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Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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Left: Outgoing Southern Baptist Convention President Ronnie Floyd led a focused time of prayer during the National Call to Prayer for Spiritual Leadership, Revived Churches and Nationwide and Global Awakening at the annual meeting of the SBC. (Photo by Adam Covington) **Right:** Southern Baptist Convention leaders pray together on the stage during the National Call to Prayer for Spiritual Leadership, Revived Churches and Nationwide and Global Awakening. (Photo by Matt Miller)

Southern Baptists plead for awakening at annual meeting

St. Louis, Mo.—At times they raised their hands. At times they gathered together in groups of two to three. And at times thousands of messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention knelt at their chairs as they pleaded with God to bring national revival and spiritual awakening to America.

In one of his final acts as SBC president, Ronnie Floyd led the convention in an evening of prayer during its annual meeting in St. Louis.

"From this moment on, it will not be about personalities on the stage. It will be about Jesus, all the way," said Floyd, who has focused much of his two-year presidency on urging Southern Baptists to pray for spiritual awakening. "We're about to give Him praise. And from this

moment on, I'm going to ask you to give Him your all. What if this were your last night on this earth? Wouldn't you want to give it all to Jesus and be ready?"

Floyd noted that Southern Baptists had thousands at First Baptist Church of Orlando who were, at that time, praying desperately for their city.

"Orlando is a lot more desperate tonight than they were before this tragedy," Floyd said. "But why should it take a tragedy to make us desperate for God?"

Praying for spiritual leaders

Matt Chandler, pastor of The Village Church in Flower Mound, Texas, talked about the need for pastors to so deeply love Jesus that they have the spiritual depth to lead their wives to be "well-

watered vines."

Chandler read from Psalms 27 and 63 to show the way men of the Bible talked about God "in a way rare in modern times.... I don't hear that a lot in our day. I've found there is a lack of spiritual lustfulness in the hearts of many ministers. Where is the guy who just has to be with the Lord? And finds his fuel in the Lord? ... What we learn in the Bible is that people flourished under Jesus-pursuing, God-loving, Word of God-proclaiming spiritual leadership."

Johnny Hunt, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Woodstock, Ga., encouraged the gathering toward lifting up spiritual leaders. Quoting Psalm 27:8, "Lord, I will seek Your face." Hunt said that spiritual leadership requires three

things: humility, a teachable spirit and gratefulness to God. He encouraged others to pray daily that they would exhibit these three characteristics as they lead others in their spiritual walk.

Praying for revived churches

John Avant, pastor of First Baptist Church in Knoxville, Tenn., shared about the revival that broke out in his church in Brownwood, Texas, in 1995, and encouraged pastors to trust that God can bring revival to their churches as well.

"Who's crying out for Him to do it again? We're in a desperate stage and our strategies and our meetings and our denominations are not going to save us,"

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SBC renounces displaying Confederate flag

By Tom Strobe

St. Louis, Mo.—Messengers to the 2016 Southern Baptist Convention renounced display of the Confederate battle flag in a historic, overwhelming vote.

The convention adopted a resolution that urged "brothers and sisters in Christ to discontinue the display of the Confederate battle flag as a sign of solidarity of the whole body of Christ, including our African American brothers and sisters."

The Confederate flag resolution was another step in the convention's effort to address its past actions regarding slavery and racism. The SBC, which began in 1845 in part in support of slaveholding missionaries, approved a resolution in 1995 repenting of racism and asking for forgiveness from African American Christians.

It also has acted in a variety of ways in an attempt to bring about racial reconciliation and involve African Americans

and other minorities in leadership roles in the convention.

In calling for "sensitivity and unity," the resolution urged Christians who display the flag "to consider prayerfully whether to limit, or even more so, discontinue its display" because of the "undeniably painful impact of the flag's symbolism on others."

After two messengers spoke against the resolution, former SBC President James Merritt offered an amendment that deleted a paragraph that said the flag "serves for some not as a symbol of hatred, bigotry, and racism, but as a memorial to their loved ones who died in the Civil War, and an emblem to honor their loved ones' valor."

His amendment also removed language requesting prayerful consideration and, instead, called for a halt to displaying the flag.

Merritt, lead pastor of Cross Pointe

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Annual meeting tops 7,300 registrants

The Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting drew 7,321 messengers to St. Louis June 14-15 from the nation's 46,000-plus Southern Baptist churches. The unofficial total is 35 percent above last year's 5,407 messengers in Columbus, Ohio. When registered guests, exhibitors and others are included, the count of those at the SBC annual meeting rose to 11,581. Missouri churches turned out in force in St. Louis, the first time the SBC annual meeting has met in their state since 2002; their 877 messengers dwarfed their 2015 total of 182 in Columbus and represented the largest single contingent of messengers. The state with the next largest number was Tennessee at 824, while Kentucky was fifth with 477 messengers.

Gaines elected SBC president after Greear withdraws

By Barbara Denman

St. Louis, Mo.—Tennessee pastor Steve Gaines was elected by acclamation as Southern Baptist Convention president after fellow candidate J.D. Greear withdrew his candidacy in a display of unity.

Greear's withdrawal followed a runoff vote that didn't produce a majority winner. His decision avoided a second runoff and left Gaines elected by acclamation as president of the SBC during the annual meeting in St. Louis.

Greear told the convention he prayed and believed "we need to leave St. Louis united." He made the motion for Gaines to be elected by acclamation.

Gaines said he, too, had decided internally Tuesday night to withdraw but agreed to serve as president after a conversation with Greear. "There's no way God is not doing something in all of this."

"I just wanted Jesus to be lifted high" and a united convention, Gaines said.

Gaines, Greear and New Orleans pastor David Crosby originally were nominated for convention president.

In the first ballot, Crosby received 583 votes or 10.08 percent; Gaines received 2,551 votes, or 44.1 percent; and Greear received 2,601 votes, or 44.97 percent. None of the candidates received 50 percent or more, forcing a runoff.

In the runoff, 4,824 ballots were cast. Gaines received 49.96 percent, while Greear received 47.80 percent. However, 108 votes were considered illegal because the wrong ballot was used or had an indistinguishable mark.

Roberts Rules of Order required counting the 108 illegal votes to determine a majority. To be declared a winner, Gaines or Greear needed to win 50 percent plus 1 of ballots cast, or 2,413 or more votes.

A second runoff election would have been the first time in SBC history that a second ballot for the same two candidates in the presidential election would have been necessary, said chief parliamentarian Barry McCarty.

The new SBC president succeeds Ronnie Floyd, pastor of Cross Church in

Northwest Arkansas.

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

Bellevue voted to give \$1 million during its 2016-17 church year through the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists' unified channel for funding state- and SBC-level missions and ministries. That will total approximately 4.6 percent of undesignated receipts, the church told Baptist Press.

Gaines was nominated by former SBC President Johnny Hunt, who emphasized the church's baptismal record.

"During the past 11 years, Gaines has led Bellevue Church to baptize thousands of new converts," Hunt said. "It is in light of our overwhelming need to get back to evangelism, personal soul-winning in our SBC," that he nominated Gaines to lead the denomination.

"For such a time as this, when baptisms are at a 15-year low, we need Steve to lead us in a great soul-winning resurgence," Hunt said.

Gaines has been a member of the 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, chairman of the Resolutions Committee, and president of the SBC Pastors' Conference, Hunt noted.

Gaines is the fourth president from Bellevue Baptist Church, following Southern Baptist legends R.G. Lee, Ramsey Pollard and Adrian Rogers.

Greear, 43, was nominated by Jimmy Scroggins, pastor of First Baptist Church in West Palm Beach, as a younger alternative to the two other candidates, saying his election would signal the next generation of leaders they "have a place at the SBC table."

"Some people feel like the days are dim for the future of our convention—baptisms are down, missionaries are coming home and churches are

closing," Scroggins said. "We have to get younger and more diverse. J.D. Greear has a church full of diversity and ethnicity."

"J.D. is the right man and this is the right time for the baton to be passed from one generation of SBC leadership to another," Scroggins said. "His election will send a signal to an entire generation of Southern Baptists that their time has come. He would bring together churches of all sizes and people of all ethnicities and encourage thousands of pastors in their 20s, 30s and 40s that they can and should and must get involved."

Former SBC President Fred Luter nominated fellow Louisiana pastor Crosby, saying, "He has had the reputation of a man of high morals and high values. He leads not only by his preaching and teaching, but also by his lifestyle. He is a man of character, compassion and of concern."

During his 20 years at First Baptist Church of New Orleans, the church has given between 7 and 15 percent of its undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program, even as the church worked to rebuild and relocate in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Elected as first vice president was Doug Munton, pastor of First Baptist Church in O'Fallon, Ill., who ran unopposed; and as second vice president, Malachi O'Brien, pastor of The Church at Pleasant Ridge in Harrisonville, Mo., who was one of three nominated for the post and won in a runoff.

The Committee on Order of Business recommended Roger Spradlin, pastor of Valley Baptist Church in Bakersfield, Cal., as the 2017 convention preacher; Vance Pitman, pastor of Hope Church in Las Vegas as the alternate; and Mark Blair, of Bellevue, as music director. All three were elected.

The 2017 SBC will be held June 13-14 in Phoenix, Ariz. (BP)

Barbara Denman is director of communications for the Florida Baptist Convention. Contributing to this story were Todd Deaton, of the Western Recorder, Brian Koonce of The Pathway, and David Roach of Baptist Press.



(Left to right) Outgoing SBC President Ronnie Floyd together with presidential nominee J.D. Greear congratulate president-elect Steve Gaines. (Photo by Bill Bangham)

Gaines recounts presidential decision

By Erin Roach

St. Louis, Mo.—Steve Gaines, elected president by acclamation at the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis, recounted in a press conference afterward how God led the candidates to a "special moment" of unity.

After a runoff didn't produce a majority winner between Gaines, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn., and J.D. Greear, pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, N.C., Greear withdrew his name and urged messengers to vote for Gaines.

The display of unity began the night before when the two men talked.

"He and I both were sensing the Holy Spirit moving in the same direction, and we had a good time talking last night," Gaines told reporters. "We talked to the Lord, and we talked about the situation, and I really feel like what just happened was really a blessing from God, and I pray God would use it to help us go forward and tell people about Jesus Christ."

As president, Gaines hopes to emphasize spiritual awakening, soul-winning and stewardship, among other issues.

"We need to be more intentional and proactive about sharing Christ with people," Gaines said, adding that good stewardship would enable Southern Baptists to send missionaries back to the field rather than bringing more home.

While talking with Greear, Psalm 133 came to his mind, Gaines said: How good and how pleasant it is to dwell together in unity. "I think what you just saw is when the leaders are unified in the Lord Jesus Christ, it brings unity to the body," he said.

"We don't have to unify everybody. If we can just unify the leaders, that will definitely flow down just like the anointing oil, just like the dew from Hermon," he explained. "We see it in our church, and I believe we're going to see it in the Southern Baptist Convention."

Gaines and Greear both had the same impulse from the Holy Spirit the night before the vote, Gaines said.

"And at the same time He was prompting the president of the Southern Baptist Convention to pray for that," Gaines said. "That's not coincidental. That is the sovereign God ordaining something. So I believe with all my heart it was a special moment when both J.D. and I realized God said the same thing to both of us."

What Southern Baptists saw in this year's presidential election, Gaines said, is that "if the devil was trying to divide us, he failed and failed miserably."

"The Lord Jesus Christ gave us unity today in a great way." (BP)

Russell Moore awarded alumnus of the year at SBTS luncheon

By Andrew Smith

St. Louis, Mo.—Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary presented the 2016 Distinguished Alumnus of the Year award to Russell Moore at the seminary's alumni luncheon during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

"Russ Moore has already made history and there is much history still to be written. He has made Southern Seminary proud in so many different ways," said Mohler, who also presented Moore a commemorative plaque. "It is high time that we make this presentation and celebrate Russ Moore as Alumnus of the Year of the institution very proud to claim him as our own."

Moore, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the SBC and SBTS Ph.D. graduate (2002), also formerly served as professor of Christian theology, dean of the School of



Albert Mohler Jr. presents the Distinguished Alumnus of the Year award to Russell Moore.

Theology, and senior vice president for academic administration at Southern Seminary.

"This school didn't just educate me," Moore said. "I look around this room, the best friends in the world that we have, I look at students that I love. I look at a place where, when we arrived home with our first two children, there was a parking lot full of people waiting for us

... I can't thank Southern Seminary enough for being our family."

In his annual presentation to alumni and friends, Mohler called for increased boldness for the challenges facing Southern Seminary. Using Acts 4:23 as his text—in which the disciples react to their bold proclamation of the gospel before the Sanhedrin by praying for more boldness—Mohler said more is required of the seminary as it looks to the future.

"I think there's the temptation for us to simply be thankful for how bold the Lord has allowed this school to be," Mohler said. "But what we really pray for is that the Lord would make us even more bold, because what will be required of us in the future is even far greater than what has been required in the past.... Everything we've done thus far—sweet and precious and instructive as it is—is just, by God's grace, a foretaste of what's to come." (SBTS)

Flag renounced

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Church in Duluth, Ga., said he offered the amendment not just as a pastor but as the great, great grandson of two men who fought in the Confederate Army.

"(N)o one can deny" the Confederate battle flag is "a stumbling block" for many African Americans to the witness of Southern Baptists, Merritt told messengers. In a comment that produced a partial standing ovation, he said, "(A)ll the Confederate flags in the world are not worth one soul of any race."

Calling it "a seminal moment in our convention," Merritt said, "This is not a matter of political correctness. It is a matter of spiritual conviction and biblical compassion. We have a golden opportunity to say to every person of every race, ethnicity and nationality that Southern Baptists are not a people of any flag. We march under the banner of the cross of Jesus and the grace of God."

"Today, we can say loudly and clearly to a world filled with racial strife and division that Southern Baptists are not in the business of building barriers and burning bridges," he said. "We're about building bridges and tearing down barriers."

Messengers approved the amended resolution by a wide margin.

SBC leaders welcomed the convention's latest action in support of racial reconciliation.

Kevin Smith, former president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and newly elected executive director of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware, told Baptist Press he was "very thankful and very moved by his (Merritt's) clarity brought to the issue today."

He was "pleasantly surprised" by the adoption of Merritt's stronger language and believes it will help the SBC in the future, said Smith, who had been assistant professor of church history and Christian preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Smith expressed gratitude to the Resolutions Committee and Dwight McKissic, who submitted the original version of the resolution. McKissic, an African American, is pastor of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas.

Calling it "an extraordinary moment," ethics leader Russell Moore told BP, "We watched a denomination founded by slaveholders vote to repudiate the display of the Confederate battle flag in solidarity with our African American brothers and sisters in Christ."

"I can't recall ever seeing anything like it," said Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. "And my hope and prayer is that we will work together in our churches toward modeling for the rest of the world what it means to be brothers and sisters in the kingdom of God." (BP)

Note: See the full resolution below.

Resolution 7: On Sensitivity and Unity Regarding the Confederate Battle Flag

Here is the full resolution renouncing the display of the Confederate flag:

WHEREAS, SBC President Ronnie Floyd has rallied Southern Baptists to "rise up and cry out against racism that still exists in our nation and in our churches," recognizing we are in a "desperate hour" that calls us to "replace these evils with the beauty of grace and love"; and

WHEREAS, In 1995, the Southern Baptist Convention repudiated "historic acts of evil, such as slavery," and committed "to eradicate racism in all its forms from Southern Baptist life and ministry"; and

WHEREAS, In more recent resolutions the Southern Baptist Convention called "all Christian men and women to pray and labor for the day when our Lord will set all things right and racial prejudice and injustice will be no more" (2014) and expressed continued grief "over the presence of racism and the recent escalation of racial tension in our nation" (2015); and

WHEREAS, More than 20 percent (nearly eleven thousand) of our cooperating Southern Baptist congregations identify as predominately non-Anglo and for the last two years more than 50 percent of Southern Baptist new church plants are predominately non-Anglo; and

WHEREAS, We recognize that the Confederate battle flag is used by some and perceived by many as a symbol of hatred, bigotry, and racism, offending millions of people; and

WHEREAS, We recognize that, while the removal of the Confederate battle flag from public display is not going to solve the most severe racial tensions that plague our nation and churches, those professing Christ are called to extend

grace and put the consciences of others ahead of their own interests and actions (1 Corinthians 8:9-13; 10:23; Philippians 2:3-4); and

WHEREAS, The state of South Carolina, with the support of state Baptist leaders, responded to the tragic slayings on June 17, 2015, of nine precious believers at Mother Emmanuel AME Church in Charleston by removing the Confederate battle flag from their Capitol grounds and placing it in preservation at a military museum in Columbia; and

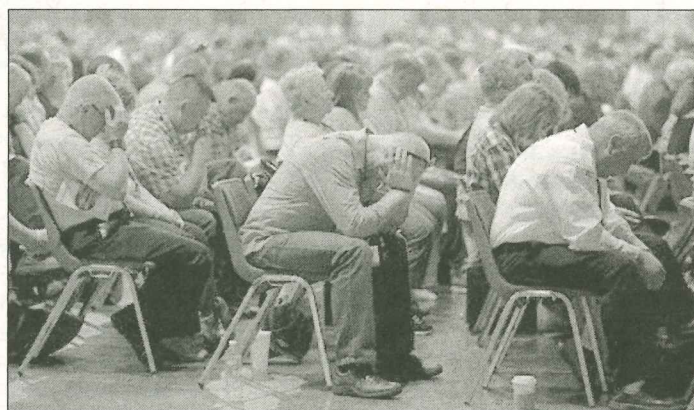
WHEREAS, Oklahoma Baptist University recently removed an image of the Confederate battle flag from its campus chapel; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, June 14-15, 2016, commend the governmental officials of South Carolina, Baptist leaders in that state, and the Oklahoma Baptist University administration for their sensitivity and for fostering unity; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we acknowledge both the importance of remembering family heritage and sacrifice, as well as the urgency of pursuing a unified Body of Christ and racial healing in America; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we call our brothers and sisters in Christ to discontinue the display of the Confederate battle flag as a sign of solidarity of the whole Body of Christ, including our African-American brothers and sisters; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we urge fellow Christians to exercise sensitivity so that nothing brings division or hinders the unity of the Body of Christ to be a bold witness to the transforming power of Jesus.



People pray during the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention June 14 in St. Louis. (AP Photo/Jeff Roberson)

Awakening

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Avant said. "Who's going to cry out for revival in our day?"

Bill Elliff, senior teaching pastor of The Summit Church in North Little Rock, Ark., led participants to literally cry out, asking God to revive their churches and the churches in their communities.

Appealing to God as a "covenant-keeping God," Elliff prayed, "As we look around the convention, we see that the bride is weak, Lord. Your bride is filled with sin... We ask that You come and cleanse Your bride."

"We need You, Lord, and only You and the revival You bring."

Praying for racial reconciliation

Following a message from Jerry Young, president of the National Baptist Convention USA, Southern Baptists gathered in groups to ask God to break down racial barriers.

K. Marshall Williams, who leads Nazarene Baptist Church in Philadelphia, "prayed down" the stronghold of racism in the church.

"We magnify Your holy name.... We confess our sin," he prayed. "We pray You would by the power of Your Holy Spirit manifest fruits of repentance in our lives.... All of us were created after Your likeness. Oh God, we are but dust, and we live in a day where when one piece of dust thinks it is better than another piece of dust. We ask that You bring your children together.... We call down the satanic, systemic stronghold of racism."

R. Marshall Blalock, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Charleston, S.C., prayed for racial unity in churches.

"I confess that it took nine people being killed in my city (at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church) to make me desperate," he prayed, tearfully asking God to "break our hearts," "open our minds" and "open our eyes" to racism.

"Call our hearts to repentance," he prayed. "May our hearts be drawn toward racial unity with Christ as the center."

Praying for racial unity in the communities and cities, A.B. Vines, senior pastor of New Seasons Church in Spring Valley, Calif., prayed against the sin of racism in the spirit of David facing Goliath.

"We won't wear someone else's armor. We will use what we have. And what we have is love ... hope ... compassion ... and understanding," he prayed. "What we have, God, is a made-up mind.... We must run up to

this giant and say, 'You, too must come down!'"

Felix Cabrera, lead pastor of Iglesia Bautista Central in Oklahoma City, prayed in Spanish for racial unity in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Paul Kim prayed for the churches in America to come alive. He prayed first in Korean and then in English. Kim is the Asian American consultant for convention advancement with the SBC Executive Committee.

"Help us to be united in Jesus Christ," Kim prayed. "Help us to obey the Great Commission with one heart and one mind through the Word of God by the power of (the) Holy Spirit."

Praying for awakening

Sen. James Lankford of Oklahoma prayed for awakening in America. Citing Nehemiah 1, he noted how Nehemiah, upon hearing about the destruction of Jerusalem, sat down and wept. He confessed his nation's sins. He reminded God of His promises.

As a result, "they fixed in two months what had been destroyed for 140 years," Lankford said. "For 140 years, they lived in a broken-down city until they awakened and said, 'No more!'"

Nehemiah came among the Israelites and prayed and worked, prompting Lankford to suggest, "Maybe that is the model: pray and work."

Listing several areas of great need, Lankford, a Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary graduate, reminded attendees of the need for churches to engage in America.

He urged, "Maybe it's time we say our trust is not in the government and what it's going to do but in the church and what God is going to do."

The evening was capped off by a call for a nationwide and global awakening by Greg Laurie, senior pastor of Harvest Christian Fellowship in Riverside, Calif. "We need to get our eyes on the Lord again," Laurie said. "We need to stop fighting with each other as believers and pull together for the sake of the gospel. Our enemies are not the people in this room. Our enemies are the world, the flesh, and the devil."

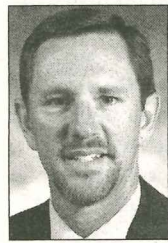
His call for increased evangelism was punctuated by calling pastors and churches to refocus their efforts on reaching the lost in America. "I am all for churches doing good works, but the good news is only good if it gets there on time. We have an urgency like never before," Laurie said. "America needs a fourth great awakening. Let that revival start with us, not because it is what we do as a job, but because it is a passion." (BP)

Display of Baptist polity

The annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis was a tremendous opportunity to celebrate all God is doing through our Cooperative Program funded mission work and ministries to reach North America and the world for Christ. It was also a fascinating display of Baptist polity.

The autonomy that exists at every level of Southern Baptist life is often misunderstood by the media and by people from other religious traditions. Our

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

denominational autonomy means that, instead of Southern Baptists having a hierarchical system of control, our churches, associations, state conventions and the SBC all operate with their own authority. For example, no denominational body tells a local Southern Baptist church what to do. Nor does any denominational body

tell another denominational body what to do. That is to say, the state convention doesn't control a local Baptist association or vice versa.

As messengers registered and voted on business items and candidates for SBC offices, their voices could be considered representative of Southern Baptist churches and associations but their decisions are not binding on churches, associations, or state conventions. Nowhere is our polity more perplexing than in adopting resolutions.

Resolutions are statements, typically expressed in official language, that communicate positions taken by a convention or association and sometimes even a local church. Resolutions can be an important part of annual meetings. That was certainly the case at this year's SBC. Messengers approved 12 resolutions on topics including the freedom of the press, biblical sexuality, women and the draft, the Confederate flag, and evangelism.

If you haven't already, I would encourage you to go online and read through the resolutions adopted in St. Louis. As you do so, here are three helpful observations (not original to me) about resolutions:

1. A resolution is a powerful expression of conviction but is non-binding. It is a snapshot in time of what messengers approved at one Convention meeting but does not bind future Convention meetings or, for that matter, any individual Southern Baptist, SBC entity, or SBC church.

2. A resolution speaks for the messengers who were gathered in a particular place at a particular time. As such, a resolution is not a statement of official Southern Baptist policy, nor could it, in most cases, represent the beliefs of every Southern Baptist. We place great value, however, on what it means for a deliberative body of messengers from cooperating churches to make a public statement concerning key issues facing our churches, country, or culture.

3. Resolutions are informative rather than directive. A resolution does not have any effect of allocating resources or directing the work of Southern Baptist or state convention entities, and a resolution certainly cannot govern the ministry or policies of any local church.

Memorable moments in Missouri

This year's annual meeting in St. Louis offered plenty of highlights, but three rose above the rest. All of these could be summarized with a single word: unity. Here are my top three memorable moments from St. Louis:

3) Confederate Flag debate. Heading into St. Louis, some may have anticipated that a resolution disavowing display of the Confederate Battle Flag could cause considerable uproar in being seemingly tantamount to dishonoring one's ancestors and their sacrifices. Yet, it soon became evident to most messengers that a higher cause was at stake here. Many won't soon forget former SBC President James Merritt's poignant remarks that took the SBC to task.

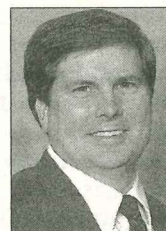
"Southern Baptists are not a people of any flag," Merritt said. "We march under the banner of the cross of Jesus and the grace of God." Urging Christians to discontinue displaying the Confederate flag because it hinders evangelism among African Americans, he asserted, "I rise to say all the Confederate flags in the world are not worth one soul of any race."

After messengers overwhelming passed the resolution, Russell Moore, president of the SBC Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, commented: "Today, messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention, including many white Anglo southerners, decided the cross was more important than the flag. They decided our African-American brothers and sisters were more important than family heritage. We decided that we are defined not by a Lost Cause but by amazing grace."

2) Racial reconciliation. Jerry Young's appearance on a panel and during the nationally televised prayer service marked the first time in at least three decades that the leader of the National Baptist Convention, a historically African American denomination, has addressed SBC messengers. And, his challenge to us was noteworthy.

Racism in America, he said, stems in part from the church's failure to be salt and light in the world. "Somebody needs to pass the salt and turn on the lights," Young urged.

"(To) those who would like to suggest that racism is not indeed a problem for the church, but rather is a sociological problem, I would argue it is without question a sin problem," Young said. He



After Thought

By Todd Deaton

described himself as "a young man who ... despised people who looked like Dr. (Ronnie) Floyd, because I thought they were the problem—until I met Jesus, until Jesus Christ became Lord of my life." The cure for racism is found in transformation of the human heart brought about by the gospel.

1) Greear's humble withdrawal. While a runoff for a presidential election is rare, a second—as seemed destined to occur—would have been historic. According to SBC Recording Secretary John Yeats, the presidential election has not gone to a third ballot in at least 20 years—maybe much longer.

Yet, something far more significant took place. A presidential candidate graciously and humbly felt led of the Spirit to withdraw from the race in the interest of fostering unity. When has that ever happened before?

It was a classy gesture by J.D. Greear. And, it was difficult to disagree with Steve Gaines' assessment that "there's no way God's not doing something in all of this." Some even wondered aloud as they embraced on stage after announcing their

mutual decision, if we weren't looking at the SBC's past, present and future. Outgoing president Ronnie Floyd congratulated newly-elected president Steve Gaines as J.D. Greear, perhaps the next SBC president, looked on.

These three comprised the top memorable moments for me. Yet, even as SBC messengers gathered to plead for spiritual awakening in America and around the world, they joined together in praying for those affected by the shooting rampage in Orlando, Fla., that had occurred over the weekend, which left 49 people dead and as many injured.

"Since all human beings are made in the image of God, this attack against gay Americans in Orlando is an attack on each of us," Floyd said. "As followers of Jesus Christ we stand against any form of bigotry, hatred or violence against our nation and against any people of this world."

Sensitivity, reconciliation and solidarity seemed to be on the hearts of messengers in St. Louis. While the world around us may be teetering on "the ragged edge of moral insanity"—as Floyd observed—Psalm 133 was being lived out before us: "How good and pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity."

Resolutions address culture, ministry concerns

St. Louis, Mo.—Messengers to the 2016 Southern Baptist Convention, in addition to repudiating display of the Confederate Battle Flag, approved 11 other resolutions on a variety of culture and ministry concerns.

Messengers voted on the proposals over both days of the annual meeting, adopting resolutions that expressed compassion for those devastated by the Orlando mass shooting, urged consistent evangelism of unbelievers and encouraged care for refugees. They also passed measures that included calling for the federal government not to discriminate against people who support only the biblical, traditional view of marriage and opposing an effort to require women to register for the military draft.

For Stephen Rummage, chairman of the Resolutions Committee, the call for Southern Baptists to evangelize was central to the 10-member panel's deliberations in presenting the 12 measures to messengers.

The resolution on evangelism "might seem like a standard resolution for ... Southern Baptists to pass," he said, "but really that is at the heart of everything

that we talked about, including what we had to say about the Confederate flag. Everything that we do should have as its end and as its goal reaching people with the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Rummage, senior pastor of Bell Shoals Baptist Church in Brandon, Fla., and SBC ethics leader Russell Moore both thought it helpful that messengers strengthened the original Confederate flag resolution.

Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, told reporters, "I think it lends to an even stronger witness that the process happened the way that it did."

In addition to the Confederate flag measure, the other 11 resolutions:

- affirmed Southern Baptists' commitment to biblical sexuality and urged the protection of religious free exercise. Kelvin Cochran, who was fired as Atlanta's fire chief after writing that homosexual behavior is immoral, presented the resolution to the convention.
- called for prayer and pledged support to those affected by the Orlando shooting.
- encouraged faithful proclamation of the gospel and intentional evangelism by Southern Baptists.

lism by Southern Baptists.

- declared "unrelenting opposition" to efforts by military leaders and the Obama administration "to increase the likelihood that women will be placed in harm's way" along with voicing support for service members and their families.

- called on the government to enact strict security in screening refugees and for Southern Baptists to compassionately minister to them.

- urged participation in voting and prayer for God to provide "spiritual, moral, ethical, and cultural renewal."

- encouraged churches to consider increasing ministries to Alzheimer's and dementia patients and caregivers.

- called for pastors to support freedom of the press and journalists to practice that freedom responsibly.

- affirmed "In God We Trust" as the national motto and encouraged its public display.

- supported Israel's right to exist as a free state and encouraged renewed prayer for peace in and salvation of Israel.

- expressed gratitude to those in the St. Louis area and others who helped with this year's meeting. (BP)

WESTERN Recorder

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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Letters to the editor:

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.



McAlister leaves role as KBC evangelism team leader

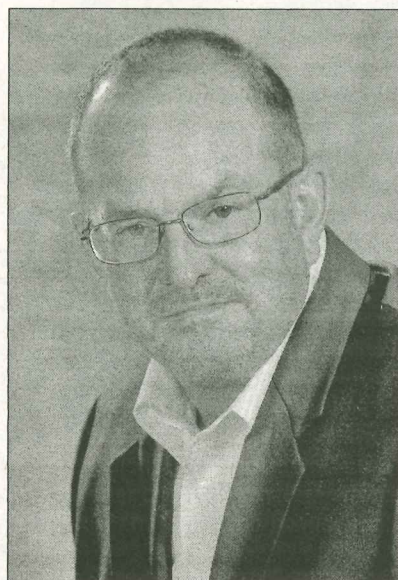
Louisville—Chuck McAlister, the fiery evangelist best known for his outreach to sportsmen, has left the Kentucky Baptist Convention to move back into full-time evangelism and evangelism consulting.

McAlister had headed the KBC's Evangelism and Church Planting Team since 2012.

"I've known Chuck for 15 years and can honestly say that he is one of the most gifted evangelists I've ever met," said KBC Executive Director Paul Chitwood, who announced McAlister's departure to staff Friday afternoon. "Chuck's passion for souls has significantly elevated the work of evangelism in Kentucky and beyond."

"He is a dear friend and brother and I wish him well as he expands his ministry. Chuck has helped develop and advance initiatives like 'Tell Your Story,' an online evangelism tool now being utilized across North America and even overseas, as well as our Twelve24 strategy for helping churches reach the rising generations."

While pastor at The Church at Crossgate Center in Hot Springs, Ark., McAlister launched a national cable television program called



Chuck McAlister

"Adventure Bound Outdoors" on the Outdoor Channel. That show launched McAlister as a popular speaker at outdoorsmen's events, including church wild game dinners that are especially popular in rural congregations across the South.

McAlister, with the help of his wife Janice, continues to lead Promise of Hope Ministries, which he

founded in 2000. He also serves on the board of directors of Baptist Global Response.

"It is with great anticipation that Janice and I embark on this new chapter of our lives and ministry as we begin the process of expanding the evangelism initiatives that we have helped launch during our time with the KBC to areas beyond Kentucky," McAlister said. "It has been a joy to lead the Evangelism, Church Planting, and Collegiate Ministry Team these past 4 years as I have had the privilege to serve with my friend of over 15 years, Dr. Paul Chitwood. I am certain that, under his leadership, the cutting-edge work the Lord is doing through the KBC will continue to reach even more people with the good news of Jesus Christ."

"Stepping out on faith is never an easy decision, but each time Janice and I have made the decision to do so, we have been greatly blessed and have seen our ministry expand. We will continue, from our personal ministry and evangelism consultation role, to be available to help the churches of Kentucky and beyond reach Kentucky and the world for Christ." (KBC)

Does being a Christian change how you handle money?

It seems Christians are increasingly being put in a position of having to choose between the ways of the world or stand firm for biblical teaching. Being a Christian should change how you approach everything in life, including finances. How we handle money reflects life's priorities. That's why the Scripture places so much emphasis on stewardship.

Here are five perspectives regarding money we should reflect on. It is one thing to believe them; it is another to put them in practice.

1. Our possessions are temporal. You "can't take it with you." Do people see an attitude towards our possessions that reflects that belief? (2 Peter 3:10; Luke 12:15b)

2. Our possessions are not a source for pride, power or prestige. This is the world's attitude toward possessions. We are to be different. (1 Tim. 6:17)

3. God owns it all. We are stewards. We should be managers, not owners, of possessions that belong to someone else. (Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 12:16-21)

4. Concern for family financial support is scriptural. 1 Timothy 5:8 states, "If anyone does not provide for his family, especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than unbeliever."

5. Our stewardship is an outward indicator of an inner spiritual condition. Show me how someone handles their money and it tells me volumes about their relationship with God.

Christianity doesn't just provide answers for 10 percent of our money any more than it only provides a way to live only on Sunday morning.



Don Spencer

Have sports become an idol?

Sports have begun to dominate the lives of our children and families in ways that are not only dangerous; they may border on being idolatrous. On an almost weekly basis, I see parents and children planning schedules based on their commitment to sports. I am saddened at what many of these children are missing; I am concerned about what they are learning is important.

Don't get me wrong. I am a huge sports enthusiast. Just ask my wife! I play sports; I watch sports; I am a good example of why "fan" is short for "fanatic." I understand what it means to be part of a team, and have long argued that participation in sports helps children learn the importance of commitment. However, a commitment to sports must be balanced with other commitments. The growing demands of sports organizations make balance difficult—especially for Christian families.

This summer, children in my church will miss Vacation Bible School and summer camp due to sports. They will miss a multiple-day event that could have tremendous impact on their spiritual lives for one or two hours of sports. This fall, children in my church will miss our weekend fall retreat because of a Saturday football or soccer game—a regular game, one among many.

Be careful about the decisions you make regarding your child's participation in sports and the message it sends to your child about priorities—yours as much as his or hers. I'm not saying kids and families should never miss a church activity for a sporting event (although I am concerned about the extent to which kids sports have begun to schedule on Sundays). I'm just saying that sports should not be an automatic trump card. When it is, you may be sending a message to your kids that you will later regret.



David Garrard

Langley to be nominated for KBC president

Elizabethtown—Severns Valley Baptist Church Pastor Bill Langley will be nominated for the presidency of the Kentucky Baptist Convention at this year's annual meeting in Florence.

"We are blessed in this state to possess many great Baptist leaders and Bill is one of them who will serve us well as president as we continue to move forward to follow God's will in reaching Kentucky, the United States and the world for Christ," said Dan Summerlin, a past KBC president who announced his intention to nominate Langley last Wednesday.

Messengers will meet at Florence Baptist Church on November 15 to elect a slate of officers, including that of president, a position that carries with it the responsibility of appointing chairpersons of KBC committees and leading KBC Mission Board meetings.

"Bill's roots grow deep in Kentucky Baptist's life," said Summerlin, pastor of Lone Oak Baptist Church in Paducah. "He gave his life to Jesus when he was 8 years old through the ministries of Severn Valley Baptist Church, Kentucky's oldest Baptist church founded in 1781, and is now the senior pastor of that historic church."

Langley received his bachelor's degree in education from the University of Kentucky, a master's of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Ft. Worth, Texas, and a doctorate in biblical studies from Louisiana Baptist University.



Bill Langley

"We have witnessed his dedication to the KBC for years as he helped in many ways throughout our convention," Summerlin said. "From serving on various committees to hosting many KBC events, we have profited from his servant's heart and his leadership skills."

Langley is the current president of the Kentucky Baptist Pastors' Conference, which is held in conjunction with the KBC annual meeting.

"Bill loves the local church and is dedicated to help pastors throughout our state and is always available to provide assistance to pastors of all ages and all size churches who come to him for wisdom and advice," Summerlin said. "As president, that role will only increase."

During Langley's seven years as senior pastor at Severns Valley, more than 500 new believers have been baptized. He also has been a steadfast supporter and advocate of the Cooperative Program.

Severns Valley has given more than \$2.1 million through the Cooperative Program since Langley became pastor, and more than \$11.6 million dating back to 1928.

"He is dedicated to the Cooperative Program by word and deed," Summerlin said. "When he arrived at SVBC in March of 2009 the church was giving 8 percent undesignated receipts to the CP. Through his leadership, they continue to raise their giving while at the same time being involved in many special projects. Year after year, SVBC has been No. 1 or 2 in the state in CP giving." (KBC)

Hall named Boyce College dean after overseeing enrollment, library

Louisville—Matthew Hall has been named dean of Boyce College, the undergraduate school of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Hall has served as vice president for academic services at the Louisville seminary since 2013 and is an assistant professor of church history.

A two-time alumnus of Southern Seminary (M.Div. and Th.M.), Hall oversaw SBTS enrollment, library and assessment initiatives in his administrative role in

academic services, after previously serving as chief of staff in the Office of the President. Hall holds a Ph.D. in American history from the University of Kentucky and was co-editor of the 2015 book, "Essential Evangelicalism: The Enduring Legacy of Carl F.H. Henry."

An elder at Clifton Baptist Church in Louisville, Hall is a research fellow on the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission and was a member of the SBC Committee on Resolutions in 2014 and 2015. (SBTS)

IMB, NAMB celebrate partnership, disciple-makers

By Julie McGowan

St. Louis, Mo.—Highlighting the partnership between Southern Baptists across North America and around the world to spread the gospel and plant churches, the Southern Baptist Convention's two mission entities held a "Sending Celebration" at the conclusion of the SBC's annual meeting.

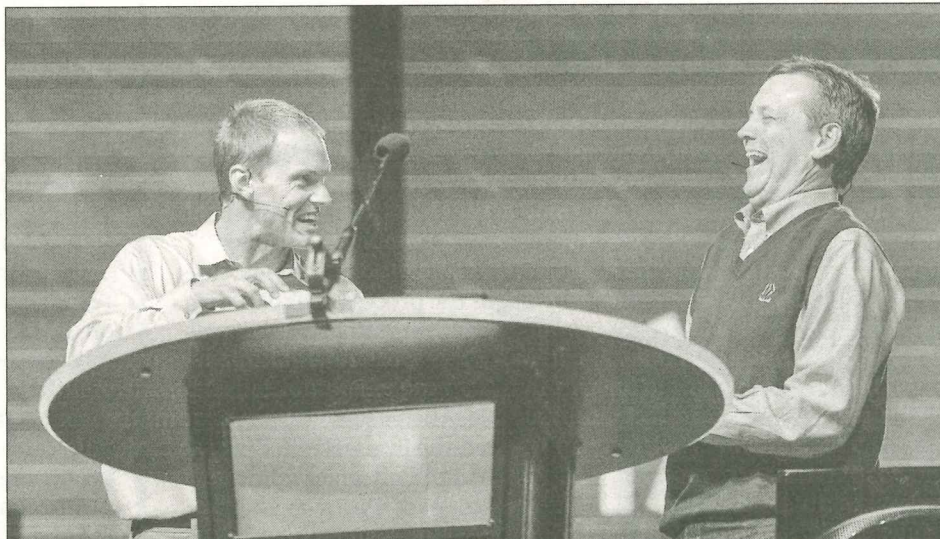
International Mission Board President David Platt and North American Mission Board President Kevin Ezell called Southern Baptists to join in celebrating the sent—those missionaries who have gone out into the near and far places of the world to bring the hope of Jesus Christ; the sending—those churches who are equipping, encouraging and coming alongside church planters and missionaries; and the lives transformed by the gospel because of Southern Baptists' sending.

The celebration specifically featured the ways Clifton Baptist Church in Louisville; Cornerstone Church in Ames, Iowa; Candeo Church in Cedar Falls, Iowa; and Anthem Church in Columbia, Mo., equip and send missionaries from their churches.

Celebrating "sending" churches includes the thousands of Southern Baptist churches giving through the Cooperative Program, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions, the leaders noted. And it includes the cooperative effort of Southern Baptists to spread the gospel to those who've never heard it. The presentation also recognized pastors and the role they play in shepherding and mobilizing local churches on mission.

"We have so much to celebrate, but there is still more to be done," Ezell said.

Platt talked on stage with John Kimbell, pastor of preaching and discipleship, and Shawn Wright, pastor of leadership development at Clifton Baptist Church, noting their role as a sending church is not just about sending missionaries. It's about making disciple makers, he noted. The pastors said they saw healthy growth and value in their



David Platt, president of the International Mission Board, jokes with Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board, after the Joint Mission Presentation at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis Wednesday, June 15. (Photo by Matt Miller)

church as they related to members sent out as missionaries.

"As people engage in a cause much bigger than themselves—which is what we're made for—there is a joy in that," Kimbell said. "And then we begin to experientially recognize the greater value of Christ and of the gospel, and that infiltrates every part of their lives as they are living as members of our congregation."

Ezell introduced messengers to leaders of a church (Cornerstone) that planted a church (Candeo) that planted a church (Anthem): Troy Nesbitt, founding pastor of Cornerstone Church; Jeff Dodge, lead pastor, Cornerstone Church; Paul Sabino, lead pastor, Candeo Church; and Stan Hayak, church planter, Anthem Church. Cornerstone is committed to planting 20 churches near colleges in the next five years.

The most difficult thing to do in church planting is to send your best staff, the church leaders said, noting that when churches send their best, they take people with them. But that is where fear and faith come together, they contended.

"Don't send the guys you don't want," Nesbitt said. "Send the guys you don't want to lose, because then your heart

goes, and then God will replace them."

"As God has raised up new leaders to plant churches, we're amazed at all that He has done," he said.

Platt read Romans 16:1-15 and challenged the messengers to consider the cooperation displayed in the Scripture.

"Here we sit, 2000 years later, a group of 40,000 churches with millions of church members ... all across the Southern Baptist Convention, every one of them important, and together, we're all cooperating on mission," Platt said, noting the roles of both NAMB and IMB. "So let's do this: let's mobilize them to pray, and to give, and to go in North America, to start right where they live to make disciples."

The Great Commission is not a "comfortable" call for any Christian to come, be baptized and sit in one location, he said, but rather it is a clear command for every follower of Christ to go, baptize and make disciples of the nations.

"This is why we exist: to bring together millions of men and women who are gathered together in tens of thousands of churches under the banner of the Bible for the spread of the gospel to the nations of the Earth," he said. "Every member of your church has a part to play in this mission." (BP)

Moore defends religious freedom for Muslims

By Tom Strode

St. Louis, Mo.—Russell Moore offered a ringing defense of religious freedom for all, including Muslims, during the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission's report at the annual meeting.

When questioned by a messenger how a Southern Baptist could defend the right of Muslims to build mosques, he said it was not a difficult decision.

"What it means to be a Baptist is to support soul freedom for everybody," Moore said.

"(W)hen you have a government that says, 'We can decide whether or not a house of worship is being constructed based upon the theological beliefs of that house of worship,' then there are going to be Southern Baptist churches in San Francisco and New York and throughout this country who are not going to be able to build," Moore said.

Having a government with "the power to outlaw people from assembling together" and confessing their beliefs "does not turn people into Christians," Moore said. "That turns people into pretend Christians, and it sends them straight to hell."

"The answer to Islam is not government power. The answer is the gospel of Jesus Christ and the new birth that comes from that."

The ERLC and the International Mission Board defended religious freedom for all in a May friend-of-the-court brief in support of a Muslim community in New Jersey that has been prevented by the local government from building a mosque.

Moore told the convention the ERLC is "active in speaking up for the invisible"—who include, he said, unborn children and their mothers, a young girl trapped in sexual slavery in Thailand, Syrian refugees, foster children and families in Southern Baptist churches with special needs children. (BP)

Southern Baptists honor Pearl Harbor survivor, veterans

By Todd Deaton

St. Louis, Mo.—World War II veteran Bill McAnany, one of 2,000 living survivors of the attack on Pearl Harbor, was introduced to the Southern Baptist Convention as messengers honored and recognized military veterans at the annual meeting in St. Louis.

Calling it an "awesome privilege," SBC President Ronnie Floyd observed that a memory of WWII disappears from American culture every three minutes as those who fought in the global conflict pass into eternity.

"We must take every opportunity to honor our veterans of the greatest generation while they are still among us," Floyd said.

This December, the United States will commemorate the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese navy. Recalling that the attack killed 2,403 Americans and wounded 1,178 others, Floyd said, "Pearl Harbor is a constant reminder that our freedom, purchased by the blood of American patriots, should never be taken for granted."

Floyd recounted McAnany's story—that he joined the Navy in 1938 and was assigned to the USS Solace, a hospital ship that was at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941.

Providing emergency medical care to the injured and dying and recovering bodies from the oil-stained waters of Pearl Harbor changed McAnany's view on life forever, Floyd said. Quoting McAnany, of Wood River, Ill., Floyd said, "You quickly realize that life is a gift not meant to be wasted."

Floyd also recognized the 75th anniversary of the first military chaplains endorsed by the North American Mission Board.

Doug Carver, NAMB's executive director of chaplaincy, called military chaplaincy "truly a frontline ministry that is vital to the extension of the local church and the advancement of the gospel."

Carver recounted that 75 years ago as America was on the verge of global war, messengers at the 1941 Southern Baptist Convention in Birmingham, Ala., "firmly agreed that there was no greater soul-winning opportunity...than the thousands of young men pouring into the military training camps around the country."

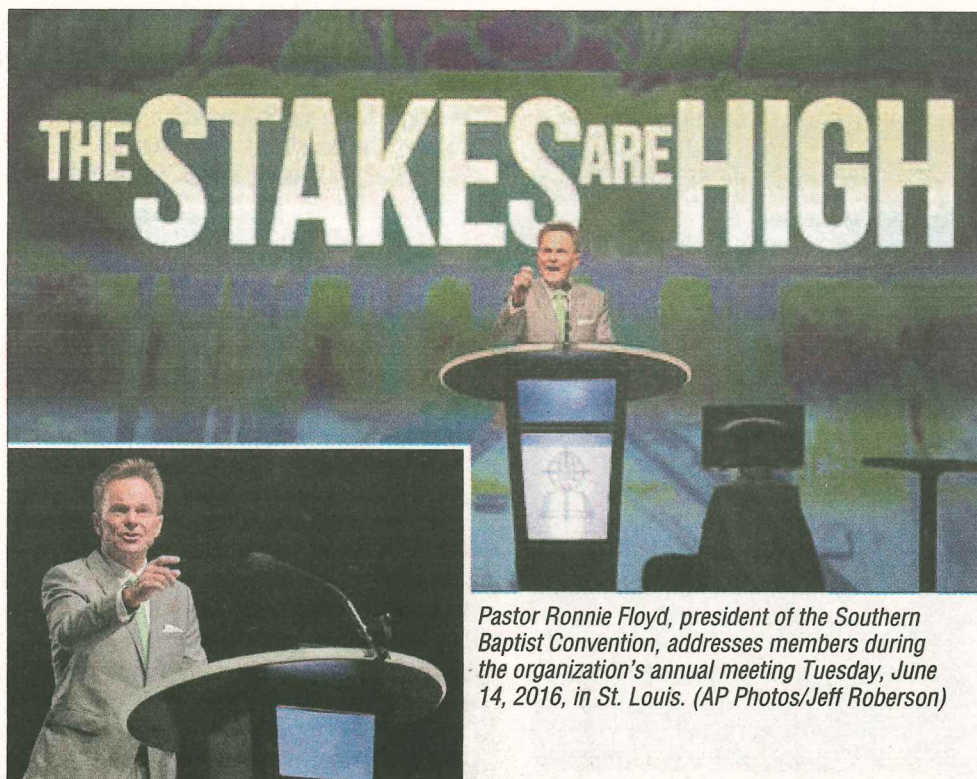
In June 1941, the Home Mission Board commissioned the first chaplains and appointed Alfred Carpenter, pastor of First Baptist Church of Blytheville, Ark. to lead the effort. "Carpenter believed that every chaplain was



Ronnie Floyd, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, honors U.S. Navy veteran Bill McAnany, of Wood River, Ill., one of 2,000 living survivors of Pearl Harbor, during the opening session of the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention Tuesday, June 14 in St. Louis. (Photo by Adam Covington)

a missionary in uniform, an evangelist at large called to share the gospel where few missionaries could go," Carver said.

"Today, 75 years later, Southern Baptist chaplains continue to carry the Gospel into places where the church cannot go," Carver said, listing armed forces, health care settings, the public safety arena, and corporate environments as examples. (BP)



Pastor Ronnie Floyd, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, addresses members during the organization's annual meeting Tuesday, June 14, 2016, in St. Louis. (AP Photos/Jeff Roberson)

'The stakes are high,' Floyd says

By Erin Roach

St. Louis, Mo.—Southern Baptists must act, akin to Queen Esther on behalf of her people, because “the stakes are high” in the church and in the world today, Ronnie Floyd said in his presidential address to Southern Baptist Convention messengers.

“More Christians around the world are being persecuted and killed for their faith than any other time in modern history,” said Floyd, pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas. “And with the continual and growing threats of Boko Haram, ISIS and other persecution, we are seeing one of the most severe refugee crises in our generation.

“Simultaneously, with over 6,000 unreached people groups globally, we as Southern Baptists are reducing our mission force by 1,000 missionaries. Southern Baptists, the stakes are high,” Floyd said.

Laws protecting traditional marriage have been overturned, government overreach has extended to the restroom and the dignity of human life is being demeaned, Floyd said, yet “these things are not some new morality. They are signs that our nation is on the ragged edge of moral insanity.”

“As spiritual leaders, there is not one of us who can sit out in this critical hour,” Floyd said. “Now is not the time for churches in America to call time-out and retreat to their land of comfort and sit around dissecting their theology and the theology of others.”

Floyd called on laypeople to “be more engaged on Sundays than ever before,” but also to “intentionally integrate your faith on the front lines of our culture in everything you do regardless of where you are.”

Referring to Esther 4:13-17, Floyd said God sees what people do not see, and God’s faithfulness and providence are present everywhere.

“Providence placed Esther at the right place at the right time to accomplish the purpose of God,” Floyd said. “To every pastor here today and those of you watching online and to every church leader, God has you where you are at the right time to accomplish the purpose

of God.

“... America is in a crisis today. We are on the precipice of either experiencing awakening or falling into an abyss. We cannot be adrift in denial any longer. We must face our future honestly,” he said.

Floyd identified five ways Southern Baptists need to respond in the current high-stakes climate.

1. Now is the time for Southern Baptists to come together. “In this social media world,” Floyd said, “we need to understand that one day we will answer to God for every blog, article and tweet we write, and every conversation we have with one another.”

2. Now is the time for Southern Baptists to lead. “We need to lead more than just in number of churches and members as the largest Protestant denomination in America. We must lead with influence,” Floyd said.

3. Now is the time for Southern Baptists to evangelize. “Pastors and church leaders must adjust their thinking and prioritize evangelism in their church, both personal evangelism and church evangelism,” Floyd said.

“... While theological debate is ascending and is applauded loudly in our convention, evangelistic fervor and fire is being extinguished and the masses are silent about it,” he said.

4. Now is the time for Southern Baptists to give. Floyd thanked Southern Baptists that giving through the Cooperative Program this year is up 2.65 percent, reflecting an increase of 6.13 percent over the projected budget for 2015-16, and he urged Southern Baptists to prioritize stewardship.

5. Now is the time for Southern Baptists to pray. “You may have given up on America, but God hasn’t. You may have given up on your church, but God hasn’t. You may have given up on ministry, but God hasn’t,” Floyd said. “God can do more in a moment than you could ever do in a lifetime.”

“... The church cannot call America to repent until the church repents. We need to repent of our prayerlessness. We need to repent of our unbelief. We need to pray for ourselves to get right with God and right with one another in this critical hour.” (BP)

Traylor calls Baptists ‘to dwell in unity’

By Barbara Denman

St. Louis, Mo.—Ted Traylor challenged Southern Baptists to move forward in cooperation and unity for the sake of the gospel—reflecting the preceding historic moment when Steve Gaines became SBC president with gracious consent from J.D. Greear.

Traylor, in the annual convention sermon in St. Louis, drew from Psalm 133 to poignantly repeat the words of the psalmist David in the first verse of the passage: “How good and pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity.”

Traylor, pastor of Olive Baptist Church in Pensacola, Fla., said the appeal for unity was first sounded in the SBC preamble written in 1845, which used three words to describe the organization of the denomination—eliciting, combining and directing, for one effort, the sake of the proclamation of the gospel.

“The reason we exist—one reason—to take the gospel to the world,” Traylor said.

The convention’s own statement of faith, the Baptist Faith and Message, also urges cooperation as a cornerstone of Southern Baptist beliefs, he noted. But Traylor admitted “we have issues.”

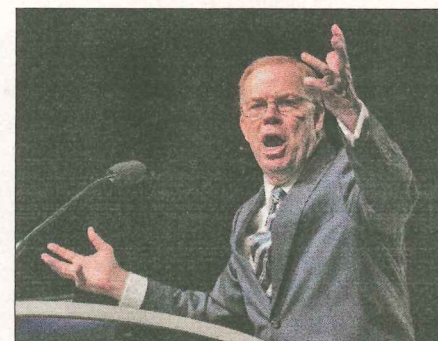
Referencing comments from outgoing SBC President Ronnie Floyd, Traylor said, “What once was the battle for the Bible has become a battle with one another. The very soul of the convention is at stake.”

He quoted Southern Baptist David Dockery, president of Trinity International University: “Southern Baptists need a new spirit of mutual respect. We need to move from controversy and confusion to a new consensus and renewed commitment to cooperation.”

“Dr. Dockery has got it right,” Traylor said. “We need to move to Psalm 133—‘How good and pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity.’”

There is room in the tent for all Baptists, Traylor said, as long as doctrine is uncompromised. “There is no real unity existing where disagreement is not allowed,” he said. “There’s life in this tent.”

Traylor said he is not looking for uniformity. “Dead conventions are peaceful enough. No one is moving. No one is doing anything. Thank God for



Ted Traylor, pastor of Olive Baptist Church in Pensacola, Fla., preaches the convention sermon at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention Wednesday, June 15 in St. Louis. (Photo by Van Payne)

life in the Baptist tent.”

Some have asked for “a seat at the table,” Traylor said. “I keep hunting for the table. I can’t find the table.

“When you come into the Baptist tent, there is only one table and it’s got the cup and bread on it. When we come in this tent, we need to examine ourselves (to determine) if we are in the faith or not.”

Traylor identified three truths found in Psalm 133:

- Unity is released, much like oil poured upon the head, or the Mississippi River and its tributaries. “We have to release our resources, going to the oceans of the world.”

- Unity is refreshing, like the dew of God falling on His people, or as seen in one brother in prayer for another.

- Unity is rewarded. “God commands the blessings of life when we are one.”

While he, too, is concerned about the decline in SBC baptisms, Traylor “wondered” if statistics are down “from a spirit of independence rather of cooperation ... that says ‘do not trust your leaders, and do not trust your brothers. Trust only yourself.’”

Applauding the example set by SBC presidential candidates Gaines and Greear, who both offered to withdraw from the election for the sake of unity, Traylor asked, “Could it have sparked something today—that picture of unity, a picture of what we ought to be?”

No one can compel, command or force cooperation. “I’m asking you for cooperation. I’m asking you in Jesus’ name for God to turn our hearts, I’m asking you to love one another. We can do better.” (BP)



Committee chair Paul Chitwood presented some 150 first-term nominees and second-term renominations of this year’s Committee on Nominations. Chitwood, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, summarized the new and returning trustees as a “diverse and highly committed group of Southern Baptists” who will “represent you well as they steward the entities of the Southern Baptist Convention.”

Endurance, gospel-centrality spotlighted at Pastors' Conference

St. Louis, Mo.—Aimed at giving pastors a charge like the one the apostle Paul gave his son in the ministry, Timothy, in 2 Timothy 4:5-6, the 2016 Southern Baptist Convention Pastors' Conference kicked off at the America's Center Convention Complex in St. Louis. With the theme "Live this!", the Sunday evening and Monday sessions focused on issues such as suffering, endurance, the Gospel, cross-cultural ministry and evangelism.

Noah Oldham

Ministers of the gospel should endure suffering for the glory of God, pastor Noah Oldham of August Gate Church in St. Louis said.



"Suffering goes hand-in-hand with our call, and God is calling us to embrace it for His glory and our joy," said Oldham, who also serves as the North American Mission Board's Send St. Louis coordinator.

Pointing to 2 Timothy 4, Oldham read from Paul's charge to Timothy: "Preach the Word." Although this is "one of the most important imperatives in all of Scripture," Oldham reminded his listeners that this "is not a solo command."

Four times, Paul speaks of suffering, urging Timothy to "endure suffering." Paul was reminding Timothy of a truth he had earlier seen displayed in Paul's life: namely, following God's call involves suffering.

Sharing the adversity he experienced as he sought to become a church planter, Oldham affirmed, following Jesus, living out God's call, is worth the pain that will inevitably come.

James MacDonald

"Endurance is the funnel through which all Christian virtue flows," James MacDonald, pastor of Harvest Bible Chapel in Rolling Meadows, Ill., said at the conference.



"If God can just get you to endure; if God can just get you to keep going; if God can just get you to remain under the pressure and not quit, and not give up, and not back up, and not shut up, but just keep going in His strength, for His glory, everything good is coming from that."

Using Paul's charge to Timothy to "endure hardship," MacDonald warned pastors about five obstacles to endurance: loneliness, discomfort, conflict, rejection and exhaustion.

He shared advice he received when his church went through a difficult conflict. "Get low and stay low," MacDonald said. "Lean on the Lord as never before."

David Platt

David Platt said that from his seat as president of the International Mission Board, he sees missions agencies and missionaries around the world who are gospel-less and gospel-lite—and that's because there are churches around the United States who are gospel-less and gospel-lite.



"The last thing the nations needs is the exportation of nominal Christianity

from North America," Platt said. "The last thing the nations need is a gospel-less, gospel-lite version of Christianity that minimizes the glory of God, the offense of sin, the sufficiency of Christ's cross, and the necessity of man's total surrender to Him. The nations need the gospel, which means the gospel must be clear in the church, which means the gospel must be clear among pastors."

Platt presented an acrostic G-O-S-P-E-L based on Ephesians 2:1-10, to "bring clarity in your own heart regarding what is the gospel," he told pastors. The acrostic represents God's character; the Offense of sin; the Sufficiency of Christ; Personal response; Eternal urgency; and Life transformation.

Platt said the gospel is not just information; it's an invitation that demands a decision.

Derwin Gray

Pastor and former NFL linebacker Derwin Gray coached conference-goers on the work of an evangelist in uniting people across ethnic, class and generational boundaries.



"Jesus will do things in you and through your church for His glory," said Gray, lead pastor of Transformation Church in Charlotte, N.C. "He is looking for people who are crazy enough to trust Him to do the impossible so the impossible can show up."

Churches must examine what they mean by the term "gospel," Gray said, and question any message of salvation lacking a horizontal aspect of human reconciliation. Gray, who recently authored "The High Definition Leader: Building Multiethnic Churches in a Multiethnic World," cited Transformation Church's diverse leadership and outreach as illustrating the importance of church unity in reflecting the new heavens and new earth.

"We are not to be colorblind but color-blessed," Gray said, expounding on Galatians 3:28. "People who say we should be colorblind are people whose color usually hasn't been a disadvantage to them."

Byron McWilliams

Pastor Byron McWilliams charged pastors to develop an evangelism strategy for their churches. He shared how the Lord has moved at his church, First Baptist Church in Odessa, Texas.



McWilliams noted the pastor's responsibility to lead in evangelism, saying, "When the pastor lives the gospel, God is most glorified, ... God's church is most fortified, ... God's servant is most satisfied."

Recognizing the rich evangelistic heritage of the SBC, McWilliams reflected on the current state of Southern Baptist churches and said, "We stink at evangelism ... and it is our (pastors') fault. It is not the fault of the SBC's top leadership; it is not the fault of the people who sit in the pews."

McWilliams told pastors that if they renew their commitment to evangelism, it will be a life filled with broken-heartedness over the lost in their community and the world. At the same time, though,

it will invigorate their ministry.

Jack Graham

Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas, urged attendees to fulfill their ministry calling, be faithful, be fruitful in their efforts, and finish well. To accomplish these tasks they must "do the work of an evangelist," Graham said.



Basing his message from 2 Timothy 4:5-8, Graham offered 10 ways to create an evangelistic environment and culture within the local church: evangelism begins with the pastor; an invitational culture should be encouraged and developed within a church; authenticity is critical; the power of the gospel must be trusted; do whatever it takes to reach people for Christ; train believers to share their faith; give a public invitation; baptize believers as often as you can; engage in event evangelism, and participate in mission trips and church planting.

Graham said evangelism should permeate the church. The ideology is more caught than taught, he said, so a high expectation should be set for church members to invite others. "It all starts with us—with our attitude, our holy ambitions, and the enthusiasm, eagerness and passion to preach the Word and to do the work of an evangelist," he said.

When it comes to evangelism from the local church, Graham exhorted the group: "You gotta finish. Live this! (Evangelism) is our life; it is our legacy. I'm not interested in leaving a legacy; I'm interested in living a legacy and doing what God has called me to do."

Ed Stetzer

Southern Baptist churches should develop new strategies for evangelism to reach an unbelieving world, said Ed Stetzer, who was appointed in May as executive director of the Billy Graham Center for Evangelism at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Ill.



"Brothers and sisters, Jesus' last words have to be our first priority," Stetzer said of the Great Commission, the biblical mandate to evangelize unbelievers. "And yet, our evangelism effectiveness continues to decline."

The church has become increasingly ineffective despite an unchurched community that is largely willing to listen to the Christian message, he said. "We have a nation with open hearts and a church with closed mouths," he said.

Southern Baptist churches need to reevaluate how they "do church," Stetzer said, or risk losing their place in God's plan for the universal church.

Jimmy Scroggins

Jimmy Scroggins, pastor of Family Church (formerly First Baptist) in West Palm Beach, Fla., drew a sharp contrast between his previous ministry in Kentucky and that in South Florida, "way below the Bible Belt."



The "multicultural, multigenerational and multi-campus church" is

"seeing people saved" and has been identified as the ninth fastest growing church in the United States, Scroggins said.

"Yet we are not making a dent in the millions and millions of lost people in South Florida," he said. "And as a Southern Baptist family, we are not making a dent in millions and millions of lost persons in the world."

Citing 2 Timothy 4:6, Scroggins urged Southern Baptists to pour themselves into gospel conversations, gospel congregations and gospel prayers.

Johnny Hunt

Preaching from 2 Timothy 4:6, Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church in Woodstock, Ga., said, "If I'm still alive, then God's not through with me."

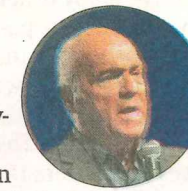


In 2 Timothy, the apostle Paul, knowing he was in his final season of life, wrote to Timothy that his life was "being poured out as a drink offering," the final act in the Old Testament sacrificial ceremony outlined in Numbers 15. Paul wanted to encourage Timothy "in what he already knew" about continuing in obedience to God, Hunt said.

"It's not the truth we know that changes us; it's the truth we obey," Hunt said, adding that Christians should desire to hear God tell them, "well done," rather than "well known," when appearing before God's judgment seat.

Greg Laurie

A strong call for revival was Greg Laurie's message in his keynote address, saying believers want to see an awakening in America, but that revival must first start in the church and its leaders.



Laurie is senior pastor of Harvest Christian Fellowship in Riverside, Calif., and recently led what is reported to be the largest presentation of the gospel in American history in Dallas. According to Harvest America, the event drew more than 350,000 people to the live event and related webcasts, with more than 25,000 professions of faith.

"God is giving our country some wake-up calls," Laurie told pastors. "Are we going to wake up and pay attention?"

Laurie said we often use the words "awakening" and "revival" interchangeably. He said there is a difference between the two: awakening happens in a church, and revival to a nation.

Laurie noted that the church never "defaults to quality, always to mediocrity," and challenged pastors to recognize that the church, and pastors in particular, have fallen asleep. "Revival is waking up from sleep. And when you are sleeping, you don't even recognize that you are asleep," he said. "But nothing can happen through you until it happens to you. We must ourselves be revived."

He encouraged pastors to recommit to preaching the gospel and giving clear, concise, public invitations. "We can evangelize or we can fossilize," Laurie said.

Dave Miller, senior pastor of Southern Hill Baptist Church in Sioux City, Iowa, was elected president of the 2017 Pastors' Conference in Phoenix. (BP)

'Pass the Salt': Racism cure resides with church

By Diana Chandler

St. Louis—Racial reconciliation rests at the doorsteps of the church and can only be achieved through the gospel in action, a diverse panel of Baptist pastors said during a trailblazing discussion on the opening morning of the 2016 SBC annual meeting in St. Louis.

Southern Baptist Convention President Ronnie Floyd convened the panel, historically including National Baptist Convention USA President Jerry Young. The two have collaborated for months to put talk into action and actually achieve racial reconciliation in a racially troubled America.

"Being together here at this significant moment in America where racial disunity is occurring, and few are speaking into this discussion, it is our responsibility as the church of Jesus Christ to resound the power of the gospel and the unconditional love of Christ for all people into this conversation," Floyd said in introducing the nine-member panel including African American, Hispanic, Anglo, American Indian and Asian pastors of varying ages.

"It is our responsibility to have this historic conversation today for our present and for our future," Floyd said of the panel, titled "A National Conversation on Racism in America." He called Young, a chief speaker at the event, a "dear friend."

Days before the first anniversary of the June 17, 2015, racially motivated massacre of a pastor and eight church members at the historic Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C., the panel also featured in a key speaking role Marshall Blalock, pastor of Charleston's First Baptist Church.

All members of the panel expressed a unity of vision and purpose, describing the church as the Light and Salt of the earth, and the only cure on this side of heaven for racism.

As Young put it, "Somebody needs to pass the Salt and turn on the Light." The pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Jackson, Miss., said racism is a sin problem that can only be solved by the people God has put in place to offer the healing salvation of the gospel.

"The problem in America is a problem with the church being what God called it to be," Young said. "The problem (is) contaminated salt, concealed light, whereby we do not express the love of Christ nor extend His light."

Blalock referenced the "grief and grace" Charleston experienced after white supremacist Dylann Roof slaughtered worshippers after they welcomed him into a Bible study.

That experience, Blalock said, helped white Americans understand the true pain of racism.

"For so many years, white people have not really been able to capture and understand the true pain, the true hurt of racism, at least not experientially," Blalock said. "But racially motivated murder hurt all of us. The white community for the first time, in some ways, would experience the depth of the pain; for the first time, beginning to understand, it was our church that was attacked, our people, our brothers and sisters, our neighbor. Our city was made



Ronnie Floyd, outgoing president of the Southern Baptist Convention, leads the panel discussion "A National Conversation on Racial Unity in America" during the annual meeting of the SBC in St. Louis Tuesday, June 14. (Photo by Van Payne)

one by grief."

The church needs to ask itself whether it is intentionally practicing segregation, Blalock said, encouraging those present to search their hearts.

"Only the gospel can change hearts. Only the gospel can eliminate racism," Blalock said. "Sadly, if we allow our own hearts to fall in that trap (of racism) it takes away from the Good News. As Dr. Young said, it covers and conceals the Light."

Blalock realized years ago that he himself had a "segregated" heart, he said, when a black pastor and friend took him through an African American neighborhood and introduced him to individuals he had never taken the time to notice.

"That day (my friend) walked me through a neighborhood where we stopped and shook hands and visited with people, and for the first time I realized it was me. My own heart was segregated," he told the thousands gathered in the convention hall. "I had no intention of living that way, just like none of you have any animus toward black people. But yet, it's subtle, and I allowed it to

sneak into my soul."

To panelists, Floyd posed questions germane to their individual ministries and circumstances.

Kenny Petty, senior pastor of The Gate Church in St. Louis, spoke from the vantage point of the racial turmoil that erupted nearly two years ago in Ferguson upon the killing of Michael Brown.

"What was happening then and what was present then was an infection, a historical, a societal infection that was exposed by an incident, like the incident in Charleston, the incident in Florida (the killing of Trayvon Martin)," Petty said. While healing has occurred, much more is needed, he said.

"The infection just didn't stop at the doorstep of the culture, but that infection was also in the church and needed to be exposed," he said. "It's a good thing that we're having sessions like this."

H.B. Charles, pastor of Shiloh Metropolitan Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla., said racism is rooted in sin. The church is asleep as Jonah was asleep as a storm raged in the sea, Charles said, and "the Lord is trying to wake the church up."

David Um, senior pastor of Antioch Baptist Church in Cambridge, Mass., and chaplain at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said the smartest people in the world have invented no cure for racism.

"The students I encounter at these elite and intellectual institutions are most certainly not racist. Just ask them. They are the enlightened ones," he said with sarcasm. "They have evolved beyond racial divisions ... or so they assume."

But they are "completely blind to their personal biases and bigotries."

Um concluded, "You cannot educate away racism because you cannot educate away sin. Sin is the problem. Racism is just another sin."

Former SBC President Fred Luter Jr., pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, also served on the panel. Other panelists were Timmy Chavis, pastor of Bear Swamp Baptist Church, Pembroke, N.C.; Joe Costephens, pastor of First Baptist Church, Ferguson, Mo.; D.A. Horton, pastor of Reach Fellowship, Los Angeles, and Gregg Matte, pastor of First Baptist Church, Houston. (BP)



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WMU highlights missional discipleship

By Julie Walters

St. Louis, Mo.—Wanda Lee, executive director of national WMU, thanked Southern Baptists for partnering in missions education to equip the next generation of missionaries, an endeavor she described as more critical than ever before in an increasingly postmodern world.

Lee told messengers at the SBC annual meeting: "It is our desire to partner with every Southern Baptist church in discipling preschoolers, children, youth and adults by engaging them in meaningful missions involvement right in their own communities or on the other side of the world; to support those who go to the nations for a lifetime with our praying and giving; and to accept the mandate of the Great Commission in whatever way God calls us."

National WMU President Linda Cooper thanked Southern Baptists for the largest Lottie Moon Christmas Offering in the history of the offering.

"When the financial needs were made known, Southern Baptists stepped up as they always have and gave over \$165.8 million dollars," Cooper said. "This is a reminder that what we do together is far

greater than anything we can do alone as one person or one church."

Lee reported that Cooper of Bowling Green, Ky., was re-elected to a second term as president of national WMU and Tana Hartsell of Concord, N.C., was re-elected to a second term as recording secretary during the WMU Missions Celebration and Annual Meeting on June 13 in St. Louis.

Earlier in the convention, Lee was honored for her 16-plus years as WMU executive director, having announced her intention to retire upon the election of a successor.

Messengers approved a resolution of appreciation for Lee, who was elected as WMU's seventh executive director in January 2000, expressing "sincere and profound gratitude to God for the extraordinary life, ministry, and contributions" of Lee and her husband Larry.

Lee is the only woman in WMU's history who also served as national president, an office she held 1996–2000. Lee served as president of Georgia WMU from 1993–1996. In addition, Lee, a nurse by training, and her husband served as missionaries with IMB from 1979–1981 in St. Vincent, Windward Islands. (BP)



Frank Page, president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, presents retiring Woman's Missionary Union Executive Director Wanda Lee with a resolution of appreciation during the annual meeting of the SBC in St. Louis on Tuesday, June 14. (Photo by Matt Miller)

Woman's Missionary Union urged to 'not grow weary in doing good'

By Tobin Perry and Kathie Chute

St. Louis, Mo.—International Mission Board church planter Sabastian Vazquez couldn't escape the inevitable emotions as he stood before a group of women whose legacy had led to four generations of pastors in his family.

Speaking during the 2016 Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) Missions Celebration and Annual Meeting, Sabastian unsuccessfully fought off tears as he told the story of a new Southern Baptist missionary who a century ago handed a Spanish-language evangelistic tract to an illiterate baker named Angel Vazquez, his great-grandfather. Angel knew the missionary had given him something very special because of the way in which he gave it to him. He became a Christian and asked the missionary to teach him how to be a pastor, too. His son, grandson and great-grandson, Sabastian, would follow in his footsteps.

"My family is your legacy," said Sabastian, who serves as a church planter among college students in Toronto. "I tell you that story so you know to never give up. Don't grow weary in doing good because somewhere out there, there's a baker waiting for a missionary. Somewhere ... there's a baker waiting for someone to tell him about the gospel—and that missionary needs someone like you to support him and pray for him, to raise money for him, to give him a water filter, to give him a home to stay in when he goes stateside. He needs you."

Sabastian's plea, directed to the 550 attendees of the celebration, came during the Monday afternoon (June 13) session of the event. He and his wife Erin then told stories related to the four new churches they had started in Toronto since their arrival.

'Our turn to lead WMU forward'

In the Monday morning session, National WMU President Linda Cooper urged WMU to build upon the legacy of the women who had gone before them,



Linda Cooper, president of the national Woman's Missionary Union, gives her president's address during the annual WMU missions celebration and annual meeting in St. Louis. Cooper, of Bowling Green, Ky., encouraged the group of more than 500 women to share Christ "by all means." (Photo by Van Payne)

such as Annie Armstrong, Fannie E.S. Heck, Hephzibah Jenkins Townsend and Wanda Lee.

"We are blessed in WMU today because of their contribution, and we are very thankful for the strong foundation they laid for us," Cooper said. "So now it's our turn to lead WMU forward."

Cooper, of Bowling Green, Ky., who was also elected to her second term as WMU president, noted the retirement of Wanda Lee as executive director and said she had appointed a committee "to find the person whom God has already prepared who will lead WMU forward."

While WMU searches for that person, Cooper told attendees the entity would continue to do its work, including missions discipleship, raising support for IMB and NAMB missionaries, job training, providing clean water for missionaries and publishing missions-related books through New Hope Publishers.

Missionary encouraged by cards

North American Mission Board missionary Travis Kearns told attendees about his work among Mormons in Salt Lake City. He noted the loneliness that often comes while serving in a city where he is one of the few evangelical Christians.

He also thanked attendees for the

support of WMU—and in particular the hundreds of birthday cards he had recently received from WMU groups throughout the country.

"Thank you so much for your support, WMU," Kearns said. "Thank you for your love. Thank you for your generosity. I want to encourage you to continue to do that because with your help—by all means—we can reach people, even in our nation, who are lost and don't know Jesus."

'The mission matters most'

Jeff Iorg, president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, told conference participants that the hardest part of being a seminary president is keeping the seminary focused on its mission.

"While that is true of a seminary," he said, "it's also true of your church and you personally. Our mission is refined by our circumstances. It is not defined by our circumstances. The circumstances you are facing do not define your mission that God has given you. Your mission is to share the gospel."

Iorg said that circumstances could refine how you share the gospel and with whom you share it, but "do not let your circumstances decide whether or not you will share the gospel. Our mission focus must be on reaching people." (BP)

Lee honored for 20 years leading national WMU

By Julie Walters

St. Louis—Approximately 150 Southern Baptist leaders, family members and friends from across the country gathered in St. Louis on June 11 to honor Wanda Lee and her leadership of national WMU over the past 20 years—16 as executive director and four as president.

Frank Page said he got to know Lee in 2010 when he assumed his current role as president and CEO of the SBC's Executive Committee. Page recited Micah 6:8, "What does the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

"I believe Wanda Lee has exhibited that great trio of imperatives from our Lord," Page said. "I believe she has done what is right, what is just. She is merciful, and many of you are the recipients of her mercy and ministry in your own life. She is a strategist, an organizational genius, yet is always humble and gives credit to those around her."

Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board, thanked Lee for her leadership and presented a check for \$15,000 to the Wanda Lee Joy Fund in her honor.

Marilyn Graves, president of Baptist Nursing Fellowship, presented Lee with a donation of \$500 to the Joy Fund. These along with other donations, including \$15,000 from the International Mission Board, bring the total given to this fund over the past six months to more than \$62,000.

The Wanda Lee Joy Fund benefits a solid financial foundation for the operational expenses of national WMU.

In January, Lee announced her intention to retire as executive director of national WMU. (BP)

Welding skills light torch for gospel in Mozambique

By Myriah Snyder

Mozambique—A Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief team recently returned from a week in Quelimane, Mozambique, where they taught welding to national pastors and left each with a startup welding kit.

Their goal was for the pastors to learn a trade that would help them support their families while they plant and pastor churches there.

The trip was similar to another where disaster relief volunteers provided training and equipment to dig wells. From that trip, several churches were planted and many came to know Christ. The welding team is hoping for similar results. During the trip, 12 professed faith in Christ.

"We're excited about these kinds of trips because we think it multiplies our work and the impact for the gospel," Coy Webb, state Disaster Relief director, said.

"It's also exciting to see pastors being given a way to learn a skill that will not only open doors to the gospel, but also feed their families," he added.

Matt Stickel, a Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief volunteer from Ohio, said, "Those business owners are pastors. They live in the country, and they

work in their fields most of the time. They don't have a lot of free time to go out and plant churches.

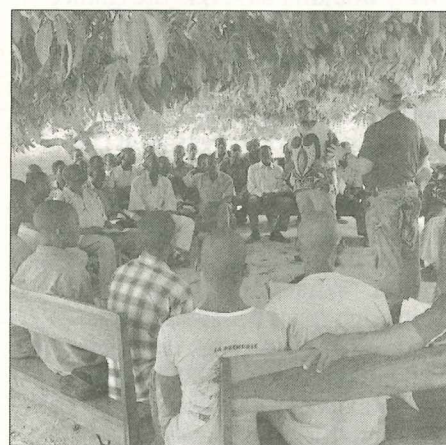
"This is giving them a business where they can move in town where the higher population is and start a church, earn income for their family, and be able to serve in a church that can't afford to pay."

The team of three Kentucky Disaster Relief volunteers with welding experience teamed up with a volunteer from Arizona who taught the business aspect. At the end of the week, they had taught welding skills to 33, and an additional 27 had learned about business.

Teaching course material that would generally take a semester in a classroom outside under a tree to students who spoke little to no English in one week was different than his normal teaching experience, Bill Johnson, DR volunteer from Liberty Missionary Baptist Church in Canonsburg, said.

"Not knowing really what to expect and trying to teach through an interpreter, we thought there would be a disconnect, but it was just the opposite. We connected from the very beginning with all of the men who were in our class," Johnson said.

"We were concerned with trying to teach someone to weld in a week. That's



Bruce Bayes teaches a welding class under a tree, a first for him.

just not how it's done," he continued. "God just made a way for everything to happen in such a fluent manner. They picked up on what we were trying to teach."

During the week, the team put what they were teaching to good use, repairing gates for Quelimane Baptist Church.

In a note to the team, Pastor Joao Antonio Sulude said, "(W)hen we look at the two gates, they are signs of your presence and by them you will always be remembered here at the Baptist Church in Quelimane. Your example will be remembered and followed." (BP)

Lottie Moon offering reaches \$165.8 million

By Julie McGowan

Richmond, Va.—Southern Baptists provided resounding support through the 2015 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. Finalized in early June, the offering totaled \$165.8 million—the highest total in its 127-year history, surpassing the previous record of \$154 million in 2013 by \$11.8 million.

The 2014 Lottie Moon offering totaled just over \$153 million.

"Southern Baptists have exhibited their commitment to God's mission through these gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering," said IMB President David Platt. "Especially after... we have walked through many challenges together, the support Southern Baptists have shown through this offering will not only sustain but also encourage the thousands of missionaries sent from Southern Baptist churches who are spreading the gospel right now."

"In addition, we as an IMB and SBC family look forward to exploring in the days ahead how our cooperative giving can fuel an ever-increasing mission force taking the gospel to those who have never heard it," Platt noted. "Our times are too urgent, our opportunities are too great, and our gospel is too glorious to settle for anything less than wholehearted abandon as a convention of churches to seeing Christ proclaimed in every place and among every people group in the world."

Wanda Lee, executive director/treasurer of Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), which promotes the offering in partnership with IMB, expressed her gratitude for the gifts.

"With the inception of the first offering for international missions in 1888," Lee said, "Southern Baptists were challenged to pray and give sacrificially so those who had not heard the gospel might have that opportunity. When Lottie Moon saw the depth of lostness in China and pled for help, churches responded with increased giving and prayer support. This year, we are grateful Southern Baptists responded once again at a critical time when increased resources are needed for our international outreach. How thankful we are for every person who gave and prayed, proving that together we can accomplish so much more than any one church or individual can alone."

IMB's vision for the future includes "limitless" missionary teams—healthy groups of "sent ones" who partner together with the goal of each team making disciples and multiplying churches. Ultimately, IMB's work is focused on the unreached, "doing all of this because we love the glory of God more than our own lives," Platt said.

Full-time missionaries are essential as leaders who continue to be the key workers in some of the most difficult places on earth. More than 3,600 IMB missionaries depend on the Lottie Moon offering and regular missions giving by churches through the Cooperative Program for missionary salaries, housing, medical care, education, field transportation and other expenses. Supporting one fully funded missionary overseas costs an average of \$141 per day, or about \$51,000 per year. (BP)

Shepherdsville pastor Landrum to run for KBC Second VP

Louisville—Shepherdsville pastor Josh Landrum will be nominated for second vice president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention when it convenes Nov. 15 at Florence Baptist Church at Mt. Zion.

"I believe Dr. Landrum will serve the Kentucky Baptist Convention well as second VP. He embodies what our state convention is about, reaching our state, nation and the nations with the gospel of Jesus Christ," said Tim Scott, pastor of Milton Baptist Church, in announcing Landrum's nomination.

"While he leads Bullitt Lick Baptist

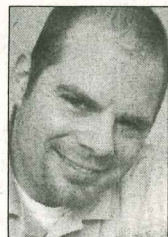
Church to faithfully give to the Cooperative Program, he personally embodies a love for Christ and the nations through sharing the gospel with those in his community and leading teams to proclaim the gospel in other nations," Scott added. "Further, Josh loves Kentucky Baptists and has a heart to lead Kentucky Baptists into greater cooperation with one another."

Landrum, who earned master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has been lead pastor of Bullitt Lick since July 2014. Previously, he served as

pastor of Knoxville Baptist church in Williamstown. He also has been pastor of students and recreation at The Baptist Church at Andover in Lexington.

His denominational service includes the KBC constitution and bylaw committee, tellers committee, and member of the J.H. Spencer Historical Society. He also is a member of the administrative team of Nelson Baptist Association.

According to the 2015 Annual Church Profile, Bullitt Lick, which has a resident membership of 211, reported nine baptisms and gave \$34,766, or 10 percent of its undesignated receipts of \$347,666, to the Cooperative Program. (WR)



Josh Landrum

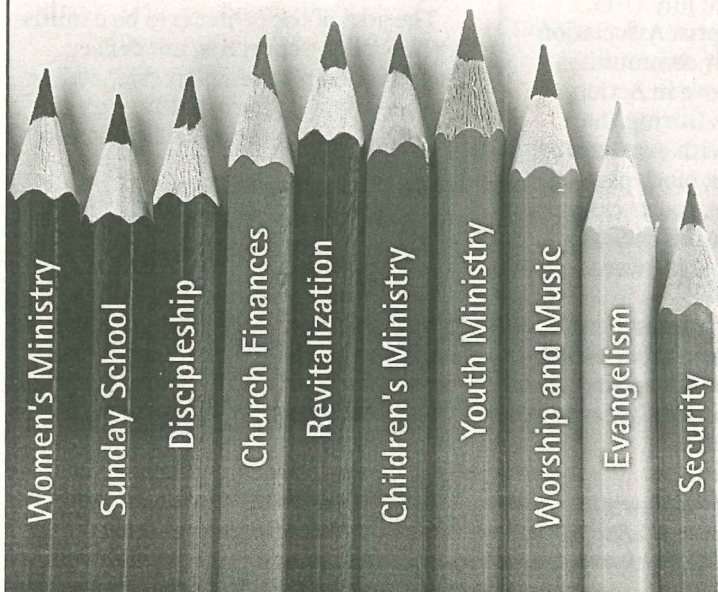
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Choices big and small

The following was written by one of our 2014 graduates:

The choices we make in life determine everything, and although I didn't choose to be raised in Oneida, I

This is Oneida



Larry Gritton

know God had a plan when he moved my parents to OBI. As I grew up at Oneida Baptist Institute, I learned to love and be loved by Christ. I learned about different cultures through my international friends here. I discovered I had a passion for learning, and I was able to excel in my classes due to the faculty's desire to help students, AP classes and other opportunities I

availed myself of.

At OBI, I had so many options for extracurricular activities, so I chose to do as much as I could, including drama, choir, band, cross country, basketball, tennis, student council, National Honor Society, yearbook, and so many other activities that I

likely wouldn't have had the chance to do at another school.

As the Oneida chapter of my life ended and the next was beginning upon graduation in 2014, I began to wonder what good my time at OBI was for me moving forward. I had gained so much in the way of college prep, a foundation in Christ, and support of friends here, but I kept asking myself, "What next?" It was in this confusion that I believe God was working in me through the people He had put in my life at OBI. I fell back on my experiences in my extra-curricular activities and classes.

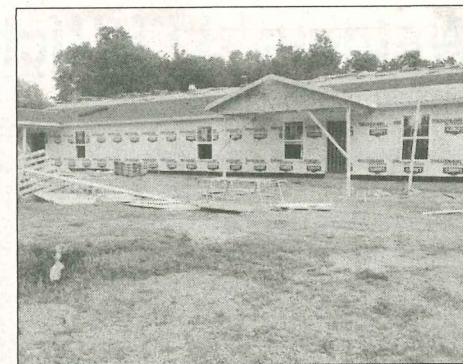
Then I read Jeremiah 29:11, which says, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." I knew that regardless of my doubts, God was there, and the choices I had to make were in His hands.

Soon I was off to Eastern Kentucky University to study music education and political science, and my

background at OBI allowed me to adjust seamlessly to the programs. After two years at college, OBI's influence in my life is evident. Every single day I face hundreds of choices, many of which are vital to the success of my future, and I feel as though all of these decisions are positively influenced by my time spent at Oneida.

Now I have been given the opportunity to serve at OBI during the summers, which I consider a big honor. Not only do I have the chance to serve the school, but I can spend time with my family. Growing up at Oneida is a unique experience, to say the least. I made a lot of sacrifices but received so much in return. As I said before, I believe our choices both big and small are vital to our successes. I know because of my time at OBI, I have the confidence to make these choices and follow the plan God has for me.

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



Ministry center being built on burned church's property

By Myriah Snyder

Clinton—The new ministry center of West Kentucky Baptist Association is literally rising from the ashes of Second Baptist Church of Clinton.

Five years ago, after Second Baptist Church burned, the congregation gifted its property to West Kentucky Baptist Association. The churches of the association, along with volunteers from other states, now are constructing a ministry center on the site.

The approximately \$100,000 center, which will be 46' x 100' in size, is expected to be completed in the next few months.

"With accumulated funds and the sale of the (association's) previous office, plans are to dedicate the center this fall debt-free," said Richard Blair, WKBA director of missions.

When Second Baptist's former building burned, Pastor Larry Fraser led the church to construct its new facility on the main highway. They then gave three vacant lots to WKBA on the condition that it be used for ministry, explained Blair.

In addition to local residents, volunteers from churches in Alabama and Mississippi are involved in the project.

"We've had people help from the judge on down to community service," Glen Stewart, moderator for WKBA, said.

He shared about one man who prayed to receive salvation while at the job site during the beginning stages. "While the foundation was being laid, someone came to know the Lord," Stewart said.

The building will house a shelter for severe weather victims, a clothing exchange and food pantry for the churches within the association, and small group space. Additionally, it will provide office space for associational staff.

The goal of the center is to be a ministry hub for the churches, not deflect from their ministries, Blair said, adding that they have had nearly 100 percent participation in the project by the association's churches.

Blair expressed gratitude that although the center is an initiative of the association, the work is being done by and for the churches. He hopes that the resources provided will spark further ministry within the individual churches.

"There are tremendous needs. There are people who are hurting; there are people who are hungry," Blair told WPSD. Blair hopes the ministry center will help the association's churches meet these needs. (WR)

Cary Donnell contributed to this story.

Thankful for family, friends and Clear Creek

First-year student Ryan Chapman, from Kodak, Tenn., is thankful for the role that the Lord, his family and friends have played in directing his life toward Clear Creek.

"I was saved at a revival meeting when I was 10 years old," said Chapman. "I remember being under such heavy conviction during the service. When the invitation was given, I went forward and accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior of my life. Jesus changed everything about me. That was the best day of

my life, and I will never forget the day He saved me. Nothing compares to the greatness of knowing Jesus Christ.

"I thank God for the great family

He has given me," said Chapman. "My family is pretty big, and they all played a part in raising me from day one. My family is such an encouragement to me, and we all grow in the Lord Jesus Christ which is the best thing ever. We all draw strength from each other in the Lord.

"I found out about Clear Creek through an alumnus who is a great friend of mine," added Chapman. "When I came for a campus visit I got to experience everything about the campus. I talked with the Admissions Office, sat through some of the classes, ate lunch with students in the dining hall, went to a chapel service, took a tour of the campus, and got to see where I would live in the single men's dorm. I knew from that day on that Clear Creek is where the Lord

wanted me. So I did everything I needed to do in the admissions process, and now it is great to be here as a student.

"I know God has called me to preach. I don't know exactly where the Lord is going to lead me right now, but I do know that I surrender all and wherever He leads me I will go," he said.

"The classes here at Clear Creek have been such a wonderful experience for me," said Chapman. "They have helped me tremendously in ministry equipping and have helped me grow closer to our Lord Jesus Christ. If it is God's will for you to train for ministry, do it at Clear Creek."

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

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

Supporting summer ministries

The heart of God is at the center of all we do in missions. "For God so loved the world ..." is such a familiar verse that we can quote it without even thinking about what it means. Yet, it is the heart of the story of missions and why we learn, pray, give, go and send.

As you read this column, summer ministries with children and families are taking place across Kentucky to share the love of Jesus and EBO is at work just a few.

Amy Wilhelmus, director of the Moore Activity Center (MAC) in Covington uses EBO funds to provide meals, snacks, crafts, recreation equipment, and Bible materials for ministries with children and youth. Her accountability form for last year's grant included the story of Susan, grandmother to some of the

kids who come to MAC. On her deathbed Susan said, "Amy, please make sure my grandkids keep coming to the MAC once I pass away." This grandmother had no doubt that God was using MAC for the good of her grandchildren. Praise the Lord that the grandfather is still bringing the children, allowing MAC to continue ministry to the family.

This week students in Little River Baptist Association are engaged in community service through "Camp Cadiz." EBO funds are assisting with the purchase of materials for home repairs, food, water, VBS materials and other supplies. Last year the students completed 105 projects in 76 locations. Over 250 vehicles were washed or had their windows cleaned. Youth passed out more than 150 bottles of cold water as well as hundreds of cookies in the name of Jesus. And they cooked meals for more than 25 elderly and shut-in

persons. Each day students participated in morning devotions and evening worship services. Four students accepted Christ and several dedicated their lives to Christian service.

During the week of July 11-15, Christian County Baptist Association will reach out to their community through Operation Love in Action, a mission trip at home. During the week EBO will help with expenses for Back Yard Bible Clubs, block parties, construction projects, sports camp and other outreach ministries. Last year more than 200 people were involved in this effort.

EBO is at work all summer long and gifts to the offering are received all year. Pray for these and many other summer ministries. Give now at www.kywmu.org/ebo.

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

171 Changers making difference in Hopkinsville

By Myriah Snyder

Hopkinsville—Kentucky Changers kicked off their summer of service with 171 participants in Hopkinsville. Before the summer is complete, they will have around 700 more participants, from eighth graders to college students, join the efforts in Calloway, Greensburg and Frankfort as they repair houses and share the gospel with homeowners.

The Hopkinsville project had 14 crews from 13 churches at 21 project locations.

Students learned how to “tell their story” in three minutes. They were encouraged to do so as the week progressed, talking to homeowners and neighbors. They were also given a salvation bracelet and New Testament to mark the Romans Road and give away before the week was over.

Each morning the students rose early to head to work sites. The students did the work and were overseen by the crew chiefs and assistants. Every evening, after a couple hours to shower, rest and eat, they attended worship.

Peggy Murphy, Kentucky Changers coordinator with the Kentucky Women's Missionary Union, has been in charge of Changers for the last 22 years.

“It takes both of my passions and puts them into one,” she said. “I love youth and I love missions. I love to see youth learn what missions is, experience missions and thrive on missions.”

“The neat thing about it for me is that we have crew chiefs who started coming to Changers out of the seventh grade,” she added. “They have moved up the

ladder and now they're taking leadership roles. We also have generations serving together. We have a lot of families that come, and the whole family serves in some capacity.”

“My first year I was forced by my mom to come here,” 15-year-old Ashley Harris from Valley View Baptist Church in Vine Grove, confessed. “I am very happy that she made me come. I realized that I wasn't doing the Christian thing. I was self-centered and all about me my first year here.

“I am here for the glory of God,” she continued. “I am here because these camps help me become a better Christian. They help me become who I am going to be in the long run. It's encouraging to know that I'm going to be making a difference in someone's life.”

Larry Koch and his wife Elaine have been helping with Changers since 1998. Not only are they present at the locations, but they also spend countless hours helping the WMU office prepare for the summer.

“I think without missions, life is kind of empty. It's great to see these young people pay to come out here and work in this heat and see the interaction between the youth and the homeowners,” Koch said.

“Some are elderly people and they just grasp onto these kids like they become their grandkids almost. It's just exciting to see how God takes those actions. There are tears at parting even among the kids. A lot of times you see them crying on Friday because they have to leave their friend they made that week,” he



continued.

Shauna Gaylon is a 14-year-old Hopkinsville native working with Changers for her second year. She's enjoying putting her passion to help people to use in her own community.

“There's so many new people you are able to meet in your hometown,” she said. “It's awesome to meet them, help them, and later come and see them again, ask how they're doing and help them out a little more than just this week.”

“It's one of the few mission opportunities where you can see tangible results,” said Joe Ball, speaker for the week and Changers participant since it began in 1994.

“A lot of times you do a VBS or Backyard Bible club (they are all great things), but you may never know this side of heaven what you accomplished. Here you can see there's a new roof; you can see there's new paint.”

He added, “It also lets the students learn a trade that they can do and hopefully go back home and do that in their communities.” (WR)

Kentucky Changers finish workdays with worship

Hopkinsville—After a long day working on houses, students and adults gathered for a time of worship, as Joe Ball, pastor at Russellville's First Baptist Church, led the Kentucky Changers, driving home this summer's theme: “Connected to the Source.”

International Mission Board missionaries Jacob and Cara Stevens also spoke to the students on “what it means to have a call from God,” before speaking to individual youth groups during devotional time.

“I think a lot of us think of a call from God as something that has to be supernatural—I need it to be in the middle of the night, or I need it to be an experience like Paul had on the Damascus Road,” Stevens said. “That's not how I experienced my call to the mission field, and I kind of doubt it will be that way for you all.”

Stevens gave his testimony and encouraged them to look for ways God is calling them to serve him. He presented opportunities for students to serve in missions through the IMB.

Following a time of acoustic worship Monday night, Ball spoke on John 15 and challenged students to stay connected to the source.

He challenged teens, “What is it in your life that you know is blocking your connection? What is it that is more important than your relationship with Jesus that you are allowing to stand between you and Jesus? What are the spiritual disciplines you need to work on?” (WR)



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Five reasons to consider sponsoring a child through Baptist Haiti Mission

By Randall Breland

Crossings Ministries is privileged to be ministry partners with Baptist Haiti Mission. Crossings has a strategic goal of helping BHM raise support for 3,000 additional children in Haiti. Here are five reasons why a \$25 a month commitment is a wise kingdom investment:

1. BHM is a model of gospel faithfulness and has a long-term investment in the region. The organization has served in Haiti for more than 70 years, focusing both on physical and spiritual needs of the Haitians, especially those in the Ferme area.

2. The BHM Child Sponsorship Program encourages sponsors to develop a real relationship with the child.

When you sponsor a child, you can follow their progress. All sponsors are encouraged to exchange letters with their children, which the BHM staff translates for you. Sponsors are also encouraged to send care packages, small birthday presents, and even come for a visit.

3. The BHM Child Sponsorship Program provides a necessary education. Your \$25 a month will provide books, a uniform and the opportunity to for a Christian-based education. Many people in Haiti are illiterate, which creates barriers to social mobility and, more significantly, to reading and knowing God's word.

4. The BHM Child Sponsorship

Program meets medical needs.

Because medical aid can be expensive, the opportunity to receive it is not always an option for young children. Children within the sponsorship program receive all necessary vaccines and are provided medical assistance in the case of sickness or an accident.

5. The BHM Child Sponsorship Program sows gospel seeds. While caring for physical needs is necessary for an impoverished country like Haiti, the spiritual needs are greater. These children need to hear the gospel and believe in Jesus. The BHM Child Sponsorship Program ensures

these children hear the gospel and are brought up in a Christian worldview. While a biblical education does not save children, it plants the necessary seeds that will point them toward the cross of Jesus.

Will you support a child today? Please visit www.bhm.org/child-sponsorship.html to change a life and build a relationship. You can also support children by hosting a Sponsorship Sunday Event. Email us at bhmus@bhm.org or visit www.bhm.org/get-involved for more information.

Randall Breland is director of communications for Crossings Ministries.





July

- 1-2 Overnight at Cedar Crest Camp, Bagdad
2-8 Kentucky Changers, Greensburg
5 Power Lunch, Baptist Building, Louisville
8-9 Acteens Quest, Jonathan Creek Camp, Hardin
8-9 Overnight at Jonathan Creek Camp, Hardin
9-15 Kentucky Changers, Frankfort
10-17 Kentucky Acteens Activators, New Orleans
14 LIFE Tour, Eastwood Baptist Church, Bowling Green
23 Excel, Reidland Baptist Church, Paducah
29-30 Camp Courage, Laurel Lake Camp, Corbin

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

FORDSVILLE—Kentucky Campers on Mission, headquartered in Fordsville, announces upcoming work dates: July 13-15, Buffalo Lick Church in Cadiz; Aug. 14-26, Oneida Baptist Institute in Oneida; Sept. (TBA), youth building in Cadiz. For more information, see www.campersonmission.net/Kentucky. **Martin Brown** is director.

HARDIN—Aurora Church has called **Heath Mims** as pastor.

LOUISVILLE—Beechland Church has called **Chuck Love** as pastor. Beechland also held a reception for **Ken Hollis** in appreciation of 25 years of faithful service as pastor. Carlisle Avenue Church celebrates its 105th anniversary this month. **Kevin Weldon** is pastor.

Cloverleaf Church will host the Mark Trammell Quartet on June 30 at 7 p.m. For information, call the church at (502) 367-0218. **Geoffrey Lacefield** is pastor.

Deer Park Church will hold a patriotic service July 3 at 10:30 a.m. **Albin Whitworth** is director.

Fern Creek Church will hold a potluck luncheon at 12:15 p.m. & patriotic concert at 2 p.m. on July 3.

Vine Street Church called **Spencer Harmon** as pastor.

SOMERSET—Pulaski Association will participate in a "Cup of Cold Water" at Pulaski County Fair July 25-30. If interested in helping, contact (606) 678-4465.

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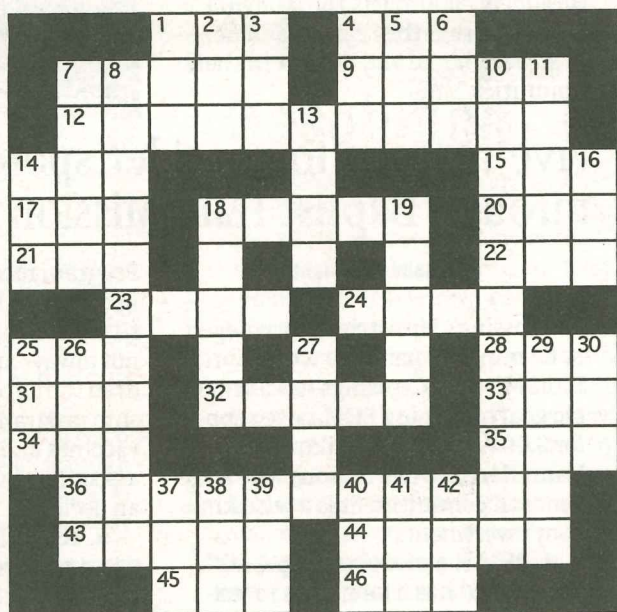


Bible Crosswords

By John Thornberg

Across

- 1 "Whose ____ is in his hand" (Matthew 3:12)
4 To sink downward
7 "Turn not ____ from following the Lord" (1 Samuel 12:20)
9 Half quarts
12 Where David's story begins (2 words)
14 Nothing
15 Doze
17 Raw material
18 "Queen of ____" (1 Kings 10:1)
20 "____ the kine to the cart" (1 Samuel 6:7)
21 "Cast him into the ____ of lions" (Daniel 6:16)
22 Deoxyribonucleic acid, abbr.
23 "Under a pomegranate ____" (1 Samuel 14:2)
24 "Sing unto the Lord ____ song" (Isaiah 42:10) (2 words)
25 Prohibit
28 ____ and flow
31 A friend, Fr.
32 Former
33 Sheltered side
34 Marker
35 "As the ____ ran, he shot an arrow" (1 Samuel 20:36)
36 David was one, in other words
43 Fixed gaze
44 "Jonah was exceeding glad



#66

of the ____" (Jonah 4:6)

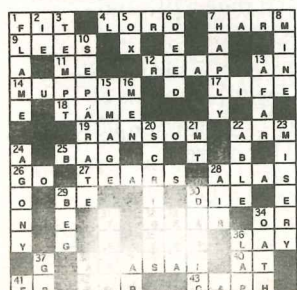
45 Light brown

46 "____ no man any thing" (Romans 13:8)

Down

- 1 "Instruments made of ____" (2 Samuel 6:5)
2 Advertisements, abbr.
3 "Cast the ____ on the right side" (John 21:6)
4 A mineral spring
5 Point at target
6 Wildebeest
7 "____ shall devour before him" (Psalm 50:3) (2 words)
8 A Christmas carol (2 words)
9 One who lives in a tent
11 "Worthy is the Lamb that was ____" (Revelation 5:12)
13 "A rod out of the ____ of Jesse" (Isaiah 11:1)
14 Affirmative expression
16 A legume

#65



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 tunnelhillbaptist-church@gmail.com no later than July 1.

SEEKING: Part-time music minister at Sharon Baptist Church, Mayfield, Ky. Please see church 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: Hill Grove Baptist Church is seeking a bi-vocational pastor for rural community. Church located in Guston, Ky. www.hillgrovebaptistchurch.org. Send resumé to: kathygerkinsveith@twc.com or 1124 Ridgeway Dr., Brandenburg, KY 40108.

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.

SEEKING: Hillcrest Baptist Church in Lebanon, Mo., is accepting resumé for a minister of youth and family life. Send resumé to pveanes@lebanon.k12.mo.us or call David Veanes at (417) 532-1021

SEEKING: Bi-vocational pastor sought by rural Southern Baptist congregation in Central Kentucky. Send resumé to Clover Bottom Baptist Church, 6321 Fords Mill Rd., Versailles, KY 40383.

SEEKING: Friendship Baptist Church is seeking a bi-vocational pastor. Friendship is a rural church offering children and youth ministries. Resumé will be accepted until July 31 and can be emailed to janeblevins@hotmail.com.

SEEKING: Buffalo Lick Baptist is seeking a bi-vocational pastor. Send resumé to harrisonvest@twc.com or call (502) 633-4320.

SEEKING: Edgewood Baptist Church is reopening its search for a full-time pastor. Send resumé and inquiries to edgewood@edgewoodbaptistchurch.com, Attn: Pastor Search Committee. Resumé accepted through July 11. For information, visit <http://www.edgewoodbaptistchurch.com>.

SEEKING: Hillcrest Baptist Church in Lebanon, Tenn. is seeking a full-time minister of music. Hillcrest has a blended-type of worship and the congregation averages 1,000 for Sunday morning service. Please email resumé to: resume@hillcrestbaptist.org.

SEEKING: Parkland Baptist Church is seeking an interim part-time minister of education. Please submit resumé to the Personnel Committee, Parkland Baptist Church, 7206 Shepherdsville Rd, Louisville, KY 40219.

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SEEKING: Cropper Baptist Church is seeking a pastor who has been called by God as a shepherd for His flock. The ideal candidate will be first and foremost a pastor in all aspects of the duty for which he has been chosen, dedicated to the Lord and His people, prepared to serve the needs of the church, and willing to reach out into the surrounding community to witness to the lost. Cropper is a small congregation with a small budget but a strong desire to fulfill God's will for us. Should you feel led to apply, please send your resumé to CropperBaptist@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Minister of music. First Baptist Church of Bowling Green, Ky., is accepting resumé for a full-time minister of music. Please visit <http://firstbaptistbg.org/music-minister-search> for further details. Résume and cover letter (PDF) may be submitted to fbcmmst@gmail.com. Review of applicants will begin in July.

SEEKING: Georgetown Baptist Church (Ky.) seeks an associate pastor of children and family ministries. The position will provide coverage in two major areas; the primary emphasis is children's ministry, but we are open to the creativity and skill set of the successful candidate for the second coverage area. GBC partners with the BWA, CBF, SBC, and local Baptist association. We are located next door to and partner with Georgetown College and Baptist Seminary of Kentucky. Please send inquiries to APSC@georgetownbaptist.org.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church in Russell Springs, Ky., is accepting applications for pastor following retirement of previous pastor. Resumé will be accepted through July 31 and can be mailed to P.O. Box 1477, Russell Springs, KY 42642, Attn: Keith Ellis.

SEEKING: Evergreen Baptist Church in Frankfort, Ky., is seeking a part-time children's minister. Submit resumé to maryghughes28@gmail.com. (502) 223-8364.

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CHRISTIAN STORES

Crossover St. Louis sees increase in faith decisions

By Joe Conway

St. Louis—Southern Baptist volunteers took advantage of the preparations made in advance of Crossover St. Louis and saw those efforts result in 556 St. Louis residents placing their faith in Christ for salvation. As the host city for the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, the St. Louis Baptist Association and executive director Jim Breeden helped create environments where people were receptive to gospel conversations.

The number of salvation decisions during Crossover Saturday (June 11) marks an increase for the first time in three years. That is a trend organizers hope to see continue in Phoenix, host for the SBC annual meeting in 2017.

The registered number of Crossover St. Louis volunteers was 3,984. Those volunteers participated in 8,379 gospel conversations where an invitation for a decision was extended. Crossover events were sponsored by more than 85 host churches and events.

North American Mission Board executive director of evangelism Joel Southerland serves as coordinator for the mission board's Crossover responsibilities. Southerland said he was humbled by the experience of seeing so many volunteers engaged in gospel conversations.

"Crossover St. Louis was fantastic," Southerland said. "It brought churches together and many did an evangelistic event for the first time. We had more decisions in this Crossover than in the past three years—over 200 more than last year. It's a testament to the hard work of the churches and pastors."

Southerland has already been in planning sessions for Crossover Phoenix. He expects another successful experience for volunteers and the Southern Baptist family in Phoenix. In addition to the traditional Crossover outreach activities, Harvest America will bring a new dynamic to Crossover Phoenix with the element of a city-wide crusade.

"Next year Crossover Phoenix with Harvest will be historic," Southerland said. "We have the opportunity to make a major impact for Christ in a major city. Working together we could see more than 5,000 come to faith in Christ with

many more from the simulcasts going on around the nation and world. It will be something Southern Baptists will be talking about for a long time to come. Every pastor should put June 10, 2017, on his calendar and make plans to be there."

By any measure—city population, metro area or regional influence—Phoenix is a major North American city. One reason Phoenix is the sixth largest city in the United States is that it has become the go-to destination for retirees and high-tech entrepreneurs.

Harvest America is assisting churches with evangelistic events and will partner with Crossover Phoenix with an opportunity to capture the momentum from Crossover in a single, culminating crusade. It will enhance the traditional Crossover element with a focused, concluding activity. Find out how to volunteer at www.namb.net/crossover. (BP)



Top: Mascoutah Fire Chief Joe Zinck lets local residents try on firefighting equipment during a block party at First Baptist Church in Mascoutah, Ill., Saturday, June 11. The block party was part of Crossover St. Louis 2016, held prior to the annual meeting in St. Louis. (Photo by Matt Miller)

Left: Jacob Austin, 10, tries to stay cool in the 98-degree heat during a block party at Parkway Baptist Church in St. Louis on Saturday, June 11. The event was part of Crossover St. Louis 2016 held prior to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention June 14-15 at America's Center in St. Louis. (Photo by Chris Carter)

Right: Shiung Yee (right), a member of First Baptist Church Euless, Texas, shares the gospel with Ferguson, Mo., resident Willie Clark during Crossover St. Louis 2016. (Photo by Susan Whitley)



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Bellevue sings of 'King' on Fox, Carnegie Hall

By Diana Chandler

New York—The choir from newly elected Southern Baptist Convention President Steve Gaines' pastorate sang the gospel alongside Elvis hits in New York's Times Square on Fox TV June 20 in advance of their concert at Carnegie Hall.

An Elvis impersonator with the choir said the Memphis, Tenn., group loves to sing of "the King."

"We always want to sing about the King," said the impersonator, one of two Bellevue choir members who impersonated the rock star on the live broadcast of Fox & Friends. "So, most times we sing about Jesus, sometimes we sing about Elvis. Whatever draws people closer to Jesus, man, that's what we're about."

About two-thirds of the 250-member choir and 45 members of the orchestra were on a week's mission trip in New

York under choir director Mark Blair's leadership. Their concert featured Grammy-nominated and Dove Award-winning gospel artist Natalie Grant in her Carnegie Hall debut. Grant has noted on her website.

Gaines, elected SBC president June 15 at the St. Louis annual meeting, gave his Christian testimony at the Carnegie Hall concert, according to Bellevue's director of communications Jim Barnwell. Gaines also was slated to preach June 21 at Brooklyn Tabernacle during a 7 p.m. service featuring the Bellevue choir, Barnwell said, with both events planned months before Gaines' SBC election.

At Carnegie Hall, the Bellevue choir sang selections from two of its published choir books and corresponding CDs "Holding On to You" and "Praise His Name" from Prism Music, with arrangements by Josh Stewart, who also arranged 10 selections Grant will per-



form at the event.

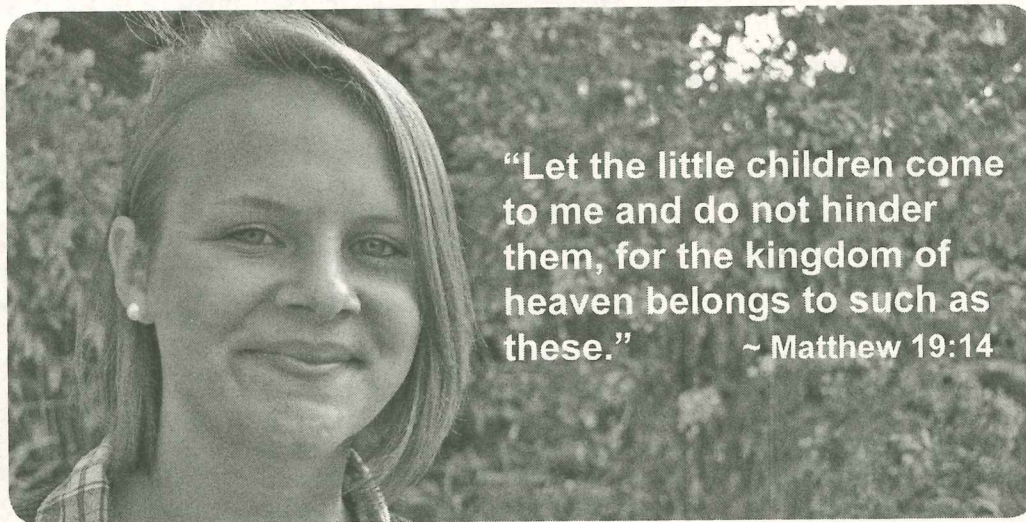
During Fox & Friends, Bellevue member Hannah Tetmeyer led the choir in a rendition of "Say Amen."

"Yes there are bad things that happen, but God is greater," Tetmeyer told Fox & Friends co-host Ainsley Earhardt. "God is more powerful than anything that can ever come against us."

In an earlier event, the choir sang in an outdoor concert and community outreach with a new church plant in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., the Living Water Church.

A total of 280 Bellevue members and friends made the trip, Barnwell said. (BP)

Oneida Baptist Institute



"Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."
~ Matthew 19:14

Oneida ... bringing young people to Jesus

- Oneida Baptist Institute is a Christian boarding school for students in grades 6-12.
- Our school was founded in 1899.
- We offer an 11:1 student/teacher ratio.
- OBI is accredited by the Kentucky Non-Public School Commission.
- Nearly 65% of our funding comes from churches, other groups, and individuals.
- Oneida students come from the local community, all over Kentucky, across the U.S. and around the world.
- OBI is a Christian school that gladly accepts non-Christian students.
- Many unbelieving teens come to Christ each year at Oneida, while young Christians are helped and encouraged to grow in their faith.
- We have a 200-acre farm and a full agriculture program.



Would you like to learn more about Oneida? Contact us!

Oneida Baptist Institute

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Education for Time and Eternity