

WESTERN
Recorder

August 23, 2016 — *Shine Like Stars* ✳ Philippians 2:15 — Volume 190, Issue 17

Amid Louisiana flooding, social media conveys hope

Baton Rouge, La.—Sermons by social media became a means of disaster response Aug. 14 amid record rainfall and flooding across south Louisiana.

David Denton, pastor of Highland Baptist Church in New Iberia, used Facebook to speak to church members after services were cancelled.

"Help with cleanup, and exercise caution in doing so," Denton told church members, according to the Baptist Message, newsjournal of the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

"Feed people who are hungry. Get involved wherever you can and by all means share Christ with people," Denton said.

"Be encouraged by God's promise that there is coming a day when there will be no need for rescue shelters or clean up because there will be no more floods," Denton said. "Hold on to that hope."

Brian Crain, pastor of Progression Church in Baton Rouge, also used Facebook to deliver his sermon, speaking from the living room of worship pastor Michael Young.

"Just reach out and be the hands and feet of Jesus," Crain told Progression Church members, the Baptist Message reported.

"It's going to take a lot of us to be able to work together and really see an impact made in the city," Crain said. "But it's a great way for the church" to step up as the "collective body of followers of

❑ *See Louisiana flooding... Page 2*



The city of Denham Springs is among the hardest-hit in flooding across south Louisiana. (Photo from Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness)





Christian Co. churches partner for outreach to migrant workers

By Cary Donnell

Crofton—New Palestine Baptist Church in Crofton, Sinking Fork Baptist Church in Hopkinsville and Crofton Baptist Church joined in an outreach effort to area Hispanic, migrant tobacco farmers.

Approximately 125 migrants attended the event, which is one of multiple outreach efforts planned for the next several months.

"It's a process of building relationships for the sake of spreading the gospel," said Ken Cummins, bivocational pastor of New Palestine Church, which hosted the event, "It's our obligation to reach our neighbors."

The idea for this ministry effort began with an idea from David Daniel, a church deacon and Sunday School teacher at New Palestine, who suggested a mechanical bull be provided for recreational use at the outreach events. The proposal was met with approval by church staff.

"The migrant ministry has been going on for years. We had been hosting an ongoing Bible study during the week," added Cummins. "Many of these migrants are struggling on the tobacco farms this year due to the heavy rain we've had.

"We just felt like this event would be an effective tool for area churches

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A man embraces a woman as she arrives on scene to talk to Bowling Green Police, Sunday, Aug. 14, 2016, after a man allegedly stabbed his father during a church service at Hillvue Heights Baptist Church in Bowling Green, Ky. The victim was taken to a hospital where his condition wasn't immediately known. (Miranda Pederson/ Daily News via AP)

Bowling Green church still 'place for all people' after man stabs father

By Todd Deaton and Cary Donnell

Bowling Green—A Bowling Green man was arrested after allegedly attacking his father with a pocket knife at Hillvue Heights Baptist Church on Aug. 14. The church's co-lead pastor, however, is encouraging the congregation not to recoil in fear, but instead remain "a church for all people."

According to the Bowling Green Daily News, Ethan Buckley, of Bowling Green, was charged with first-degree assault-domestic violence after allegedly stabbing his father multiple times in the neck during a morning service. The church's security team apprehended Buckley until police arrived.

After the incident, the church cancelled its 11 a.m. service while members comforted each other, trying to make sense of what happened.

"It's scary, but in today's society this can happen anywhere," said Alicia Bell, who was in the sanctuary during the attack, according to the Daily News. "I'm glad my family and I are okay, and I'm praying for anybody who was hurt."

In his Wednesday night message Aug. 17, Jamie Ward, co-lead pastor at Hillvue Heights, reflected on the incident.

Before that Sunday service, Ward said he had spoken to both of the first-time guests, who were seated on the third row, as he recalled.

While the father appeared to be a "very humble and gentle man," Ward recollected that the son "wouldn't acknowledge me."

During an altar call, Ward said he heard a scream. "The young man grabbed his father around the neck and

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Central City church to provide Bibles through motorcycle ride

By Cary Donnell

Central City—South Carrollton Missionary Baptist Church is hosting a motorcycle ride on Sept. 10 to provide Bibles around the world.

Following the ride, the church is also hosting a cookout, where fried catfish and hush puppies will be served, and a silent auction for Harley-Davidson motorcycle merchandise. Proceeds from the event will go toward purchasing Bibles.

"This is a tremendous service (South Carrollton Missionary Baptist) is doing. They're getting involved in reaching out to the community," said Jerry Eades, director of missions at Muhlenberg County Baptist Association. "It's a great thing they've done the past few years and again this year."

The event begins at 9 a.m. with a devotion and prayer for the riders, their families and churches, and for the United States. Kickstands will be up at 11 a.m., and riders will leave the church on the ride.

Although the church is hosting the event and Muhlenberg association is providing support and helping raise awareness, the motorcyclists are the ones evangelizing and building relationships to help purchase Bibles and, ultimately, spread the gospel. They, said Eades, are the ones who should receive a bulk of the attention and recognition.

"Sometimes, we don't give credit where credit is due," concluded Eades. "These motorcyclists deserve credit for reaching out to the surrounding community in the name of the Lord." (WR)

Mayfield church collects $118k offering for church planters

By Cary Donnell

Mayfield—Every year, First Baptist Church of Mayfield celebrates Founders Day. As part of the celebration, they collect an offering, which is usually used towards building renovation.

But this year, they felt led to give away all of their $118,000 offering to church planters who are serving in two largely unreached locations in the United States.

"So many members of our church have seen firsthand the brokenness and lostness of the Native American reservation in Arizona and Staten Island in New York," said Wes Fowler, senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Mayfield, "It's hard to believe, but there are places in the United States where virtually nobody is reached."

Most of the offering will go to help Chris Turpin, the missionary leading the effort to reach the lost in Staten Island, N.Y. The remainder will be donated to the mission efforts in Arizona among a village of unreached Native Americans. The Mayfield congregation believes God has specifically placed these mission fields within their scope and in the hearts of their church.

"The congregation has always given generously, whether there was a specific offering we were trying to raise or if was a regular Sunday," added Fowler. "In this case, there was even more giving. It's such a blessing to have a church that has that kind of heart for the Lord."

"When (Fowler) announced the total amount given to the offering, he said if the giving didn't cause a difference in something in their lives, then it probably wasn't sacrificial," said Todd Gray, church consultant for the Kentucky Baptist Convention who preached at the church that Sunday, "That really says a lot about him and his church."

The goal for Turpin and his ministry in Staten Island is to plant 50 churches in the next 25 years. Church planters recognize that it is contributions from churches like First Baptist and other outside sources that help make their ministry possible.

"Gospel focus and selflessness are key attributes to a healthy church," concluded Fowler. "(The congregation) saw a need for people to come to know the Lord and they responded."

Gray added, "The story needs telling. The fact that there was a record offering for church planting says something about the congregation. Their priorities are where they need to be." (WR)

KBC chorales: musical ambassadors for Christ

Bowling Green—Be an ambassador for Christ through music and join the Kentucky Baptist Convention Men's and Women's chorales.

The 2016-17 chorale season gets underway Sept. 23-24 with a retreat at Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green.

Individuals interested in participating in a chorale are encouraged to register at either www.kybaptist.org/menschorale or www.kybaptist.org/womenschorale.

All season performances are open to the public and offer opportunities to share the gospel with family and friends.

The 2016-17 Men's and Women's Chorale Season includes:

- Oct. 9, women's chorale, Highview Baptist Church, Louisville, 6 p.m.
- Oct. 20, combined chorales, Harrodsburg Baptist Church, 7 p.m.
- Nov. 15, combined chorales, Florence Baptist Church during the KBC Annual Meeting afternoon session
- Nov. 15, men's chorale, Erlanger Baptist Church, 7 p.m.
- Feb. 16, men's chorale, Horse Cave Baptist Church, 7 p.m.
- March 14, combined chorales, Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah, 7 p.m.
- April 20, men's chorale, Oneida Baptist Institute, 7 p.m.
- May 7, women's chorale, First Baptist Church, Walton. 7 p.m.

The men's and women's chorales will be accompanied by the Kentucky Baptist Wind Orchestra, comprised of ministers of music and instrumentalists from Kentucky Baptist churches. (KBC)





Louisiana flooding

Continued from Page 1

Jesus to get involved in the city."

Slow-moving storms began dumping rain on southern Louisiana on Thursday, Aug. 11, spawning floodwaters that have claimed at least six lives and required the rescue of 20,000 residents by the National Guard, according to the Weather Channel. Additional thousands were rescued by other agencies or individuals, and still thousands more have been evacuated, many in and around Baton Rouge, as rain continued into Sunday.

Portions of three Interstate highways, I-10, I-12 and I-110, were closed by floodwaters Saturday in Baton Rouge. Much of the campus of Louisiana State University was covered by floodwater.

Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers were aiding survivors within hours, helping where they could and beginning the ramp up to service that will help bring safe water, nutritious meals and compassion in the face of crisis.

"We are in the process of initiating a response in coordination with the Louisiana Baptist Convention disaster relief and our national partners," said Mickey Caison, executive director for Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR) through the North American Mission Board.

Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief shower units and volunteers were deployed on Friday, Aug. 19, according to Coy Webb, the convention's Disaster Relief director. The shower units, which will be stationed at Prairieville and Livingston, La., have been requested for a minimum of two weeks, he said.

Flood recovery teams also are preparing to leave for Prairieville Aug. 23, Webb said.

Following the initial response, SBDR volunteers will be needed to aid survivors with mud-out, cleanup and other service, Caison said.

"Please pray that those affected will be safe and our volunteers will be faithful in ministry to them," Caison said. "It is our desire to bring honor and glory to our Lord as we share the hope of the gospel while serving others."

An estimated 40 Louisiana Baptist churches have been damaged by floodwater to varying degrees, according to information in the Baptist Message's reports, along with 20 homes of pastors and ministers.

Meanwhile, more than a half-dozen Baptist churches were among the facilities serving as shelters for evacuees.

"Pray first for safety as people are searching for higher ground," said Leo Miller, pastor of First Baptist Church in Denham Springs, which took on at least 4 feet of water. "Pray for God to use this crisis for His glory. Churches are already opening doors for shelter. Pray for God to grant mercy and favor as people move into the rebuilding process."

Those wishing to donate to SBDR relief can contact the Baptist convention in their state, or in this case the Louisiana Baptist Convention Disaster Relief Fund, https://louisianabaptists.org/donateDR.

Donations also can be made through NAMB at 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/WR)

Nursing fellowship celebrating another year of ministry

By Myriah Snyder

Elizabethtown—At any given Kentucky Baptist meeting, gathering or church block party, a table of Baptist Nursing Fellowship nurses will likely be found with their blood sugar and pressure monitors, pamphlets and expert advice. Kentucky BNF is celebrating another successful year of ministry by keeping at it.

At their summer meeting on Aug. 6 in Elizabethtown, the nurses gathered for a time of continued education, fellowship and planning.

The continuing education session was on Bridges Out of Poverty, taught by Benita Decker, Kentucky BNF president and a credentialed course teacher.

According to the curriculum, the Bridges Out of Poverty workshop is an interactive session that introduces participants to the culture of poverty by examining social class characteristics and how they relate to health, community and the church.

"Participants develop an accurate mental model of poverty, explore some of the hidden rules of poverty compared to the middle and wealthy economic classes, and learn about the resources needed to improve relationships and outcomes for people living in poverty," the curriculum states.

"Baptist Nursing Fellowship is an opportunity for healthcare workers across the state to come together to network and to grow in their Christian walk," Decker said.

She continued, "It's an avenue to learn how to reach out to people using their gifts as a healthcare worker and to pray for each other and for healthcare workers on the mission field."

Throughout the year, Baptist Nursing Fellowship has participated in many health initiatives around the state.

On Sunday, Aug. 7, the nurses appeared at the Fern Creek Health Fair, where they took blood pressure and blood sugar, handed out information and made connections in the community. They did the same thing at the Senior Living Celebration events and had a health table at the KBC ministers' wives event.

"When we do block parties, those kind of events provide an opportunity for anybody who stops by to get their blood pressure checked to sit down and talk to a medical professional," Wanda Walker, the adult consultant with Kentucky WMU, said.



BNF nurses hand out health information pamphlets at the Fern Creek Health Fair.

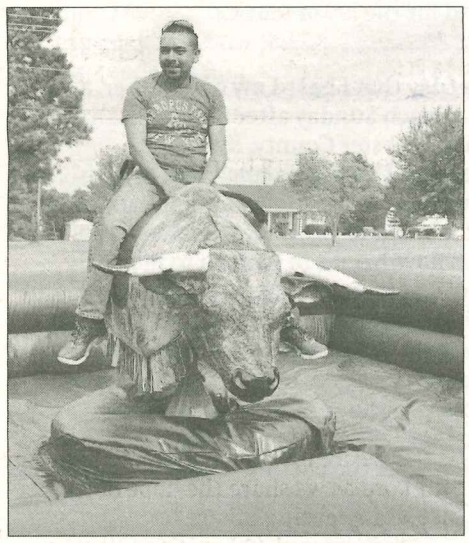
"Sometimes in that conversation, things come up that they never think about. And it leads to, 'Maybe you really should go to the doctor and talk to him about this,'" she shared.

In addition, many of the nurses have started or are involved in health ministries within their churches, as well as Baby Boot Camps to help prepare first-time mothers for parenthood.

"Anywhere they go, our nurses have been so busy, because I think people are more health conscious and I think they just like to know, 'Is my blood pressure O.K. today? I've wondered, do I have high blood sugar?'" Walker said, sharing some about the way people react to interaction with the nurses.

Walker concluded, "I have witnessed BNF nurses serve the whole person. As they do a blood pressure or talk to someone about their medications, they are interested in more than the physical wellbeing, they are investing in the mental, emotional and, most importantly, spiritual wellbeing of each individual they serve. These nurses are not just called to be a nurse; they are called to minister."

For more information about the Kentucky BNF, visit http://www.kywmu.org/bnf. (WR)



Migrant ministry

Continued from Page 1

to come together to reach this community."

After the worship services on Aug. 14, the three churches provided a meal, a gospel presentation and Spanish New Testaments to the migrant workers. The mechanical bull was available for use and local WMU provided gifts to be distributed.

To the disappointment of leaders, there were no responses to the gospel presentation, but that won't deter future evangelism efforts.

"The Lord is always at work around us. He uses us as his witnesses," explained Cummins. "He is working on the hearts of the migrant workers here for the season as well as those who live here."

Going forward, the Christian County churches know it will take commitment, hard work, cooperation and prayer to reach their neighbors.

"(These efforts) have been demonstrative of how the body of Christ reaches out to all nationalities, especially the Hispanic migrant works in our nearby communities," said Cummins. (WR)

Henderson church gives sports equipment to Louisville ministry

By Myriah Snyder

Henderson—A western Kentucky church partnered with Long Run Baptist Association to donate sports equipment to an urban Louisville ministry.

Zion Baptist Church in Henderson has been collecting the equipment for years for a ministry that never came to fruition. In effort to do something meaningful with the large amount of equipment, they contacted the Kentucky Baptist Convention, which pointed them to Long Run Baptist Association and the Louisville Baptist Fellowship Center.

"We were just looking for someone to partner with and hopefully this will blossom into a partnership," Doug Hamblin, student pastor at Zion, said.

Hamblin helped deliver the equipment, and said the church was glad to see the equipment put to use and to get a chance to work with the Baptist Fellowship Center.

"A donation like this is another reminder of the importance of partnerships, like this one between a church in western Kentucky and an inner-city ministry in west Louisville," Eric Allen, KBC missions mobilization team leader, said.

"The Baptist Fellowship Center hasn't had the means to minister to youth through sports camps and recreational activities the way they'd like to, but that has all changed with this generous gift from Zion Baptist Church," Allen added.

Damon Armstead, Baptist Fellowship Center executive director, said this equipment will go to needy families whose children wanted to participate in sports but cannot afford the equipment.

"We want to use those items as an incentive for them to some way volunteer in the community on behalf of the Baptist Fellowship Center and the mission that we are trying to accomplish here," Armstead said. "Much in the same way that the Bible teaches us that since we have freely been given, we have to freely give."

This sports equipment ministry is one of many things the Baptist Fellowship Center does.

In addition to counseling services, emergency assistance, and a summer day camp, they recently had a back-to-school block party.

Armstead, who has been the executive director since January, is seeking more ways for the Center to not only "collaborate in leadership," he said, referring to the board being made up of nine members from each association, "but also in followership."

Collaborative ministry is one of the center's core values.

"Just as the Bible tells us that folks will know us by our fruit, and we need to have love one toward another. Christ's prayer for us was that we would be one even as He and the Father were one," he said.

"When you get people working on behalf of Christ, race becomes less of an issue in regards to that," he said. "That's how we do it."

Allen added, "This gift of sports equipment is very timely considering the unique ministry of BFC to Louisville's west end and the racial tension we are experiencing in our country." (WR)

CP giving tops $20M

Louisville—Kentucky Baptist churches have given more than $20 million this fiscal year through the Cooperative Program. The latest financial report from the Kentucky Baptist Convention showed churches contributed an additional $1,597,361 in July.

"It's a joy to see our churches working cooperatively to get the gospel to people all over the world," said KBC Executive Director Paul Chitwood. "Money given through the Cooperative Program allows us to keep thousands of missionaries in places the average congregation would never have an opportunity to reach working alone."

The CP is the primary means for nearly 750,000 Kentucky Baptists in 2,400 churches to support missionaries around the world. Total CP receipts from Sept. 1 through July 31 are $625,000 ahead of budget projections with one month to go in the fiscal year, that ends Aug. 31.

"We'll need to receive $1,730,938 to exceed last year's CP total of $21,837,101," said Lowell Ashby, head of the KBC's Finance and Business Services Team. "I'm praying we'll actually reach $22M or more with a $1.9 million CP total for August. ... This is a good time to remind our churches that gifts need to be postmarked by Wednesday, Aug. 31, and received by Friday, Sep. 2 to be counted in this fiscal year."

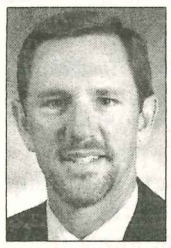
Churches have been generous in their giving to three offerings that support missions. They've given nearly $5.3 million to the Lottie Moon offering for international missions, $2.3 million through the Annie Armstrong offering for North American missions, and almost $1.2 million for the Eliza Broadus offering for state missions. (KBC)

What do the new overtime regulations mean for churches?

Guest post by Jim Donnell, KBC Associate Executive Director

Questions abound regarding the recent Department of Labor regulations for overtime pay. Here are answers to some frequently asked questions on this important, albeit confusing, topic.

Together
We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

What are the new overtime regulations all about? They are related to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), the federal law that dictates minimum wage and overtime be paid to certain employees. Some employees are exempt from these requirements due to the duties they perform and the salaries they are paid. The federal Department of Labor, which administers the FLSA, released new regulations increasing the salary threshold that must be met in order for an employee to be considered exempt from overtime pay. That threshold has been raised from an annual salary of $23,660 to $47,476. This increase becomes effective Dec. 1.

Are churches required to comply with the new regulations? Unfortunately, most churches are not exempt from complying with the FLSA and the new overtime regulations. Some churches may not engage in interstate commerce (i.e, do not purchase goods from across state lines, do not make interstate phone calls, etc.) and, as a result, they would be exempt from the FLSA. These churches, however, are few and far between.

Are ministerial staff members impacted? This is the good news. Some employees are always exempt from the FLSA. This group includes ministers employed by churches and religious organizations. It also includes staff members who are not ordained or have the title "minister," but who still perform ministerial duties.

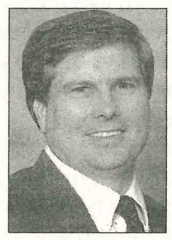
What steps should a church take to comply with the regulations? First, churches should review the salaries of any non-ministerial staff members who are currently exempt. Secondly, for any employees who paid an annual salary of less than $47,476, a decision must be made as to whether or not the church is willing to increase the salary to the new salary threshold amount. If so, the staff member may continue to be paid on a consistent salary basis with no adjustments due to hours worked. If the church is not willing or cannot afford to increase the salary to at least $47,476, the staff member must be converted to a non-exempt status. Work hours must be tracked and overtime paid at the rate of one-and-a-half times the regular hourly rate. The church may continue to pay the employee on a salary basis, however, once hours worked in a given work week reach 40, then the salary must be converted to an hourly rate and the overtime hours paid as previously stated.

Worshiping through music affects our lives

Worship music has played a significant part in my spiritual life from the time I was a youngster.

Though I cannot remember the name of the song, I do recall my first solo in a Christmas musical as a kindergartener. It had something to do with the "clip-clop" sounds made by Mary and Joseph's donkey as they made their way to Jerusalem.

My piano teacher in elementary school insisted upon teaching hymns to me, though I much preferred playing the hip-hop, "boogie-woogie" songs of the day. I think she may have had a clandestine purpose—not for my soul, but for me to become a pianist for our church one day. It didn't quite work out, though. Little league football season started, and dreams of being a star receiver interfered. That didn't quite work out either.



After Thought

By Todd Deaton

The churches where my dad served during my junior high and high school years both had large, active youth choirs. They were fun places to hang out with friends on Sunday nights, and we took several trips to sing at area churches. Several of us even were honored to be part of the state convention's All-State Youth Choir.

In college, attempting to follow in my Dad's steps, I tried out for the Furman Singers. Sight-reading a piece that I'd never heard before didn't go very well. In fact, the director's bewildered grimaces linger still. I did, however, wind up singing with the university chorus for a while. At Christmas, the chorus joined with the Singers for a performance of Handel's "Messiah." The mass choir's sound was impressive to say the least, and I can recall the words to many of those incredible compositions even today.

At our wedding, a church hand bell choir in which I had participated as a teenager made the long trek across several states to play for the pre-processional and to do a peal of bells as we left the altar. During the ceremony, the congregation joined with us in singing "The Lord's Prayer." I still get choked up whenever someone intones, "For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory forever."

As newlyweds, Michelle and I joined the church choir and played hand bells again. She played several of the high, tinkling bells, and I struggled along with several of the low, gonging bells. She was pregnant with Laura for much of the time, and I believe the joyful sounds of those bells have something to do with our daughter's love of music and playing a cello. Our son, Caleb, later learned to play the French horn.

The church where we now attend in Louisville has an outstanding choir with a talented orchestra and praise team. Worship music is always thoughtfully planned, well-prepared and very meaningful. Neither Michelle nor I have participated in a church choir for years, choosing to worship together as a family. But now that our kids are grown, there's renewed talk of returning to the loft.

Why have I taken you along on this trek down memory lane? Worship music likely has affected your spiritual lives, too, helping shape your theology. And, although few churches probably note it, this week is Worship Music Week on the Southern Baptist Convention's calendar. Frankly, I wouldn't have known it, except that there is one sitting on my desk.

Don't let this Sunday pass by without expressing a sincere word of appreciation for the ministry of your music leader and for the choir members, pianist, organist, orchestra and praise team who faithfully lift their voices and instruments—and our spirits—in praise of the Heavenly Father. Most importantly, thank our God for the joy of music.

A believer's life at 60

It seems like only yesterday that Mom and Dad took Steve and me on vacation trips to the Alamo, to Galveston, Texas, and to Cherokee, N.C. It seems like only yesterday that Dad took me inside his Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary library, inside that magical place, past the bust of Spurgeon, to teach me how to use the card catalog to check out books.

Notes from the Back Row



Duane Bolin

It seems like only yesterday that I perched myself on the shelf behind the front cash register in my father's drug store, selling boxes of King Edward's Cigars, Baby Ruth candy bars, and Archie comic books to customers young and old, while my father and brother (yes, my father and brother) filled prescriptions, and our mother worked on the books at the desk in the dark corner next to the safe where the narcotics were tucked away.

It seems like only yesterday that I loped down the court in the Webster County High School gymnasium flinging up jump shots from wherever; or walked down the halls of that wonderful school between classes. It seems like only yesterday that I stepped into Ms. Catlett's English class, or Ms. Rich's French class, or Mr. Gillaspie's writing class, or Ms. Gillaspie's math class, or Doogie Seller's chemistry and physics class. It seems like only yesterday that my parents took me down a road to Nashville, Tenn., for me to study history and play basketball at Belmont College, a place that opened up a whole new world to me, a place that is no more, altered now beyond recognition.

It seems like only yesterday that I heard the preaching of H. Franklin Paschall at Nashville's First Baptist Church, or Jim Henry at Two River's, or J. Dan Cooper at Lexington's Calvary Baptist, or Peter Mcleod at Waco's First Baptist Church. It seems like only yesterday that I heard my own father, a bivocational minister, preach Sunday after Sunday at Dixon's First Baptist Church in Webster County, Ky.

One day last December, I awakened on a cold morning to realize that I am now 60 years old. How did that happen? It snuck up on me, as I learned to say in western Kentucky. Now, strange things have begun to happen to me.

At 60, instead of trying to sleep late into the morning, I mysteriously rise promptly at 6 a.m. Suddenly, I have acquired fix-it skills around the house that Evelyn never knew I had. Doors open smoothly. Gates close with a click in the garden. The car is even cleaner. Amazing!

It is true that with the passing years I feel that press of my mortality. And I can echo the lyrics of Seals and Crofts when they sang,

"Like Columbus in the olden days
We must gather all our courage
Sail our ships out on the open seas cast away our fears and
All the years come and go take us up, always up
We may never pass this way again
We may never pass this way again."

Even at 60, I have found a new, fresh energy to live life as John Bunyan wrote, "with grace abounding."

I heard my father preach hundreds of sermons. Every day I wish I could hear him preach one more time.

Dad's sermons were always rich in poetry, but he must have quoted this Annie Johnson Flint poem more than any other. Even now as I write the poem, I can hear his voice repeating these lines:

"He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,
He sendeth more strength when the labors increase;
To added afflictions He addeth His mercy,

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BAPTIST FORUM

Watch your speed: Slow down or speed up?

By David Jeremiah

COMMENTARY

Henry Ford pioneered the production of cars in America but he didn't invent the modern automobile. That honor is usually given to a German whose name is also legendary, Karl Benz. While Henry Ford's Model-T began rolling off the assembly line in Detroit in 1908, Karl Benz's three-wheeled car was granted a patent and produced in 1885.

I had to smile when I read this next historical tidbit: It only took three years before "the need for speed" gave birth to the speedometer, called then by its Croatian inventor, Josip Belušic, a velocimeter.

Why did they need to know how fast they were going just three years after the car was invented? There were no state troopers with radar guns in Croatia in 1888 and very few speeders, with the first cars puttering along at only a few miles per hour.

Our need to know our speed applies to many areas of life. We humans are inveterate counters. We always want to know how far, how fast and how much. But there's one dimension of speed that is even more important than our miles per hour: the speed of our lives relative to our spiritual needs.

I see two kinds of speed limit signs on freeways: the maximum speed and the minimum speed. Not only is it dangerous to go too fast in life, it's also dangerous to go too slow.

Too fast? Slow down!

For most of us, our problem is not moving too slow for our own spiritual good. Our problem is we're moving too fast to build our relationship with God on a daily basis.

When I think about how fast we are moving through life, I think about how the English Bible translator J.B. Phillips rendered Romans 12:2: "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within." We have become full-fledged citizens of the American lifestyle where "the faster we go, the behinder we get," as Lewis Carroll put it. We are exceeding a speed limit that produces a healthy, balanced and mature spiritual life.

When we take a moment to look in our spiritual rearview mirror, we see the Lord Jesus looking at our receding taillights, wondering if we'll make time to sit and fellowship with Him tomorrow.

Don't get me wrong—I know we are all busy. I certainly am, and I have to overcome the same daily temptation to speed through my day without setting aside time for God. And it's not just daily devotions. Some Christians can't slow down long enough to attend church, meet with a home fellowship group, attend a spiritual conference or read a Christian book that would deepen their walk with Christ.

Too slow? Speed up!

If some Christians are moving too fast, others are moving too slow like the sluggard in Proverbs 6:6-10.

They might say, "I need time to rest and plan; I'll spend time with the Lord and attend church when my life is more organized." Their symptoms, however, are the same as the person who is going too fast: no devotional time with God, no prayer and Bible study, and no involvement with the body of Christ.

What is the perfect speed for a healthy and balanced spiritual life? I can't give you a number, but I can give you signposts: joyful contentment; growth in Christ-likeness; increasing knowledge of Scripture; service for Christ; a vibrant, up-to-date testimony; and fruitful, biblically-based relationships with family and friends.

Slow down or speed up and reach these godly goals. Check-up challenge: Look at your personal speedometer today to see how you're spending your time. (BP)

Equip generates 'a lot of excitement' in eastern Kentucky

By Ken Walker

Russell—Lisa Wilcox just got her batteries recharged.

A worship ministries assistant at First Baptist Church of Russell, she intends to spend more time getting to know those who serve with her thanks to what she learned at an Equip training conference.

Wilcox attended a "Dos and Don'ts of Music Ministry" workshop led by Kentucky Baptist Convention Worship/Music Consultant Jason Stewart. It is one of 20 one-hour sessions offered at the biennial seminars, which are meeting in eight locations across the commonwealth during August.

"He had a lot of great things to say about leading your people," said Wilcox, the wife of First Baptist's worship and music minister. "He talked a lot about ministering to your people and getting to know them—and how if you focus on all the logistics of your ministry, you will lose your people. But if you focus on your people, they'll help you take care of the logistics."

Wilcox was one of nearly 300 Kentucky Baptists who attended the first two Equip conferences in Prestonsburg and Russell.

Steve Rice, KBC's church consulting and revitalization team leader, said turnouts thus far make it likely the tour will equal or surpass the 1,000 convention members trained in 2014.

Equip drew more than 180 participants to Russell.

Equip includes workshops for pastors, including one on breaking attendance barriers in smaller churches. Pastors attending the workshop receive a 36-page booklet that lists 10 common barriers and suggestions for overcoming each. Another of timely interest reviews developing a security plan for your church.

However, Rice said most people who attend are lay leaders and the workshops are aimed at equipping them for ministry by making them more effective in their positions.

Central Baptist Church of Ashland youth leader George Crisp feels the workshop he attended will help him improve his teaching skills.



"I didn't expect this many people to be here," said Lisa Wilcox, a ministry assistant at First Baptist Church of Russell. Wilcox was one of nearly 300 Kentucky Baptists who attended the first two of eight Equip conferences.

"It will help me engage students more in what I'm doing," Crisp said, looking forward to his first time in the role.

Bob Quillen, youth pastor at Garner Baptist Church in Rush, said he took away some ideas from a workshop on recruiting, equipping and maintaining volunteers.

"We're going to do some small group studies and Bible studies with youth leaders," Quillen said. "Hopefully, we can equip them to better do their jobs."

Another attractive feature of Equip is how meetings are geographically arranged so that attendees won't have to drive more than an hour to a meeting.

"I'm glad they are starting to get (conferences) to where they're more accessible," said Marvin Boggs, pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Flatwoods. "Some of the meetings they've had in the past have just been so far away."

"I think it's absolutely wonderful," Wilcox added. "I didn't expect this many people to be here. It's great to have resources to teach leaders, but it's also great to get people from different churches together to get to know each other." (KBC)

Eight common retirement planning mistakes

FINANCIAL FORUM

Don Spencer

A wise teacher once said, "The difference between an old man and an elderly gentlemen is adequate income." Most people have a goal of adequate retirement income. Tragically, so many fail to reach that goal. They don't plan to fail, but they fail to plan. Here are some common mistakes:

Depending on someone else to do it for you. Many assume social security and possibly a company retirement plan will provide for comfortable retirement. This is rarely the case. You must be the one planning for the total retirement picture. No one else will do it if you don't.

You have a dream rather than a goal. A dream is easy. But it will never happen without quantified goals. Have specific dollar goals at specific dates using reasonable rates of return, inflation and longevity assumptions. Remember, dreams can turn into nightmares.

You start too late. The longer money is invested the more likely it will grow. The longer you wait to start, the more it will take to have adequate retirement.

You don't know how to save. Too many focus on consumption and immediate satisfaction. So many today want everything now and will run up encumbering debt to have it, instead of saving a little. Establish a pattern of regular saving, and do it now.

You expect someone else to think for you. Most people have limited education and experience in managing money. Learn the basics. Seek appropriate help, but you make the final decisions.

You micromanage your retirement investment. Aggressive management of a retirement portfolio is often counterproductive. Don't make short-term decisions on a long term investment. Develop an appropriate strategy and stick with it—and be patient.

Your planning ends too soon. Retirement day does not mark the end of retirement planning. The need for planning continues well beyond the day you retire. Some decisions at retirement are critical and permanent. Find out your options and evaluate carefully before deciding.

You fail to consider the twin terrors: taxes and inflation. Inflation and taxes do not stop when you retire. If someone retires at age 65, it's not unusual for them to find in their mid 80's the buying power of their retirement income has been cut in half – simply due to inflation. Funding a retirement benefit must allow for inflation and taxes.

Back Row

Continued from Page 4

To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.
When we have exhausted our store of endurance,
When our strength has failed ere the day is half done,
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources
Our Father's full giving is only begun.
Fear not that thy need shall exceed His provision,
Our God ever yearns His resources to share;
Lean hard on the arm everlasting, availing;
The Father both thee and thy load will upbear.
His love has no limits, His grace has no measure,
His power no boundary known unto men;
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again."

Duane Bolin teaches in the Department of History at Murray State University and is a member of Murray's First Baptist Church.





East Kentucky churches, association examples of 'loving in deed'

By Paul Badgett

Two events in Greenup Association and one in Pike Association serve as examples of churches and associations that are reaching out to their communities not just in word, but also in deed.

Rose Hill Baptist Church in Greenup Association wanted Ashland residents to know of the love the church had for them. The church hosted a series of block parties to provide a night of fun for all ages, while also providing church members with an avenue for sharing the gospel.

Rose Hill's block parties included free hotdogs, popcorn, cotton candy, snow cones, inflatables, crafts and carnival games. In addition, the church conducted Bible lessons for children and adults.

Matt Shamblin, the church's pastor, came to the church from the West Virginia Baptist Convention with a vision to make an impact on the community. Angie Vanover, children's minister, said, "We wanted to love on our city, so we brainstormed together on some things we could do to impact our city."

The campaign began with "I heart Ashland" yard signs. The signs popped up all across the city. The theme, "I heart Ashland," resulted in bringing a health fair to the Ashland Town Center Mall in cooperation with Cedarville University. The church also provided volunteers for "Summer Motion," an event held annually by the city of Ashland.

The goal of Rose Hill was obvious: to take the church beyond the four walls of their worship center.

Unity Baptist Church in Ashland, a member of Greenup Association, launched its acts of kindness campaign with the help of 125 volunteers. Pastor Jeremy Couture had the goal of making a difference in the Ashland community.

Unity's efforts to impact their city included a gas buy-down by providing gift cards as they pumped gas for residents. They washed more than 40 cars, delivered homemade cookies, passed out bottles of water, conducted lawn work and visited in nursing homes.

Couture said, "We're not here for ourselves. We're here to make the community better."



"It is a pleasure to work with these gospel-centered churches and associations in East Kentucky," noted Paul Badgett, regional consultant for the Kentucky Baptist Convention. "It is a joy to know that they are not only interested in sharing God's Word in speech, but they also are willing to illustrate how much they care through their compassionate deeds."

Pike Baptist Association conducted its second annual "Love Loud Campaign" June 26-July 1. Their theme verse was "Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18).

Jason Lowe, director of missions, reported that more than 100 volunteers and 12 churches participated in "loving in deed" projects.

Jason said, "We held several projects such as roof repairs, building wheelchair ramps, landscaping, painting and free car washes." He added, "It's wonderful to share the Word of Jesus by helping people who have a need."

The association washed 400 cars at no charge, and they gave away 450 copies of the Word of God. They repaired 15 homes, and they also gave out 850 tracts. They installed six wheelchair ramps, and offered their prayers for individuals as they completed each project.

The objective was not just to tell their neighbors, "We love you," but to illustrate that they love them by their actions.

In addition, 12 community service projects were completed, which included yard chores and landscape care.

Jason said, "We gave out bottles of water, articles of clothing, and household items in a five-day, free yard sale."

After a hard day of service projects, the churches would gather nightly at Grace Baptist Church in Pikeville for an evening meal, sharing testimonies, and worship. (WR)

IN REMEMBRANCE
of Deceased Kentucky Baptist Leaders

At its annual meeting in November, the Kentucky Baptist Convention wishes to recognize all Kentucky Baptist ministers, missionaries, educators, institutional leaders, laypersons and staff who died during the past convention year *(September 1, 2015 through August 31, 2016).*

To ensure that all deserving servants are remembered, we need your help. If you know of a Kentucky Baptist whose life of Christian service ended this past year, please notify us by September 9.

By letter:
Wanda Karolyi / KBC Executive Office
13420 Eastpoint Centre Drive
Louisville KY 40223-4160

By email: **wanda.karolyi@kybaptist.org**

Needed Information:
- full name
- birth and death dates
- active or retired status
- church, association and state where member
- brief description of service or ministry worthy of recognition

KBC
KENTUCKY BAPTIST CONVENTION

Bowling Green

Continued from Page 1

started stabbing him," he recalled.

Ward said from the moment the son grabbed his father, he was subdued in 12 seconds and in a police car within 6 minutes. "The response of our (church) safety team was unbelievable," he said.

"God was just all over this (incident)," he said, referring to the prompt reaction of church members, adding, "I guess, (the response) was the exact opposite of what the enemy had intended.

"The enemy's hope," Ward continued, "was that the mission and vision of this church would be dashed in that event, and no one would even come back here because they wouldn't feel safe.

"Yet, everyone I've talked to has said, after I saw the (quick) response, I feel safer now than I ever had before."

Ward said he spoke with the father in the hospital, who has now been released.

"I saw him get stabbed in the neck twice. There was blood all over floor," he said. "God just saved that man's life."

Ward recounted that the father told him that he had brought his son to Hillvue Heights in hopes of getting him help.

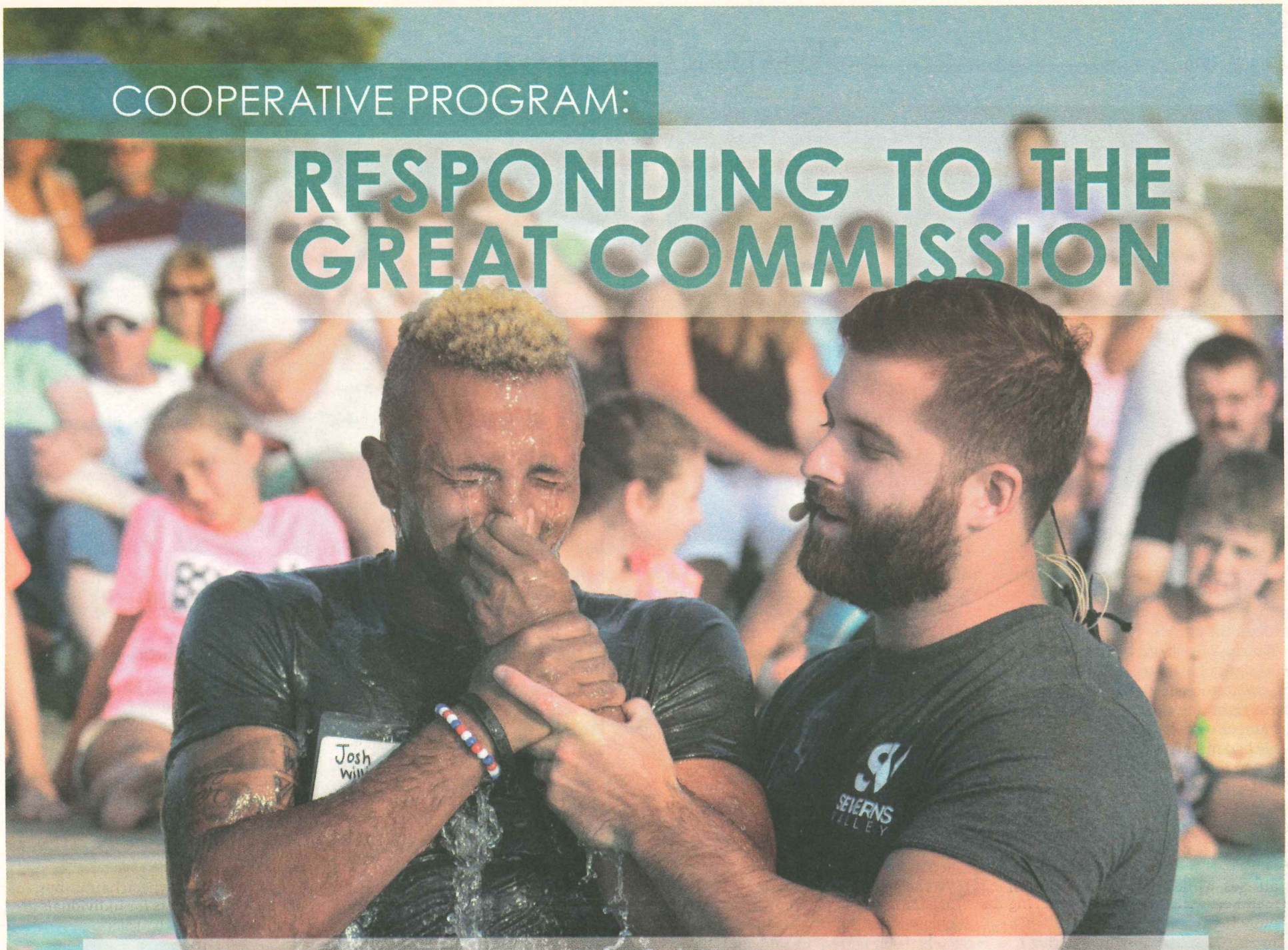
"This wasn't an attack on Hillvue Heights. This was a thing between a boy and his dad," Ward emphasized. "He was obviously a very troubled young man.

"I don't know what's going on in his life," Ward added, "but, man, he needs Jesus, and we know that Jesus loves him."

Encouraging church members to reach out to the young man by sending care packages to the prison, Ward urged, "I'm praying that God just opens a gigantic door and somehow for that kid to feel the love from this church."

Turning to Ephesians 6:10-12, he encouraged church members to "be strong in the Lord" as their struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil.

"My overwhelming thought since Sunday has been, 'I still want to be a church for all people,'" Ward challenged church members. (WR)



COOPERATIVE PROGRAM:

RESPONDING TO THE GREAT COMMISSION

THOUSANDS OF MISSIONARIES SENT OUT

The Cooperative Program is how Kentucky Baptists respond to the Great Commission, joining together with more than 46,000 congregations nationwide to support some 10,000 missionaries who are sharing the gospel of Christ every day.

The Cooperative Program is also how 750,000 Kentucky Baptists in 2,400 congregations support the work of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and its many agencies and institutions that do so much for the cause of Christ. It's through the Cooperative Program that orphaned children are given safe haven, future church leaders are educated, aging congregations are revitalized, pastors are taught effective evangelism strategies, church members are encouraged to be on mission, and so much more.

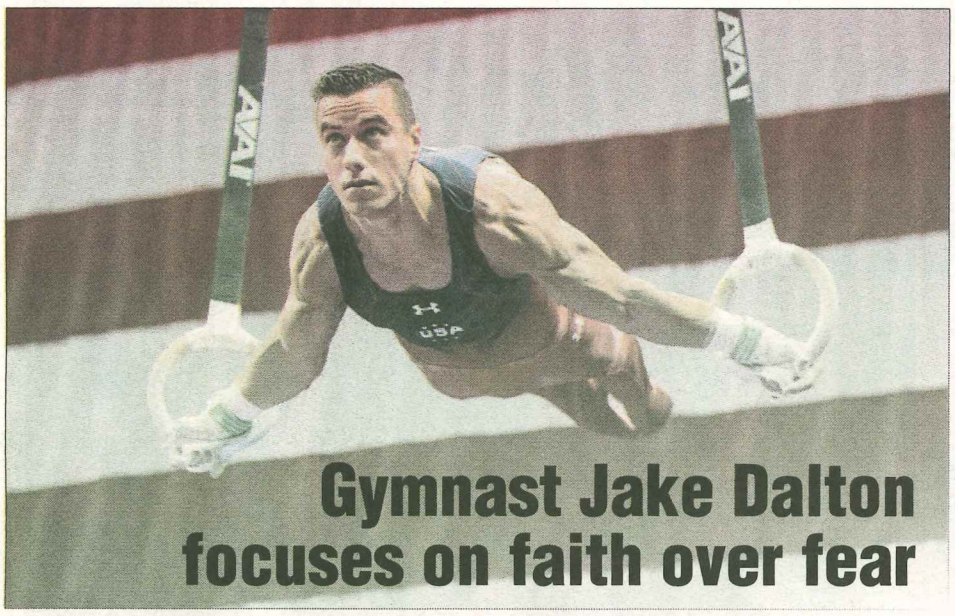
THOUSANDS OF SOULS BEING SAVED

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.

KBC
KENTUCKY BAPTIST CONVENTION

COOPERATIVE PROGRAM



Gymnast Jake Dalton focuses on faith over fear

By Adelle Banks

Olympic gymnast Jake Dalton isn't one of those athletes who point heavenward after every successful vault through the air.

But the 24-year-old bears other outward signs of his Christian faith, including two tattoos: a pair of praying hands on his right side and the words of a New Testament verse on the other.

He had his left side etched with Philippians 4:13 –"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"—months before traveling to the Olympic trials in 2012.

Dalton has since become a four-time world medalist and has won more than a dozen national medals. He competed in the gymnastics competition in Rio.

"It was kind of my last little thing to remind myself to do everything that I could to be ready for that team and try to get on that team, and whatever happens it was God's plan to happen, whether I made the team or not," he said of the Bible verse tattoo.

Dalton, a fitness advocate, also wears a favorite necklace in the shape of a kettle bell with the words of Psalm 28:7: "The Lord is my strength."

The Reno, Nev., native grew up playing different sports but was mainly focused on baseball. He thinks divine intervention led him to focus on floor routines.

"My baseball coach told me to do gymnastics because it would help with my pitching arm," he said.

Since the London Olympics, Dalton had a setback. He had to undergo surgery last year for a shoulder injury.

"My biggest question and fear was, 'Was I able to get back fast enough to get ready for the Olympic Games?'" he recalled.

Dalton said his faith—especially daily prayer—has helped him overcome his fears about competing.

Praying through his workout calms him down but also energizes him.

"If I'm a little nervous to do something, it allows me to put my trust in my faith and allows me to get through workout a little bit better," he said.

As he prepares to flip and hit the perfect landing, Dalton said he tries to focus on faith rather than fear.

"Usually you're afraid to get hurt, so my thought process is, if that's God's plan that I'm going to get injured, there's going to be a reason for it and it's going to make me stronger," he said. "I'm ready to go and just put my faith that God's going to carry me through and keep me safe." (RNS)



Mackenzie Brown, the fourth-ranked archer in the world, was upset in the round of 16 on Aug. 8, ending her hopes for a medal and bringing her first Olympic competition to a close. Brown's home church is Flint Baptist Church in Flint, Texas. (Photo courtesy of USA Archery)

Mackenzie Brown takes aim in first Olympics

By Kimberly Winston

Mackenzie Brown may be the only woman on Team USA's archery squad, but she is just one of the guys in another way: Like her coach and many of her fellow bowmen, Brown, 21, is an evangelical Christian.

"I am so beyond ecstatic to be going to Rio this summer for the Olympic Games!" Brown said in a tweet after qualifying for the team in July. "I'm so grateful for all of the support and love from y'all! God is so good all the time!"

No one doubts Brown's right to a place on the team—she is ranked fourth in the world. But it has refocused attention on Team USA's archery coach, Kisik Lee, who has come under scrutiny in the past for blending Christianity with his coaching.

He has been involved in the baptism of at least seven Olympic-bound archers, including 2016 team member and 2010 silver medalist Brady Ellison. At the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, Lee reportedly ran a morning hymn-sing and Bible study and regularly worshipped with athletes at the interfaith center.

"I just want to show them who I am," Lee told The New York Times in 2008. "I'm the witness of Jesus, not just an instructor. So I have to encourage them how, how we can change in Christ."

In 2007, Lee was warned by United States Olympic Committee officials to separate his evangelism from his coaching. He reportedly no longer holds Bible study classes at the sport's Chula Vista, Calif., training center, where athletes come to live and train. His personal website has numerous references to his faith and draws links between religious faith and performance.

Christianity has long been associated with archery. A verse in Genesis reads, "And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer."

Many archers compete with Genesis brand bows, many participate in Christian archery ministries such as On Target for Christ, and there is even an archery program at the Creation Museum in Kentucky.

So Brown should fit right in.

"There is nothing better than seeing your kid do something that she loves," her mother, Stacey Brown, told the Tyler (Texas) Morning Telegraph. "This is a God-given ability she has." (RNS)

Heath sees soccer as platform for faith

By Kimberly Winston

Team USA soccer midfielder Tobin Heath, has been kicked around by soccer as much as she's kicked around in it.



Tobin Heath

A two-time gold medalist, winning in Beijing 2008 and London 2012, she tasted punishing defeat when the U.S. lost to Japan in a penalty shootout at the FIFA Women's World Cup final in 2011.

Heath, a graduate of the University of North Carolina, has been a Christian since childhood. Her faith has helped her manage the lows and keep the highs in perspective.

Heath says the growing popularity of women's soccer—and Team USA's impressive record—has given her a broad platform from which to share her faith.

"Becoming known or noticed in my sport isn't what drives me to work hard and want to be the best I can be," she said in 2011. "It's Jesus. That's why I play. I play to glorify Him."

In Rio, Heath used that platform to win over international fans. After the U.S. defeat of France on the first day of play, Heath endeared herself to Brazilian viewers when, in the second half of the game, she busted out a samba-like move known as the "elastico," borrowed from her idol and Brazilian soccer megastar Ronaldinho.

Heath's final tweet before leaving for Rio was Romans 8:28:

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him," it reads, "who have been called according to his purpose." (RNS)



Johnson and Boudia exhibit faith in their diving

By Kimberly Winston

Steele Johnson almost died on the diving platform.

In 2009, at age 12, he was practicing his favorite dive, a triple reverse somersault in a tuck position—many watched him ace it in the men's individual platform diving in Rio—when he cracked his skull on a concrete platform, sliced open his scalp and fell 33 feet into the pool.

His coach pulled him out and held his head together all the way to the hospital. Today, he still has some memory loss.

But Johnson, a Christian, has spoken of how his faith helped him recover and placed him in medal contention in Rio.

"I wanted to be the kid that had the big injury and came back from it and made the Olympics and all that stuff," Johnson told the Indianapolis Star in June. "So it's kind of embarrassing. But now I've kind of realized that God had His hand over all of it to help me come to the realization, like, that's not why at all.

"He gave me this ability to dive," Johnson said. " ... God kept me alive and He is still giving me the ability to do what I do."

At the Rio Olympics, he competed in the 10-meter men's synchronized platform diving with David Boudia, a three-time Olympian and a fellow Christian. The diving duo won a silver medal.

In July, when the pair qualified for the Olympics—Johnson's first and Boudia's third—Johnson was so overwhelmed he doubled over with emotion before getting out of the pool.

"It's cool because this is exciting, this is fun, but this is not what my identity will be for the rest of my life," a dripping Johnson told NBC Sports. "Yeah, I'm Steele Johnson the Olympian, but at the same time I'm here to love and serve Christ. My identity is rooted in Christ, not in the flips we're doing."

Boudia, who is six years older than Johnson, also said his diving is driven by his faith.

"We can't take credit for this," Boudia told NBC Sports. "To God be the glory."

Of the pair, Boudia has the most experience in talking publicly about the connection between his faith and his sport.

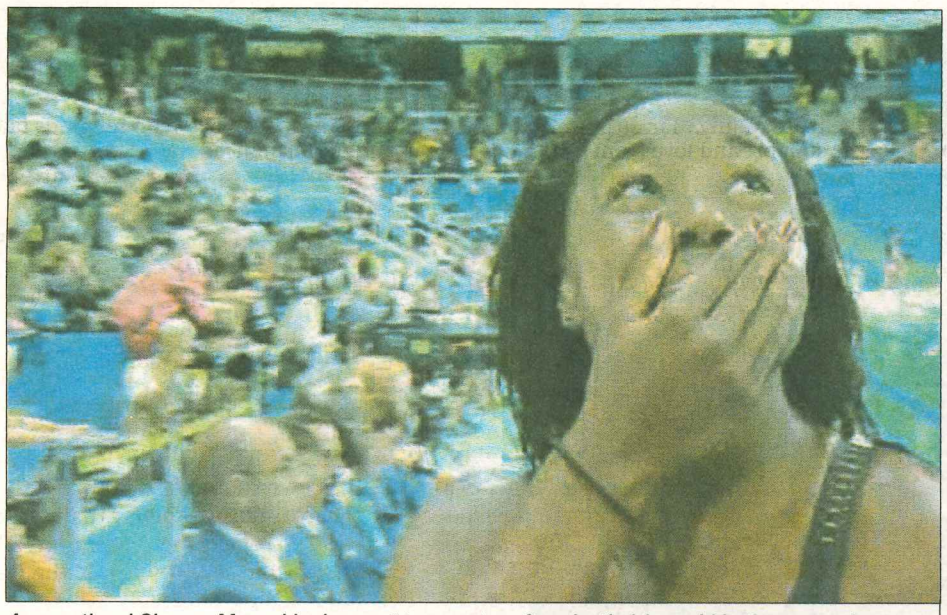
Boudia has written an entire book about the subject, "Greater Than Gold: From Olympic Heartbreak to Ultimate Redemption," that hit stores a few days before the Olympics began. In it, he tells how he became an evangelical Christian through the help of his Perdue University diving coach, Adam Soldati.



"I am not a diving coach who happens to be a Christian," Soldati said in a talk he gave at his church just after the close of the 2012 London Olympics, where Boudia won a gold medal. "But rather I am a Christian, follower of Christ who happens to be a diving coach."

In his book, Boudia talks about how he was engaged in "a destructive lifestyle" at Perdue and sought his coach's guidance. He credits his gold medal to his conversion to evangelical Christianity.

"Whatever happens at the end of this Olympic Games is completely out of my control," Boudia said in 2012. "God is totally sovereign over everything." (RNS)



An emotional Simone Manuel looks up at teammates after she tied for gold in the women's 100-meter freestyle swim. Manuel is the first African American woman to medal in an individual swimming event. (Screen capture from NBCOlympics.com)

Swimmer makes history, gives 'all glory to God'

By Tim Ellsworth

Simone Manuel became the first African American to win an individual medal in swimming on Aug. 11 when she won gold in the women's 100-meter freestyle, and she was quick to credit the Lord for that accomplishment.

"All I can say is all glory to God," Manuel said through tears in a post-race interview. "It's definitely been a long journey these past four years. I'm just so blessed to have a gold medal ... I'm just so blessed."

Manuel tied Canada's Penny Oleksiak in the race with an Olympic-record time of 52.70 seconds. Manuel previously won a silver medal in Rio, her first Olympics, as part of the women's 4x100-meter freestyle relay.

"Coming into my first Olympics I didn't think I was going to be getting a gold medal individually," Manuel said. "My goal was just to get more experience, swim as fast as I can. And after prelims and semifinals and seeing where I was sitting, when I came in tonight I was like, 'I want to get on that medal stand.'

"Just surpassing that goal and getting an American record on top of a gold medal is super exciting for me."

Manuel and her family are part of The Church Without Walls in Houston.

After the race, pastor Ralph Douglas West tweeted, "It makes me proud to see Simone give God the glory in this monumental moment in her life."

Manuel said the medal was not just for her, but for those who have come before her and inspired her.

"It is an honor to represent the USA!" Manuel tweeted after her gold medal performance. "God is working in me! I am so blessed and grateful. Thank you all so much for your support." (BP)

US volleyball player seeks God amid trials

By Tim Ellsworth

Micah Christenson spent the past year playing professional volleyball in Italy. Sound like fun?

He thought so, too, until he got there. He couldn't speak the language and was living alone for the first time in a foreign country. He didn't have any friends on the team. And then he got sick the first week.

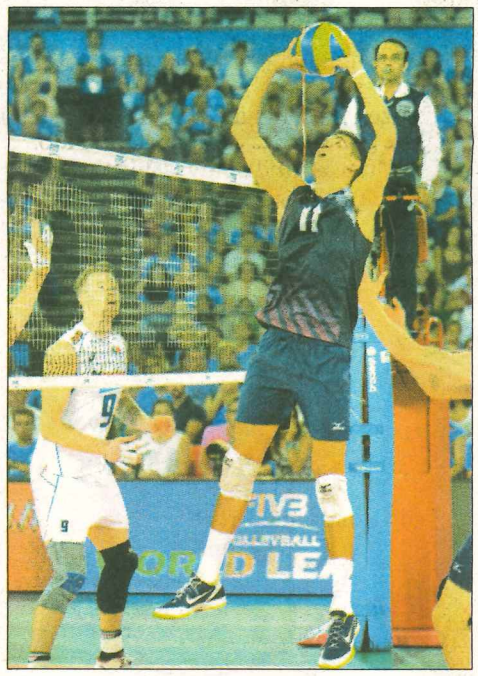
"I'm throwing up, and I'm sitting in my apartment alone," he told Baptist Press. "I'm like, man, this is a lot harder than I thought. I can't talk to anybody because there's a language barrier. I can't ask somebody where the eggs are in the grocery store."

But during that time, Christenson said, he learned what it meant to depend upon the Lord.

"It really allowed me to just surrender to God and to give everything to him because I really had no control over what things were happening there," he said. "I was just begging God to take everything, just trying my best to trust in everything that He had for me there."

A Hawaiian member of the U.S. men's volleyball team competing in the Olympics, Christenson has Christian parents to thank for giving him a foundation of faith at an early age. His full name is Micah Makanamaikalani Christenson, with his middle name meaning "gift from heaven." His mother needed surgery while she was pregnant with him, and his survival was questionable.

He attended church and Sunday school regularly, learning about the Bible and the gospel. When he left the island to attend the University of Southern California, however, he realized that the time had come for him to make his own decisions about what he believed.



He got involved early in Athletes in Action, a campus-based sports ministry, eventually becoming a student leader.

"I'm so grateful that I chose God because that choice has really sparked something inside of me and I feel the Holy Spirit working inside of me all of the time," Christenson said.

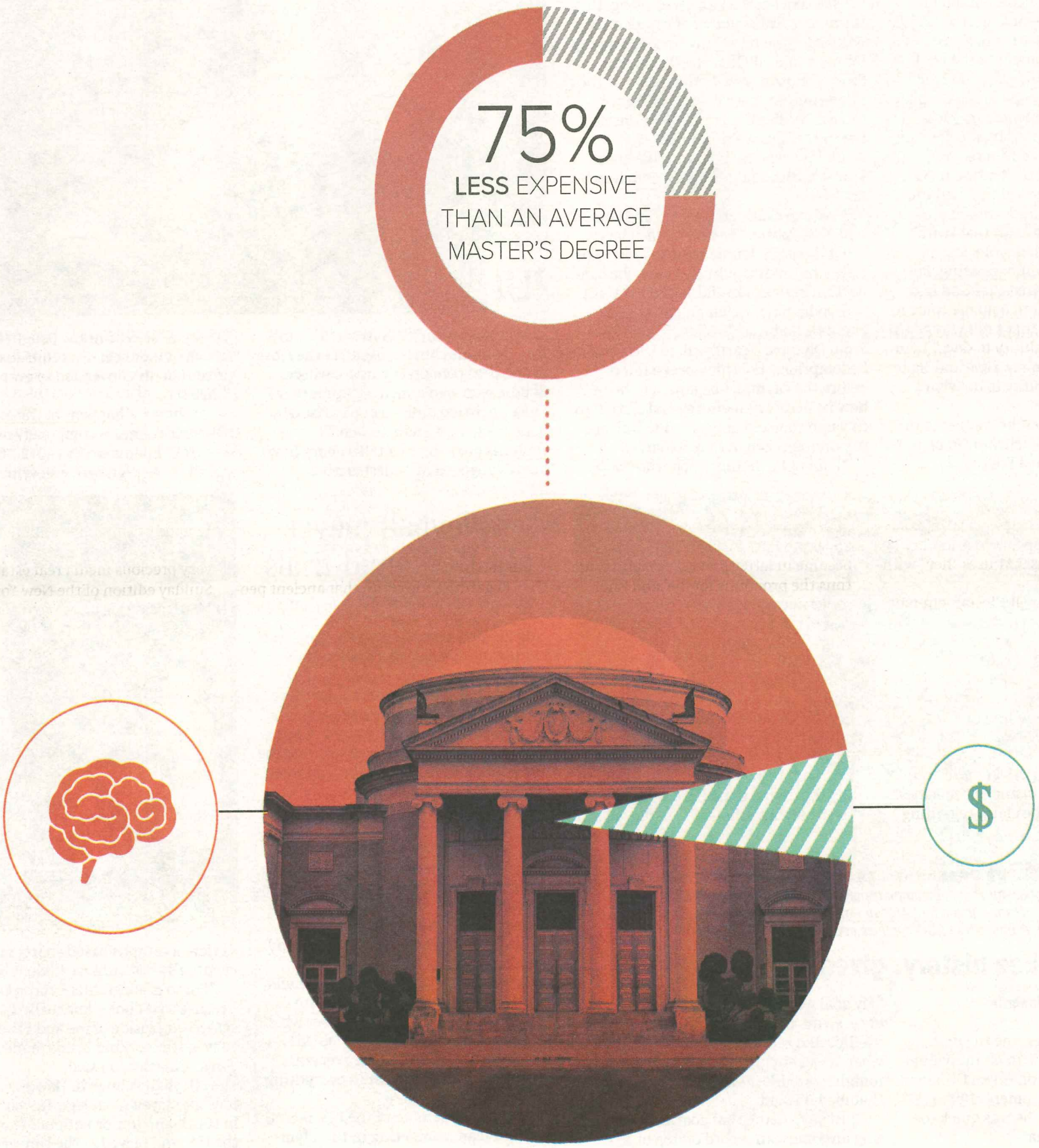
Volleyball is huge in Hawaii, and his mother played in college. He participated in youth and junior national teams for the U.S. and played at the University of Southern California before turning professional and moving to Italy.

The challenges he faced there gave him the opportunity to spend more time reading the Bible, and he began to understand the words in James, "Consider it pure joy when you face trials of any kind."

This year in Rio was Christenson's first Olympics experience.

Regardless of the outcome, Christianson acknowledged that he wants to shine God's light around him by being steady and faithful in all that he does. When it comes to relying on God and living for Him, Christianson notes, "that's enough." (BP)

SOUTHWESTERN
BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

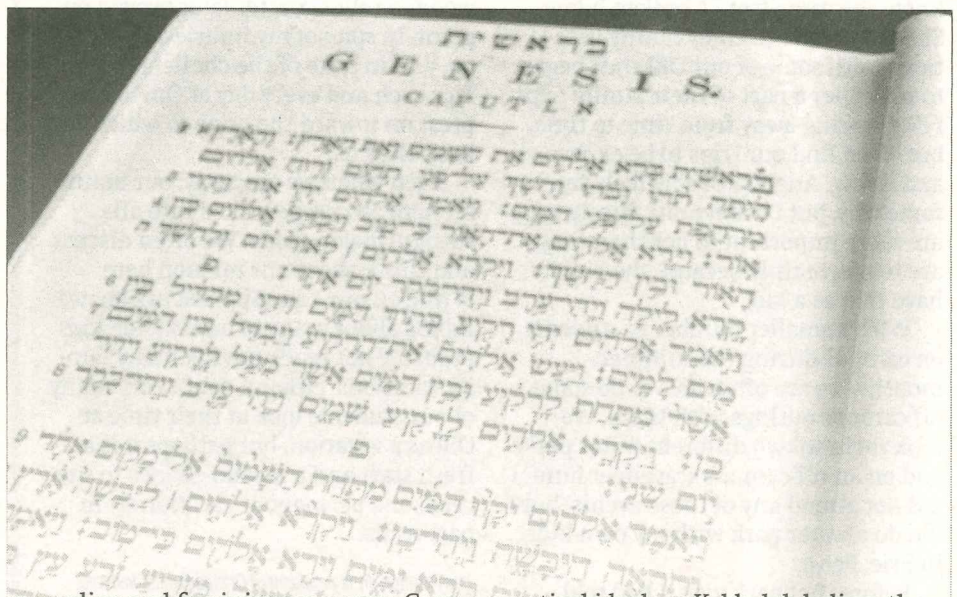


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Transgenderism and the Old Testament: Times op-ed refuted

By David Roach



Nashville—A New York Times op-ed suggesting the Old Testament supports transgenderism has been classified by Southern Baptist seminary professors as a mischaracterization of Hebrew grammar and theology.

"It should not surprise any of us that if we want to find something in Scripture, then we will twist it to say what we want it to say," Paul Wegner, professor of Old Testament studies at Gateway Seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention, told Baptist Press. "(Op-ed writer) Mark Sameth has pointed out some oddities in the Hebrew Bible, but it is doubtful that they mean what he thinks."

Sameth, a Reform Jewish rabbi, wrote in an Aug. 12 Times piece titled "Is God Transgender?" that the Old Testament, "when read in its original (Hebrew) language, offers a highly elastic view of gender." Sameth told of having a transgender cousin and stated he is "particularly saddened whenever religious arguments are brought in to defend social prejudices—as they often are in the discussion about transgender rights."

Among Sameth's arguments:

• The Hebrew Old Testament's use of masculine pronouns, nouns and metaphors to describe women—and vice versa—reflects "well-expressed gender fluidity" in the ancient world. For example, Genesis 3:12 appears to reference Eve as "he" and Genesis 9:21 uses "her" with respect to Noah.

• The four-letter Old Testament name for God, sometimes rendered in English as YHWH, "was probably not pronounced 'Jehovah' or 'Yahweh,' as some have guessed. The Israelite priests would have read the letters in reverse as Hu/Hi—in other words, the hidden name of God was Hebrew for 'He/She.'"

• Gender ambiguity or fluidity was thought to make a person more "god-like" and civilized in ancient societies.

In response to the claim regarding masculine and feminine pronouns, Gary Arbino, professor of archaeology and Hebrew at Gateway, noted, "Biblical Hebrew is an ancient language that—in the form(s) we have it—is a written representation of a verbal language and thus is filled with linguistic oddities and variances. To make a theological case—or perhaps even a cultural one—from these grammatical issues is tenuous."

Wegner explained that the lettering system used to write Hebrew during the period described by early chapters of Genesis—from which all of Sameth's pronoun examples are taken—"does not appear to have been as developed as it became in latter parts of Scripture, and thus the pronouns for 'he' and 'she' sometimes look alike." That resulted in confusion when scribes copied manuscripts of Genesis.

Instances early in Genesis where the grammatical gender of pronouns is unambiguous often are assumed to be adjustments made by later copyists or editors, Wegner said in written comments to BP.

In response to Sameth's claim regarding the divine name, Arbino noted that "some Jewish scholars" influenced by the mystical ideology Kabbalah believe the arrangement of letters in the Hebrew Bible "is malleable" and can be altered to form new readings such as Sameth's "he/she" reading of YHWH.

However, Arbino said he does "not know of any canonical biblical or second temple literature that shows this reading/understanding. Does the author adduce any literary evidence for his reading prior to the medieval period? Also, of course, the meaning of the Tetragram (a technical term for the name of God) has been discussed for thousands of years, so there is no definitive etymology of the name, thus allowing more theories to be put forth."

Regarding the claim that ancient people viewed gender fluidity as godlike, Daniel Warner, associate professor of Old Testament and archaeology at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, told BP in written comments, "There is no word for 'goddess' in the Bible. Hence one needs to do a thorough study of the Hebrew Bible before making assertions."

Even ancient pagans saw Yahweh as masculine, Warner said, as evidenced by an ancient pagan inscription wrongly suggesting Yahweh had a wife. The inscription is "one of many" pieces of evidence inside and outside the Bible that Israel's God was not viewed as "transgender," Warner said.

Wegner said an ancient Egyptian woman cited by Sameth who disguised herself as a man to become pharaoh "shows that the genders were very inflexible."

The female pharaoh wore a male disguise, Wegner said, "because she would not be taken seriously to rule the country unless she took on masculine characteristics. She was not confused; it was a necessity of the culture and so she made sure that people would respect her."

Wegner added, "When God is referred to (in the Old Testament), He is referred to in masculine forms and there is no variation in this. But it is also true that sometimes God is said to love or care for His people like a mother cares for a nursing child (e.g., Isa. 49:15), but this does not mean that the concept of gender for God is flexible or confused. It just means that terms that are commonly associated with female characteristics are also sometimes connected with God."

Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said in his podcast The Briefing that the Times' publication of such ludicrous biblical arguments illustrates the extent some secular media outlets will go to promote so-called transgender rights.

"Why would this article appear in the very precious media real estate of the Sunday edition of the New York Times?" Mohler said. "It's because this article makes a point that the paper and its editors want made. And that, perhaps more than anything else, tells us what's really going on here. And it's one of the things we need not to miss.

"This is the world we live in, a world in which The New York Times all of the sudden gets interested in theology and even ancient Hebrew if the article they're able to run makes the argument they're for," Mohler said. (BP)

Sept. 11 prayer outreach spotlights 'critical' year

By Diana Chandler



Cleveland, Tenn.—On the 15th anniversary of the deadliest terrorist attack in U.S. history, Southern Baptists are being urged to join hundreds of thousands of Christians from many denominations and ethnicities in praying for a Christian awakening in the nation.

The Sept. 11 Cry Out America prayer outreach of the Awakening America Alliance and Center for Spiritual Renewal, an 8-year-old cooperative initiative encompassing more than 150,000 churches, ministries and parachurches in North America, is increasingly popular this year as more Christians recognize the nation's deep spiritual need, Awakening America executive director Kay Horner told Baptist Press.

"I think that the nation is beginning to wake up and recognize the desperation that we are going to have to have for God to hear from heaven and heal our land. There's just this increasing recognition that we're desperate for God," Horner said. "This is also such a critical year with the election and all of the security issues, the need for racial reconciliation. We anticipate a much larger increase in the churches involved, because of it being on a Sunday."

Immediate past Southern Baptist Convention President Ronnie Floyd is among leaders issuing a 9/11 prayer call this year. Most recently, Floyd issued the call during a July 17 sermon and in an Aug. 5 blogpost, asking churches to denote at least 11 minutes and up to an hour to prayer in Sept. 11 worship services.

"With great conviction, I want to ask each pastor and church in America to allocate the day to praying for our nation," Floyd said of 9/11. "The churches of America need to pray for our country in our worship services. Not just mention it, not just pray, but pray extraordinarily."

The stakes are especially high this year, Floyd blogged.

"Prayer brings the walls down! Prayer crosses over the perceived barriers of ethnicity, race, and generations, bringing down the walls that divide us. Let the walls fall down!" Floyd wrote. "Our sinful choices have built these walls, but Jesus' work on the cross has brought them all down."

He asked churches to decide for themselves how much time to give to prayer on the anniversary, encouraging between 11 minutes and an hour of prayer.

Horner expressed pleasure at Floyd's emphasis on 9/11 prayer, part of the Cry Out America movement that began in 2008 on the steps of courthouses in the nation's 3,143 counties and has spread to include schools, churches, and parachurch and marketplace ministries, with a presence in all 50 states.

"We like to use the terminology of Christ awakening, because you can have spiritual awakening through a number of things. But we really are encouraging people to pray for a Christ awakening and for revival in the nation," Horner said. "Cry Out America has always involved people from different denominations and races and cultures and government, education. It's been a unified effort. It's much like the fall version of National Day of Prayer, that people put aside their tribes, their logos and their egos and they come together to just seek God."

Horner included a link to Floyd's sermon in a letter to 150,000 pastors encouraging participation. The letter included an exhortation from Jeff Farmer, president of the near 30,000-church strong Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches of North America (PCCNA), asking churches to pray at least 11 minutes.

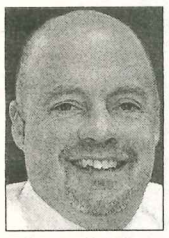
"This challenge issued by PCCNA President Dr. Jeff Farmer echoes the plea of Dr. Ronnie Floyd and other denominational leaders in the nation," Horner wrote. "It should stir all of us to consider the importance of engaging in fervent, united prayer and action."

Free Sept. 11 prayer resources and promotional materials are available at http://awakeningamerica.us. (BP)

Vacation at Oneida

In late July, our year-round staff took a much needed and well deserved vacation. Since all the students and the vast majority of our staff were gone, Angie, the kids, and I hit the road for a vacation of our own. We purchased a camper in April and decided to pull it all the way to Canada.

This is Oneida



Larry Gritton

Growing up as a staff kid at Oneida, I remember most of our vacations to be trips to see family, but there was the occasional trip to the beach or to Florida and Disney World. What I remember most about those trips was the journey, and being on the road with my family. My own kids seem to fuss and complain in our fairly spacious sport utility vehicle, but I recall a trip to Florida in which seven of us traveled in a Chevrolet Caprice Classic.

I have often shared Angie's story across this state, and many of you know she came from a broken home. She did not get to enjoy family vacations until some of our OBI staff began to make her a part of their family trips. I like getting away from time to time, but often find our trips to be expensive and tiring. Angie probably feels the same way, but I believe our family trips are more important to her than they are to me, mainly because she didn't have that as a kid.

With a smaller number of students on campus during the summer months, we are often able to do some off campus outings with them. We took them to two different water parks and on an off-campus scavenger hunt. I did not attend any of those events, but I did do a water park with my own kids in Erie, Penn.

Before that park visit, I had told Angie I was getting too old to ride stuff with the kids. A broken toe in the wave pool and a badly bruised or even cracked rib while riding a rickety, wooden roller coaster later proved my point. In spite of my injuries, I pressed on, and in spite of the challenges we face each and every day at Oneida, we press on toward the prize to which God has called us.

Even when we are away, our brains seem to always be locked into all-things-Oneida mode. We often discuss and think about our mission here. While on our Canadian excursion, we talked about many of our Oneida kids probably not really having many family vacations, either. I doubt very many of our students look at their time at OBI as a vacation, but perhaps it is a fresh start and a second chance to succeed, or a permanent vacation from past trials.

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.

Summer missions experience

Student Joseph Gragg spent his second summer in Quitman, Ga., on mission helping in Vacation Bible Schools, CentriKid camps and Discipleship Now events. He had a busy summer gaining some valuable practical ministry experience.

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

"I cannot believe how fast this summer has flown by," said Gragg. "It seems like yesterday that I was driving 500 miles to get to Quitman. This summer was a blessing to be here again because the people have become like family and make me and my teammate, Nick, feel right at home. That means so much since we are so far away from home.

"The first part of the summer we helped multiple churches with their Vacation Bible Schools," he said. "I was able to teach, help with recreation, and lead some of the music. All the Vacation Bible Schools we worked with also raised money for national and international missions.

"We also had the opportunity to spend part of our summer in Atlanta doing some mission work with kids," said Gragg. "We learned that the world has literally come to the Atlanta area where we were ministering. Our team went in to some of the apartment complexes where different nationalities of people were living and shared Bible lessons with the kids and played soccer with them. They had a great time each day. We were blessed to be able to minister to these kids.

"Our team also enjoyed helping with CentriKid camps during the summer," he said. "This camp was a very energetic camp and the kids were involved in a lot of things. They would be going from 7 a.m.–10 p.m. at night. We helped with recreation and Bible study during the camps. We ended up having five kids in our group accept Jesus Christ as their Savior.

"The last part of our summer was spent helping with a Discipleship Now event," added Gragg. "The theme for the event was focused on serving. We went over what it meant to be a servant, who do we serve, when do we serve, and how do we serve. I was a small group leader for this event. This was a powerful time that really helped me out personally. Please pray for all those in Georgia that the Lord has touched and moved through this summer."

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.

EBO had a part in it...

Thank you, Kentucky Baptists! You are people who just keep on giving! We share the state missions emphasis month after month, telling the stories and asking you to be generous. You respond with generosity and prayer support.

On Aug. 31 we will close the books on an offering year and start all over on Sept, 1. Some might wonder if we will ever get done. As long as there are people who have not accepted Jesus as Savior, we will keep sharing the "Heart of the Story" across our state. Here are some stories received this year.

EBO at Work



Joy Bolton

Ben showed up at Hope House straight from prison. He came to know Jesus as Savior while in jail and came to get help with employment. Jobs are a real challenge for those with felony records, but Ben knew that Jesus wanted to do something great with his life and was one of the best students in the Jobs for Life program there. Now he is working at the Hope House warehouse and has a goal of becoming a drug and alcohol counselor. EBO had a part though a $2,000 grant this year.

Tommie was estranged from family, addicted to drugs, and homeless. He went to the Louisville Rescue Mission seeking services and hope. A volunteer built a relationship with Tommie and encouraged him to enter LifeChange. Today he has moved home, reconciled with family, gotten married and has a vision for starting his own business. EBO had a part through a $4,000 grant this year.

After speaking for Lincoln Association WMU a few weeks ago, I was invited to stop by the Unto Me Home in Stanford which opened in August 2015. Perry, the house coordinator, told me the story of how God had worked in his life through the ministry which provides shelter for people who are homeless. He now builds relationships with those who come seeking help and has a special understanding of their needs because he was once homeless, too. Perry has reconnected with his wife, and they have both grown spiritually. Since the Unto Me Home opened, there have been 70 people come through and 13 have professed Christ as Savior. Many have found employment and permanent housing. EBO had a part through a $1,000 grant this year.

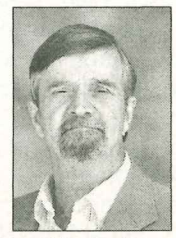
Stories like this make me smile as I think of the impact of your faithful giving as God blesses EBO and uses it for His glory and to proclaim the gospel. A new offering year will begin soon with the theme "Be Ready—Live Ready." Are you ready?

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

Boone's Creek DOM sets retirement at year's end

By Cary Donnell

Winchester—John Ryder, director of missions at Boone's Creek Baptist Association, has announced he will retire effective either Dec. 31 or whenever a new DOM is hired.



John Ryder

A search process has begun to find his successor.

"We are thankful for the leadership John has given during his six-and-a-half years there," said Eric Allen, Missions Mobilization team leader for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, "Pray for John and the association as they transition and seek the Lord concerning next steps."

During his time as director of missions, Ryder has encouraged cooperation among churches for missions and outreach to the community.

"We've done pastor prayer breakfasts to get pastors involved and 'men on mission' gatherings, where we have encouraged men to do missions work through external building repairs," he said.

Ryder has also preached at all 36 churches and has used his financial background to help the association develop policies and procedures to be fiscally responsible.

"I am grateful for John's partnership with the state convention and his faithfulness to support and provide resources for the churches in Boone's Creek," Allen said. "John really challenged the churches to engage in missions and led the association to experience a 423 percent increase in missions participation."

Going forward, the biggest challenges for Boone's Creek association will be encouraging young people to be involved in the local church and continuing to encourage cooperation between churches and the association, Ryder said, adding that these are challenges faced by any association, not just Boone's Creek.

"It takes time and effort to get (churches) to work together," Ryder said. "So many churches still do things independently.

"If you can get them all working together, it opens the door to things they couldn't do by themselves." (WR)

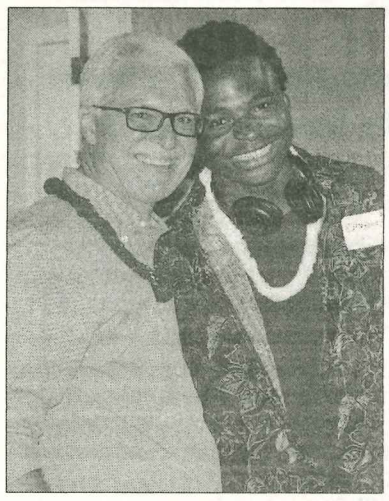
Auditions open for All-State Jr. High Choir

Louisville—The Kentucky Baptist Convention is now accepting applications for the 2016 All-State Junior High Choir.

Seventh through ninth grade students in good standing with a Kentucky Baptist church are eligible to audition. To register go to www.kybaptist.org/asjhc. Forms and instructions will be mailed after students have registered.

Ministers of music are responsible for submitting a recorded audition of each student by Sept. 23. Auditioning students will be notified of the results by Sept. 30.

Selected students will meet Nov. 11-13 at Ashland Avenue Baptist Church in Lexington for a rehearsal retreat and scheduled performances. (KBC)





Left: *First Baptist Pastor Keith Inman poses with Emmanuel, an international student at MSU.* **Right:** *Murray State international students gathered for a time of Hawaiian themed fellowship Aug. 13.*

First Baptist offers thriving ministry for internationals at Murray State

By Myriah Snyder

Murray—Around 50 Murray State University international students gathered with First Baptist Church of Murray for food and fellowship to kick off their school year on Aug. 13. It was just one of many events that First Baptist will host for the international student ministry.

Three years ago, Steve and Paula Alcott started the ministry after a few Chinese students approached him in Walmart asking for a ride back to campus. As they spoke on the ride back, he explained that he had just returned from visiting his daughter, who is a missionary in China. The couple invited the students to church.

"After the first service, we asked if they had any questions. One of the girls spoke up and said, 'Yes, what was that in there?'" Paula recalled.

"I said that was a worship service for the God that we serve that created the world," Paula said. "But inside, I was thinking, 'How do we begin with the process of explaining the gospel to someone who has never heard?'"

They began inviting the students over to their home and sharing the gospel with them through Storyteller's Bible study for international students.

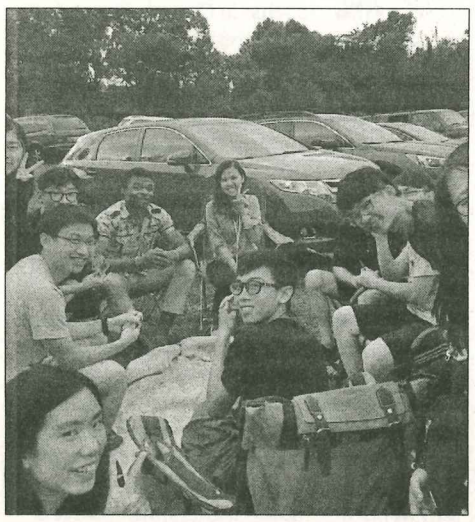
Baptist Campus Ministry students began inviting internationals and from those first students, the group grew to 40 Chinese students the first year. Now many different nationalities are represented.

"We felt like it was a divine appointment that we met at Walmart. It wasn't just by accident," Paula added.

The group has grown so large that they are divided into two Sunday School classes—one for those seeking to learn the basics of Christianity, and the other for those who are Christians.

"We've noticed that for some internationals, this is the very first time they have ever been to church. ... They are really learning and searching and just don't know the extreme basics," said Carole Inman, the pastor's wife at First Baptist and one of the host homes for Sunday dinners. Conversely, she explained, many international students, particularly the Nigerians, were raised Christian.

On one occasion, they had a group of 40 Taiwanese students find their way to the church. It was the first time they had ever even heard of Christianity. The ministry brought in people specifically to minister to them, teaching the basics of Christianity and answering their questions.



International students spend time together with First Baptist Church members at the Calvert City drive in theatre.

Each Sunday, the church sends a bus to campus to pick up the students, since many of them don't have vehicles. They attend Sunday School and church, then go to a home for lunch. Once a month, they meet for lunch with the other college students in the church.

"We have an amazing number of college students that are really connecting with them, very passionate, and it's pretty cool," Inman added.

The students also come together periodically for events such as a cooking night, where students make food from their native countries for others to try.

Since many of the students can't go home for Christmas, the church does something for them at Christmastime.

In addition, summer activities abound, such as visits to the local drive-in theatre or being part of the Fourth of July parade.

Over the past three years, around 12 of the internationals have been baptized.

"There have never been a whole bunch of them baptized at once. They're sitting under a Sunday School teacher for a while before they really make a decision. It's a really big decision for them," Inman said, pointing out that many of them have to consider their family's response to their converting to Christianity.

She describes what she has seen of their decisions as "steady and heartfelt."

"It's been a combination of trying to build relationships with people and trying to share the gospel with them," Steve Alcott concluded. (WR)

The gospel is the power of God for salvation

Paul wrote to the Corinthians: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth" (1 Corinthians 3:6). In a lightning flash of nine little words, Paul reminds the Corinthians—and us—of a fundamental truth. Any fruit or success that we witness in ministry comes from God.

We may plant the seeds of the gospel, but God gives the growth. We may water those seeds with love, conversations, a godly example, and the sacrifices of time and energy, but God gives the growth.

As you are reading this article, we at Crossings are gathered for an end of summer evaluation. At this evaluation, we are celebrating the growth that God has given at summer camp.

There are many ways in which Crossings has grown this summer, but the chief thing we celebrate is the growth that we have seen in the lives of kids and students.

Here is what our merciful God allowed us to be a part of this summer:

- 715 young men and women indicated a desire to pursue vocational ministry.
- 870 students made a decision to believe the gospel, take up their cross, and follow Christ.
- $120,000 was given by middle and high school campers to support Cuban missionaries working in South America.
- $26,000 was given by elementary aged children to support the paramount work at Baptist Haiti Mission.

To God be the glory, great things He has done!

Will you join us in praying for these students? Will you pray for God to confirm, establish, and strengthen these new believers in the faith? Will you pray for older church members and parents to come alongside them and disciple them?

Will you pray for those called to ministry to find their desire to serve the Lord broadened, deepened, and goaded on? Will you pray that those who gave sacrificially for the gospel to go to the nations will themselves consider going to the nations?

As you consider the way God transformed so many students this summer at Crossings, may we urge you to continue sharing the gospel with more vigilance? While we freely confess that these things are from the Lord, we also freely confess that we are not surprised. Is not the gospel the power of God for salvation (Romans 1:16a)?

Teen who 'egged' church leader's car saved at Crossings

By Cary Donnell

Williamstown—Walker Angell has one of the more radical testimonies you'll hear from this camp season. The 17-year-old was invited to attend Crossings camp by a family whose car he'd "egged" only three days before he left for Crossings camp.

There, he saw his need for salvation, and he accepted Jesus as his Lord and Savior during an altar call.

"We are rejoicing with the angels in heaven at this brother's salvation and we are praying for God to confirm him, establish him, and strengthen him in the faith," said Randall Breland, director of communications for Crossings.

The Williamstown resident egged multiple cars in frustration over, of all things, the families' relationships with God. He returned to apologize to Darryl and Deana Cummins, two egging victims, who attend Williamstown Baptist Church, where Darryl serves as facilities manager and as a deacon.

"We asked him if he wanted to come with our group to Crossings," recalled Deana Cummins. "He was baffled that we forgave him."

While at the camp, the Cumminses talked to Angell about God's salvation through Jesus Christ.

He was shocked that despite his earlier transgression, the Williamstown church group did not seem bothered by his presence. During a response time following a service, he stood up to say he wanted to give his life to Christ.

"He said afterward that he had been baptized at age 8, but it was for appeasing his parents," added Deana Cummins. "He wasn't living anything out."

Walker is unafraid and unashamed to proclaim who he is in Christ now. He gave his testimony to his church group in front of the Williamstown Baptist congregation. He regularly shares what Jesus did for him with others.

"Stories like this one are the reason Crossings Ministries exists. When you first hear the story, it seems surprising. Yet, it is exactly this kind of story that should not surprise us," concluded Breland, "Our student camps provide us the privilege and opportunity to see God changing hundreds of lives every summer." (WR)

Music, worship conference slated in Woodburn

Woodburn—Dove Award-winner David Williamson leads a stellar cast of experts at the Kentucky Baptist Music and Worship Conference. The half-day conference will be hosted by Woodburn Baptist Church in Woodburn on Sept. 22, beginning at noon.

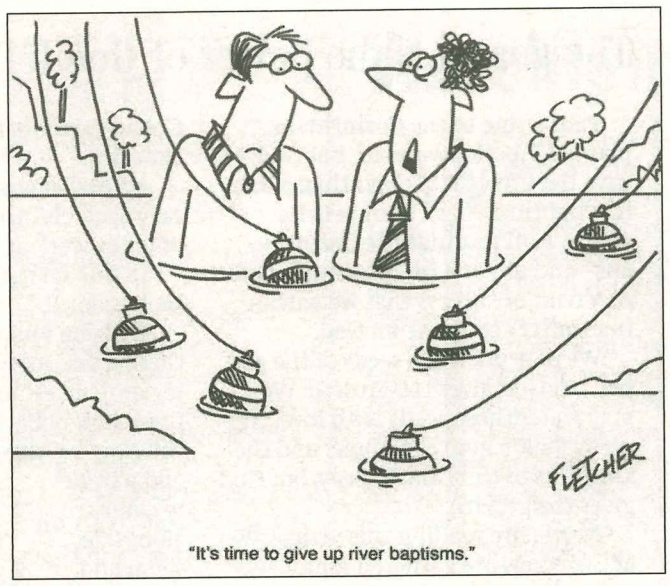
Williamson, a longtime Tennessee worship pastor and Christian recording producer, will be joined by several Kentucky Baptist worship leaders ready to share their knowledge on a variety of topics, including technology in worship.

Participants will enjoy great music and an optional awards banquet. Register by Sept. 9 at www.kybaptist.org/kbmc.

KBC Calendar of Events

August
29 Equip, Twelve Oaks Church, Paducah
30 Equip, Edgewood Church, Hopkinsville

September
6 Power Lunch, Ky. Baptist Building, Louisville
10 Excel, Bethlehem Church, Louisville
15 Retired Director of Missions Luncheon, Severns Valley Association, Elizabethtown
22 Ky. Baptist Music Conference, Woodburn Church, Woodburn
23-24 Disaster Relief Chaplaincy Training, Clarkson Church, Clarkson
23-24 Men's & Women's Chorales Retreat, Living Hope Church, Bowling Green
23-24 Basic Training Journey for Hispanic Church Planters, First Church, Paducah



"It's time to give up river baptisms."

Mountains to the Mississippi

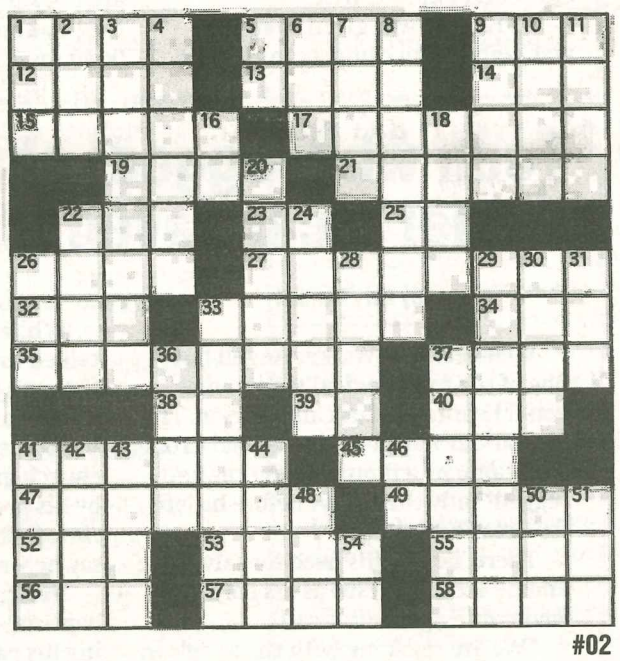
Compiled by Staff

CENTRAL CITY—New Hope Church will hold its homecoming Aug. 28 at 10 a.m. with **Vernon Cook** and music by His Heart Quartet at 11 a.m. A potluck meal will be held at the ballpark. **Travis Fox** is pastor.

LOUISVILLE—Two Highland neighborhood churches, Deer Park Baptist and Bardstown Road Presbyterian, are co-sponsoring "Neighborfest" on Sept. 10, from 3-5 p.m., on both church parking lots. Foods and activities will include bubble bug, cake walk, cotton candy, crafts, face painting, fire truck, inflatables, live music, pony rides and snow cones.

Bible Crosswords

By Linda Nunn

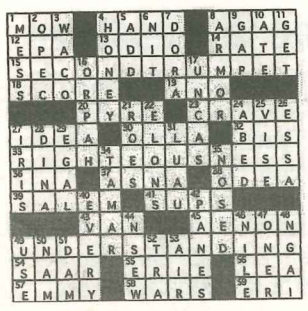


#02

Across
1. "Thy word is a ____unto my feet" (Psalm 119:105)
5. Actor Alan
9. "____ iniquity unto their iniquity" (Psalm 69:27)
12. Egg shaped
13. Oust
14. Feminine name
15. Rectangular sections
17. "The heavens ____ the glory of God" (Psalm 19:1)
19. Object of adoration
21. Believed
22. Asian country (abbr.)
23. In the same place (Lat.)
25. So-so (abbr.)
26. "perfumed my bed with myrrh, ____, and cinnamon" (Proverbs 7:17)
27. Pioneer in steel
32. Kin (abbr.)
33. "from the tower of ____ shall they fall" (Ezekiel 30:6)
34. Inhabitant of (suffix)
35. "in his law doth he ____ day and night" (Psalm 1:2)
37. "they love to____standing" (Matthew 6:5)
38. Either
39. Continent (abbr.)
40. Munch
41. Of a Damascus river (2 Kings 5)
45. The man behind McDonald's
47. Feels contrite
49. Sound of a dropped melon
52. ____-de-France
53. "if he shall ____ the whole world" (Matthew 16:26)
55. Apollo's mother in myth
56. Careless
57. He was (Lat.)
58. Anglo-Saxon slave

Down
1. "the Lord of hosts shall ___ the bough with terror" (Isaiah 10:33)
2. Star of The Barefoot Contessa
3. "Yet thou in thy____ mercies forsook them not" (Nehemiah 9:19)
4. "What ____ shall I give thee?" (Genesis 38:18)
5. Direction for printer (abbr.)
6. First ____
7. Slave Scott
8. To die
9. Son of Kemuel (Genesis 22)
10. "for a good man some would even ____ to die" (Romans 5:7)
11. Act
16. King of Egypt (2 Kings 17)
18. Lift (Fr.)
20. Tripoli is its capital
22. Toward the wind
24. Red root vegetables
26. Branch
28. Move stealthily
29. "for no man can do these (John 3:2)
30. State (Fr.)
31. King (Sp.)
33. Alien
36. Bulwer-Lytton heroine
37. "sin is a reproach to any____" (Proverbs 14:34)
41. Seed covering after fertilization
42. Lugosi
43. Peak
44. "the bright and morning ____" (Revelation 22:16)
46. Currency of India (abbr.)
48. A Nethinim family, the children of ____ (Nehemiah 7)
50. Chewed
51. Anderson's High
54. Bib. div.

#01



Classified Ads

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

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 By Pass North, Lawrenceburg, KY 40342. Attn. Gary Ellcessor.

SEEKING: The Summersville (Ky.) Church is accepting resumés for a pastor. Summerville is looking for a God-called individual who will lead the church forward and further develop the congregation. Please send resumés to Summerville Baptist Church, c/o Pulpit Committee, P.O. Box 68, Summerville, KY 42782.

SEEKING: Southside Church, Princeton, Ky., is now accepting resumés for a full-time minister of music. Email resumés to musicsearchteam@southsidebaptist.com or mail them to: Southside Baptist Church, Attn: Music Search Team, P.O. Box 684, Princeton, KY 42445

SEEKING: Columbia Church is prayerfully seeking a part-time minister of music. Candidates must have 1-2 years of worship leadership experience and a bachelor's degree is preferred. Candidates must have a kingdom focus and be a team player. Send resumés to: ATTN: Personnel Commit-tee, Columbia Baptist Church, 201 Greens-burg St., Columbia, KY 42728, or email them to churchoffice@columbiabaptist.com. While Columbia Baptist appreciates all candidates, any applicant should understand that it is not a reformed church.

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

SEEKING: Westside Church, Murray, Ky., is seeking a youth, college and career pastor. Resumés may be submitted to aleslie@wbcmurray.org.

SEEKING: Youngers Creek Church in Elizabethtown, Ky., is seeking a part-time youth minister. Interested individuals can send their resumé to James Hines, at janicehines70@gmail.com or call (502) 773-0749 for more information.

SEEKING: Long Ridge Church in Owenton, Ky., is seeking a full-time or bivocational pastor. Long Ridge is a church of about 100 members. Send resumés to longridgebaptist@gmail.com.

SEEKING: New Hope Church, Versailles, Ky., is seeking a worship/youth pastor. For a job description and to submit resumé, email ma@newhopeky.org.

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.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church in downtown Tallahassee, Fla., is seeking God's guidance for a full-time senior pastor. It is a Bible-focused congregation that desires a dynamic preacher/teacher who can preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, possesses a deep and personal prayer life, has a strong focus on evangelism and can pastor a diverse congregation. Candidates should have a minimum of a masters of divinity and a doctorate is preferred. For more information on the church, please refer to www.fbctlh.org/pastorsearch. Interested candidates or referrals should submit a cover letter and resumé to pastorsearch@fbctlh.org or to Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 710, Tallahassee, FL 32302. Review of resumés and cover letters will begin Sept. 2.

SEEKING: Oak Hill Church, Sonora, Ky., is accepting resumés for a pastor. Oak Hill is a rural church located in LaRue County. The church has an active children and youth ministry. Members are seeking a pastor with a heart for the Lord. Send resumés to: Attn Pulpit Committee, Oak Hill Baptist Church, P.O. Box 252, Sonora, KY 42776, or email to oakhillbaptistchurch@hotmail.com.

SEEKING: Knoxville Church in Williamstown, Ky., a mission-minded and dedicated rural church, is seeking a full-time or bi-vocational pastor. Resumés may be submitted by Sept. 30 to KnoxvilleBaptistSearch@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Clear Fork Church in Rockfield, Ky., is currently accepting profiles/resumés for a pastor. Clear Fork is a conservative congregation located in a rural but quickly growing area of Warren County. Send profiles/resumés to Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 105, Rockfield, KY 42274 or email to clearforkbaptistchurch@yahoo.com by Oct 1.

SEEKING: Reidland Church in Paducah, Ky., seeks a senior pastor with strong leadership skills and a prayerful vision to evangelize a 1st century message using 21st century methods. Important qualities are strong communication and organizational skills inspired by God to revitalize a congregation searching for stability, integrity, and a diligence to win the lost to Christ and serve as a lighthouse of hope in the community and world. For additional information or to submit resumés or nominations: RBC Search, Box 3316, Paducah, KY 42002-3316, or reidlandbaptistsearchcommittee@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Bevinsville Church is seeking a bi-vocational pastor. Send resumés to P.O. Box 17, Bevinsville KY 41606.

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Severe injuries teach basketball player what is 'really important'

By Redunda Noble

Memphis, Tenn.—Watching Laura Spradlin drain 3-pointers and block shots, it's hard to believe a car crash nearly took her life.

"I love that basketball is a game for tall people," said Spradlin, who has played since she was 5. At almost 6-foot-2, not being able to play basketball was torture. "I couldn't run for months because of my injuries," she said.

"But I knew I needed to try my hardest because I really wanted to play again."

Driving alone on her way to school, Spradlin was severely injured when her car collided with a pickup truck at a Memphis-area intersection Jan. 22, 2014. Despite doctors' low expectations, Spradlin aimed to stay positive amid the rigors of her recovery.

"Rehab was my opportunity," she said. "Whenever they told me to walk for five minutes, I asked if I could walk a mile."

News of the accident initially devastated her parents. "On the way to the hospital, we prayed for God to spare her life," said Mike Spradlin, president of Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary. "She was only 17 and I prayed she wouldn't be in a wheelchair the rest of her life."

Though the idea of losing their only daughter and youngest of their three children was heart-wrenching, Spradlin's mother Lee Ann rejected fear that tried to set in. The Lord immediately reminded her "Laura was right with Him no matter what happened."

Laura was in critical but stable condition when her parents first saw her.

Strapped in a neck brace, her left eye was swollen shut. Still in a coma, she suffered from massive brain bleeding and a fracture in which part of her face had separated from her skull. Her front teeth had been knocked out; a carotid artery, the major blood vessel carrying blood to the brain, had been damaged; and shattered glass was embedded in her face.

Other injuries included a severed leg tendon and dislocated elbow.

"We knew things were pretty serious as soon as we saw her," Lee Ann said.



Above: *Laura Spradlin, back on the basketball court after suffering life-threatening injuries, shoots a free throw in a 2015 game attended by Kevin Durant and Russell Westbrook in honor of Oklahoma City Thunder teammate Cameron Payne, whose high school number was being retired at Lausanne Collegiate Academy in Memphis. Durant and Westbrook are in the background over Spradlin's shoulder.*

After several bad reports, family members prepared for the worst.

Laura's parents refused to leave her alone at Regional One Health in Memphis. They initially split shifts during the day, while family and friends stayed nights. Known as the MED to locals, the hospital is staffed by highly trained trauma specialists, though Mike Spradlin admitted, "We had only heard horror stories about the MED. What we found was the complete opposite. The doctors and nurses were wonderful.

"It was like the whole city of Memphis was taking care of our daughter."

Although on heavy medication, Laura turned a corner just four days after the accident. "Dad, I think I'm in the hospital," she said in a surprise early morning wake-up call that sent her parents racing to the hospital, anxious to see their daughter awake.

In subsequent days and weeks, word spread of the accident. "So many people wanted to visit Laura and help us," Lee Ann Spradlin said. "We were overwhelmed by the support."



Laura Spradlin

"He was all I needed to be happy and fulfilled. And once I got everything back, I realized I didn't need those things as much as I thought."

Laura's aunt created a personal website to give updates. People around the world prayed and posted encouraging messages. Friends delivered hot meals, and Spradlin's basketball team even collected money to help with expenses.

"We are so grateful for the body of Christ," Lee Ann Spradlin said. "The family of God was there to help us with whatever we needed."

Recovery was excruciating for Spradlin due to diet restrictions. "My jaw was wired shut and I had to drink all my food through a straw. I was always so hungry," she said. "They brought me cream of mushroom soup for breakfast. It was horrible."

Rejecting sugary protein shakes and smoothies, she lost 32 pounds. "I was upset because they wanted me to drink all this sugar and I couldn't move around or work out," she said.

Even when the nutritionist threatened to insert a feeding tube, Laura wouldn't concede. She wasn't satisfied until she could eat her mom's chicken tortellini soup. "It tasted so good and I finally felt full."

Mood and memory changes added to Laura's challenges. Family members never knew if she would angrily lash out, cry uncontrollably or be joyful. In difficult moments when attempts to calm her failed, nurses had to restrain her.

Her parents remained hopeful that her brain would recover. "I know it was hard for them," Laura said. "They had to keep repeating things to me because I wouldn't remember what happened the day before. I still have bad brain days," she said. "But compared to how they thought I would be, I'm so much better."

After four weeks in the hospital, 11 surgeries and months of rehab, Spradlin returned to basketball with flair and vigor.

She shocked everyone in her first game by shooting a 3-pointer.

Her game, now bolstered by a six-day-a-week workout regimen, had changed—and everyone could see it, especially intimidated opponents who don't think she can shoot because she's tall.

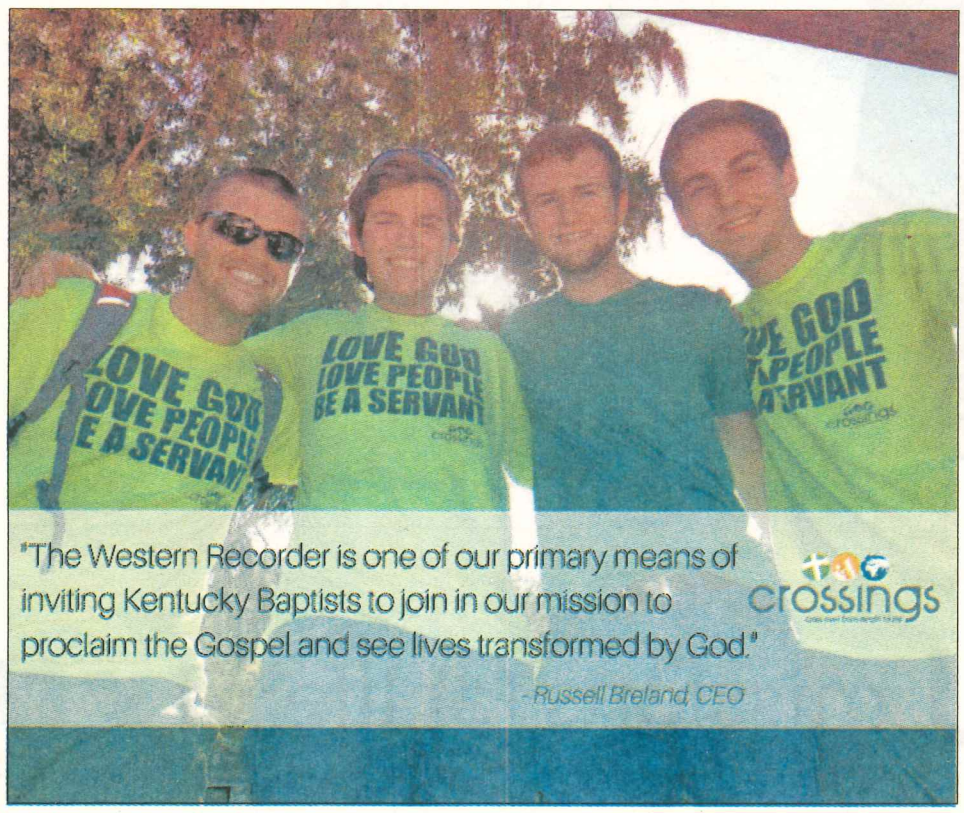
Spradlin's most striking change is her relationship with Christ. "God taught me to trust Him more," she said, reflecting a joy in sharing her testimony. "When I was in the hospital, everything was taken away. I couldn't walk, or play the piano or play basketball."

With no guarantee she would recover, Spradlin focused on the Lord. "He was all I needed to be happy and fulfilled," she said. "And once I got everything back, I realized I didn't need those things as much as I thought."

This fall, Spradlin will be a power forward for Ouachita Baptist University's Lady Tigers in Arkadelphia, Ark., her spot on the team secured by an impressive tryout.

Despite her achievement, Spradlin cautions young people against becoming fixated on sports, friends and their social lives. "We can make those things our god and push our spiritual life to the side," she said.

"In the scope of things, your soul is what really matters. When I almost died, I learned what was really important." (BP)



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