastors' Conference president in 2005.

During the 11 years Gaines has pastored the Memphis-area Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn., the congregation has averaged 481 baptisms per year, according to the SBC's Annual Church Profile. Previously, he pastored churches in Alabama, Tennessee and Texas.

Gaines holds doctor of philosophy and master of divinity degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Louisiana pastor David Crosby's nomination was announced March 24 by former SBC President Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans.

Among Crosby's leadership roles at the association, state convention and

SBC levels, he has served as moderator of the New Orleans Baptist Association, Executive Board member of the Louisiana Baptist Convention and member of the SBC Committees on Committees and Resolutions. He is a trustee at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary.



David Crosby

During the 20 years Crosby has pastored First Baptist Church in New Orleans, the congregation has given between 7 and 15 percent of its undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program. The church has averaged 658 in worship and 24 baptisms annually over the past five years. Previously, Crosby pastored churches in Texas and Mississippi.

Crosby holds a doctor of philosophy degree from Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and a master of divinity from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Q&A with the nominees covers the convention's future, CP

The new SBC president will succeed Arkansas pastor Ronnie Floyd, who was elected to the first of two one-year presidential terms in 2014.

The following is a question and answer session between Baptist Press and the presidential nominees. BP requested each nominee to respond within 150 words to each question.

What influence on the Southern Baptist Convention do you pray to have during the two consecutive one-year terms that an SBC president typically serves?

GREEAR: First, we need a continued re-awakening to the gospel. Revival begins not with the world awakening to Christ, but the church getting "re-awakened" to the gospel. Times in our country may be dark, but—based on past history—that actually means conditions are incredibly ripe for revival.

Second, we need to bring a new generation of Southern Baptists to the table, partnering with older generations in the cooperative missions of the SBC. There is a new wave of excitement about the SBC, but many are still sitting on the sidelines. We've been given a rich legacy, and it's time we, the rising generations, pick up that torch, taking personal responsibility for the mission.

Third, we need to see diversification in the SBC's leadership. About one in five Southern Baptist churches are now predominantly non-Anglo, and we want to see our brothers and sisters from these non-Anglo backgrounds join us in leadership.

GAINES: I want to build on the wonderful foundation that has been laid by our current president, Ronnie Floyd, by being a catalyst for spiritual awakening and revival. The SBC needs fresh fire and wind from heaven. It will come through fervent prayer and seeking God. I also want to emphasize soul winning. The SBC is currently in a 15-year downward nosedive in baptisms. In 2014, we baptized 100,000 less than we did in 1999. Pastors must lead their churches to verbally share the gospel with lost people,

and also extend evangelistic invitations when they preach. I also will focus on stewardship. Individual Christians must give more to their churches so our churches can give more to the Cooperative Program so we can send more missionaries overseas. We need to put 1,100 missionaries back on the foreign fields instead of calling them home.

CROSBY: I hope to renew a spirit of cooperation among our churches. We are all experiencing the reality of America as a mission field. Any true mission setting requires more cooperation, not less, to share an effective witness. On the mission field you must set aside your differences and rally around the true core of the gospel. That is where we are now in our nation and our world.

We have a wide-open door that will help us evangelize our nation and present the full wonder of the gospel—the love of our neighbors. This love may be expressed corporately in compassion ministries initiated by our churches to address local needs. I hope to help foster such ministries. This strategy of outreach will put us in touch with the many residents of our communities who are distant from us culturally and provide bridges for powerful witness.

If elected as SBC president, in what ways do you envision calling Southern Baptists forward in seeking to fulfill the Great Commission and undergirding the Cooperative Program?

GAINES: We must emphasize the Great Commission, which is: "making disciples, baptizing disciples, and teaching disciples." Making disciples includes winning lost people to Jesus. If not, then there is no evangelism in the Great Commission. I will call Southern Baptists back to our historic roots of being soul winners—people who proactively, intentionally and verbally share the gospel to win people to Jesus. Each person we win to Christ must then be baptized. We do NOT need to deemphasize baptisms as a valid metric to measure our evangelistic

effectiveness. Baptisms are a biblical metric. Every person who was saved in the New Testament was baptized! Once a person is saved and baptized, he should be taught and disciplined so he can grow in Christlikeness. Financial stewardship is part of being a disciple. Christians must give more to their churches so churches can give more to the Cooperative Program.

CROSBY: We communicate our true relationship with Jesus through love of neighbor. If we fail to love, we are just an annoying noise. Any future revival of the Great Commission will be linked to our keeping the Great Commandment. The notion that these two great commands of Jesus are in tension is a true absurdity. We will never faithfully represent the Savior without both the words and the deeds of the gospel. All of our churches have multiple ways to love neighbors in need. Let's grab our bandages and go help them.

The Cooperative Program is suffering from the notion that designated giving to our individual entities is just as faithful to our cooperative work as supporting the unified giving plan. We will continue to see layoffs and the downsizing of our cooperative mission enterprise until and unless we have a revival of support for the Cooperative Program.

GREEAR: To the churches who choose to affiliate with the SBC, I would say that we must take ownership of our entities and mission. More than 1,000 missionaries coming off the field isn't "the SBC's problem." It's our problem. We need to respond with intentional, sacrificial generosity, giving away more than we feel we can spare. We must rest on the promise that as we seek the Kingdom of God first, He'll supply the rest of what we need (Matthew 6:33).

The CP should remain our best and primary means of giving, but we should encourage other cooperative ways to give, too. God is doing new things in the coming days, and we must respect the autonomy of Southern Baptist churches

in responding to that. The entities of the convention exist for one reason—the Great Commission. We must constantly re-evaluate everything we do in light of that. Mission above all.

Describe ways you have led your church to be involved in Great Commission outreach through Southern Baptist cooperative missions and the Cooperative Program.

CROSBY: We have adopted an unreached people group in Africa in response to the challenge of the IMB. We have made 15 trips with many different individuals from our church.

We are fully engaged in the cooperative mission work in New Orleans. Our church sponsors a new church plant and is working on a second one. The North American Mission Board and the Louisiana Baptist Convention are our partners in serving the homeless population and children who come to school hungry. The LBC also partners with us in our ministry that recruits, trains and supports foster families in our region. We work hard to connect the words and deeds of the gospel in all compassion ministries. We have seen many people come to faith in Christ with this strategy.

GREEAR: Currently, we have 150 of our members serving overseas through the IMB. We've also, by God's grace, planted 26 Southern Baptist churches through NAMB here in the U.S., sending out over 400 members, all in the past 5 years. We have a God-sized goal of planting 1,000 churches by 2050 through the entities of the SBC, and our people have rallied behind that vision.

Over the same period, we've also tried to demonstrate the kind of increased, sacrificial giving the hour demands. Three years ago, our church voted to increase our CP giving by 230 percent over the course of five years, and we were able to complete that two years early. On January 1, we took our 2016 giving to \$390,000 for the year. Our "Great

Commission Giving" has remained consistent at 10 percent for four years, and our total missions giving has remained between 15-20 percent of undesignated receipts.

GAINES: At Bellevue Baptist Church, over the past six years we have increased our Cooperative Program giving from \$250,000 per year to \$1 million per year. We have been the top giver to the CP in our state for several years now. We have annually increased both the amount given and also the percentage. Since Great Commission outreach should be done at the local church level, the associational level, the state convention level and the national convention level, we believe in supporting each of these financially and with our participation.

We win people to Christ in Memphis through personal soul winning and also through multiple evangelistic ministries. On the national level, we are planting churches in the Seattle area through the Send North America emphasis. Bellevue also serves overseas in evangelistic outreach and church planting efforts in partnership with our IMB. We believe in cooperating with other Southern Baptist churches.

In what ways do you see the SBC president coming alongside leaders of the International Mission Board, North American Mission Board, LifeWay Christian Resources, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, GuideStone Financial Resources and the convention's six seminaries to undergird and encourage their respective ministries?

GREEAR: God has given us tremendous leaders—men and women of God raised up for the hour—in these entities. He sent us a Conservative Resurgence, then a Great Commission Resurgence, and the leadership of our entities reflects those great movements. Here's what excites me: past grace is evidence that God intends to bestow future grace. These are exciting days for Southern Baptists. God didn't act to preserve institutions, but to advance the mission.

These entities exist to assist local churches in the work of the ministry, not to do ministry for them. The local church is God's "Plan A." Churches plant churches, raise up leaders, send out missionaries and evangelize their cities. I've been encouraged to see these entities begin asking how they can better serve the churches. I hope to represent Southern Baptist churches of all shapes and sizes well to these entities, pressing in on that very question.

GAINES: I will emphasize the need for all of our national entities to work in cooperation with one another and also with our state conventions and local associations to fulfill the Great Commission. Southern Baptist churches do not need to digress to a societal form of giving to support our various agencies at various levels. State conventions must not be pressured into giving such high percentages to the national entities that they are unable to evangelize their own states. We must seek to have a unified way of funding all levels of SBC missional work, and that is the Cooperative Program.

We must discourage a spirit of competition between the national entities and the state conventions and local associations. All of these levels of SBC activity are vital to our success in carrying out

the Great Commission. Southern Baptists will advance if we focus on cooperating instead of competing against one another.

CROSBY: The greatest encouragement I could give as president to our entity heads is to be a cheerleader for the Cooperative Program. I will do this faithfully.

I am happy to represent a pastor's perspective in meetings with our denominational leaders. For more than 40 years I have been the pastor of local churches that gave generously and faithfully to our unified giving plan. I have made more than 30 international trips to work with our missionaries. I have served at all levels of our work together. I am prepared to help us process the challenges that lie before us and develop creative strategies to address them.

I see much to admire in the new generation of young pastors and church planters. They are courageous and committed. We have the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit and heaven as our home. We have no reason to be fearful, angry or discouraged.

If elected as SBC president, how do you foresee speaking to the next generation of Southern Baptist leaders to be involved in expanding the convention's Great Commission work?

GAINES: Our son is a 33-year-old pastor of a Southern Baptist church here in Tennessee. I encourage him and all the next generation of Southern Baptists to get involved in SBC life at every level. Local associations provide fellowship and ministry opportunities that are encouraging. State conventions allow younger Southern Baptists unique opportunities to reach lost people in their states. God has brought the world to our cities and states. There are over 3 million lost people in Tennessee and 18 million in Texas. We can reach the world by reaching the lost people in our states! I also encourage the next generation to support the national SBC by being involved in church planting through NAMB and a variety of worldwide missional opportunities through the IMB.

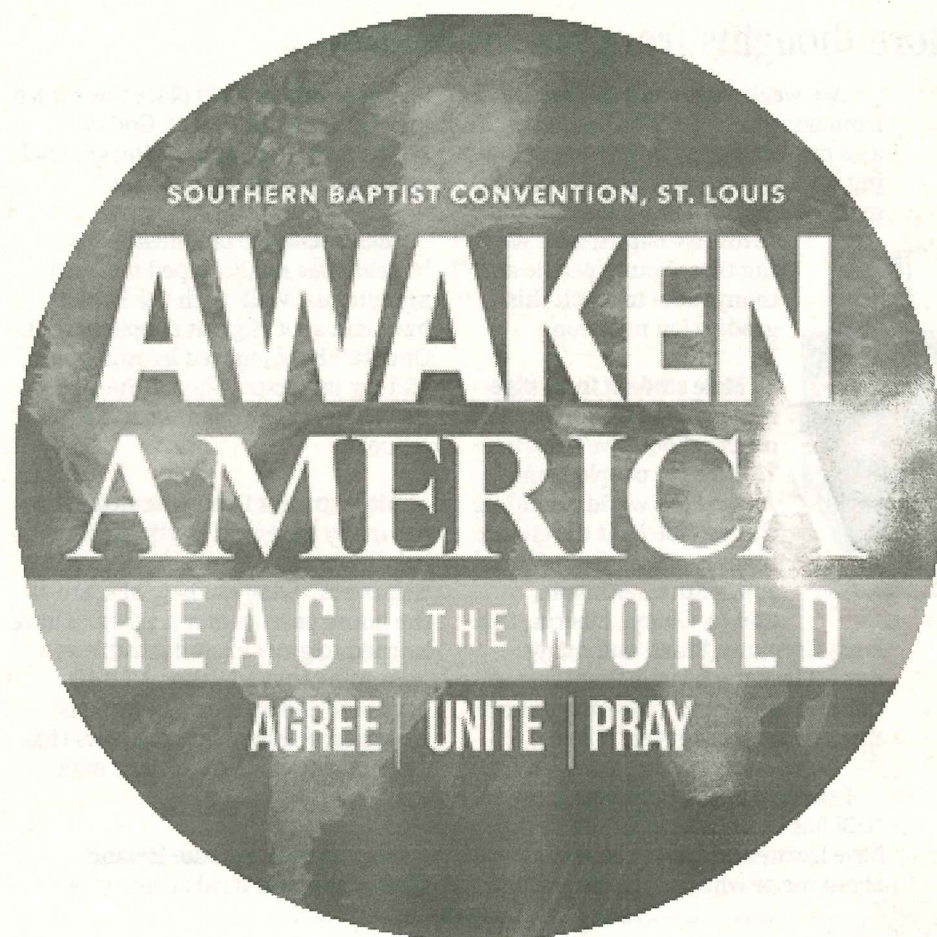
No other preaching fellowship has greater potential for providing comprehensive involvement for the next generation than the SBC at all its various levels of ministry.

CROSBY: The next generation will inherit from us a unified giving plan. I hope that they will support it and not let it languish. We have no proposals on the table that I know of that will keep our cooperative work healthy and whole apart from the Cooperative Program or something like it.

Our young leaders need to put their hands and their eyes on our cooperative work. We should develop scholarship programs that will help young pastors go overseas to work with our missionaries. When we get to know our missionaries, we love them and see them for who they are—faithful servants of Christ who represent us well around the world.

Our state conventions should be highly valued. I am a Southern Baptist because my father went to a Texas Baptist college. Our witness for Christ has been magnified through the various associations and conventions.

GREEAR: Those of us in the younger



generation "stand on the shoulders" of faithful, older generations. We should honor them, learn from them and unite with them. We need to humbly ask lots of questions. (As my mentor Paige Patterson told me, "Never tear a wall down before you know why it exists!") And we must continue supporting the mission structures that have made Southern Baptists the most prolific church planting people on the planet. We must own our convention.

Again: great days are ahead. Why would the Holy Spirit have been so gracious in the Conservative Resurgence if not to give us an unprecedented effectiveness among the nations? The SBC's best days are before us. They have to be: more than 6,000 people groups remain unreached, and history cannot end until that changes. It is time again to expect great things of God, and then attempt great things for God.

What do you see as the key moral issues of our day, and how can the SBC president represent Southern Baptists as America increasingly moves away from Judeo-Christian values?

CROSBY: The greatest moral issue is our flagging love for the lost and dying around us. We must get out of our houses of worship and into our communities. Unless we renew our love for our neighbors, we will never renew our witness.

Jesus introduced race in His story of the Good Samaritan in order to make it abundantly clear that love of neighbor involves loving people across ethnic, economic and cultural barriers. The tendency is universal in the human heart to pull into ourselves, into our own group and shut out the rest of the world. We must love the world enough to give of ourselves.

I am less concerned with the moral drift of the culture than I am with the moral drift of people who call themselves Christians. If we do not look like Jesus in our behavior, we will certainly not sound like Jesus nor represent Him

faithfully in our world.

GREEAR: Antagonism toward Christianity is growing, but this is no time to despair. The early Church didn't grow exponentially because the government was behind them, but because they trusted the Spirit and proclaimed the gospel boldly. Thus, while we will continue to advocate for religious liberty, we must also live as the counter-cultural people of God, a unique community where the fragrance of Christ is sweet and distinct. The darker our culture becomes, the brighter the light of the gospel shines forth.

We must aim for the same paradox Jesus embodied—"full of grace and truth" (John 1:17). Truth without grace is fundamentalism. Grace without truth is vapid sentimentality. The Great Commission is that we proclaim the gospel; the second Great Commandment is that we love our neighbors. Both should be evident among Southern Baptists. We must not only speak the truth of Christ; we must do so with the spirit of Christ.

GREEAR: The three key moral issues in our day are abortion, sexual immorality and racism.

The SBC, including the president, must continue to be a champion for the unborn and their right to life. We must never waver regarding the fact that the Bible teaches that life begins at conception. Every unborn child is an eternal soul.

We must also continue to provide a prophetic voice crying out in the wilderness of a morally confused culture regarding sexuality.

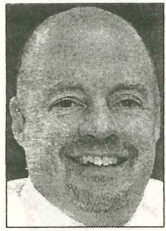
We must advocate for biblical marriage. The only marriage Jesus affirmed was heterosexual, monogamous marriage—one man married to one woman for life. God created males to be males and females to be females. Gender is biological, not psychological.

Regarding race, all people are created in God's image. Thus there is only one race—the human race. Christians must lead by example by loving everyone, regardless of skin color. (BP)

More thoughts from our graduates

Two weeks ago, I shared comments from our graduates. The following are also provided by some of our graduating seniors that were shared at our graduation ceremony. Thank you,

This is Oneida



Larry Gritton

Kentucky Baptists, for helping these young people and many more to reach this graduation milestone.

Male student from Nigeria—"OBI was different from other schools I've been to. There were people from around the world attending this school. I got the chance to meet people from China, South Korea, Ethiopia, Congo, Ghana, Liberia, Thailand, Germany, Brazil and many more. I love the friends that I met at OBI because I know I'm going to have them in my life forever."

Female student from Georgetown—"OBI has changed me for the best. I have learned that it is not always about me or what I want, but about

giving to others. This place has shown me that no matter what, God is always with me and that He will stick with me through everything."

Male student from Oneida—

"Oneida has really helped me with my spiritual walk with the Lord. I have met a lot of great people here at Oneida. I have enjoyed learning here, and my understanding of the world has also improved thanks to the school."

Male student from Wisconsin—"It has many times felt anything but helpful for me to be here, but I think that overall with the help of some of the house parents and teachers, I have learned to grow up and mature as a teen going into adulthood. Life is hard, and the comforting thing is that everyone here at OBI knows that fact but overcomes it in their own way."

Female student from Ireland—

"Being here was hard at times, but

being able to make new friends from all around the world has been a great experience. I feel as I have made friends for life from my time at OBI and for that I am grateful."

Male student from Lexington—

"During my time at OBI, I made the decision to completely surrender my life to Christ. Throughout the four years of being here, I was able to play baseball with great friends, which brought about the opportunity to play college baseball. I was also able to accelerate in music through the help of one of my teachers and now it has become a passion."

Male student from Ethiopia—"I have a lot of things to say about OBI, but simply, OBI is the best place to learn about people and to think about life."

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.

Donnell joins WR staff as journalism intern

Louisville—Cary Donnell, of Louisville, has joined the staff of the Western Recorder as a journalism intern.

Donnell, a recent graduate of the University of Louisville, is the son of Jim and Ginny Donnell, of Louisville. His father is the associate executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

A member of Highview Baptist Church's East Campus, Donnell earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from UofL. He also holds an associate's degree in communications from Jefferson Community and Technical College, having attended Louisville's Male High School.

He is employed part-time as night shift package handler at UPS.

An avid sports fan, particularly basketball and football, he enjoys impersonating Elvis Presley on the karaoke stage at his college group's Bible studies and editing college football entries on Wikipedia.

Through the internship with Western Recorder, Donnell hopes to gain valuable experience as news and feature writer that will help him in progressing toward his chosen career in communications.

"My hope is to produce works at the WR that I can show to a potential employer, and to develop my skills in writing," Donnell said. "I would love to have a career in Baptist life," he added. (WR)



Cary Donnell

Graduates share favorite memories from the 'Creek' Part II

It is graduation time at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College! This is always a special time to celebrate what God

has done in the lives of our graduates. I know you will enjoy some more of their favorite memories they recalled during their time with us preparing for God's call on their lives.

"My fondest memory at Clear Creek is the feeling of love and God's blessings as prayers were lifted up for me. I was blessed to be a part of the Child Development Center for four years.

When I moved to follow God's call on my family, those kids were ever on my mind and heart: the way they truly loved and blessed me. Sweet friendships had developed there, and when I

became physically sick and spiritually weak, they—along with many others—rallied around me in love and prayed over me. I am grateful to all who pushed my husband and me to greater goals, as Philippians 3:13-14 says, "... to press toward the mark ..." May God richly bless each and every one of you both past and present who have impacted my life."—**Emily Elizabeth Harr**

"My fondest memory from Clear Creek during my time here and online is the love and encouragement I received from the staff and professors when I returned to finish my education."—**Jonathan James Kinner**

"My fondest Clear Creek memory would have to be all the late night discussions in Kelly Hall and meeting people that have become some of my closest brothers and sisters in Christ.

It is awesome to be able to look back at the impact Clear Creek has had on my life and all of our lives here as students."—**Brady Thomas Koettel**

"I absolutely loved the friendships I gained at Clear Creek as well as the education in the Bible."—**Kayla Rachelle Little**

"While I was at Clear Creek there was a large winter storm that snowed us in for almost a week. I remember how everyone at the school enjoyed the beauty of the snow, and then came together helping each other and those in the local community. I will always remember the love I felt from the school and students."—**Joshua David Lynn**

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

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

Summer activities for children and youth

Summer is upon us with all of the wonderful ways that Kentucky WMU involves children and students (youth) in missions.

Mission Adventure for Kentucky Kids will take place June 16-18 in Richmond and June 23-25 in Bowling Green. Red House Baptist Church will host in Richmond and Calvary Baptist Church in Bowling Green. Each three-day mission trip includes prayer walking, worship, Bible study, mission projects and Kentucky Kid fun.

Ministries include sorting, organizing donations of food and clothing, home meals delivery to the homebound, games with children at a shelter, making cookies for international students, and more.

Kentucky Changers will do home repairs for low-income home owners in

Hopkinsville (June 11-17), Calloway County (June 18-24), Greensburg (July 2-8), and Frankfort (July 9-12). Building on the 2016 theme, "Stay Connected to the Source," students will be challenged through nightly worship to stay connected to Jesus in all of life. Volunteers of all ages assist with teaching construction skills, supervising projects, cooking, checking out tools, and many other tasks to support the students as they serve.

Overnights for Mothers and Daughters and Girls in Action will take place at Cedarmore (July 1-2) and Jonathan Creek (July 8-9). Participants will meet a missionary and enjoy summer fun while they learn. Acteens Quest, our newest overnight, will be held at Jonathan Creek (July 8-9) followed by a state Acteens Activators Team trip (July 11-17) to New Orleans to work at the Baptist Friendship Center.

Camp Courage, a campout for boys,

will be July 29-30 at Laurel Lake Baptist Camp in Corbin. Boys will participate in a variety of outdoor activities while learning about missions.

We are most excited to report on the completion of a new Kentucky WMU storage facility at Cedarmore. With the addition of Kentucky Changers to the WMU family, the need for adequate storage of all the required equipment was huge. We are grateful to Mercer Baptist Association for the use of their storage building for the past two years. We also appreciate the partnership with Crossings who allowed us to construct a building at Cedarmore.

Whether supporting summer activities led by Kentucky missionaries, helping with WMU sponsored ministries, or funding outreach by church planters, EBO is at work all summer long.

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

EBO at Work



Joy Bolton

KBC Annual: A snapshot of Kentucky Baptist life

Louisville—A lot happened in Kentucky Baptist life last year, and a snapshot of highlights can be found in the 2015 Kentucky Baptist Convention Annual.

The KBC Annual, which celebrates how Kentucky Baptists are bucking trends in baptisms and giving, is now available for download at www.kybaptist.org/annual.

Read the names of churches that made the "Top 100" lists in per capita giving and total giving to the Cooperative Program. Then learn how state, national and international missionaries used those gifts to share the gospel of Christ with a lost and hurting world.

Featured items in the 208-page digital book include presentations at the 178th KBC Annual Meeting from Executive Director Paul Chitwood, then-President Tom James, as well as from Mission Board committees, agencies and institutions.

For fact checkers and trend watchers, the annual provides historical information about past officers and heaps of statistics reported by Kentucky Baptist churches and associations.

Looking for ministry connection points? Check out the annual's extensive directory of ministers, churches, KBC staff and more.

In an effort to be good stewards of Cooperative Program gifts, the 2015 Kentucky Baptist Convention Annual is only available as a free digital download. (KBC)

Rainer shares roadmap to helping lead change

By Carol Pipes

Nashville—The email addressed to LifeWay Christian Resources President and CEO Thom Rainer sounded urgent. The subject line: A plea for help.

"I am a pastor and I'm about to give up," the email began. The pastor went on to share his frustration in trying to lead his church to make much-needed changes. "Every time I try something, I get hit hard by critics and bullies," he wrote. "My wife wants me to quit." He ended by asking Rainer for advice on how to lead change in the wake of so many obstacles.

Rainer receives multiple letters, emails and comments a month from pastors saying they are discouraged trying to lead their churches to change. His latest book, "Who Moved My Pulpit?" is a response to those asking for advice.

"I wrote this new book with a heart for those church leaders," he said. "Most pastors and church leaders don't know how to lead change. But it's an important and perhaps the most difficult aspect of leadership."

Published by LifeWay's B&H Publishing imprint, Who Moved My Pulpit? comes out at a time when many churches are in need of change. Research shows nearly 9 out of 10 churches are either declining or growing more slowly than the communities in which they are located.

"Change is absolutely necessary in our churches," Rainer said, "but it is difficult and risky."

Leading change in churches is more difficult today than it was 20-25 years ago, Rainer said. That's due in large part to the pressure of today's ever-changing culture on church members.

"The world outside the church has shifted so drastically away from Judeo-Christian values that church members want to hold onto the methodologies, ministries and programs they know and are comfortable with within the church," he explained. "When change happens in the church, they are told they have to let go of those things they know, and that is yet another major frustration."

The book, available June 1, is a collection of stories drawn from the experiences of pastors and congregations navigating change. Readers will learn valuable lessons from the mistakes and successes of others. One of the biggest mistakes a leader makes when leading change is not praying first.

"Leading change in the church can only work if it is God-led, God-powered, and God-ordained," Rainer writes.

Another mistake, he said, is moving forward without making sure the congregation is on board with the change—and not measuring how others are responding to change.

"The greatest determinant of whether

change will be effective is how well the leader is being received as a change agent," he noted.

Rainer provides an eight-stage road map for leading change, which includes prayer, communicating a sense of urgency, building an eager coalition, providing a voice and vision of hope, dealing with people issues, moving from an inward to an outward focus, picking low-hanging fruit and implementing change.

Who Moved My Pulpit? takes some of its cues from retired Harvard professor John Kotter's "Leading Change."

"Some of Kotter's principles have a biblical foundation even though the book was not written with biblical intentionality," Rainer said. "I had recommended his book to pastors for years, but many couldn't connect with it because it's a business book. I felt I needed to write a book for pastors and church leaders that would communicate some of these same change principles."

For churches unsure they need to

change, Rainer offers these five signs:

1. The church is not growing.
2. There is ongoing conflict within the church.
3. Most of the church's ministry and budget are focused inwardly.

4. The church doesn't have a positive presence in the community.

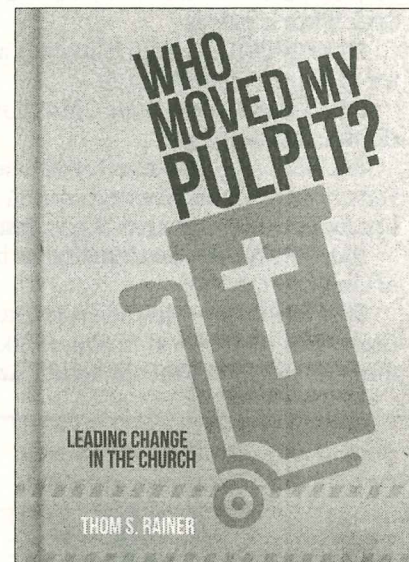
5. The church has a high turnover of leadership.

If leaders take only one thing away from the book, Rainer hopes it will be to lead change with prayer. "Even if they only do that one thing, they are depending on the power of God to change the hearts of people more than any

type of strategic methodology," he said.

"Prayer is not an option in leading change in the church."

Rainer hopes pastors will have the courage to make a difference in their churches and lead change well. Tens of thousands of churches are in need of revitalization. "God has called pastors to lead change for such a time as this," he noted. (BP)



Stetzer to join Wheaton College faculty

By Art Toalston

Wheaton, Ill.—Ed Stetzer, executive director of LifeWay Research and executive editor of The Gospel Project curriculum published by LifeWay, has been named to the faculty of Wheaton College and as executive director of Wheaton's Billy Graham Center for Evangelism.

Stetzer, 49, will begin his new roles at Wheaton July 1, which also will include publisher of Evangelical Missions Quarterly and chair of the graduate school's evangelism and leadership program.

Wheaton President Philip Ryken, in a news release, said Stetzer is "a dynamic communicator and brilliant researcher who brings a genuine knowledge of the gospel and a deep understanding of contemporary culture to his new place of service."

LifeWay President Thom Rainer voiced appreciation that Stetzer, in nine years at the Southern Baptist Convention entity, "made a significant contribution to our ministry. We are excited for the impact Dr. Stetzer will make in his new

role, and also grateful LifeWay will have a continued consulting relationship with him."

Stetzer said he has been "blessed to work at LifeWay with men and women of character, driven by a burning desire to serve the church in her mission."

Stetzer, while with LifeWay, also has served as executive editor of its Facts & Trends journal and authored or coauthored 10 books, most recently "Transformational Groups: Creating a New Scorecard for Groups" with Eric Geiger. Before joining LifeWay, he had written five other books.

A New York native, Stetzer received a Ph.D. in missions and evangelism from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2003; a doctor of ministry degree in pastoral leadership from Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in 1998; a master of arts degree in church growth/planting from Liberty University Divinity School in 1995; an M.Div. from Southern Seminary in 1994; and an undergraduate degree from Shorter College in Georgia in 1988. (BP)



Ed Stetzer

A place to start

Individuals who seek guidance from the Kentucky Baptist Foundation often ask for suggestions on how best to start their estate planning process. We suggest using the following four steps as a framework for organizing your thoughts as you begin.

People

The people in your life are central to the planning process. List the individuals for whom you are now financially responsible and those whom you would like to assist in the future. It is also appropriate to include your church and other Christian ministry causes on the list as part of your "family."

Property

Next, we suggest listing your property. Think of everything you own, including financial assets and tangible property. Begin with income from all sources (salary, investments, rental property, etc.). Also include any current balances in pension plans, individual retirement accounts (IRA's), 401K plans and other retirement accounts. Beside each asset, list its current value and the asset's original cost. Finally, note whether you own the asset outright, or with others.

Plans

Your plans begin to take shape as you review the list of persons and consider how you wish to provide for them. Study the various assets

you listed to determine which may match the needs of each person or charitable cause you identified as important to you.

Planners

Various professionals play a key part in establishing and advising your estate plan. At the top of the list of planners will often be an attorney and an accountant. Your attorney drafts your will and other legal documents. Your accountant can provide valuable advice on tax matters as well as other estate planning issues, in consultation with your attorney. Others who may participate include life insurance professionals, financial planners, real estate professionals and trust officers.

The staff of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation would be honored to be a part of your planner team. We welcome the opportunity to work with individuals seeking how best to organize their estate planning goals to achieve their personal and charitable objectives. To request a private estate stewardship consultation, please contact the Foundation's trust counsel, Laurie Valentine, or me at our toll-free number (866) 489-3533.

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

Ky. Baptist Foundation



Richard Carnes

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June

- 7 Power Lunch, Baptist Building, Louisville.
- 9 LIFE Tour, Flemingsburg Church, Flemingsburg
- 11-17 Kentucky Changers, Hopkinsville
- 12-13 WMU Annual Meeting, America's Center, St. Louis, Mo
- 14-15 SBC Annual Meeting, America's Center, St. Louis, Mo
- 16-18 Mission Adventure for Ky. Kids, Richmond

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

HARRODSBURG - Harrodsburg Church welcomed Colby Flowers as its student minister. Wayne Spivey is pastor.

LANCASTER - Sean Kelly is the new pastor of Gilberts Creek Church.

MELBER - New Concord Church will host a gospel sing on June 26 at 1:30 p.m. The featured group is The Bowlins. Greg Winn is pastor.

MUNFORDVILLE - Paul Hines has accept the call as pastor of Munfordville Church.

PAINT LICK - Good Hope Church has called Jimmy Closterman as pastor.

SALVISA - Salvisa Church will celebrate its 175th anniversary June 12. Service begins at 11 a.m., followed by a luncheon and program at 2 p.m. Jonathan Jones is pastor.

SALYERSVILLE - Ben Martin has been called as pastor of First Church.

SIMPSONVILLE - Simpsonville Church will host the SBC Great Float on June 6 at 11 a.m. at Elkhorn Creek in Frankfort. Call (502) 722-5246 for details. Steven Boyd is pastor.

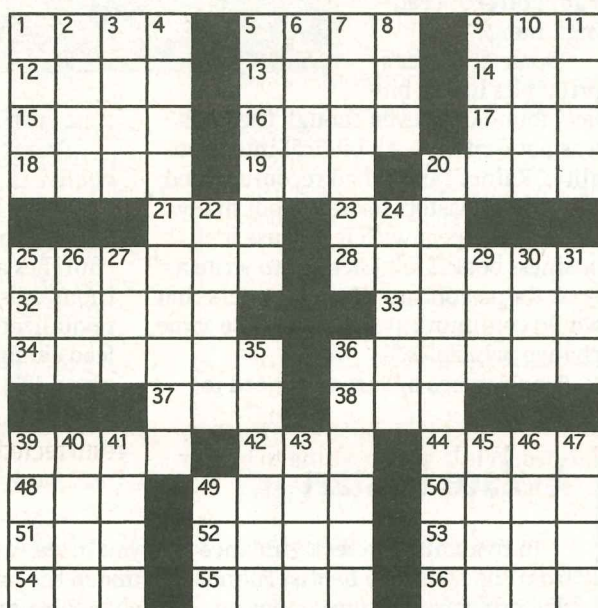
Bible Crosswords

Across

- 1 "Do him no ____" (Jeremiah 39:12)
- 5 Abbott, Fr.
- 9 "Also I shook my ____" (Nehemiah 5:13)
- 12 Oil of ____, skin softener
- 13 "The ____ of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever" (Psalm 19:9)
- 14 "Do they not ____ that devise evil?" (Proverbs 14:22)
- 15 Puts on
- 16 "And it is a ____ thing that the king requireth" (Daniel 2:11)
- 17 "Now as he walked by the ____ of Galilee" (Mark 1:16)
- 18 Father of Enos (Genesis 5:6)
- 19 "Blessed ____ the pure in heart" (Matthew 5:8)
- 20 "And ____ ye not, but pursue after your enemies" (Joshua 10:19)
- 21 One of the sons of Gad (Genesis 46:16)
- 23 Librarian's whisper
- 25 "Ye have ____ treasure together for the last days" (James 5:3)
- 28 "For ____ is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:10)
- 32 "And it shall be unto them ... that have sworn ____" (Ezekiel 21:23)
- 33 Weird
- 34 Welcomes
- 36 "____, and be baptized every one of you" (Acts 2:38)
- 37 "He ... chooseth a tree that will not ____" (Isaiah 40:20)
- 38 "That which groweth of ____ own accord" (Leviticus 25:5)
- 39 "I will bless the ____ at all times" (Psalm 34:1)
- 42 "Let us ____ with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1)

#63

By Elaine Okupski



#64

- 44 "And I will give unto thee the ____ of the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 16:19)
- 48 ____ Maria
- 49 Mongrels
- 50 "And the rest will ____ in order when I come" (1 Corinthians 11:34) (2 words)
- 51 22nd letter of alphabet
- 52 Swedish name
- 53 Nickname for Nathaniel
- 54 "Make thee an ____ of gopher wood" (Genesis 6:14)
- 55 "That the ____ men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith" (Titus 2:2)
- 56 "I will give thee ... a ____ of apparel" (Judges 17:10)

Down

- 1 Bricklayers' troughs
- 2 "Burn plant"
- 3 To speak vehemently
- 4 "The Lord is ____" (Psalm 23:1) (2 words)
- 5 "They fell on their face, and were sore ____" (Matthew 17:6)
- 6 "____ ye one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2)
- 7 "Because thou ____ the ark of the Lord God" (1 Kings 2:26)
- 8 "And ____ the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord" (1 Samuel 3:3)
- 9 "Neither shall ye touch it, ____ ye die" (Genesis 3:3)

- 10 Length times width
- 11 "____ without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- 20 "They wandered about in ____ and goatskins" (Hebrews 11:37)
- 22 "Return unto thy ____ my soul" (Psalm 116:7) (2 words)
- 24 "A great ____, knit at the four corners" (Acts 10:11)
- 25 Domesticated swine
- 26 "That which ye have spoken in the ____" (Luke 12:3)
- 27 "I ____ no pleasant bread" (Daniel 10:3)
- 29 Anger
- 30 ____-tin-tin, hero dog
- 31 "And God ____ them in the firmament of the heaven" (Genesis 1:17)
- 35 Put beads on a string
- 36 "It shall be both scoured, and ____ in water" (Leviticus 6:28)
- 39 Molten rock
- 40 "Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod ____ the streams" (Exodus 8:5)
- 41 To stink
- 43 "The Pharisees began to ____ him vehemently" (Luke 11:53)
- 45 Jacob's brother (Genesis 25:26)
- 46 Abominable snowman
- 47 Editor's instruction
- 49 Government agency

CLASSIFIED ADS

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 resumé 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: 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 resumé to bcrews@fbcsonerset.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 resumé for a full-time student pastor. Send resumé to EHBC, 703 E. Walters, Harrison, AR 72601 or email to ehbcadmin@eagleheightsharrison.org. Job description is available at ehbc Harrison.org.

SEEKING: Bi-vocational pastor for small congregation in Jamestown, Russell County, Ky. Send resumé to Welfare Baptist Church, P.O. Box 904, Jamestown, KY 42629.

SEEKING: Small Southern Baptist church (conservative and traditional) seeks pastor. Located in central Ky. Prefer full-time, but will consider bi-vocational. Send resumé to: wbc.resume@yahoo.com or mail to 620 George St. Lebanon, KY 40033. Attn: Jerry Albertson.

SEEKING: Hill Grove Baptist Church is seeking a bi-vocational pastor for rural community. We are located in Guston, Ky. www.hillgrovebaptistchurch.org. Send resumé to: kathygerkinsveith@twc.com or 1124 Ridgeway Dr., Brandenburg, KY 40108.

SEEKING: Part-time communications specialist for Kentucky WMU. Looking for an individual with experience in social media, web design, apps, creating print pieces (postcards, flyers, posters), writing, and project management. Experience with WMU organizations a plus. Send resumé and work samples by June 15 to Joy Bolton, Executive Director, Kentucky WMU, 13420 Eastpoint Centre Drive, Louisville, KY 40223 or email: Joy.Bolton@kybaptist.org.

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

SEEKING: Long Run Baptist Association in the Metro Louisville, KY area is seeking a director of missions for its 160 churches. Resumé will be received through June 30, 2016 and may be sent to christina@lrba.org to the attention of the DOM Search Committee. Hard-copy resumé may be sent to DOM Search Committee, Long Run Baptist Association, 2722 Crittenden Dr., Louisville, KY 40209-1114.

SEEKING: Erlanger Baptist Church is seeking a director for its SonLight Preschool. Preschool hours are Monday-Friday from 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. To view job description, please go to http://erlangerbaptist.org/#/connect/sonlight-preschool. Please send all resumé to: ebcsonlightministry@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Richmond First Baptist Church is seeking a person to lead senior adult ministry. The part-time position includes building a strong fellowship of seniors through travel, Bible Study and group encounters, and also involves using seniors as a resource for ministering to others. Resumé or recommendations will be accepted until position filled and should be submitted to fbcresumes@firstbaptistnet.com or Administrator, First Baptist Church, 425 Eastern Bypass, Richmond, KY 40475. Selected candidates will be contacted to schedule an interview.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of education/associate pastor to assist in educational and discipleship programs and assist in outreach and mission programs. Send resumé to: Olive Branch Baptist Church, 400 Olive Branch Church Rd., Hanson, KY 42413 or call (270) 322-8251 for further inquiries.

SEEKING: Munfordville Baptist Church is seeking a full-time minister of youth & children. College degree in related field and 3-5 years' experience in similar position preferred. Must adhere to Baptist Faith and Message (2000). Send resumé by June 30 to Munfordville Baptist Church, Attn: Minister of Youth & Children Committee, P.O. Box 445, Munfordville, KY 42765 or to mbcyouthchildrenministry@gmail.com.

KBC Position Opening

Kentucky Baptist Convention has an immediate opening for a Help Desk Representative in the Information Technology Department. Position primary responsibility - user support and customer service on company supported computer applications and platforms. Troubleshoot problems and advise on the appropriate action. Should possess knowledge and experience of customer service practices, relevant call tracking applications working knowledge of fundamental operations of relevant software, hardware and other equipment, self-starter, ability to work both independently and as a team player, prioritize multiple projects to meet deadlines. Strong interpersonal communication and computer skills required. College degree or comparable professional focus in computers and technology a must. Great environment, attractive pay and benefits. Mail resumé to: Human Resources, Attn: Shari Rogers, P.O. Box 43433, Louisville, KY 40253-0433 or e-mail to shari.rogers@kybaptist.org.



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'But seriously folks': Humor's role in pulpit assessed

By David Roach

Nashville—The legendary British preacher Charles Spurgeon was once rebuked by a woman in his congregation who felt he used too much humor in his sermons. As Baptist historian Michael Haykin recounts the story, Spurgeon replied, "Well, madam, if you knew the number of things that I refrain from saying, you would give me more credit."

Humor abounds in the human mind, but the question for preachers is how often, if ever, to employ it in sermons.

Chris Osborne, a Texas pastor who is writing a Ph.D. dissertation at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary on the use of humor in preaching, told Baptist Press there are three general views on the subject.

"One is you don't use it at all ever, which is (the view of Baptist preacher and author) John Piper," said Osborne, pastor of Central Baptist Church in College Station, Texas. "The other is that you use it ... all the time, which is (the view of Charismatic minister) Jesse Duplantis. My dissertation argues there is a judicious use. You use it in a way that's appropriate—not overused, not underused."

Humor for average pastors

Among Southern Baptists, humorists like Dennis Swanberg ("America's minister of encouragement") and the late Grady Nutt ("the prime minister of humor") have made jokes and funny anecdotes a centerpiece of their ministries for a combined 50 years.

At the same time, a study of 1,400 regular church attendees released this month by Christian Resources Exhibitions in London found just 1.6 percent of sermon listeners view humor as the most important element of a message while 44 percent view

"biblical exposition" as most important, The Telegraph reported.

Amid that backdrop, Osborne counseled average pastors to chart a middle course.

He sees precedent for some homiletical humor in Scripture, arguing Jesus' statement about having a plank in one's eye and His habit of calling James and John the "sons of thunder" both were intended to be funny. Osborne also notes satire in the Old Testament prophets and says the account of Balaam's talking donkey "is obviously a fairly humorous story."

In his own preaching, Osborne said, humor is an important tool for connecting with a congregation and disarming skeptics.

"When a man speaks on the passage about women submitting to their husbands," Osborne said by way of example, "a woman might take that well from a woman. She's not going to take that well

from a man. So you kind of have to use a little humor to grease the skids."

Martin Luther, George Whitefield, Spurgeon and others established a precedent of using humor in preaching, Osborne said, though some historians disagree with his assessment of Whitefield.

But Osborne warned that preachers should never feel more joy in making people laugh than in communicating truth. He also suggested pastors ask trusted friends to evaluate whether their use of humor in sermons is excessive.

Rules of thumb

Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board and a preacher noted for his humor, agreed humor can help preachers connect with their audiences. He offered several "rules of thumb" to help negotiate the proper use of lightheartedness.

- "When in doubt, leave it out."

Ezell told BP, "In preaching, you roll the dice when you throw out a joke just to throw out a joke. If you throw it out early and it dies, you just feel the whole sermon headed toward a crash."

- Never use the church's leadership or your family as the brunt of a joke.

"Even though people may laugh," Ezell said, "my experience is that they don't like it."

- You can use humor too much.

"There's a tipping point where instead of trying to get a point across, you're just trying to be funny," Ezell said.

- Use humor "as a tool, not as the ultimate end."

Hershael York, pastor of Buck Run Baptist Church in Frankfort, and a preaching professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, offered a pragmatic reason not to tell jokes in sermons.

"Telling a joke requires a rhythm, a tone, a perfect setup, the right pause

before the punch line, and precise phrasing," York wrote on the website Preaching.com. "If it weren't hard to do, Johnny Carson would not have been unique."

"If a preacher spends three minutes of a 30-minute sermon telling a joke only to forget an important detail in the setup or to stutter on the punch line, he has wasted 10 percent of his time and made his audience pity him," York said. "He becomes the object of attention rather than the point he was trying to make."

"Humor, not jokes, is the way to go," York continued. "Appropriate humor in a sermon is delightful and helpful. When telling funny stories about themselves—especially when they are self-deprecating—preachers do well."

"Amusing anecdotes relating events or the absurdity of life don't hang on the flawless timing or tone of a single punch line. Wit endears listeners to a preacher but doesn't entail the risks of a joke," he said.



Humor not required

Andy Davis, pastor of First Baptist Church in Durham, N.C., estimated he uses humor in 20 percent of his sermons. But he told BP the humor is never pre-planned. While not objecting to humor in sermons, Davis said preachers should bear in mind "the gravity" of their task and only use humor if doing so accords with their personality.

"Humor is not required for a good sermon," Davis said. "As a matter of fact, you can go an entire life of preaching and never use humor in the pulpit and still be a very, very effective preacher."

Davis, who holds a Ph.D. in church history, cited John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards as noted preachers who do not seem to have used humor in the pulpit.

Twentieth-century pastor and evangelist Martyn Lloyd-Jones likewise was cautious about humor, Davis said, adding he is not sure whether some statements of Jesus often cited as humor were intended to be funny.

"Conversely, however, I would not say the use of humor in the pulpit is sinful or wrong," Davis said. "You definitely see Martin Luther and Charles Spurgeon and others using humor very effectively."

Still, Paul's admonitions in 1 Corinthians 1-2 against using flashy rhetorical techniques in sermons can be applied to humor, Davis said. Paul "did not want the focus to be on him as a personality,

as a man. He really wanted the focus to be on Christ and on the Word of God."

Davis also cautioned that transitions can be awkward from humor to "the weighty issues of Christ crucified and resurrected, of eternity, of Judgment Day." Pastors come across as "changing gears in a rough way" when their transitions seem reminiscent of a comedian's saying, "But seriously folks ..."

Judicious use of humor

In the end, all the preachers interviewed by BP seemed to adopt Osborne's philosophy of using humor "judiciously," though there may be some difference over the definition of judicious.

Osborne expressed a common sentiment when he said, "If (listeners) remember your humor more than they remember the reason for the humor, then you're probably overusing it." (BP)

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