



WESTERN Recorder

July 12, 2016

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 190, Issue 14

DR volunteers impact, encourage others

By Myriah Snyder

Greenbrier County, W.Va.—In the wake of devastating flooding in West Virginia, Disaster Relief's efforts are appreciated and spurring on more volunteers.

A Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief group from Ashland has been helping Charles Cobb, a homeowner in Kanawha County, West Virginia.

On the evening of June 24, he and his wife evacuated their home. Neighbors told him that within a 15-minute period, the water rose five feet.

The waters totaled almost 30 inches in his home.

"Three things that were saved were my Bible, a plaque that said, 'God bless our home,' and in front of the house we have a rock that's engraved with Ecclesiastes 'For everything there is a season,'" Cobb shared.

"This is my wake up call," he said.

DR volunteers helped him clean out sheetrock, remove insulation, subflooring, furniture and kitchen cabinets as well as disinfect for mold.

"I have a tear in my eye because strangers come in, and they're doing so much," Cobb said. "I could never thank them enough."

The devastation of the flooding has also resulted in more SUVs or spontaneous untrained volunteers than DR has possibly ever seen, Bill Johnson, Kentucky DR's West Virginia Incident Command leader, said.

They give the untrained volunteers a quick orientation and pair them with a team or individual who is trained. (WR)

After W.Va. flooding, Baptist DR aiding recovery

By Josie Rabbitt and Jacob Brooks

Greenbrier County, W.Va.—Blue and "yellow" hard hats can be seen along eight West Virginia counties' roads and streets—hats worn by Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers. Engaged in recovery assessment, the SBDR response teams are making their way through communities that were under water just days ago, answering calls for help from numerous West Virginians left without power, vehicles and even homes.

On June 23, torrential rains hit West Virginia, causing flooding that claimed at least 24 lives and more than 100 homes. More than 30,000 homes and businesses lost power.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) described the flooding as a "historic" tragedy and applauded the continued efforts of relief response teams such as the American Red Cross and various SBDR units, as reported by the Associated Press.

West Virginia Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin tweeted his appreciation for state partners who provided critical resources to West Virginia as quickly as possible and announced that FEMA will expand federal funding to eight counties: Fayette, Clay, Roane, Summers, Monroe, Greenbrier, Kanawha and Nicholas.

Though the opportunity to receive federal funds can help rebuild the demolished communities, the clean-up and recovery process has already begun, with funding a priority for SBDR volunteers as they serve survivors.

"We're going to need blue and yellow



Disaster Relief volunteers unload water to be distributed after the devastating flooding in West Virginia. DR crews already have more than 400 residence work orders.

hats into the foreseeable future," said Danny Rumble, West Virginia Baptist Convention disaster relief ministry director. "We had a bit of rain after the initial flooding, but the sun's out now. We can send those hats—those trusty volunteers—to go out and do what they were trained to do, to assess people's homes for damage from the flood."

Several SBDR units were mobilized immediately on June 25 after state and federal officials identified West Virginia's disaster areas. Search and rescue teams were deployed as well, and continued their work June 30. As of June 29, SBDR response teams were ready to conduct recovery assessment of homes and businesses across the affected counties.

Bill Johnson, who is managing relief

efforts in Greenbrier County on behalf of the North American Mission Board, reported that more than 40 work orders already were submitted for repairs.

Johnson estimates more than 100 work orders will be submitted by the end of week. His estimates are based on 400 residence work orders already sent to command centers currently manned by 75 SBDR volunteers from West Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio and the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia.

Johnson and Rumble both agreed that donations would help sustain the long-term clean-up and recovery process that looms ahead for West Virginia.

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Violence brings outcry for 'true way of our Lord'

By Diana Chandler

Nashville, Tenn.—The collision of fear and mistrust have driven the violence upon violence that killed two black civilians and five police officers in three separate states in as many days, Southern Baptist pastor Lee Wesley told Baptist Press.

"There is a fear on the part of police officers when they go into the black community, and that fear heightens their approach to these problems," said Wesley, whose pastorate Community Bible Baptist Church is in Baton Rouge, La., where two white police officers pinned Alton Sterling nearly immobile and shot him dead in a parking lot early July 5.

Sterling, 37, had been accused by a 911 caller of displaying a gun while selling CDs outside a convenience store.

"On the other side, the side of African Americans, particularly black men, you have the mistrust factor," Wesley told BP. "We don't trust you because in the past you've not treated us right. You've abused us over years. And whenever you have fear and mistrust colliding, almost invariably you're going to have some violence."

Grieving with the suffering, Southern Baptist leaders offered spiritual comfort and wisdom.

"As we see our nation in turmoil, we readily obey our Lord's command to love and pray for all people, especially those

who have recently suffered immeasurable loss in the tragic deaths of their loved ones," Southern Baptist Convention President Steve Gaines told BP. "May God pour out His mercy and grace on our nation as we bow our hearts humbly before Him. May He grant us understanding, love and forgiveness."

"This is the true way of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and His followers," said Gaines, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn. "This is the way we will choose to live as Southern Baptists."

Killed a day after Sterling, 32-year-old Philando Castile was shot four times at point-blank range July 6 as he sat in his car during a traffic stop outside St. Paul,



CNN screen capture

Minn. According to Castile's girlfriend, Diamond Reynolds, who was next to him in the vehicle, the black man was attempting to comply with a white police

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Violence

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officer's request for identification when the officer shot him. Reynolds recorded a portion of the incident on her cell-phone before police arrested her with her 4-year-old daughter sitting in the back seat. Castile had been driving with a busted tail light, police said.

Also dead are five Dallas police officers shot by at lone sniper during a July 7 protest related to the killings of Sterling and Castile. Seven more police officers and two civilians were shot but survived, Dallas Police Chief David Brown said at a press conference after police killed the sniper, identified as 25-year-old Micah Xavier Johnson of Mesquite, Texas. The slain officers have been identified as Dallas Area Rapid Transit agency officer Brent Thompson, 43; Patrick Zamrippa, 32; Michael Krol, 40; Lorne Ahrens, 48; and Michael Smith, 55.

The violence is everyone's problem, said Byron Day, president of the National African American Fellowship of the SBC, a group representing close to 4,000 pastors.

"I am calling on all Southern Baptists to see these tragic events not as an African American problem but as a problem for all of us," Day told BP. "I appreciate and respect our law enforcement officials. ... Nevertheless, I am deeply grieved to hear of these recent deadly shootings that appear to be racially motivated.

"I am prayerful and hopeful that our legal authorities will investigate the situation thoroughly and provide genuine and truthful answers to a country that

is looking for a solution once again to racial disharmony," said Day, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Laurel, Md.

SBC Executive Committee president and CEO Frank Page reminded Southern Baptists their years-long labor toward racial reconciliation is not in vain, and he extended hope found in love.

"The culture of violence, fear and death that grips our nation can only be overcome by the power of unconditional love and equal justice under the law for all people, including people of all races as well as law enforcement officials who serve and seek to protect our neighborhoods and communities," Page said. "We cannot turn a blind eye to the racial tensions in our country or allow ourselves to become numb to the reality of the deep pain experienced by all these families. The senseless killings that are sweeping through our land must cease."

Fred Luter, the first black pastor to serve as SBC president, joined other Southern Baptist leaders in calling the church to action.

"It is an ideal time for the church to be that healing balm in the community and the country," said Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans. "Let's pray for a healing among our races in America."

In Baton Rouge, anger, confusion, frustration and bitterness have been expressed and observed, said Pastor Wesley, who has encouraged calm while attending vigils, rallies, and press conferences in the Louisiana capital.

Wesley encourages Southern Baptist pastors to counter and hopefully prevent violence by building relationships and being available to the community. (BP)



Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers prepare and pack food for transport to aid stations located around West Virginia as part of the clean-up and recovery efforts in the wake of flooding that hit West Virginia after torrential rains. From left to right: Tommy Story of Guston, member of Ekron Baptist Church; Donna Castle, of Wittenville, member of First Baptist Church of Hopkinsville; and Diane Hamby of Hillcrest Baptist Church. (NAMB photo by Van Payne)

Disaster Relief

Continued from Page 1

"We know where to get more assessors, those who are trained in disaster response, but food and funding will continue to be necessities as the teams go out," said Johnson, who currently oversees the feeding of displaced West Virginians in Greenbrier County.

"The area of greatest need for residents in Greenbrier County is feeding," Johnson said. The SBDR teams supply two meals a day to each person who comes for help. "They have nowhere else to go."

SBDR teams will continue to provide feeding, recovery, medical and mud-out units in the affected West Virginia counties for at least three to four weeks, Johnson said.

"People are still texting and calling me, asking for help," Rumble said. "They're distraught but are determined to rebuild their communities. They're coming together, reaching out for help, and it's an incredible effort to witness.

"West Virginians are always very grateful when we respond to them, and they often want to work alongside us. A lot can be done when folks dig in and work hard. A lot more can be done with the right resources and funding to do so," Rumble said.

The North American Mission Board coordinates and manages Southern Baptist responses to major disasters through partnerships with 42 state Baptist conventions, most of which have their own state disaster relief ministries.

Southern Baptists have 65,000 trained volunteers—including chaplains—and 1,550 mobile units for feeding, chainsaw, mud-out, command, communication, child care, shower, laundry, water purification, repair/rebuild and power generation.

To learn more about helping, contact the Baptist convention in your state or go to www.donations.namb.net/dr-donations. For phone donations, call 1-866-407-NAMB (6262) or mail checks to NAMB, P.O. Box 116543, Atlanta, GA 30368-6543. Designate checks for "Disaster Relief." (BP)

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Kentuckians react to resolution to halt display of Confederate flag

By Myriah Snyder

Louisville—On June 14 at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis, the messengers voted overwhelmingly to repudiate the Confederate Battle Flag.

The event made history for the Southern Baptist Convention, which began in part in support of slaveholding missionaries.

Although the SBC officially repented of racism in 1995, this was an historical moment for the convention. The resolution's significance in promoting racial unity is rivaled only by the electing of their first African-American president, Fred Luter, in 2012. Joel Bowman, senior pastor of Temple of Faith Baptist Church in Louisville, pointed out in a commentary on Kentucky Today.

Despite two messengers speaking against the resolution, former SBC President James Merritt presented an amendment followed by a speech where he declared, "All the Confederate flags in the world are not worth one soul of any race."

Across Kentucky, other Baptists have

expressed support for the resolution.

"I am a proud son of the South, but my highest allegiance is not to my region, but to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and His kingdom," David Prince, pastor of preaching and vision at Ashland Avenue Baptist Church in Lexington, said. "As a child of God by the grace of God in Christ, I am a part of a glorious, multi-ethnic family, with brothers and sisters from every tribe, tongue, and nation."

"If we cling supremely to our gospel heritage in Christ more passionately than we do our ethnic and cultural heritage, this becomes a simple issue for our churches," Prince noted.

"Our Christian gospel heritage teaches us that the reality of vertical gospel reconciliation with God should be demonstrated in the church through the horizontal reconciliation of believers, transcending all cultural boundaries (Eph 2)," he said.

Bowman's commentary stated, "Let's face it, the display of the Confederate flag, no matter what your personal view of it, does not promote peace among people, but rather, it stirs up strife. Why? For

many, including myself, it is an ugly reminder of the Dred Scott Decision of 1857. The Confederate flag harkens back to a time when people of African descent were not considered full human beings; made in the image of God."

"The SBC is to be commended, as in one 'seminal moment,' it set the example for many other Christian groups to follow," he added. "I am thankful to be a part of an SBC family in which corporate repentance is the order of the day."

Joshua Whisenant, messenger from Hurstbourne Baptist Church in Louisville, noted that Merritt's comments reflected the theme of unity that he saw demonstrated throughout the convention.

"After Dr. Merritt did his thing, I pretty much saw him as dropping the mic and walking away. He had his point made," Whisenant said.

"There were several people that were swayed because of his eloquence," he continued. "We did need to vote against the Confederate flag, not for its history or for its importance but because of forming a unified front and convincing people it's not worth condemning lives

because they see us a certain way or because they associate it with something that is not Christian."

Jarvis Williams, author of "One New Man: the Cross and Racial Reconciliation" and professor of New Testament interpretation at Southern, added, "The SBC resolution to repudiate the flying of Confederate flags is an important symbolic act of repentance for Southern Baptist involvement in the enslavement of and the sponsoring of the enslavement of black bodies."

"May God use this resolution to serve as a means by which to create clear examples of reconciliation within many of our SBC churches, which are still divided along racial lines," he continued.

"The conversations that this resolution will produce are needed to confront the ghost of Jim Crow that haunts too many of our congregations," Prince concluded. Citing Paul in Philippians 2, he added, "Symbols matter, and out of a desire to do the right thing and out of familial love for our black brothers and sisters, I think we are right to urge Southern Baptists to take the Confederate Battle Flag down." (WR)

Farris to run for Pastor's Conference president

Inez—Owensboro pastor Travis Farris will be nominated for president of the Kentucky Baptist Pastor's Conference when it convenes Nov. 15 at Florence Baptist Church at Mt. Zion preceding the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

"Being a personal friend of Travis, I can attest to his godly character, and assure Kentucky Baptists he walks with the utmost of integrity," Sam Schmidt, pastor of Inez First Baptist Church, said in nominating Farris.



Travis Farris

"Travis understands the importance of the Cooperative Program, and he is a soul winner," he continued. "I think that's what we need in our convention right now for our pastors, someone who can exhort us and encourage us next year, and teach us the importance of soul winning."

Schmidt also mentioned Walnut Memorial Baptist Church's commitment to missions. "As if all those reasons aren't enough, I believe Travis Farris is a devout man of God and a man of character. He is that kind of person that someone can follow and really get behind and support. I think he'd really be a great asset to our Kentucky Baptist pastors."

Farris has been pastor of Walnut Memorial since May 2015 and has been in pastoral ministry for 14 years.

He became a Christian at age 9 and was called to ministry as a young man, Schmidt noted.

A graduate of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College with a bachelors degree in pastoral studies, he earned his masters from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is currently pursuing a doctorate from Andersonville Theological Seminary.

According to the 2015 Annual Church Profile, Walnut Memorial, which has an average of 460 in attendance on a Sunday morning, reported 40 baptisms and gave \$37,358, or 5 percent of its undesignated receipts of \$754,135 to the Cooperative Program. (WR)

Pastors on politics: It's biblical, not controversial

By Tom Strobe

St. Louis—Proclaiming Scripture instead of promoting controversy is their approach when addressing political issues, pastors said during a panel discussion at the 2016 Southern Baptist Convention.

Five Southern Baptist pastors explained to Ronnie Floyd, former SBC president, how they handle political issues in their churches. The panel discussion—titled "Pastors and the Church in American Politics Today" and moderated by Floyd—came during a tumultuous election season that has found many Southern Baptists and other evangelical Christians dismayed at their presidential options.

"I do not try to be controversial; I want to be biblical," said A.B. Vines, senior pastor of New Seasons Church in Spring Valley, Calif., and a past president of the National African American Fellowship (NAAF) of the SBC.

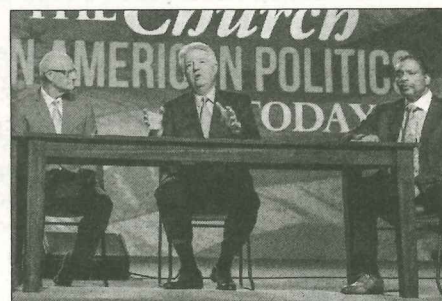
"I want to give them the Word of God," Vines said, adding he teaches the people of New Seasons Church "to trust God in these moments."

David McKinley, pastor/teacher of Warren Baptist Church in Augusta, Ga., echoed Vines, saying, "I don't want to add to the controversy. I want to help people to think biblically."

He seeks to teach "that every one of us—Republican, Democrat, whoever we are—are to come under the authority of Scripture. And I think if we preach that and teach that, we will be an equal opportunity offender in what we do."

Hance Dilbeck, senior pastor of Quail Springs Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, said he hears "a lot of disappointment" from church members with their choices for president.

"It's almost like an expression of grief," he said. "I can see all the five stages, you know, anger and denial



Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas (center) participates in the panel "Pastors and the Church in American Politics Today." (Photo by Bill Bangham)

and bargaining and depression and acceptance.

"(W)hat they're grieving is at least the loss of perceived cultural dominance, where Bible-believing people were a majority that could exercise political power and always win the day," Dilbeck told Floyd.

While Americans have "tremendous political tools," Christians "have so focused on those tools that some of our spiritual muscles have atrophied, and we've gotten weak when it comes to prayer and to purity and to proclamation of the Gospel," he said. "(Pastors) have this great opportunity to call our people back to the kind of biblical, spiritual influence that is always going to be our primary influence."

The presumptive presidential nominees—Democrat Hillary Clinton and Republican Donald Trump—have prompted some Southern Baptists and evangelicals to declare they can vote for neither major candidate.

Refusing to vote is not an option, said Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas.

"You can't sit this one out. You can't say, 'I'm not going to participate.' The stakes are too high," said Graham, a former SBC president.

"Isn't it great to know, number one, that God is not in heaven wondering,

"What am I going to do with Donald or Hillary?," he said, adding, however, Christians are responsible to act in the election. "(W)e simply must not abdicate our responsibility to pray, to participate, to vote and, as pastors and leaders in our churches, to encourage others to do the same."

Graham said he is focusing on three considerations in determining how to vote in this presidential election: (1) A candidate who will seek God's wisdom in making Supreme Court nominations; (2) who will support the sanctity of human life; and (3) who will defend religious liberty.

K. Marshall Williams, senior pastor of Nazarene Baptist Church in Philadelphia, Pa., and another former NAAF president, said the church needs to be "passionately praying" for those in authority.

He also said Christians should "maintain a collective, incarnational, redemptive presence in the church and in the culture." The church should not only address such issues as the sanctity of life and religious freedom, but "attack systemic racism and injustice in our land," Williams said, and "be concerned about the pipeline from school to prison, that one out of every three African-American men are tied to the criminal justice system."

In addition to being biblical in his approach, McKinley said he seeks to be: instructional and not just emotional; pastoral and not just political; (3) "convictional, not just informational;" and (4) "hopeful, not cynical."

All five pastors encouraged Christians to run for local offices.

Floyd opened the session encouraging pastors not to be judgmental of one another during this election season. "Disagreement does not have to result in a strained relationship with a brother or sister in Christ, especially over politics," he said. (BP)

The danger of plenty

Few of us in the average evangelical church in America have real need. Yes, I know some do go hungry and some have no roof over their heads. But that is the exception. The vast majority of us have all that we need.

In fact, many of us have far more than we need. We have plenty.

First Person



Kathy Howard

And that in itself is a problem. Plenty can bring more serious trouble than need.

In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses warned the children of Israel about the danger of plenty before they entered the Promised Land: "But that is the time to be careful!

Beware that in your plenty you do not forget the Lord your God and disobey his commands, regulations, and decrees that I am giving you today. For when you have become full and prosperous and have built fine homes to live in, and when your flocks and herds have become very large and your silver and gold have multiplied along with everything else, be careful! Do not become proud at that time and forget the Lord your God, who rescued you from slavery in the land of Egypt" (Deuteronomy 8:11-14 NLT)

After 40 years wandering in the wilderness and depending on God for every bite of food and drink of water, the Israelites were about to settle into a land of abundance.

Yes, the wilderness had been a physically difficult place, but this land of plenty would bring unique spiritual dangers.

Moses points out four specific dangers in Deuteronomy 8:11-19:

1. Forgetfulness—When we aren't forced to depend on God for our daily physical sustenance, we tend to forget Him. We fail to remember that God provides everything, even our ability to work and make money to purchase all the things we have.

2. Pride—Not only do we forget God's provision, we begin to think we have done it all ourselves. We become puffed up and prideful in our plenty.

3. Disobedience—When we have forgotten God and become full of ourselves we begin to do anything and everything we want. We do it our way and give no heed to God's commands.

All this leads to idolatry.

Once we have forgotten God, something else will assume His rightful place in our lives.

Whether money, job, recreation, another person, or ourselves, we will worship something.

How can we avoid the danger of plenty? Moses tells us that too. In one word, we must "remember."

Remember God's past provision. Remember God's equipping for work. Remember God's rightful place as the one true God who deserves our worship. (BP)

A Father to the fatherless

The other morning on my commute, the song "Piece by Piece" by Kelly Clarkson played. The song begins by telling the story of a daughter whose father wouldn't love her, at least not when she had nothing to offer. She remembers him walking away. She begged him to want her. He wouldn't. When she grew up and "made something" of herself, he then wanted to be in her life. But she realized his love had a price.

This was the umpteenth time I have heard it in the last few months, but this time it took me back months ago when I was driving to my apartment. I had a wearying extended weekend, and I was emotional. To add to that, the van following me carried my stepmom, two half-siblings and my father. They had come to town for my sister's archery tournament and wanted to see me. We were leaving my favorite pizza place, and I was on my way to show them my apartment and, by extension, a snippet of my life.

On the drive I prayed, "Please let Piece by Piece come on." And it did. I don't believe in coincidence, so it made me more emotional. I soaked in the song and continued with my evening, which turned out to be fabulous.

This seems normal, having a nice dinner with my family and talking in my apartment. But this is new for me. A couple years ago, I could only remember one or two times I "hung out" with my father's family. Things with him are better now. But the song Piece by Piece hits home because I am like the girl in the song.

I am that fatherless daughter.

This song gained popularity for multiple reasons. Yes, Kelly Clarkson is an amazing vocalist. Yes, her tunes are catchy. But, I believe this song made the charts because there are many people like myself, fatherless children. They have known heartbreak

because the first person to break their hearts was the one who was supposed to protect it.

Thankfully, the story changes in the chorus, focusing on her child's father and how he loves her. Piece by piece he mends Clarkson's broken heart. He proves to be a loving father and devoted husband. He restores her faith in what a father should be.

First Person



Myriah Snyder

I can't speak for what Clarkson meant as she recorded this song, but I take away a much deeper meaning. I see an opening for a Heavenly Father to fill.

I was blessed that an uncle stepped in as a father figure and with a mom, sister and grandmother who lavished me with unconditional love. But the one who filled the void in my heart wasn't human. He was my Heavenly Father, whose raw, overwhelming beauty is His perfect nature, wrapped in mercy and grace.

He calls me His child (1 John 3:1). He loves me unconditionally (Romans 5:8). Before the world began, He chose me (Ephesians 1:4). Based on His love and nothing else, I don't have to earn His greatest gift to me, His grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). He sent His Holy Spirit to comfort and guide me (John 14:16; John 16:13). But better yet, He's promised to never leave me or forsake me (Deuteronomy 31:6).

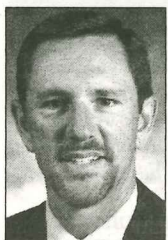
These sound a lot better than the fathers in Clarkson's song. Her husband is going to let his daughter and wife down, even if it's only in simple ways. Fathers are fallible, even the best ones.

So when I hear that song, think of the hurt my father unintentionally caused me, and dream of the day I find the man I will marry who will become a daddy to my children, I take heart. This world and the people in it are flawed. I know because I, too, am a sinner. But I also know the love that saved my soul comes not from a mere man; it comes from the Heavenly Father, who loved me enough to send His Son to ransom me.

Wars and rumors of wars

A few days before our nation celebrated its independence, the Obama administration continued its assault on American morals and values with the inclusion of gender frauds in the United States military and threats of drafting our daughters for war.

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

Media coverage coincided with stories of a seemingly endless number of suicide bombers and well-armed terrorists continuing to unleash suffering and death around the globe and, increasingly, on American soil.

While military and political experts debate ways to defeat a covert enemy with no regard for human life, I believe the time has come to question

whether that enemy has the capacity to defeat us. By "us," I am referring to the peoples and nations that do not embrace the teachings of the Koran and Islam.

Notice I do not use the term "Muslim" to reference our enemies, because millions of people who call themselves Muslims do not live out the murderous teachings of the Koran and, thus, are not our enemies. They may have been born into Islamic countries and/or cultural traditions, but they do not obey the Koran's commands to kill infidels (non-Muslims). That doesn't mean Islam is a "religion of peace," as President Obama is fond of saying. To the contrary, peaceful Muslims are those who choose not to

follow some or all of the teachings of their religion.

As for the growing number of Muslims bent on following the Koran and creating an Islamic Caliphate everywhere on the planet, they are the self-professed enemies of every human being who refuses to submit to their demonic religion and have unequivocally and publicly declared war upon us all. And they just might win.

Why would I make such an unthinkable statement? Consider these reasons, among many:

The seat of economic and military power has, for the past several decades, resided in the West, but Western nations are quickly abandoning the cultural values, moral precepts, and religious convictions that have kept us unified and strong.

This abandonment is the direct result of the rejection of Christianity. The call to lay down one's life for God and country begins to ring hollow in countries where God is mocked and His teachings are discarded as offensive. Will millions of young fighting men still answer the call to war when the country for which they would fight despises their core beliefs and their God? Will those who do not believe in God and the Bible's teachings about our obligations to love our neighbors and defend the weak be willing to put themselves in harm's way for their fellow man?

Although religious convictions are disappearing in free nations, they are growing in the Islamic world. The

jihadi takes up arms and willingly lays down his life with the conviction that his god will welcome him into eternity. Eternal convictions are what cause men to face the enemy with courage and risk death with shocking confidence.

In the classic movie, "Sargeant York," young Alvin stole away to the woods to search the Scriptures for direction and then faced the enemy without any concern for his own life. Today, young Abdul does the same, but studying the Koran rather than the Bible, what he reads is not a call to defend the defenseless but a call to slaughter the defenseless. He answers that call with a promise of virgins awaiting him in the afterlife.

Bible prophecy does not ensure the temporal defeat nor victory of Islam. What the Bible does ensure is the victory of Christ over Satan and the eternal victory of the church over everything and everyone who stands against her, the false religion of Islam included.

Will America ever become a Muslim nation? I wish the answer to that question was more obvious than it is. Will Islam wipe Christianity from the face of the earth? I'm glad the answer to that question is never in doubt.

Muhammad's bones are dust, but Jesus' tomb is empty and His bride will be here to greet Him when He comes for her. I love my country and pray God does not lift His hand of protection from her. But my petitions turn to praise when I recall that God will deliver His people from death's sting to Christ's eternal Kingdom.

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.



Baptists: Reflections of the stats guy

My upcoming career change means—for the first time in a long time—I won't be employed by an SBC entity (although I'm still a Southern Baptist). In other words, my long history of being the bearer of bad news as the denominational stats guy is coming to a close.

But, facts are still our friends. And, the SBC Annual Church Profile has been a bearer of unwelcome facts for a long time.

As I look back over my years of tracking SBC statistics, a few things are worth saying on the way out.

Dispelling the myth

Several years ago, our team brought attention to the fact that the SBC was in a long-term trend that would involve long-term decline. It was—and remains—a multi-decade decline, and it is accelerating. I wrote about it in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2012. As I had noted, "The membership decline of the SBC is not a matter of debate. It is a matter of math."

I had to write that (and I used that exact phrase at the SBC Pastors' Conference at that time) because some in the SBC claimed the decline wasn't real. Articles were written to demonstrate there was no decline, as if math has some nefarious motive. But there was a decline that is continuing.

Although the number of congregations in cooperation with the SBC increased last year, membership declined more than 200,000, down 1.32 percent to 15.3

million members. Additionally, average weekly worship attendance declined by 1.72 percent to 5.6 million worshippers.

First Person



Ed Stetzer

We also experienced a decline in baptisms, down 3.3 percent to 295,212. Reported baptisms have fallen eight of the last 10 years.

So, even though the number of churches continues to increase, the number of people attending SBC churches continues to decline, and the number of people baptized in SBC churches continues to decline.

It isn't a pretty picture.

Now that the decline is unmistakable, some are blaming the percentage of churches reporting their ACP numbers. Doing so is just another way to refuse to face reality.

The reporting percentage this year is about the same as last—and the numbers continue to decline. SBC President Ronnie Floyd is correct in his analysis and warning, "Be careful in your assessments, evaluations and statements. Yet, let's be honest with ourselves; these trends are unhealthy and undeniable, demanding immediate action."

And, now, as Chuck Kelley, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, predicted a few years ago, Southern Baptists are shrinking faster than United Methodists.

Change is needed. And praying for an awakening without making the needed change, and engaging in the needed work, is basically asking God to do what He called us to do.

There are issues that still must be addressed.

Generational issues

Although generational division isn't as evident nationally today, it still abounds in many places across the SBC. Join me at many state Baptist conventions and you'll see.

Many younger believers have left the SBC, but they aren't leaving the faith or becoming Wiccans. They are becoming nondenominational evangelicals who still believe like us but now want to go on without us.

We should continue to ask why.

The SBC needs to determine how to help all generations engage in the mission of God, together, before the Southern Baptist Convention grays even more.

Church planting

Any denomination that grows will increase in both church planting and evangelism. Currently, church planting is a bright spot in the SBC. As Carol Pipes wrote for Baptist Press, the number of churches cooperating with the Southern Baptist Convention grew by 294 to 46,793, a 0.63 percent increase over 2014—the 17th year in a row the number of Southern Baptist churches has grown.

However, generally denominations must plant 3 percent of the total number of churches just to maintain. That means the SBC needs 1,403 new churches in 2016, substantially more than the 800-plus in 2015, to maintain as other churches close or disaffiliate.

Yet, NAMB's church planting emphasis has received pushback, as if we are doing too much! We plant a substantially lower per capita number of churches than the Assemblies of God, for example—and they just celebrated 25 years of consecutive growth.

The SBC isn't planting too many; in fact, it must plant more.

It needs new churches that reach men and women in different communities, of different ethnicities, and across the generations.

Cultural challenges

A negative view of engaging culture, and being negatively viewed by culture, remains a thorn to SBC effectiveness. And, to be honest, some leaders have exacerbated this problem.

Many think being on the front line of the culture wars for decades is "fighting for the faith." There are things worth a fight, but we've sure found a lot of fights to wage.

For many of our neighbors, our warring is interpreted as being against them.

Give your house and live in it too

Joe and Linda decided they wanted to do something significant for their church and they hoped they could use their house to accomplish their giving objectives. They considered making a current gift of their house, but decided against that because they hope to live in it for many more years.

The logical solution seemed to be to add a gift of the house to their church in their wills to take effect after both of them are deceased.

Then Joe and Linda heard about a way to make a gift to their church now, get a sizable current income tax deduction and still be able to live in their home for the rest of their lives. This solution—a retained life estate gift—sounded like the right plan for them.

To make a retained life estate gift homeowners deed their personal residence or farm to a charity through an irrevocable retained life estate agreement. The deed includes a provision reserving to the owners the right to use the property for the rest of their lives. At the death of the last life tenant, the charity becomes the full outright owner of the property.

The value of a retained life estate gift for income tax deduction purposes is the current market value of Joe and Linda's house reduced by the value of their lifetime right to use the house.

Joe and Linda, as the life tenants, will be expected to maintain property insurance, pay the property taxes and pay for typical maintenance and repair items.



Laurie Valentine

You can't reach a people and war with a people at the same time.

As of yet, we've not made it to the point where we have, as SBC Executive Committee President Frank Page has suggested, become known for what we are for rather than what we are against.

Yet, we simply cannot continue building walls between ourselves and the culture, then castigate people on the other side for not climbing over.

That means our churches need to change, and part of that change has to be a renewed emphasis on evangelism.

Effective evangelism

The fact is, we seem to have lost our passion for evangelism. Baptists love evangelism as long as somebody else is doing it.

Baptists love baptisms so much that we named our denomination after them. Yet, there are fewer and fewer. Evangelism, and the baptisms that flow from gospel proclamation, must be our focus again or we need a new name that does not involve the waters of biblical baptism.

And, yes, that evangelism has to change in some ways, and innovation and change are just not bad things, Southern Baptists.

The gospel needs to be proclaimed, and Southern Baptists need to get more serious about proclaiming that same gospel in new ways.

As I leave denominational service, I'm a bit relieved to drop the role of statistical truth-telling to Southern Baptists. It's not a fun job, I assure you, as telling the statistical truth is often controversial in our denomination. And, some have a vested interest in saying things are fine, since they are (at times) the ones in charge.

But all is not well. Sure, there are other issues to address like how Southern Baptists treat one another, organizational challenges, character issues, and more.

However, at this point, might I suggest that we need the truth and we need change.

The truth is the SBC is declining, the decline is accelerating, and if something does not change, the denomination will depopulate itself in a matter of decades.

The change is more focus on sharing the gospel, planting churches, engaging the culture, and joining Jesus on mission. (BP)

Shattered vows

Q: I have just learned that my husband looks at pornography, and I am devastated. I feel embarrassed and ashamed. I feel so alone and don't know what to do.

A: Being sexually betrayed by your husband is devastating but does not have to be debilitating. It is vital that you surround yourself with support to help you through this. There are a growing number of resources available for wives who discover

that sexual betrayal has assaulted their marriage. Both of you will need help, support, accountability, education, prayer and hope to survive this and move toward recovery, either individually or as a couple.



Valerie Vincent

One helpful resource to guide you is Debra Laaser's book *Shattered Vows*. Debbie is a testimony and advocate for women's recovery in this area. She declares, "As you grieve the loss of what you thought you had, I want you to know that it is possible to experience transformation in your life—and even in your marriage." She not only shares her personal narrative of betrayal but also her journey toward healing.

She identifies seven desires of the heart universal for men and women: the desire to be heard and understood, the desire to be affirmed, the desire to be blessed, the desire to be safe, the desire to be touched in healthy, nonsexual ways, the desire to be chosen, and the desire to be included. She has discovered that the yearning for what is missing is often a theme when sexual betrayal is present.

One of the biggest challenges for healing a marriage is restoring trust. One tool Debbie offers in recovery is a check-in process that uses the acronym FANOS (Feelings are shared, Affirmations are given, Needs are stated, Ownership is taken, Sobriety is measured). Each chapter of the book provides a helpful list of questions entitled "Thinking It Over."

As you read, these questions help you reflect on your own experience and process toward recovery and healing. It is important that you reach out for help. God created us for community. Pray for direction. Begin to seek out resources available to you, your husband and your marriage.

'Insanity of God' shows faith amid despair

By Bob Smietana

St. Louis—Nik Ripken almost abandoned hope when he first arrived in Somalia 25 years ago. Ripken, then a young International Mission Board missionary, had caught a ride with the Red Cross in a small plane carrying relief supplies across the border between Kenya and its war-ravaged neighbor.

What he saw shook him to the core. He met parents who asked for burial cloths for the children they'd lost rather than food and water for themselves and saw soldiers passing out narcotics rather than relief supplies to those in need. It was a country where despair was commonplace.

"It was like I'd been plunged into hell," Ripken recounts in "The Insanity of God," the first theatrical release from LifeWay Films, which was previewed June 13 in St. Louis during the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting.

The movie, based on a book by Ripken (who uses a pseudonym), follows him and his wife Ruth from their days as a young missionary couple from Kentucky just starting out through their time in Somalia and some of the hardest places in the world.

Ripken worked in Somalia for years on relief projects. He also became friends with Somalia believers. At one point in the film, he recalls sharing communion with four Somali believers, who feared for their lives. Soon afterward, he learned they and other Christians had been murdered.

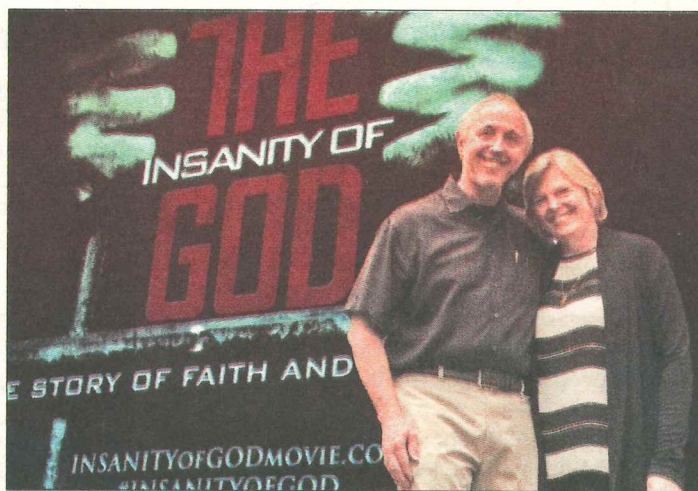
He wondered how faith could survive in the midst of such suffering.

"What do you do when everything seems to be crucifixion and there's no resurrection?" Ripken asks during the film.

That question soon became personal.

While at their home base in Kenya, the Ripkens' young son Timothy suffered a severe asthma attack. Unbeknownst to the family, their home had a mold infestation exacerbated by the rainy season.

Ripken rushed to the hospital. At one point, he pulled over and compelled a



Nik and Ruth Ripken appeared at the screening of "The Insanity of God" documentary in St. Louis. The film is based on Nik Ripken's book by the same title. (Photo by Jenna Wachsmuth)

passerby to get in the car and drive so he could administer CPR to Timothy.

But Ripken's efforts were in vain and Timothy died. The Ripkens buried their son on the grounds of a school in Kenya, not far from their home. They struggled with guilt and wondered if Timothy would have lived if they had stayed in the United States. Was their call to missions worth Timothy's life?

Soon afterward, the Ripkens set out to answer that question. They traveled the globe, talking with Christians in more than 70 countries where believers face persecution.

Everywhere they went, they met believers who had been able to persevere despite their suffering. Among those persecuted Christians, the Ripkens found kindred souls, who knew the cost and suffering that come from following Jesus. They learned faith can endure and thrive, even in the midst of despair.

"Evil has never stopped doing what evil does," Ripken says in the film. "God has not stopped doing what God does."

The interviews with persecuted believers became the basis for Ripken's book, "The Insanity of God," and the film, which was co-sponsored by the IMB.

The preview crowd gave the film, which opens in 400 theaters across the United States August 30 as a one-night event, a standing ovation. The preview was the first time the Ripkens had seen this version of the film, which is dedicated to the memory of Timothy Ripken.

"I miss my son," Ripken said in a question and answer session after the

film. "And I miss walking with these people."

He gave an impassioned plea for families to follow Jesus's command to go and make disciples of all nations.

"Don't cheat your kids out of going on this kind of journey," he said. "Don't cheat them out of experiencing Jesus among the nations. After 30 years of doing this, I believe Jesus said, 'go into the world' as much for those who will go as for those who will hear (the gospel.) Because if we don't go and we don't speak, we will miss Jesus Himself."

The Ripkens say their job is to connect the dots so believers from around the world can learn from each other. Ruth Ripken urged the audience not to forget those who suffer for their faith around the world.

"We are being persecuted every day because they are part of us," she said. "As they hurt, we should hurt—as we are part of their body."

Those who suffer for their faith also rejoice for Christians who are able to share their faith freely, Ruth said.

"We are not a free church and persecuted church," she said. "We are just the church."

During the question and answer session, Ripken also gave an update on one of the believers in the film. Ripken said Dmitri, a Russian pastor who'd been jailed for 17 years, had died. But Ripken later learned that was not true. He also learned that Dmitri's son is now the chaplain at the prison where his father was once jailed.

"That's the way God will work if you give Him a chance," Ripken said. (BP)

All-State choir, orchestra gives six performances

By Cary Donnell

Louisville—The Kentucky Baptist All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra gave six performances in five days at four churches. The ensemble, 66 in total, stayed and practiced on the campus of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"All we can say is how great SBTs was to us, and how grateful we are to all of their staff," said Jason Stewart, worship/music consultant at the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

The ensemble gave performances June 22-26 at Walnut Street Baptist in Louisville, First Baptist Mount Washington, and Broadway Baptist in Lexington. They then gave three performances on June 26 at First Baptist Richmond.

"The kids came in on Sunday and begin practicing together for the first time that evening and then for the next three days to miraculously be prepared by Wednesday evening," added Stewart.

The group also performed service projects in Louisville. They were involved in projects with Louisville Operation Brightside, the Louisville Rescue Mission, Scarlet Hope and the KBC. This was the first year a mission experience was added to the ASYCO schedule. (WR)

Pineville church starts new chapter with building

By Cary Donnell

Pineville—Mill Creek Baptist Church's new church building doesn't represent a rebuilding effort; it represents a new chapter in the church's life.

"It's been a long process," said Larry Sowders, pastor of Mill Creek Baptist, "I believe God had the move in it."

The new building, which replaces one that burned to the ground in February 2015, was built by volunteers from all over the United States. Volunteers from Alabama to Colorado and other places were involved in the project.

"Thirteen states were represented," added Sowders. "Volunteers worked 12-hour shifts and many shared their testimonies."

Workers not only furnished their own construction equipment, but also raised approximately \$7,200 for the church.

"There's not a mountain you can't climb and a wall you can't get over when the Lord's at work," said Sowders.

The church, which had been meeting in a gymnasium, will continue to use it as the church's educational center, at least for now. They anticipate the project will be completed by mid-September, when the first service is expected to be held in the new structure.

The church has experienced many trials in the past year and a half. In addition to the fire, the church had trouble obtaining a permit to build the new building and could never definitively determine the cause of the fire. There were also concerns that members of the congregation who were uncomfortable with the current meeting place might leave.

No matter what happens to the church structure, though, expect the mission and focus of Mill Creek to remain the same. "We just hope to see people saved," said Sowders. (WR)



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THOUSANDS OF SOULS BEING SAVED

Kentucky Baptists, working cooperatively in communities from the mountains of Appalachia in the east to the banks of the Mississippi River in the west, have had great success in reaching out with the gospel over the past year. The latest figures from the KBC show 14,223 baptisms across Kentucky in 2014, an increase from 13,975 the year before. That's enough people to populate a mid-sized Kentucky city. But the news gets even better. Thanks to your support of the Cooperative Program, missionaries from the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board reported another 190,957 baptisms last year.

The Cooperative Program isn't just a line on your church budget. It is the primary means through which Southern Baptists support the work of missionaries in the state, across the country and around the world. The Cooperative Program allows your congregation to make an impact literally around the world.



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Give 10 donations help provide for children in crisis in many ways, from therapy hours to outings and activities that foster the healing process. Those who donate to Give 10 through Facebook will be entered to win a summer activities gift basket. This year's initiative runs through the end of July.

"This is a fun way to engage with the community," said Sunrise President Dale Suttles. "More importantly, it's an innovative way to help us protect children from

destructive, even life-threatening circumstances."

Sunrise has expanded this year's Give 10 program, reaching into more of Kentucky's large residential areas from London to Paducah, including Louisville, Lexington, Elizabethtown, Madisonville and Bowling Green. For more information, or to make an online donation, visit www.sunrise.org.

Sunrise Children's Services offers Kentucky's hurting children and families a continuum of Christ-centered care, including therapeutic, residential and foster care programs for abused, abandoned and victimized children throughout the state. Sunrise's nonprofit ministry began in 1869 — today, it is a fully licensed behavioral health service organization helping change the lives of at-risk children throughout the commonwealth. For more information or to learn how you can help a child in crisis, call 1.800.456.1386 or visit www.sunrise.org.

Chris Jones is the assistant director of communications for Sunrise Children's Services.

Ky. Baptists building missions pipeline to Alaska

By Robin Cornetet

London—First Baptist Church of London has built a missions pipeline to Alaska and the spigot twists open this month.

"It's one of the largest mission efforts of the church," said First Baptist Youth Pastor Ryan Coffey. "We're taking everyone from 6 to 60."

About 50 church members flew out recently to volunteer at a youth sports camp run by Alaska Missions.

The camp focuses on building relationships and sharing the gospel with young athletes while offering quality sports instruction.

First Baptist will provide instructional assistance in basketball, soccer and archery.

Coffey said evenings will be spent doing service projects, such as painting and cleaning, for a nearby Christian school.

"Our main objective is to go and love on the kids," Coffey said.

Church members have met regularly since February to pray and work on personal testimonies in preparation for the mission trip.

Kentucky Baptist Convention Affinity Evangelism Strategist Andy McDonald described Alaska as having a great spiritual need—a place where some people go to hide from God.

"There are a lot of great Alaska Baptists up there slugging away to reach people with the gospel, but they need help," McDonald said. "Our goal is to create a pipeline of Kentucky Baptists to go and serve."

This summer, Kentucky Baptists from half a dozen churches are participating in mission trips to Alaska.

Howard Fuller, retired education minister at Lone Oak First Baptist Church, is leading a group to Laverne Griffin Camp in Wasilla, Alaska.

Like the team from London, Fuller plans to use sports as a means to talk about Christ.

"It's about presenting the gospel where people live and where their love is," said Fuller.

His group plans to teach archery at

the camp then, end the week with a tournament and gospel presentation in the presence of family and friends.

Before returning to Kentucky, the team will offer training for Alaska churches about using the Centershot archery program as an outreach tool in family ministry.

"We've found that Centershot is very effective reaching young families, which a lot of churches are having difficulty doing," Fuller said.

The team raised about \$5,000 to purchase a Centershot kit with bows, arrows and targets so Alaska churches would be able to launch their own archery ministry.

Both Fuller and Coffey said the missions trips would not be their last to the land of the midnight sun.

First Baptist, London, already has opportunities to minister to families during the late summer salmon run and volunteer at the Iditarod next spring.

"I'm prayerfully optimistic," Coffey said. "I see Alaska as not only a long-term partnership for our church, but also for other Kentucky Baptist churches."

McDonald agreed.

"Kentucky Baptist churches working together with the Kentucky Baptist Convention could create an amazing network and really make an eternal difference in the lives of people in Alaska," he said.

To learn more about Alaska missions opportunities, or about using Centershot as an affinity evangelism tool, contact Kentucky Baptist Convention Affinity Evangelism Strategist Andy McDonald at andy.mcdonald@kybaptist.org. (KBC)

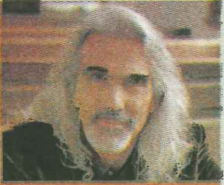


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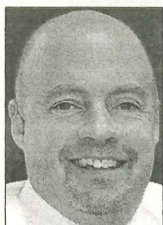


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A good reminder

After a recent week-long road trip, I was given a good reminder of why I go on the road from time to time. My recent trip had been a long and exhausting one. This trip, like most of

This is Oneida



Larry Gritton

my trips, was simply an effort to strengthen current Oneida partnerships and to also make new friendships for the Oneida ministry.

Sometimes I know immediately what the results of a trip are. Other times I may realize later on what the results are, and sometimes I will never know what the results may or may not be. Oftentimes my travels are exhausting, and I don't ever

enjoy being away from my family for very long, but I also know the importance of reaching out to the many friends of Oneida.

When I consider the challenges of my travels, I am often reminded and encouraged by what our founder, James Anderson Burns, once did. In "The Crucible" Burns wrote, "I

followed the long, long trail which would wind its way all over every state in the Union for twelve weary years. I delivered four thousand lectures to two million people. Every lecture was my best possible effort to secure friends for Oneida Institute and our mountain children. If five percent of the people in my audiences were vitally interested, then Oneida Institute has one hundred thousand faithful friends scattered over all the various states. The friendship of these, when materialized, should result in sufficient facilities to meet emergencies and supply the demands made upon our school."

I am baffled when I consider how Professor Burns was able to reach every state in the country in the early 1900s, but I am also encouraged in knowing I must do my very best to secure faithful friends to sustain Oneida well beyond my tenure.

The reminder I needed and received after my most recent trip came the following morning in chapel. At separate times just before the

service, two of our students approached me. This young lady and young man each epitomize Oneida. They are who we serve and why we do what we do in the Oneida ministry. Both have experienced trials in their home lives and both have unique challenges academically, yet they seem to be thriving at Oneida.

As our faculty and staff invest in them each and every day, they continue to grow spiritually, socially, physically and mentally. As each of these young people walked away from me, a tear came to my eye because I was reminded they are Oneida and they are why I go out seeking friends for Oneida.

Thank you for helping Oneida to reach these two youngsters and so many more just like them. God has been so faithful to Oneida, and you are a vital part of His work in this small yet significant place and work.

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.

In Memory Beloved Louisville Hispanic pastor dies

By Cary Donnell

Louisville—Pedro Jose "Pete" Rivera, former senior pastor at Westport Road Baptist Church's Getsemani Mission in Louisville, passed away on June 23. He was 79 years old.

Born in Caguas, Puerto Rico, Rivera attended Hardin Simmons University and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

He also served as a minister in Illinois, Louisiana and Florida and as a language minister in Illinois and Kentucky, as well as a missionary with the North American Mission Board.

Tony Hough, director of missions at Shelby Baptist Association, got to know Rivera while serving as ethnic and language missions director at the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

"Because he wasn't pushy or aggressive, he won the confidence of Hispanic ministers and churches," said Hough. "He was an excellent administrator. His gentleness, kindness and trustworthiness meant so much. His word was his bond."

Despite expecting to retire after a long life of ministry, Rivera changed course and accepted the position of senior pastor at the Getsemani Mission. Although he lived in Frankfort, every Sunday, he made the drive to Louisville.

"The folks at Getsemani adored him," added Hough, "He had amazing maturity. He was a very good strategist."

Rivera was instrumental in the growth of the Hispanic ministry in Kentucky.

He will be remembered for his efforts to reach and connect with Hispanics wherever he served.

"He was a real blessing to us," said Rick Lucas, interim director of missions at the Oldham-Trimble Baptist Association, "He was an excellent pastor and exemplary Christian. He helped ground Hispanic pastors and helped them understand Southern Baptist traditions and faith."

Rivera was involved with the Central Region Hispanic Ministries, which focused on reaching Hispanics in north and central Kentucky.

He also served the Hispanic Bible Institute in Kentucky.

"He worked with Anglo churches that were interested in sponsoring Hispanic churches and associations," added Lucas.

"Everybody loved him. He was always smiling. He was always happy," said Carlos de la Barra, church planting strategist at the Kentucky Baptist Convention and Rivera's former NAMB colleague.

"He spent all his time with the Lord," de la Barra added. "To him, the most important thing in life was serving the Lord."

He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Ann Marie, four children, 12 grandchildren and one great-grandchild. (WR)



Pete Rivera

A better attitude and a softer heart

New student Cody Simpkins, from Cincinnati, Ohio, is thankful for the learning environment at Clear Creek that has given him new insight into ministering to people.

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

"I was raised in a Catholic household but with no real emphasis on the love of God, or who Jesus really was," says Simpkins. "I knew the name and that was about it. My best friend invited me to church one day after track practice and I started going. After help-

ing out with my first VBS, God really spoke to me. The following Sunday the pastor preached on the parable of the lost sheep. I knew I was lost, I knew God was calling out to me to come home and I accepted Christ as

my Lord and Savior."

"After accepting Christ I got involved in the church serving where I was needed," says Simpkins. "I also enlisted in to the United States Marine Corps after feeling called by God to do so. When I came home I stayed involved in the church and started working with the youth. I felt a call to ministry and my pastor recommended Clear Creek. I initially visited the campus four years ago but never enrolled. I am glad I am here now."

"I enjoy my classes," says Simpkins. "Sometimes I will ask, 'How in the world is this going to help me?' and God tends to answer that question pretty quickly, (most of the time during class). As I grow in knowledge and understanding through all of these classes I see the relevance to ministry

and how I can apply them to the ministry God has called me to do."

"Clear Creek is not easy," says Simpkins. "However, it is one of the most rewarding experiences a person could have. The fellowship and the building up of one another allows me the ability to call Clear Creek my home. Someone is always right there ready to pick you up and walk with you through whatever you are dealing with. Clear Creek has helped me develop a better attitude and a softer heart towards people. Jesus gave us the commandment to love one another as He loved us and I believe Clear Creek represents that to the fullest extent possible."

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

Gift of a lifetime

Each year the Kentucky Baptist Foundation is fortunate to receive estate gifts that were planned in earlier years by thoughtful, forward-looking donors. These donors, through provisions in their wills and other long-term plans, made gifts that might otherwise not have been possible.

Ky. Baptist Foundation



Richard Carnes

Other individuals would like to support the ministries of their church and Baptist causes but think they don't have anything to give or believe such a gift would compromise their family member's future security. This is a common feeling but there is encouraging news on ways you can make a gift from assets you accumulated during a lifetime.

Giving through your will can be a convenient way to support the Christian ministries important to you. After first providing for your loved ones, you may decide to make a charitable gift of a specific amount, a percentage of your estate, or all or part of what remains after family and/or friends have been remembered.

While a will is usually the first method that comes to mind when considering a legacy gift, there are other ways to accomplish a donor's charitable goals. These plans are generally easy to put in place and can be adjusted if your circumstances change. Some of these strategies may include gifting through trusts, gifts of life insurance, gifts of real estate assets or gifts of retirement plan remainders.

Giving through a trust is an often used strategy. Many individuals make

use of trusts created during life to provide for management and future distribution of assets, then, at the termination of the trust, direct that a portion of the remaining assets be used for charitable purposes.

The Kentucky Baptist Foundation staff is honored to assist numerous Kentucky Baptists that have sought God's direction on how they should consider planning their financial matters in order to provide for their families, their church and other Baptist ministry causes.

If you have questions about these giving strategies or want to request a private estate stewardship consultation, please contact the Foundation's trust counsel, Laurie Valentine or me at our toll-free number (866) 489-3533.

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

Louisville megachurch looks within to find new pastor

By Cary Donnell

Louisville—Members of Highview Baptist Church voted to call Aaron Harvie as senior pastor on June 26.

Harvie, who has been interim lead pastor at the church's East Campus since October 2015, will begin his duties July 11. He succeeds Les Hughes, who resigned last June.

"I was faithfully serving the church

with my family, teaching on Wednesday nights starting in the fall. It was in October that God led me to pray to Him about my role at Highview," said Harvie of how he became involved at Highview, "That afternoon (interim) pastor Randy (Overstreet) texted me to see if I would be interested in an interim teaching position at East Campus. I knew this was from God and I immediately jumped in!"

Harvie has a wealth of experience in

church planting. After serving as senior pastor at Long Ridge Baptist Church in Owenton, he—with the support of the North American Mission Board—planted Riverside Community Church in Philadelphia, Pa., in 1999.

That church not only has grown significantly but also has planted four other churches in the area.

Harvie returned to Louisville in 2012, where he previously had attended

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, to train and develop church planters through a NAMB-supported teaching position at SBTS. He assumed his role as interim East Campus lead pastor last fall.

"(Harvie) is exactly the right man, at the right time, at the right church," said Al Mohler, president of Southern Seminary, "I've known Aaron for many years. I know him as a husband, as a father and as a leader." (WR)



July

14 LIFE Tour, Eastwood Baptist Church, Bowling Green

23 Excel, Reidland Baptist Church, Paducah

29-30 Camp Courage, Laurel Lake Camp, Corbin

August

2 Power Lunch, Kentucky Baptist Building, Louisville.

11 LIFE Tour, First Baptist Church, Clinton.

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

BAGDAD—Indian Fork Church has called **Steve Adams** as its new pastor.

BOAZ—Wice Memorial Church is celebrating its 70th anniversary on July 17. It will begin at 10:30 a.m. with a potluck meal at noon. Wice will furnish the meat and bread. **Frankie Goode** is pastor.

LOUISVILLE—Green Acres Church announces its 60th anniversary celebration on Sunday, July 31. The congregation invites former members and friends to Bible Study at 9:15 a.m., morning worship at 10:30 a.m. with dinner on grounds (RSVP requested) at 12:15 p.m. and special concert by GABC Praise Team and friends at 1:15 p.m. To RSVP or check on details call church secretary Nancy Thomas at (502) 964-8165.

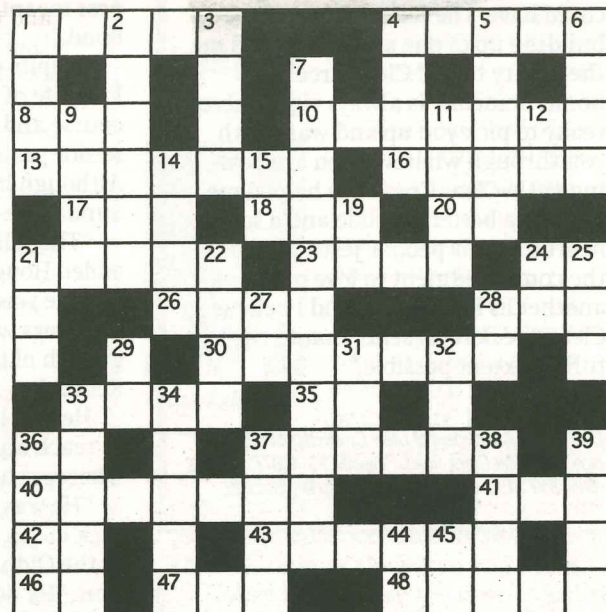
MURRAY—Salem Church has called **Lucas Nance** as its pastor.

Bible Crosswords

By Mary Louise DeMott

Across

- 1 Father of 23 and 48 Across (Genesis 4:21)
- 4 Father of those who dwell in tents (Genesis 4:20)
- 8 A tract of open grassland
- 10 Pursuing wild animals for food
- 13 A length measured in yards
- 16 To rub or scrape out
- 17 Serial, abbr.
- 18 Suitable
- 20 Iridium, chem. symbol
- 21 Dry cut stalks of grain
- 23 Musical instrument with strings stretched on a roughly triangular frame
- 24 Barium, chem. symbol
- 26 Fermented grape juice
- 28 No
- 30 Using land to grow crops
- 33 Color of the sky
- 35 First note of the musical scale
- 36 Argon, chem. symbol
- 37 "_____ the mighty hunter" (Genesis 10:8-9)
- 40 A bag, or envelope, inflated with air
- 41 Rural Electrification Administration, abbr.
- 42 Einsteinium, chem. symbol
- 43 Mystery writer Christie's first name
- 46 Latin, Locus Sigilli, means



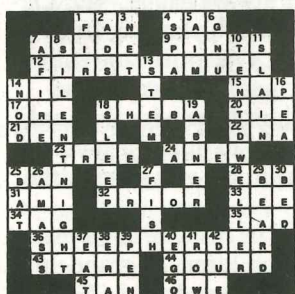
#67

- place of the seal, abbr.
47 School, abbr.
48 Musical instrument made of pipes, that air is forced through

Down

- 1 A summer month
- 2 A person who carries something
- 3 Unit of money in Turkey
- 4 A summer month
- 5 Thorny or prickly plant with woody stem
- 6 Forward section of lowest balcony
- 7 Tending a flock of sheep
- 9 Opposite of west
- 11 Walk or run with quick, light steps
- 12 Not specified, abbr.
- 14 To pull back his hunting equipment for 37 Across
- 15 Gallium, chem. symbol

- 19 Tantalum, chem. symbol
- 21 Number 39 Down turns this when he works
- 22 Opposite of husband
- 24 Bachelor of Arts, abbr.
- 25 Opposite of 28 Across
- 27 Sodium, chem. symbol
- 28 National Guard, abbr.
- 29 Fluid, abbr.
- 31 Mother
- 32 Noncommissioned Officer, abbr.
- 34 Mottled yellow and green citrus fruits
- 36 Father of 7 Down (Genesis 4:2)
- 37 Built the ark, the father of zoology (Genesis 6:13-14)
- 38 To pull something with difficulty
- 39 Father of 30 Across
- 44 Preposition
- 45 Home run, abbr.



#66

CLASSIFIED ADS

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: 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: Friendship Baptist Church is seeking a bi-vocational pastor. Friendship is a rural church with children and youth ministries. Resumes 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: 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: First Baptist Church of Bowling Green, Ky., is accepting resumes for a full-time minister of music. Visit <http://firstbaptistbg.org/music-minister-search> for further details. Resumé and cover letter (PDF) may be submitted to fbcmst@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 is open to the creativity and skill set of the successful candidate for the second coverage area. The church is located next door to and partner with Georgetown College and Baptist Seminary of Kentucky. Please send inquiries to APSC@georgetown-baptist.org.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church in Russell Springs, Ky., is accepting applications for pastor following retirement of previous pastor. Resumes 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 mary-hughes28@gmail.com. (502) 223-8364.

SERVICE: See your creative ideas in print! Trellis Writing & Ghostwriting offers services in multiple genres and mediums. Extensive experience in Christian fiction/non-fiction, as well as ministry, scholarly, and business writing. To get started, visit

www.trelliswriting.com, contact info@trelliswriting.com, or call (602) 803-0820.

AVAILABLE: DeHaven Baptist Church has 200+, 1991 Baptist Hymnals to donate to a church, nursing home or other group in need of hymnals. Contact: Rev. Clay Sommer at dehavenmusic@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Part-time children's minister, newborn through 5th Grade. 20-25 hours per week. Experience and Education preferred but not required. Send resumé to: Alton Baptist Church, 1321 Bypass North, Lawrenceburg, KY 40342 Attn: Gary Ellcessor.

SEEKING: The Summersville (Ky.) Baptist Church is accepting resumes for a pastor. We are looking for a God-called individual who will lead our church forward and further develop our congregation. Please send your resumé to Summersville Baptist Church, c/o Pulpit Committee, PO Box 68, Summersville, KY 42782.

SEEKING: Friendship Baptist Church in Campbellsville, Ky. is in search of a part-time youth minister. E-mail: friendshipyouthresume@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Columbia Baptist Church is seeking a full time minister of students (Grades 7-12). Candidates must have 1-2 years of experience working with youth and a bachelor's degree is preferred. Please send resumé to: ATTN: Personnel Committee, Columbia Baptist Church, 201 Greensburg Street, Columbia, KY 42728 or email them to churchoffice@columbiabaptist.com. While Columbia Baptist appreciates all candidates, applicants should understand it is not a reformed church.

SEEKING: Lewisport (Ky.) Baptist is seeking a senior pastor. Our church exists to glorify God by making disciples who are consumed in worship, craving the word, connected in authentic community, committed to prayer, and compelled to serve. Send resumé to pastorsearch@lewisport-baptist.org or PO box 475, Lewisport, KY 42351 between July 11 and August 22.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church Paris, Ky. is accepting resumes for a full-time pastor. Send resumé and inquiries to fbk.pky.psc@gmail.com.

SEEKING: New Cut Road Baptist Church seeking part-time worship leader. Worship style: blend of traditional and contemporary. Qualifications: Born again Christian; two years of experience; and high school or GED. Description: Under pastor's supervision, plan, promote and implement music program to include adult choir, praise team and accompanying instrumentalists. Submit resumé by email: newcutroadbaptist@gmail.com or mail to New Cut Road Baptist Church, PO Box 14085, Louisville, KY 40214. For details, call: Matt Likes at (502) 593-4410.

AVAILABLE: Jewish Outreach Ministry. Co-founder and former president of the Southern Baptist Messianic Fellowship is working in Louisville to begin a Jewish Ministry. For information, call Jim Hendricks at 540-525-4116.

'We the People' stirs state legislator's loyalty

By Jim Burton

Only a few people recognized the words written more than 150 years ago when David Floyd read them at Bardstown Baptist Church during a God and Country emphasis.

Citing a call to "public humiliation, prayer, and fasting" to be observed by all Americans, the state representative and military veteran shared these words of proclamation to his church:

"Whereas it is fit and becoming in all people at all times to acknowledge and revere the supreme government of God, to bow in humble submission to His chastisements, to confess and deplore their sins and transgressions in the full conviction that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and to pray with all fervency and contrition for the pardon of their past offenses and for a blessing upon their present and prospective action."

What may have sounded like words from a pulpit were actually those of President Abraham Lincoln when he signed Proclamation 85 on Aug. 21, 1861, proclaiming a Day of National Humiliation, Prayer, and Fasting.

"In our history, the most intelligent men were men of faith," Floyd said. "I accept the gospel by faith, but I also accept it intellectually."

The retired Air Force officer and current Kentucky state legislator asked his fellow church members if their country was worth praying for.

"I compared it to praying for your child," Floyd said. "You don't have a moment of silence on behalf of your child; you cry out to God."

The 30-minute presentation was challenging but rewarding.

"While I was speaking, I will say that every eye was on (me) and they were still," Floyd said of the attentiveness. At the invitation, several went to the altar to pray for America.

The lifelong Southern Baptist is one of four brothers who served America in the Air Force and Navy as they followed the example of their father who was in the Medical Corps during World War II.

Two sisters, Carolyn and Ruth, accidentally drowned in a pond on the Floyd's Nelson County farm in 1959 when Floyd was 8. The tragedy taught him a lesson about the frailty of life that served him well during his deployment to Saudi Arabia during Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

When a potential chemical attack threatened his base, Floyd said he remained calm though for a moment death seemed imminent.

"I was at peace," Floyd said. "That experience revealed to me the peace that knows all will be well. This world is just a stopover. That was a defining moment in my spiritual life to understand that it's going to be okay."

Mandatory churchgoing while growing up plus mandatory chapel attendance at the Air Force Academy helped Floyd stay focused on matters of faith.

However, he does admit to a time as a child when he rebelled.

"Serve your country and your community. Be grateful that you were born in America and love your country, despite its flaws—approaching your love for a child who will disappoint at times."

Rep. David Floyd (R) Bardstown



Above: Whenever he speaks to local fifth-graders, state representative David Floyd invites a student to read the preamble of the U.S. Constitution. **Right:** David Floyd of Bardstown, prepares to fly a cadet airplane at the Air Force Academy. He later spent 22 years in military service.

"I stuck my shoes in the toilet so I wouldn't have to go to church," Floyd said. "So I went to church barefoot that Sunday."

At the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Floyd attended services in the majestic Cadet Chapel that opened in 1962. The structure is 150 feet tall and has 17 spires, which he jokingly says represent the 12 disciples and five Joint Chiefs of Staff.

During a 22-year career with the Air Force, Floyd and his wife Cheri lived with their two daughters in multiple places in the U.S. and Europe.

"Even though I grew up in a Baptist church and all my brothers were baptized, I was never baptized," Floyd said. "So I was baptized in Germany in a swimming pool."

For much of his military career, Floyd flew KC-135 Stratotankers that refueled other military aircraft in flight during their sorties. He also flew U-2 aircraft.

In Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the KC-135s made an estimated 18,700 "hookups" and delivered 278 million pounds of fuel. Floyd was a wing operations officer.

After retiring from the Air Force, Floyd returned to Bardstown where he and his brothers built an assisted living center that now has personal and nursing care.

"As a family, we had a common mission," Floyd said of the endeavor.

Floyd served as CEO of the retirement community until Nelson County residents elected him as their representative to the Kentucky General Assembly in 2004. During his legislative tenure, Floyd calls his signature achievement the passage of a bill that vacated

and expunged certain class D felonies, which are typically minor offenses.

"Through this, past sins can not only be forgiven but washed 'white as snow,'" Floyd said.

Just as he has been loyal to his country, Floyd is loyal to his family. He has announced that he will not seek re-election to the Kentucky legislature while an adult daughter faces a tough cancer battle in Middle Tennessee. The Floyds want to be available to help their daughter, her husband and their 18-month-old grandson during this time.

As a retired lieutenant colonel with more than 20 years in the Air Force, Floyd remains a staunch proponent for young adults serving in the military.

"It's a mission field," Floyd said of the military. "It's an opportunity to be sought and not avoided. As a Christian, you should look at it as an opportunity."

As Americans were celebrating Independence Day on July 4, Floyd encouraged patriotism.

"Serve your country and your community," he said. "Be grateful that you were born in America and love your country, despite its flaws—approaching your love for a child who will disappoint at times."

Each fall, Floyd visits fifth-grade classes in his local district to champion representative democracy. He typically asks a student to read the preamble of the U.S. Constitution that begins with "We the People," which he then underscores throughout his presentation.

As he departs the classroom, he asks, "What are the three most important words in America?"

"I always have a lump in my throat when they call out 'We the People' in unison," Floyd said. (BP)



Salvisa Baptist celebrates 175 years of ministry

Salvisa Baptist Church celebrated 175 years of ministry June 12.

The celebration included morning worship, a sermon by Pastor Jonathan Jones, catered luncheon and an afternoon service with special presentations and recognitions. Approximately 220 people celebrated with the church.

Jones, Salvisa Baptist's pastor since May 2015, presented a sermon on Joshua 4 and the memorial stones from the Jordan River and the camp at Gilgal. Jones encouraged the congregation to not focus on the finite details of how, when and what things would happen in the church's future, but to have faith that God is always in control and present in whatever challenges come.

Referencing how God had dried up the Jordan so the Israelites could cross, Jones said today many people are "living on the wrong side of the river."

"I believe they're waiting for God to stop the water before they step in," he said. "God is waiting to see if you are willing to trust Him and take His word."

Former pastors Larry Duke, James Craigmile, Larry Koch and James Hensley, former association pastor Jonathan Bennett, and past youth and music ministers were recognized during the afternoon service.

Nick Sandefur, North Central regional consultant for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, presented a certificate to the church in honor of its 175 years of ministry and contribution to the life and ministry of Baptists in Kentucky. District Representative Kim King also presented a citation on behalf of the Kentucky House of Representatives.

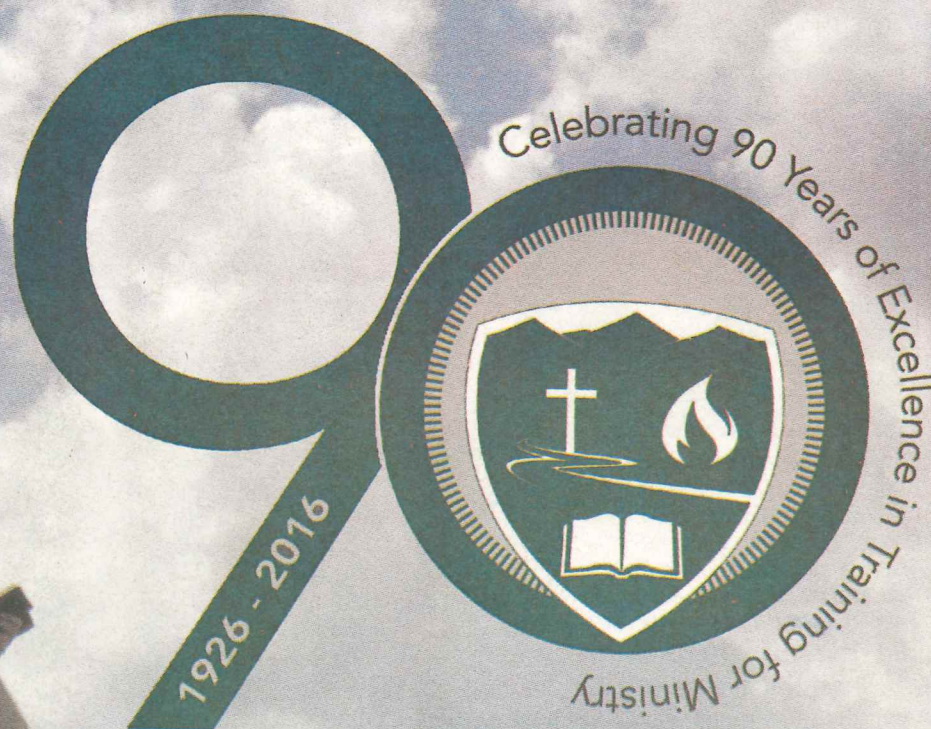
The program ended with a reading of the church's history by Mary Warford and a special concert by Made New, a gospel band from Harrodsburg.

Salvisa Baptist was organized in the spring of 1841 and has had 57 pastors and been through five building programs.

"As we begin the next leg of our journey, we must prepare ourselves spiritually for what God is preparing to do in the life of this church," Jones said sharing that he is looking forward to the church's next 175 years. "God is still in the business of doing amazing things." (WR)

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