

WESTERN Recorder

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 Convention

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Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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Louisiana flood recovery to enlist Baptists nationwide

By Josie Rabbitt

Baton Rouge, La.—The North American Mission Board is facilitating a recovery effort to help Louisiana flood survivors rebuild and to assist churches and individuals who want to serve. The initiative, under NAMB's Send Relief ministry, will begin Oct. 1 and enlist Baptists nationwide.

"We're developing a recovery plan to help Louisiana residents, pastors, churches and other buildings damaged by extreme flooding," said Mickey Caison, NAMB's Southern Baptist Disaster Relief executive director. "The Send Relief plan includes a facility to house 300 volunteers as they aid those in crisis. Another part of what's in the works concerning this year-long project (is) collegiate opportunities during students' Christmas and spring breaks to help serve and rebuild Louisiana."

The initiative, named Send Relief: Louisiana Flood, will entail a recovery and rebuild process similar to those NAMB facilitated in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, Hurricane Katrina, Detroit flooding and the Colorado floods and wildfires.

While mud-outs, clean-ups and feedings are currently ongoing, the one-year recovery plan will move into the rebuild stage.

To be part of the effort, churches, groups and individuals can visit namb.net and click on the Louisiana Flood icon. From there they will be able to



Unsalvageable household items line the curbs of Woodwick Avenue in Baton Rouge, La. Approximately 20 parishes in Louisiana experienced severe flooding after receiving torrential rain last month, which claimed 13 lives. (Photo by Carmen Sisson/NAMB)

schedule the dates for their visit. While housing and meals are provided onsite, there is a \$25-per-day fee for each participant.

So far in the response to the historic mid-August flooding in south Louisiana, SBDL team members and chaplains have made 1,345 gospel presentations and seen 171 people respond by placing their faith in Christ for salvation.

SBDL teams also have prepared more than 657,000 hot meals and will continue doing so, which continues to require tons of cans to be opened and beans to be stirred, burgers to be flipped and frozen food to be thawed and prepped for distribution. SBDL cleanup volunteers, meanwhile, continue to pull up tile and other damaged flooring, rip

out contaminated sheet rock and insulation and treat for mold as well as salvaging furniture and discarding ruined appliances.

Send Relief: Louisiana Flood will give "every church, every group and every individual who wants to serve a chance to do so without having to figure out 'Where will we sleep? Where will we eat? Who will we help?'" said David Melber, NAMB's vice president of Send Relief.

"If you show up with your work clothes and some tools, we will take care of the rest," Melber added.

David Hankins, executive director of Louisiana Baptist Convention, said, "We are extremely grateful for the short-term assistance and long-term commitment of the North American Mission Board and

all of our state partners to meet these ongoing needs.

"We're praying God will restore the lives of those affected and even bring revival from the ruins," Hankins said.

Caison affirmed that volunteers will be stepping into a disaster zone and a mission field.

"A lot of the residents are dealing with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) from the flood. They're resilient people who want to move on with their lives, again. Many escaped the flooding in New Orleans just to have it happen to them again here. It's heartbreaking but we've got Southern Baptist chaplains as well as local pastors offering up spiritual and

□ See *Flooding...* Page 2

Kentucky Baptists set records in Cooperative Program, missions giving

Louisville—Kentucky Baptist churches far exceeded the state convention's projections for the fiscal year that ended Aug. 31, giving more than \$22.3 million through the Cooperative Program to spread the gospel around the world, plus contributing an additional \$8.9 million through three special offerings to support state, national and international missionaries.

The year-end financial report from the Kentucky Baptist Convention showed CP giving \$1,064,362 more than had been projected, far exceeding budget

estimates for the first time in 10 years and exceeding the previous year's giving for the second year in a row.

"All year I have been hearing about more and more pastors leading their churches to raise their level of CP giving," said Paul Chitwood, executive director of the KBC. "Seeing such a significant jump in the year-end totals is truly remarkable. Kentucky Baptists refuse to sit silently by when multitudes of people here at home and abroad desperately need the gospel."

The Kentucky Baptist Convention had

budgeted \$21,250,000. Actual giving totaled \$22,314,362.

Of the \$1 million budget windfall, \$494,898 will go to the Southern Baptist Convention, \$171,404 will go to Kentucky Baptist agencies and institutions, and \$397,536 will go to KBC Mission Board operations.

The financial report also showed giving by Kentucky Baptist churches reached an all-time high through two separate missions offerings.

Kentucky Baptists gave \$5,383,426 through the Lottie Moon offering for

international missions, and \$2,350,567 through the Annie Armstrong offering for North American missions. In addition, they gave \$1,214,038 through the Eliza Broadus offering for state missions.

"This level of generosity from Kentucky Baptists speaks to their concern for the lost here at home, across the nation and around the world," said Lowell Ashby, leader of the KBC's Finance and Business Services Team. "It also speaks to their confidence in the cooperative work of our churches to reach the world for Christ." (KBC)

90-year-old still works for church daycare she started 50 years ago

By Myriah Snyder

Louisville—Maple Grove Baptist Daycare in Louisville is celebrating its 50th anniversary, and its founder, Glennice Manakee who just turned 90, is still working for the daycare.

"I like to keep my hand in it," Manakee said. She comes in one day a week to help keep books.

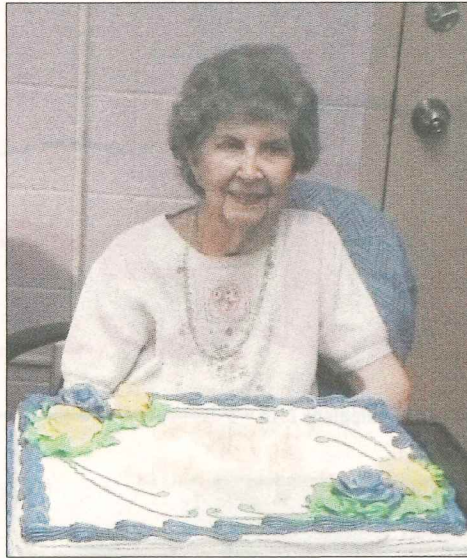
The daycare opened its doors right after Labor Day in 1966. The church, part of the Southern Baptist Convention's "a million more in '54" initiative, wanted to find a way to put the extra rooms they had to use during the week.

The pastor at the time asked Manakee, a member since 1961, to spearhead a committee to decide what to do with the space.

Manakee, a former nurse, spent her days as a stay-at-home mother. As her daughters were getting older, she was eager to find another use of her time.

"Daycare was in its infancy. For one year, we worked and we went to every daycare we could find. We went to classes. We did studies about whether it would be easy to open a daycare in this area or not. We sent out fliers. So we opened up 1966," Manakee shared.

When the daycare started, she worked for \$35 a week, arriving at 5 a.m.



each morning. "I was daycare director for 22 years. I didn't even intend to be involved. I intended after we got the daycare started, that was it. But I was the only one who knew anything about daycare at the time, so I was chosen. That was okay with me," she shared.

Now after so many years, Manakee noted that she sees adults who used to be children at the daycare bringing their own kids back to be a part.

The church, located in a predominately Catholic section of Louisville, is



rooted in ministry. "As we teach these children how to be redirected (a childcare method), we want them to be redirected to the love of Christ. I've been intentional on Wednesdays to have Bible story time. We sing Christian songs. Parents all know it," Pastor Ray Hayes said, mentioning that children of Muslim and Catholic faiths attend.

"The church has to be dedicated and committed to children's ministry," he continued. "If we don't get them while they are young and get them asking questions, they are not going to ask them when they get in middle school and high school. They used to say if you don't reach them in high school you won't reach them. Now if you don't at least touch them in preschool you won't reach them. They need to learn the truth

and the Word."

Manakee also sees the daycare as a ministry. "It definitely is a ministry. I always said that it was a church first and a daycare second. If anybody came and said, 'I don't believe in that,' I'd say, 'Well, you know, this is a Baptist church.' Even though we don't teach doctrine, we do have Bible stories. We never backed down on that."

Hayes expressed appreciation for Manakee's longevity and dedication, as well as many of the other senior saints that have been so dedicated to the daycare ministry.

"Most of her time every day was spent here meeting the needs of children. She's 90 years old, and she's still meeting the needs of children," he commented. (WR)

Weaver to lead Franklin Association

Frankfort—Jeremy Weaver joined Franklin Baptist Association as director of missions Sept. 1.

Weaver most recently served as pastor of Crossway Baptist Church in Lenior City, Tenn., and was a member at Farmdale Baptist Church in Frankfort.

He and his wife Magaly have served in various capacities in ministry from janitor to church planter. Weaver's heart and vision for Franklin Association is stated in his new job title as director of missions.

"I have a good sense that God is working among the churches of Franklin Baptist Association. I want to be a part of that, so the way that I'm going about this is I'm trying to implement a mission's emphasis within the association," Weaver said.

He continued, "I believe an association is an organization for home

missions, local missions and wider North American missions and International missions through the Southern Baptist Convention and Kentucky Baptist Convention. That's what I'm pushing for, and I think we can make a difference."



Jeremy Weaver

He hopes to spearhead an associational mission conference to feature local missionaries, missionaries outside the association, and missionaries from various SBC entities to connect with church leaders within his association.

"I'm looking forward to working with Jeremy and trust he'll be a unifying and challenging missional leader for the association," Eric Allen, the KBC's missions mobilization team leader, said. "I am excited that Jeremy is so eager to partner with the KBC so that we can work together to strengthen existing churches and plant new ones." (WR)

Converge: Engage students to engage students

By Myriah Snyder

Hardin—On Sept. 23-25, approximately 400 college students across the state will gather at Jonathan Creek Conference center for a time of connecting, fellowship and learning how to engage their campus for Christ. The conference is part of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Twelve24 initiative.

"In the fall semester you have a window of opportunity to meet new students and develop new relationships. With this generation, the twelve24 generation, relationships are one of the most important things in their life," Brian Combs, the collegiate evangelism strategist with the KBC, said. "So for churches that are trying to engage college students, they have to develop a relationship with college students."

"What we've done is create a conference where churches can work with the campus missionary within their region in the first few weeks in the fall semester,

develop new relationships with students and try to get them to this conference," Combs explained.

Speakers include Tom Richter, Curtis Woods, Holly Prosser, Elaina Barron, Brett Martin, Jon Barron, Rick Howerton, Steve Coleman, Jonathan Clark, Brian Hinton, Tyler Wittmer, Keith Inman, Todd Thomas and Sixteen Cities.

"The idea of this conference is to equip these students to go back to their campuses as a missionary to engage their friends with the gospel," Combs said, expressing his hope that churches use this to get their college students excited about sharing the gospel and building relationships on their campuses.

In addition, he hopes for many of the attenders to hear the gospel themselves. "But then we'll send them back energized and equipped to engage their campus as missionaries," he added.

To register, groups and individuals should visit www.convergeky.com



CONVERGE

Flooding

Continued from Page 1

emotional support to those suffering from PTSD."

Louisiana's Tri County Southern Baptist Association director of missions, Philip Shuford, who weathered a flood while living in North Carolina a few years ago, said he understands what it's like to think, "Why me?"

He added that addressing the current need of disaster victims is key to faster recovery. Currently, Tri County volunteers—who have been trained onsite—are working on houses damaged by flooding.

Caison said the call to provide relief comes straight from the Bible.

"We function off of 1 Chronicles 28:20, which says, 'Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Don't be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord, my God is with you. He won't leave you or forsake you until the work for the service of the Lord's house is finished.' And because of that, we work hard in homes of strangers, always ready to bring hope to those we serve."

To donate to Louisiana flood victims through NAMB, visit namb.net/Send-Relief/Disaster-Relief/Louisiana-Flood. All donations are tax deductible and 100 percent goes to aid flood survivors through Send Relief. (BP)

TOP TEN

REASONS TO READ THE
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7

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Was 9/11 a catalyst for missions to Muslims?

By David Roach

New York—When radical Islamic terrorists brought down the World Trade Center's Twin Towers 15 years ago, they didn't realize their actions would also help bring down walls to reaching Muslims with the gospel.

But that's exactly what happened.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, the number of Unengaged, Muslim Unreached People Groups (UMUPGs) in the world has decreased by nearly 20 percent, from 1,333 in 2001 to 1,077 today, according to statistics provided by Vision 5:9, a coalition of Christian missions organizations focused on reaching Muslims.

That translates to 32 million fewer Muslims living in groups with little or no access to the gospel than when terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Missiologist and former Southern Baptist missionary David Garrison argues more than 80 percent of history's movements of Muslims coming to Christ—defined as at least a thousand Muslims from the same people group being baptized over 20 years or less—have occurred in the 21st century.

Nik Ripken, a worker in the Muslim world whose story is chronicled in the book and film "The Insanity of God," said "prior to 9/11 there were hundreds of Muslims coming to Christ. Since 9/11 there is a significant segment of American culture and of Muslim culture that realizes hate and war does not change anything. It makes it worse.

"So now, where we saw a trickle of Muslims coming to Christ, we're seeing tens of thousands," Ripken said.

At the same time, however, some believers have withdrawn from missions to Muslims out of fear, and some evangelistic opportunity has been squandered.

'Advance the name of Christ'

Greg Belser, pastor of Morrison Heights Baptist Church in Clinton, Miss., told Baptist Press, "Overwhelmingly, the response of our church has been, 'If this is the condition of the world, then we need to be all the more urgent with sharing Christ.' ... Our church has responded aggressively as a result of the so-called cultural conversation surrounding 9/11."

Morrison Heights' sense of urgency led to the church's adoption of a UMUPG in Central Asia in 2013 to whom they have sent one couple to live fulltime and are preparing to send another. Short-term teams from the church also travel to the people group, and a local contact person has been established.

"Do we know that there are people (in the world) who have terrorist intents?" Belser asked. "There's no getting around that. We know that. But Jesus came into a violent world, and we live in a violent world still, and we will continue to advance the name of Christ whenever the Lord gives us opportunity."

Closer to home, the church is active in showing hospitality to and engaging in gospel conversations with Muslim students at nearby Mississippi College.

Mike Edens, a professor of Islamic studies at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary who formerly served as a missionary in the Muslim world, told BP that Morrison Heights is representative of a larger trend. For 25 years before 9/11, Edens said, the evangelical



missions movement had begun to focus on the concepts of unreached people groups and the so-called 10/40 Window, a region spanning parts of Europe, Africa and Asia where many of the 865 million Muslim residents have little or no access to the gospel. Sept. 11 inspired a more widespread interest in those concepts across the evangelical world as believers became more attuned to Islam.

"9/11 changed the attitude in a broader spectrum of the church," Edens said. The deadliest terrorist attacks ever on American soil "changed the ground-level understanding in one way or another in the average Christian."

Muslim receptivity

As Western evangelicals became more eager to share the gospel with Muslims, a segment of the Islamic world became more open to receive it, said Mokhles Hanna, pastor of the Atlanta-area Arabic Baptist Church in Lilburn.

"When Sept. 11 happened, when ISIS came, when al-Qaeda came," some Muslims "started reading more about whether (terrorism and violence) was really the teaching of Islam," Hanna told BP. "Some of them started realizing, 'Wow, this is the Islam we didn't know. ... Muhammad killed. His followers killed. And this is what the Quran is teaching.'"

Hanna added, "Thousands of them left Islam," with some becoming secular or atheist and others turning to Christ.

According to Garrison's book "A Wind in the House of Islam," 69 of the 85 movements of Muslims coming to Christ in mass since Islam's founding have occurred in the 21st century. Garrison told BP that 9/11 is one of multiple factors causing some Muslims to abandon their faith. Other factors include activities of terrorist groups like the Islamic State, Hamas, al-Qaeda and Boko Haram.

"It's hard to draw a one-to-one correlation" between Muslims coming to Christ and 9/11, Garrison said. "But there is a correlation."

Muslims, he said, "have been awakened by 9/11 with a jolt" and are thinking, "Is this who we are? If this is who we are, then I'm not sure I signed up for this."

Regarding violent Islam, the Pew Research Center has reported that "in many cases, people in countries with large Muslim populations are as concerned as Western nations about the threat of Islamic extremism." Pew also reported, "Muslims worldwide mostly say suicide bombings and other forms of violence against civilians in the name of

Islam are rarely or never justified."

'It surprises me'

While Hanna rejoices in the Muslims who have come to Christ, he is surprised American Christians haven't responded to Muslim spiritual openness with greater gospel witness.

"It surprises me that American churches still don't get it," said Hanna, who came to the U.S. from Egypt in 2006. "They still don't understand the true nature of Islam and how much more work we need to do to reach out to them."

Ripken thinks fear stemming from 9/11 is partially to blame for the less-than-ideal evangelistic response.

"After 9/11, the church's first response was to be afraid and withdraw from sending its sons and daughters and its second-career people to change the heart of Islam, to change the mindset so that things like 9/11 would not take place," Ripken said.

Though fear continues to be the predominant emotional response among some Christians, Ripken's wife Ruth told BP, gradually missions-minded Christians returned to the field with a courageous yet wiser perspective on security.

Missions organizations' "initial response was, 'Let's pull everyone out. Let's get everyone to safety,'" said Ruth Ripken. "But after they took a deep breath, many organizations spent time in prayer. They put people back into their locations and realized, 'We can't be a kneejerk organization. We have to be an organization prepared for situations like this.'"

"They began to evaluate how to equip workers on the field to be better strategic thinkers, to be more aware of their surroundings, and most groups began to implement security plans so people knew what to do in the event of" future terrorist attacks, Ruth Ripken said.

Future prospects

Organizations and individuals should continue to engage the Muslim world wisely and strategically, the Ripkens said. The most effective means they have found to reach Muslims are house churches and using the Arabic language.

In their travels to churches across America, they plead for more followers of Jesus to be on mission to Muslims in North America and internationally.

"The only places where Muslims are not coming to Jesus in significant numbers," Nik Ripken said, "are those places we don't go." (BP)

NCAA officials pull tourney from N.C. over restroom bill

By David Roach

Greensboro, N.C.—North Carolina's pro-family leaders are decrying the NCAA's decision to pull seven championship athletic events from the state during the 2016-17 academic year in response to a state law requiring individuals at public agencies to use restrooms corresponding to their biological sex.

"There is an expectation of privacy when women and children go into the shower or locker room, and it's more than an expectation—it's a right," Tami Fitzgerald, executive director of the North Carolina Values Coalition, said in a statement. "And our elected officials have a duty to protect that right. The NCAA is punishing the state of North Carolina because it dares to stand up for the commonsense notion that everyone has a right to privacy, decency and safety in bathrooms, showers and locker rooms."

The law in question, known as House Bill 2, also institutes a statewide nondiscrimination law that does not include protections based on sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression—another provision criticized by the NCAA.

The most high-profile events affected by the NCAA's Sept. 12 announcement are first- and second-round Division I Men's Basketball Championship games slated for March 17 and 19 in Greensboro.

Other sports affected include Division I women's soccer, Division III men's and women's soccer, Division I women's golf, Division III men's and women's tennis, Division I women's lacrosse and Division II baseball.

The NCAA did not announce where the moved championship events would be played, the Raleigh News & Observer reported.

In publicizing its decision, the NCAA alleged in a statement, "North Carolina law provides legal protections for government officials to refuse services to the (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) community."

NCAA President Mark Emmert said, "Fairness is about more than the opportunity to participate in college sports, or even compete for championships. We believe in providing a safe and respectful environment at our events and are committed to providing the best experience possible for college athletes, fans and everyone taking part in our championships."

Fitzgerald, a trustee of Southern Baptists' Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, called the NCAA hypocritical.

"The NCAA is guilty of extreme hypocrisy," Fitzgerald said. "While it bullies the people of North Carolina to allow boys in the girls' locker rooms, showers and bathrooms, it prohibits boys from playing on the girls' sports teams. Twenty-four states have sued the federal government over the very mandate that the NCAA is now trying to force on the people of North Carolina." (BP)

CP makes a difference

At our dinner table last night, our 13-year-old guest turned to me and asked abruptly, "Do you know why I'm glad my sister is here?" Our guest comes to visit once a week. She is working her way through a residential treatment program, trying to recover from years of abuse and neglect. The question caught me off guard and, knowing at least some of what she and her little sister have endured, I wasn't sure what she would say next.

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

I simply replied, "No. Why are you glad?"

Her sister was three when she came into the care of Sunrise Children's Services, the James 1:27 ministry of Kentucky Baptists. Fueled by the Cooperative Program, Sunrise ministers to more than 1,000 hurting kids in Kentucky. With more than 8,000 kids in our state's care, Kentucky Baptists feel we are only scratching the surface even though we are the largest private provider.

When Sunrise contacted us about a 3 year old, my wife Michelle and I were hesitant. We had been foster parents for a teenage boy for a year, and, although he had recently been placed with another family, 3-year-olds had never been on our radar. With two kids in college and one in middle school, a 3 year old didn't seem like a "good fit." But the scriptural mandate to care for orphans doesn't say much about which kids fit our life-stage, so we took the plunge.

Now, at our dinner table, her 13-year-old sister is about to break my heart even though I don't know it yet.

"I'm glad she's here because I'm glad she has a father."

I knew our foster daughter had no memory of a father, so I wasn't all that surprised when, in a matter of hours, she was calling me daddy. But what broke my heart was the 13-year-old celebrating that her little sister now has a father even though she doesn't.

These two precious girls are among the 400,000 kids in foster care in the US. Thanks to CP ministries like Sunrise, many of those kids are finding foster homes and some are finding forever families. I'd call that relevant.

The omnipotent God wants for no resource. He will accomplish His purposes without any dependence upon Southern Baptists. But thankfully God is choosing to use Southern Baptists to share the gospel. In Southern Baptist cooperative missions and ministries, God has provided the CP to accomplish His purposes. CP is essential and irreplaceable.

And, in a very real way, CP provided a safe place for our 3-year-old foster daughter to escape abuse and neglect. For me, it's a reminder that, though we use words like "cooperation," "missions," and "ministries," CP makes a difference in the lives of real people with real hurts and real needs. And we, as Southern Baptists, are working cooperatively to provide the help and hope of Christ to them.

A version of this story originally ran in SBC Life.

Jake and his lawn mowing business

One fine spring morning, Jake decided he wanted to start a lawn mowing business. He bought a shiny red mower, wound some more cord on his weed eater, sharpened all of his landscaping tools, and even designed a ball cap with a mower logo on it.

Then he heard about a seminar on best practices for mowers. He attended a lecture on the proper height to set a mower blade for best performance. And, he listened to a DVD by an expert who claimed to know whether it was better to mow in a north-to-south or in an east-to-west direction, depending upon the amount of sunlight.

Jake was about ready to start when he had a thought: "If I am going to really be successful at mowing, then perhaps I should know where the grass grows the highest."

So, Jake measured the height of the grass blades in his yard, and he calculated its rate of growth to the millimeter. He then measured his neighbor's grass blades—and the rest of the neighborhood. "Now, if I want my business to expand, perhaps I should also measure the grass in my county—and the neighboring counties," he thought.

It took several weeks, but Jake finally found the perfect location for his mowing business, according to the height of the grass. But then Jake had another thought, "Perhaps I should know the number of mowers, too. If there are many mowers, and they all work, then the grass could be mowed quickly, and there will be no work for me to do." So, Jake surveyed his neighborhood, his county and neighboring counties. He even counted the broken-down mowers, which could easily be fixed.

More weeks passed and by the time Jake determined the perfect site for his mowing business, the leaves had begun to fall. Besides, it was football season, and there'd be games to watch. "Everyone has already lined up their mowers," he thought. "Maybe next year I'll start."

Unlike Jake, we don't have to determine the best location to start a church. Jason Lowe, director of missions for Pike Association, already has done this invaluable service for Kentucky Baptists. Lowe analyzed data gleaned from a recent



After Thought

By Todd Deaton

Glenmary study, and on his blog—www.jasonalowe.com—you can read his synopsis.

Lowe hopes this analysis will help pastors and churches in at least two key ways. "I hope it helps raise awareness that while there are still vast amounts of lostness all across Kentucky, some areas of the state are in more desperate need of intentional evangelistic and church planting efforts than others," he told the Western Recorder. "Second, I hope that church leaders will use this information as a resource as they prayerfully consider specifically where God might lead their church to partner in church planting efforts within the commonwealth."

While the study did not specifically identify towns or cities, the data shows that the East region is in most desperate need of church plants, followed by the North Central region and the Central region. More specifically, Lowe notes, the data suggests that KBC church plants are most needed in (1) Campbell County (Newport/Alexandria), (2) Jessamine County (Nicholasville/Wilmore), (3) Bullitt County (Shepherdsville/Mt. Washington), (4) Rowan County (Morehead), and (5) Pike County (Pikeville).

Lowe was particularly surprised to discover that all of the 25 counties with the worst KBC church to population ratio were located in the Central, North Central, or East regions.

As a DOM, he is encouraging Kentucky Baptists to prayerfully consider partnering with these areas, which have the greatest need for intentional evangelistic and church planting efforts.

So, whatever happened to Jake and his lawn mowing business? Well, even with the finest data available, one can still fail. His mower blade and tools rusted over the winter and would need to be sharpened again. There were more seminars he planned to attend. By the time he was ready, his data would be old. It would surely need to be redone, if the best location for a successful mowing business was ever to be found.

In the end, perhaps the advice Jake should have followed in finding where best to begin was stated by Henry Blackaby some years ago in "Experiencing God." Look for where God is at work, and join in!

Some advice from a fellow student

The new school year has arrived, and I, like many others my age, have spent the last few weeks buried beneath assigned book-reading and essay-writing. It's easy to forget the importance of our own spirituality when confronted with these assignments and deadlines.

In addition to connecting your life to a church on or near your campus, I want to add five suggestions to help guard us from spiritual burnout during the school year:

1. Make time for conversation.

School is fast-paced, jumping from one deadline to another. Carve out time to slow down and converse with those around you. You can afford to spend 10 minutes asking your friends what kinds of struggles they're facing, how they are liking their classes or what's going on in their hearts.

2. Get involved with a family.

First Person



Cody Barnhart

Especially if you're single and away from home, it's easy to grow selfish during college—selfish with your time, money and love. Allowing myself to be known by an entire family rather than one close friend was very good for me, and I know other people who have had similar experiences. Whether it's a family from your church or one of your friend's parents, try to find someone willing to gather around a table for dinner or games on a regular basis.

3. Prayerlessness will ruin you.

Deep down, we still want to be sovereign over ourselves. When we get so busy that we don't pray, we no longer trust that the Spirit will sustain us. Even if you have to wake up an hour early each day to spend time reading Scripture and praying, it will be worth it. It's better to lose some sleep rather than lose your soul.

4. Your GPA only kind of matters.

Don't get me wrong—schoolwork is important. But if you don't do as well as you anticipated in a class, it isn't the end of the world. An important part of school is to learn your limitations, and sometimes these limitations mean you need to take a B or C in a class so you can focus on something more important, like a class you are doing worse in or a friendship that isn't healthy.

5. Nothing beats close friendship with Jesus.

Even at a seminary, I found that school became an idol to me. The newest opportunity or the next event the school was hosting quickly consumed my day-to-day life—and I allowed it to affect my walk with Christ.

No matter what the cost, we need to remember we are students of Christ first. We are friends with him, too. This friendship promises the kind of life academic success could only theorize about, so cling to it. (BP)

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Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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



Pastor, be true to God and to yourself

I believe a pastor often wrestles with his own identity because of the desire to be a “successful” pastor. Invariably, pastors experience the pain of comparison and the pressure of producing quantifiable results. This can lead to panic attacks riddled with self-doubt while chasing the latest fad.

Today, it seems a pastor must be a social media guru, a master of marketing, an effective motivational speaker and the latest version of cool. It may feel that way because that’s what we tend to see from pastors of the most popular churches. In the middle of this, relax and remind yourself of the truth with which to anchor the ministry.

First, be yourself. God did not decree a certain personality was required to be an effective pastor. It’s easy to confuse ministry success with personality. You and I don’t have to be a certain type to be a good pastor. Don’t conform to a stereotype, whatever that may be to you. Be comfortable in your own skin. Trying to be something you’re not is too exhausting and not sustainable.

Know what God wants you to fulfill as a pastor. As far as I can discern from the Bible, there are only two absolute and irrevocable responsibilities. A pastor must provide accurate information to the congregation and provide the proper inspiration with a godly lifestyle.

Every time a pastor gives a sermon, whether to a packed house or faithful few, his job is to accurately preach the Word of God. He must rightly understand it

so he can effectively teach and appropriately apply it. God uses the Bible’s truth to transform people and grow them in Christ (Hebrews 4:12).

First Person



Daryl Cornett

The pastor equips believers for service (Ephesians 4:11-12), and is charged with teaching what is right and warning about what is wrong (Titus 1:9). This is a tremendous responsibility and the pastor’s primary task (1 Timothy 5:17-19).

Other necessary matters are not unimportant. You’ll have to organize, administrate, make visits, and cast vision. You can and should get others to help with these tasks. But you must never allow secondary things to take away from your primary responsibility—to teach God’s Word to the best of your ability. Don’t slight your preparation time. Make sure the congregation understands this.

And I must never forget my authority to preach God’s Word rests on my living a life worthy of imitation (Hebrews 13:7). I may be an amazing communicator, effective organizer, and abound in charisma, but if I am not the man God says I must be, the ministry will come crashing down in time.

Pastors must live in 1 Timothy 3:1-7. I don’t believe this is an exhaustive list, but being above reproach comes through loud and clear. The pastor is an example to the flock (1 Peter 5:1-4). A solid teaching ministry must be upheld by a man of God who pursues this calling with earnestness. He must bring himself into submission to God’s Word as he teaches others. To be above reproach neither means to be beyond criticism nor implies perfection. It does mean no one can legitimately point out a disqualifying character flaw. All believers should strive for this, but pastors must be this.

We pastors must be happy with allowing God to use us just the way He made us. We must not insecurely think we must be a certain kind of personality to be effective. We must remind ourselves to work hard at preparing and delivering thoroughly biblical sermons. And we must set the moral example so we can confidently say to our flock, “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Be of good cheer fellow pastors! Any time you’re feeling unsure, unequipped or out of touch, remind yourself of your job. Preach the Word. Set the example. Be yourself. The rest is just details.

Daryl Cornett is pastor of First Baptist Church of Hazard, Ky., and a chaplain in the U.S. Air Force Reserve.

Five things you should know about using credit cards

1. Use them carefully. Credit cards offer convenience by not having to carry as much cash. However, it has been proven through studies that individuals spend as much as 25-30 percent more when they use credit cards as opposed to using cash. If you use them, be aware of this tendency and exercise self-discipline. Keep the use manageable. If you don’t, the costs in terms of fees and interest, or damage to your credit record could be significant.

2. Choose them carefully. Don’t automatically choose a credit card just to get freebies because there is no annual fee. Look for the card that is best for your spending/borrowing habits. For example, if you except to carry a balance from month to month, it’s more important to look for a card with a low interest rate and/or a generous “grace period.”

3. Pay as much as you can to minimize interest charges. Your goal should be to always pay your bill in full each month. Paying only the minimum means you’ll be paying excessive interest. Some folks that pay only the minimum end up paying more in interest than for the product purchased.

4. Pay on time. Late fees today are typically \$35 or more. That’s a high price to pay for being a few days late. More importantly, continued late payments may be reported to credit bureaus as a sign you have problems handling money. If your credit rating gets lowered, your credit card company could raise interest rates on your card or reduce your credit limit, or cancel your card.

5. Protect your credit card numbers from thieves. You should never provide the number, expiration date or security code in response to an unsolicited phone call, email or other communicate you did not originate. If using your card online, make sure you’re dealing with a legitimate website that encrypts data during transmission. Major credit card companies also are offering more protection by providing “zero-liability” programs that protect consumers from unauthorized use.



Don Spencer

Stopping bickering, irritability

Q: My husband and I have recently become aware that much of our two teenagers’ argumentative spirit seems to be in some ways a result of our own opinionated perspectives. While we all profess to love Christ and each other, our family is always bickering and irritated with one another. How can we change this?

A: I wish all parents would be willing to own that their children are often mimicking and/or reacting against their own foibles, character flaws and patterns of relational sinfulness.

Thanks for your honesty!

Let me suggest that your family set a common goal in the coming year to become more humble. When marriages and families are marked by humility, persons see themselves as gifted yet unworthy, highly valued yet no more so than others. Such families place others needs higher than their own and

become servants, not because of any command or approval sought from humans, but out of a desire to be a different kind of man or woman who is a lifelong apprentice of Jesus. Apprenticeship under Jesus means He tutors us in learning that loving God and others is the supreme quest of this brief “pre-life” training camp that we have before graduating into “The Life” that eternity will bring.

If Christian marriages and families exist to honor Christ, demonstrate His love for His people, model what relationships in the church should look like, and to help us train to be better lovers, then how shall we train? Following are a few suggestions on pursuing humility:

- Practice the discipline of saying “I’m sorry”
- Practice the discipline of withholding your opinion and critique
- Practice the discipline of swallowing the desire to make a play for attention
- Practice the discipline of listening more than you speak
- Practice the discipline of catching others doing something right and praising them
- Practice the discipline of serving
- Practice the discipline of doing good secretly

1 Peter 5:5 is an apt reminder to “clothes yourselves in humility.” Humble families are healthy families!



Scott Wiggington

Protecting your Facebook identity

By David Jeremiah

When Mark Zuckerberg was a teenager at Phillips Exeter Academy, he kept up with students’ names and faces by using a “face book”—a booklet containing names and pictures of students and faculty. Zuckerberg is now 32 and a billionaire as result of creating his own face book: Facebook.com, the largest social networking site. Since Facebook has more than 1 billion registered users, there’s a chance you are a member or have a friend or relative who is.

A place where lots of people know your name

The TV comedy “Cheers” used its theme song, “Where Everybody Knows Your Name,” to touch a nerve in American culture: the need to connect with others. Cheers’ characters met daily to stay in touch, proving the theme song’s premise. That’s what Facebook has become—a place for “friends” to share life. I put “friends” in quotations because on Facebook the term is used loosely. Some people accumulate “friends” for the prestige factor. But most people genuinely want to be in touch with family, and, yes, actual friends.

Your life—for all the world to see

Once you go public on Facebook, you are inviting the entire world to know about your life. The larger your network, the more likely someone will read something you thought would stay private and make it public. For

that reason, Facebook provides accountability.

For Christians, Facebook is another opportunity to ask ourselves, Who is the person I am presenting to the world? Am I the same person on Facebook as I am in church?

Living a life above reproach

It’s always been true that “you can run, but you can’t hide”—and the internet has made it doubly true. What can we do to live the kind of life the apostle Paul called “above reproach” (1 Timothy 3:2)? How can we live so there is no dividing wall between public and private?

First, live intimately and honestly before God. When the double life King David had been living was brought to light by a prophet from God, he recorded his psalm of contrition for all to read (Psalm 51). What he thought was hidden had been in God’s sight all along.

Second, live openly before the Word of God. The writer of Hebrews reminds us that everything is “naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.” God shows us what He sees in us by the “living and powerful” Word of God, revealing the “thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

Third, live accountably before others. Hebrews 10:24-25 affirms that we are to motivate “one another” to live a life of “love and good works,” “exhorting one another.” Family is our first line of defense against double standards. The family of God should be second. (BP)

Hardin now known more for gospel than for its catfish

By Todd Gray

Thirty-three years ago, no one would have dreamed that Hardin Baptist Church would be what it is today.

When the church extended a call to Pastor Ricky Cunningham, who was in his early 20s at the time, the congregation averaged about 60 people in attendance and met in a building that would accommodate 120. Today, the church has relocated to a more visible location and ministers to about 1,250 people each Sunday.

Recently, Pastor Cunningham shared what he felt the Lord used to grow the church in this unusual degree. His answers are helpful to others who are laboring and praying to see a church become more effective in its mission.

The people were willing to follow their pastor. When he came as pastor, Cunningham said, there was a sense of desperation among church members. They knew they were stagnant and needed to do something to move forward, but they did not know what.

"I like to say the church was hungry to do what God wanted them to do as a church because they recognized that at their current pace, if they didn't change things, their future was not good," he said.

For a church to move forward, there must be an agreement between pastor and congregation that the status quo is no longer working and something has to change. Cunningham shared, "They told me that if I would lead them, they would follow—and, buddy, they did."

They remodeled their sanctuary. The old facility—the one they were using 33 years ago—needed repair and updating. "A church building says something about the way you feel about the things of

God," Cunningham asserted.

The way a church takes care of its facility communicates to outsiders, he observed. Churches that fix items that need to be repaired, work hard at cleanliness, and keep the lawn and parking lot neat make a statement to those who pass by their building. It is often the case that a church that has experienced turnaround did exactly what Hardin Baptist did.

They started a second service.

While the church agreed that a second service was needed due to new people coming, the service

itself was considered a failure. Cunningham explained, "Hardin Baptist was a family church. All the young people started coming to the early service, which was negatively affecting its family culture."

The church voted to return to one service, and instead built a building that would accommodate the growth God was sending. After Cunningham was there four years, the church constructed a sanctuary that would seat 330 people.

"We thought that would hold us until Jesus came," he said. It didn't.

The church could not afford to hire a contractor, so they borrowed money for materials and used skilled laborers in the church. They have since relocated about a mile from their original site and built a facility to accommodate 675 people in worship. They now have three services and average between 1,200 and 1,300 people.

"They had such a good experience building the other building with volunteer labor that they built this one the same way," Cunningham said.

They became intentionally evangelistic. Cunningham went through "Continued Witness Training" because he knew

Pastor Ricky Cunningham baptizing a new Christian in Kentucky Lake.



how to share his faith, but he did not have a good plan for equipping others.

As a result of the CWT process, church leaders began equipping people to the point that when Hardin reached 200 in church, 100 of them were equipped through CWT.

"The first 13 weeks we went out sharing our faith, we had 13 people receive Christ, and they all got baptized at another church," he recalled.

This did not discourage the folks at Hardin Baptist, as they saw personal evangelism as Kingdom work. "Training those people to share gave us a culture of intentional evangelism, winning people to Christ," Cunningham noted.

The culture of the church became so evangelistic that when it came time to do a church directory, those in charge would not let the pastor be photographed sitting behind a desk. Instead, they had him go and knock on someone's door because that was closer to the nature of his leadership.

The pastor focused on preaching. For most of the 33 years that he has been at Hardin, Cunningham has worked bivocationally as a farmer. He and his

family farm several hundred acres of land in west Kentucky. As a pastor, he puts his ministry efforts into the preparation and practice of preaching.

"When I came to Hardin, the people decided that we were going to preach 'The Book,'" he said. "We decided that I would preach through books of the Bible and deal biblically with every topic that came up. They remain committed to the Bible."

While every church will not follow the path taken by Hardin Baptist Church, there are experiences here that others can learn from.

They have made a commitment to the gospel, to the community and to reach the lost, and the Lord has honored their commitment.

"Thirty-three years ago, Hardin was famous for catfish and a local restaurant had a particularly strong reputation. In my trial sermon, I said that I hoped one day that Hardin was more known for the gospel than for catfish," he recalled.

The restaurant has since relocated to a neighboring town, but the gospel is still being proclaimed loud and clear. (WR)

Regional SPOTLIGHT



Todd Gray
West

'Good News' delivered to doors of Hopkins County residents

Hopkins County—Toby DeHay, pastor of Concord Missionary Baptist Church, along with several pastors and churches of Little Bethel Baptist Association in Hopkins County, are strategically engaged in delivering the good news in the form of a Bible study, "Good News for You," to the entire population of their county.

"It seems that these pastors and churches have found one way to be intentional with the gospel in the community where God has called them to serve," said Todd Gray, the Kentucky Baptist Convention's regional consultant for west Kentucky.

The Bible study comes in the form of a workbook developed and distributed by Charles Brock. "The studies are intentionally simple, easy to use, and gospel-centered," Gray added.

Concord Missionary Baptist purchased 5,000 of the 8½ x 11 inches, large print workbooks to distribute to the nearly 47,000 residents of Hopkins County, 38,000 of which,

according to Glenmary research, do not attend any church on Sunday mornings.

Since beginning the effort, several area pastors and churches have joined in the campaign, including, Madisonville Second Baptist, Dawson Springs First Baptist, Slaughters Baptist, Nortonville Baptist and the association's director of missions.

"Going into Nortonville as a pastor, I wanted to help the church become outward focused on evangelism," Lee Davis, pastor of Nortonville Baptist, said. "One lady that is visiting the church wants to join because she values a church that is intentional with the gospel."

Jonathan Lail, of Madisonville Second Baptist, continued, "It is low risk, very easy. We go to a door, knock on the door, and say I have some good news for you, and give them a workbook."

They view this project as a simple, affordable and potentially impactful way of saturating their county with

the gospel of Jesus Christ, Gray said. So far, the group has distributed 2,500 of the initial 5,000 workbooks, and they have plans to order 5,000 more.

"While practicing door to door evangelism recently in one of our mid-sized towns, I met a man who is a leader for a large non-Christian religion. He did not want to hear the good news that I was sharing," Gray recounted, sharing one of his own experiences.

However, the man did share with Gray a disturbing reality. He said that his group shared their message intentionally by knocking on every door in their county twice a year, Gray said.

"It is very encouraging to see these Kentucky Baptist pastors and churches intentionally engage their community with the gospel," Gray said. "May the Lord bless and multiply their efforts to the reality of many people receiving Christ as Savior and Lord and becoming His disciples." (WR)



Pastor Toby DeHay, of Concord Missionary Church in White Plains, delivers a copy of "Good News for You" to a homeowner.

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.



500-year-old Torah scroll 'gift of a testimony'

By Andrew Smith

Louisville—A complete scroll of the Torah dating to the 16th or 17th century was given to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in a presentation at Alumni Memorial Chapel, Sept. 1.

President Albert Mohler Jr. accepted the scroll, which contains the first five books of the Old Testament, from Ken and Barbara Larson, thanking them for their contribution to the seminary's understanding of the Bible.

"We promise to be good stewards of this gift," Mohler said of the scroll, which was laid out for public viewing on a table in the front of the chapel. "We're thankful to the Lord for putting this on your heart, and even in the moments before chapel this morning, it was very clear there is an immediate magnetic draw of Christians in seeing the Word of God in this way."

The Larsons, who currently live in Florida but travel around the world frequently—including to Israel on 11 different occasions—said they have purchased 50 different Torah scrolls with the intention of giving many of them to evangelical seminaries. Southern Seminary, located in Louisville, is the 27th seminary to receive a scroll from the Larson family.

The scroll comes from southern Italy and dates around the time of Martin Luther's death, said Scott Carroll, a biblical scholar of ancient manuscripts who has built the Van Kampen Collection and

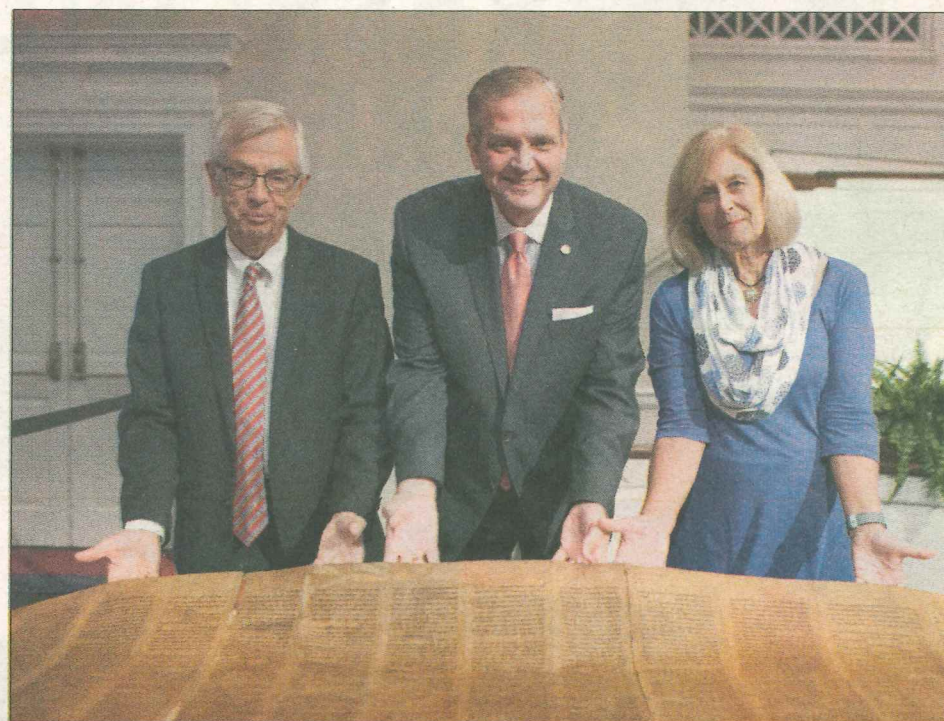
the Green Collection—the two largest privately-held collections of biblical materials in the world. The 106-foot scroll, which was opened to the book of Exodus during the presentation, is a complete copy of the Torah and contains 688 corrections—which ought to strengthen the Christian's confidence in the Word of God, he said.

"(The corrections) should be welcomed by us," Carroll said. "It was a community process to make sure that the Torah was 100 percent correct, and it is. But it wasn't done magically by a sofer or scribe; it was done by hard work by the community."

Mohler accepted the scroll on behalf of the institution, calling it "not just the gift of a text, but the gift of a testimony." The scroll was crafted in southern Italy during a time of intense Jewish persecution, Carroll noted, and the survival of the scroll testified to the importance of Scripture in the community.

"I'm incredibly humbled looking at this text," Mohler said. "Imagine what this says about the role of the Word of God amongst God's people—in this case, the Jewish people reading, loving and preserving the Torah and perhaps defending it with their lives."

Founders of the family-owned furniture chain Slumberland, the Larsons first considered investing in Torah scrolls during a trip to South Korea with Christian author Josh McDowell, who they said owns a Polish Torah and uses it as an apologetic tool for establishing the



SBTS President Albert Mohler Jr. (center) with Ken and Barbara Larson, who donated a 500-year-old Torah scroll. (SBTS photo)

reliability of the Scriptures. On a previously scheduled trip to Israel with their family a few months later, Ken and Barbara Larson decided to start buying Torahs, and gifted the first one to Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, Minn.

Barbara Larson attributed their ministry to initially agreeing to join McDowell on a trip to Tajikistan—a trip that never materialized but led to a substitute trip to South Korea, and eventually to a

brand new phase of ministry.

"Our love for (giving) God's Word came out of just saying yes to God on one thing," Barbara Larson said. "Now here we are, we've been to 27 seminaries gifting Torahs, and we just see through these seminaries how God is working."

The scroll will be housed in the Archives and Special Collections office in Southern Seminary's Boyce Centennial Library. (BP)

'Sad' Russian anti-evangelism law ends a ministry

By Diana Chandler

Oryol, Russia—Missionaries Donald and Ruth Ossewaarde always suspected their gospel ministry in Oryol, Russia, wouldn't last when they began in 2002, he told Baptist Press by telephone from his home in central Russia.

But he had not expected to be among the first people arrested under Russia's new law prohibiting organizations from evangelizing outside church walls and without a government permit.

Two weeks after police interrupted Ossewaarde's Sunday morning Bible study in his home with 15 students, arrested him and fined him 40,000 rubles—about \$600—the Independent Baptist missionary said he will leave the country amid veiled threats against his life, even though he has appealed the charges against him.

"The political situation in Russia has reached a point where they are going to, one way or the other, they're going to get rid of me," he told BP. "So I decided to end my operations here. It's sad because there are people here that really enjoy what we do. It's a big part of their life."

Ossewaarde has conducted street evangelism, distributed printed materials and held weekly Bible studies and prayer meetings in his home. He has ended those outreaches, is awaiting a

court date for his appeal, is trying to sell his apartment and house, and is making plans to return to the U.S.

"I'm very sad," he said. "This is a dream that I've been living for 22 years since the first time I visited in 1994. It

took a year or two for me to realize God was calling me to come over permanently. ... In 1996 I realized this was my calling."

As an Independent Baptist, he travelled the U.S. for several years to raise financial support before moving to Ukraine in 1999 and Oryol, Russia,

three years later.

"I guess we expected from the beginning that this wasn't going to last," he said. "I guess we were surprised that it lasted as long as it did. But now it just seems like the window and the door of opportunity are finally closing."

Ossewaarde was arrested Aug. 14 and forced to attend a hearing in the city's Railway District Court that same day, with the representation of a court-appointed attorney who advised him to accept the verdict, pay the fine and leave the city, because anything might happen to him and his family, according to a press release on Ossewaarde's website.

His wife has already returned to Illinois, where their home congregation Faith (Independent) Baptist Church is located in Bourbonnais.



Ruth and Donald Ossewaarde

"I had a thinly veiled threat against myself and my wife so I just figured it was time for her to go home," he said. "I want to complete the appeal process. If I can successfully challenge this it will make it easier on other missionaries that would probably otherwise be prosecuted."

Ossewaarde was charged under Article 5.26, Part 5 of the new law for holding religious services in his home, advertising services on bulletin boards in nearby neighborhoods, and failing to give authorities written notification when he began his religious activities. He has hired private attorneys.

"What we have in our favor ... is the way they wrote the law is very ineffective in accomplishing what they wanted to accomplish," Ossewaarde said,

clarifying that the law passed July 20 limits missionary activity by religious organizations in particular, and he operates independently of any group. "They wanted to make all missionary activity illegal. The law as written doesn't apply to me, and that's why I believe that we will win this appeal. But long term, obviously they can write another law that says missionary activity is just plain outlawed."

Five others had been arrested under the law as of Aug. 22, Forum 18 reported, including another Baptist who was fined 5,000 rubles; a Hare Krishna, acquitted; a Protestant, fined 50,000 rubles; a Pentecostal, who was to appear in court Aug. 29, and a Seventh-day Adventist, who was awaiting a trial date. (BP)



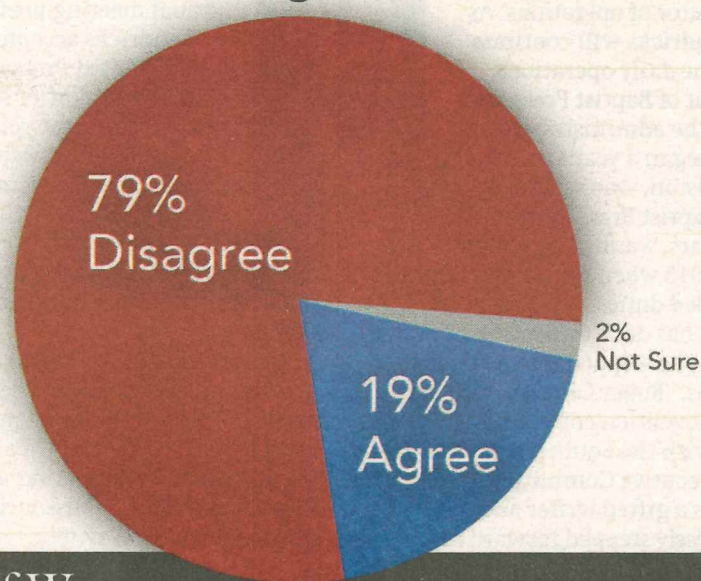
"The Western Recorder helps us share the stories of God's calling on our students' lives and how that calling led them to Clear Creek."

—Dorine Fox, Ph.D., president

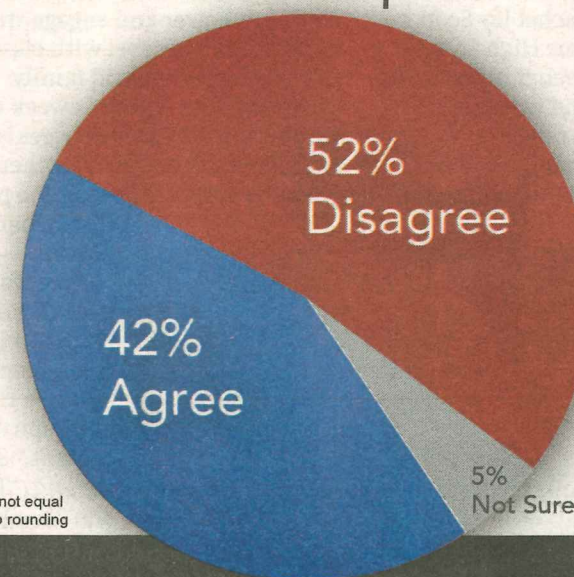


Among Americans

It is appropriate for pastors to publicly endorse political candidates during a church service



Churches who publicly endorse political candidates should lose their tax exemption



Note: Does not equal 100% due to rounding



LifeWayResearch.com

Skip the endorsements in church, most Americans say

By Bob Smietana

Nashville, Tenn.—Since the 1950s, the IRS has banned preachers from endorsing candidates during church services. Most Americans seem to like it that way.

Nearly 8 in 10 say it is inappropriate for pastors to endorse a candidate in church. Three-quarters say churches should steer clear of endorsements. Yet fewer than half want churches to be punished if they do endorse candidates.

Those are among the findings in a new report on religion and politics from Nashville-based LifeWay Research.

Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research, says there's little enthusiasm for political endorsement by pastors or churches.

"Americans already argue about politics enough outside the church," said McConnell. "They don't want pastors bringing those arguments into worship."

Endorsements seen as inappropriate

The ban on endorsements, known as the Johnson Amendment, dates back to a conflict between then-U.S. Sen. Lyndon Johnson and a Texas nonprofit, which opposed his re-election bid. Approved in 1954, the IRS rule bans all 501(c)(3) nonprofits—including churches, associations and conventions—from active involvement in political campaigns.

Since 2008, a group of mostly Protestant pastors has challenged the ban each year by endorsing candidates in an event called "Pulpit Freedom Sunday." Recent polling shows few churchgoers have heard their pastor endorse a candidate. The Johnson Amendment has been a

point of contention this election season.

The new LifeWay report compares results from telephone surveys of 1,000 Americans about religion and politics in 2008 and 2015. Researchers found disapproval of endorsements remains strong.

In both surveys, LifeWay Research asked Americans to respond to the following statement: "I believe it is appropriate for pastors to publicly endorse candidates for public office during a church service."

In 2008, 86 percent of Americans disagreed while 13 percent agreed. One percent were not sure. In 2015, 79 percent disagreed, while 19 percent agreed. Two percent were unsure.

Support for endorsements was tepid across denominational lines in 2015. Few Protestants (20 percent) or Catholics (13 percent) see endorsements as appropriate. A quarter of those with evangelical beliefs (25 percent) agreed.

Support for endorsements outside of church declined slightly. In 2008, about half of Americans (53 percent) said it was appropriate for pastors to endorse candidates, outside of their role at church. In 2015, fewer than half (43 percent) agreed.

Americans also want churches to steer clear of endorsements in general. Three-quarters disagreed with the statement: "I believe it is appropriate for churches to publicly endorse candidates for public office." A 2008 survey found similar results, with 76 percent disagreeing.

Again, those who support endorsements remain in a minority across faith traditions. Nearly 3 in 10 of those with evangelical beliefs said endorsements by

churches are appropriate. Twenty-seven percent of Protestants agreed, as did only 18 percent of Catholics.

Weekly churchgoers (29 percent) were skeptical as well as those who rarely or never go to church (18 percent).

Most Americans also want churches to steer clear of involvement with political campaigns, with 81 percent disagreeing with "I believe it is appropriate for churches to use their resources to campaign for candidates for public office." LifeWay Research found similar results in 2008, with 85 percent disagreeing.

Disagreements over tax exemptions

Fewer Americans think churches should be punished for their involvement in campaigns.

In 2015, 42 percent said churches should lose their tax exemption for publicly endorsing candidates, and 5 percent were not sure. In 2008, 52 percent of

Americans said churches should lose their tax exemption for publicly endorsing candidates, and 6 percent were not sure.

Still, there are some demographic differences. Men (47 percent), those in the Northeast (46 percent) and those in the West (48 percent) were more likely to say churches should lose their tax exemption. Women (38 percent) and Southerners (37 percent) were less likely.

Those from non-Christian religions (56 percent), nones (53 percent) and those who rarely or never go to church (52 percent) were more likely to agree churches should lose tax exemptions. Fewer Christians (37 percent) and those with evangelical beliefs (33 percent) agreed.

"Endorsements from the pulpit are unpopular and most Americans say they are inappropriate," McConnell said. "But they don't want churches to be punished for something a pastor said." (LifeWay)

IRS Tax Exempt Status

To be tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, an organization must be organized and operated exclusively for exempt purposes set forth in section 501(c)(3), and none of its earnings may inure to any private shareholder or individual. In addition, it may not be an action organization, i.e., it may not attempt to influence legislation as a substantial part of its activities and it may not participate in any campaign activity for or against political candidates.

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Columbine martyr film seeks bold youth revival

By Diana Chandler

Nashville—When two fellow classmates approached Rachel Joy Scott on the lawn of Columbine High School and questioned her belief in Jesus, she affirmed her faith and was shot to death at point-blank range.

The story of her martyrdom has been told perhaps countless times in books, sermons and interviews in the past 20 years, but Pure Flix Entertainment hopes its upcoming film of Scott's 17 years on earth inspires students nationally to accept and boldly proclaim Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Beginning a month in advance of the Oct. 21 opening of "I'm Not Ashamed," the Pure Flix Faith and Family Alliance ministry and ad hoc partners will kick off the national six-week "I Am Hope" evangelistic and discipleship movement targeting students.

Franklin Santagate, Pure Flix vice president of global strategic alliances, said the film is intended to start a youth-driven, multi-denominational movement for Christ.

"The common denominator will be young men and women who want to do something in their schools and in their communities for Jesus Christ and for one another," Santagate said. "We believe with God's help, it can activate a movement of young men and women, and that's our prayer."

Partnering with Pure Flix alliance in the outreach are the First Priority network of 2,600 school-based Christian youth groups, and See You At the Pole, an international, constitutionally-protected, student-led prayer outreach that encourages students of all ages to hold prayer meetings at flag poles on school campuses and other venues.

Pure Flix alliance will launch I Am Hope at Sept. 28 See You at the Pole prayer gatherings, and end it the week of Oct. 30 with students serving in mission projects at such sites as rescue missions and food kitchens. Included in the outreach are a free app, a four-week curriculum, the movie viewing, evangelism and discipleship.

"We have just over 2,100 different youth ministries participating in I Am Hope and we see that growing every day," Santagate told Baptist Press. "There are multiple denominations participating, including the Baptists. First Priority has become the conduit to connect with youth organizations. We're also going to use the See You at

the Pole (prayer gathering) as a connecting place."

The curriculum is designed to equip, empower and engage students in sharing the gospel with classmates, friends, neighbors and family.

At the close of the six-week emphasis, the app will provide weekly ministry updates to keep students engaged with the gospel, utilizing the popularity of smart-phones.

"We want to have this app become a conduit to stay connected and give them great spiritual content," Santagate said. "They don't use laptops and desktops; they use phones. We're using that tool to connect with them and we're praying that many will stay connected as long as they think our message is relevant to them."

"We're inviting you to join Rachel's hope that

her life would provide a chain reaction and reach this generation with the Good News of Jesus Christ," Chericco said in a brief message to youth. "You have the leadership and ability to reach this generation."

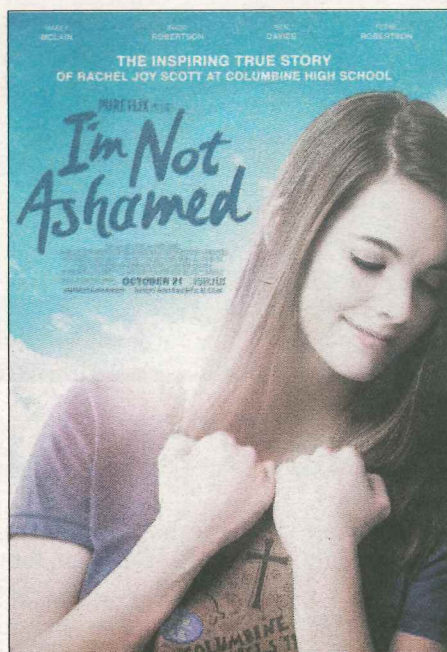
The movie portrays the faith struggle of Scott, who was among 12 students and a teacher murdered by Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold at Columbine High School in Jefferson County, Colo. on April 20, 1999.

"(Scott) grew up in a fatherless home. Even though she grew up in the church, her choices as a teenager were not the best choices," Santagate said. "She ended up struggling with the party scene—drinking, smoking. But (was) caught by her mom, and then sent away for the summer to ... her aunt Bea. At that point she accepts Christ but comes back not knowing what quite to do with it, even though she's connected now to (a) small group."

Scott experiences betrayal, depression, suicidal tendencies, heartbreak and other ills before finally sharing her faith with others.

"All these struggles are exactly what many, many teens go through. At all our screenings, we hear that over and over from the teenagers. 'Man, this is exactly what we face,'" Santagate said. "We see it on the screening cards. 'We're so glad you show the reality of trying to be a Christian as a teenager facing these temptations.'"

Students who've screened the movie are inspired to impact their schools with the gospel, Santagate said. "I Am Hope came out of that expression of 'Help us to do something.'" (BP)



Hendricks named editor of Baptist Press

Nashville—The Executive Committee has named Shawn Hendricks as editor of Baptist Press, effective Sept. 1.

Last year, Hendricks began transitioning into his new role when he was named managing editor/director of operations. As editor, Hendricks will continue to direct the daily operations and content of Baptist Press and maintain the administrative duties he began a year ago.

Art Toalston, who served as editor of Baptist Press for more than 23 years, was named senior editor in 2015 when Hendricks assumed his expanded duties.

"Shawn has done an amazing job this past year as he stepped into a whole new set of duties," Roger Oldham, vice president for convention communications and relations with the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, said. "Coming to us as a gifted writer and editor, he has seamlessly stepped forward to

organize and assign the daily lineup of stories, engage in advance planning with BP staff and state paper editors, enlist freelance writers, solicit news content, oversee the BP team's daily work and manage the SBC annual meeting press room."

Hendricks accepted the position of Baptist Press managing editor in 2013 after serving two years in the same role for the Biblical Recorder, newsjournal of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Before that, he served for nearly 10 years as a staff writer—and later senior writer—at the International Mission Board.

Hendricks also worked as a news writer with the State Gazette daily newspaper in Dyersburg, Tenn.; public relations staff writer at Hannibal-LaGrange University, and news writer at the former newsjournal for the Missouri Baptist Convention, Word & Way. (BP)



Shawn Hendricks

SBC Pastors' Conference nominees sought

Phoenix—The 2017 Southern Baptist Convention Pastors' Conference in Phoenix is expected to highlight the contributions of the convention's smaller churches and celebrate the diverse landscape that makes up the SBC. To that end, Pastors' Conference officers are seeking nominations for event speakers who represent these churches.

To help fill the slate of preachers for the conference, the leadership team is inviting Southern Baptists to recommend expository preachers for the event. The online nomination process opened Sept. 12 at www.sbcpc2017.com. Nominations can be made through Sept. 30.

Dave Miller, an Iowa pastor and president of the 2017 Pastors' Conference, made the announcement on the SBC Voices blog Sept. 7.

"We are operating from two strong convictions," Miller, who also is editor of SBC Voices, said in written comments to Baptist Press. "First, we believe that the Bible is enough. Accurately and powerfully preached, a Pastors' Conference focused on the word of God will be a rich blessing to all who attend."

"And second, we believe that there are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of qualified preachers in average Southern Baptist churches who can encourage and challenge us from the inerrant, vibrant word of God," Miller said. "Our task now

is to find the right 12 men."

Nominees should be the pastor of a Southern Baptist church with about "500 or less in average attendance" who has not preached at the annual meeting in the past five years. Miller noted on his blog, "We may stray a little higher if we decide to—these are guidelines, not rules. But we are coming from the belief that there are a lot of very good preachers out there, worth listening to, in average SBC churches."

The leadership team encourages nominations representing the ethnic and geographic diversity of the SBC. To aid in the selection process, nominators should include links where sermons may be viewed online. If online sermons are not available, sermons may be submitted via email through Google Docs.

The selected preachers will also participate in a preaching colloquium held at a Southern Baptist seminary early in 2017 to focus on expository preaching of Philippians. The theme for the 2017 Conference is "Above Every Name" (Philippians 2:9). Through the four Pastors' Conference sessions, pastors will preach through the book of Philippians in 12 expository messages.

"We want to work together as a team this year, not just 12 individual speakers," Miller, pastor of Southern Hills Baptist Church in Sioux City, Iowa, said. (BP)

'Insanity of God' ticket sales top \$1 million

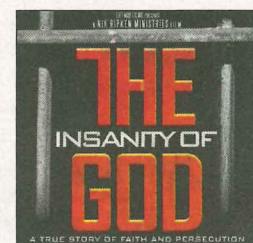
By Marty King

Nashville—Ticket sales for an encore showing of "The Insanity of God" in theaters Sept. 13 pushed box office receipts to \$1.1 million.

"Due to the success of the film's two one-night theater showings, we are planning a church simulcast for the film the first or second week of November, with a consumer DVD and church license DVD to be released Nov. 21," said Trey Reynolds, manager of LifeWay Films.

The documentary film produced by

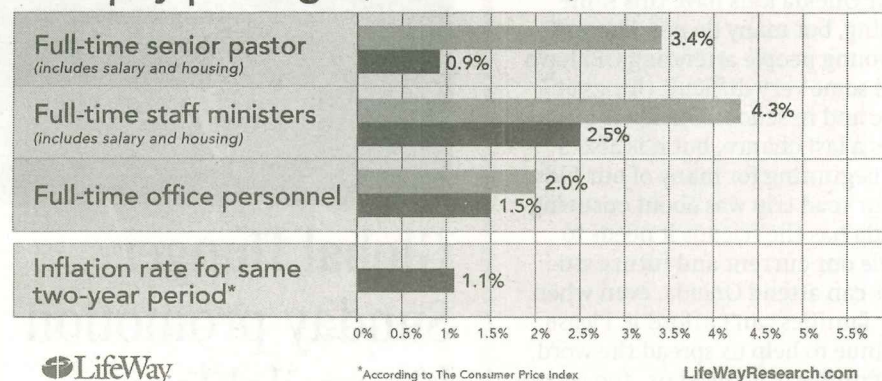
the International Mission Board and Cooke Pictures and distributed by LifeWay Films tells the story of missionaries Nik and Ruth Ripkin. After the death of their son, the couple traveled to 72 countries, into the depths of the persecuted church, to find out if God actually makes a difference in difficult places.



The film is based on a best-selling book of the same name from B&H Publishing Group, a division of LifeWay Christian Resources.

LifeWay has also released a six-session Bible study based on the documentary and Ripken's book. (BP)

Changes to SBC church staff compensation and pay package (2014-2016)



Pastors salaries are on the rise, but medical coverage drops

By Martin King

Nashville—Compensation for full-time Southern Baptist church staff members has exceeded the cost-of-living increase over the past two years. However, health insurance coverage continues to decline, according to the 2016 SBC Church Compensation Study.

The biannual study is a joint project of state Baptist conventions, GuideStone Financial Resources and LifeWay Christian Resources. Compensation and congregational data is collected anonymously from ministers and office/custodial personnel of Southern Baptist churches and missions.

Compensation increasing

Compensation (salary plus housing) increased 3.4 percent for full-time senior Southern Baptist pastors over the last two years, 4.3 percent for full-time staff ministers and 2 percent for full-time office personnel. The U.S. Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the same two-year period increased only 1.1 percent.

Factors correlating with compensation for senior pastors include education level, weekly church attendance and tenure at their current church, as well as total years of experience. Those with a bachelor's degree earn an average of \$4,040 more than otherwise equivalently qualified pastors without a college degree. Master's and doctorate degrees correspond with incremental compensation increases of \$2,171 and \$11,151, respectively. Seminary graduates have an additional increase in average compensation of \$4,706.

Scott McConnell, executive director of LifeWay Research, said despite compensation increases, fair wages take into account wages at comparable churches, increased experience and education, and cost of living.

"While inflation has been lower this last year, it is still true that the dollars churches paid last year don't buy as much," McConnell said. "Without a raise, you are actually paying less."

Benefits declining

Overall, the value of the entire pay package (salary, retirement, housing and other benefits including insurance) for senior pastors (0.9 percent) has not kept pace with inflation, even though the pay package for full-time staff ministers (2.5 percent) and office personnel

(1.5 percent) has exceeded inflation.

Only half of churches in the survey provide health insurance coverage for senior pastors, down from 60 percent two years ago and 64 percent in 2012.

"While recognizing these trends, and the impact of Obamacare, GuideStone continues to advocate for churches to support all staff members with this important benefit," said Scott Charbonneau, GuideStone's managing director of insurance plans.

One-fourth of churches pay for medical insurance for the senior pastor and his family, 15 percent provide for the pastor and his wife, and 10 percent provide only for the pastor.

Although a larger weekly attendance correlates with churches providing senior pastors with health insurance, one-fourth of churches with 250 or more average attendees do not provide health insurance. Conversely, nearly one-third of churches (31 percent) with less than 50 in weekly attendance do provide their pastor with medical coverage.

Some churches also provide additional insurance benefits to senior pastors including life and/or accidental insurance (29 percent), disability (26 percent), dental (24 percent) and vision (10 percent), although each is a few percentage points less than reported in 2014.

A number of factors also impacts the amount of vacation senior pastors receive. Larger churches tend to give pastors more vacation, with otherwise equivalently qualified pastors averaging one additional day for every 448 attendees. Pastors with a bachelor's, master's or doctorate degree add an average of one, two or four vacation days, respectively, over those with some college or an associate degree. Seminary graduates, on average, also receive one additional vacation day.

The 2016 online survey was open from December 2015 through May 2016. Data from more than 8,000 full-time Southern Baptist respondents is available at www.LifeWay.com/CompensationSurvey.

The survey also obtained compensation data for bivocational pastors and part-time custodial and office personnel. This data is standardized by the median number of hours worked to allow churches to more easily compare their part-time employees with these averages. (BP)

'Shame list' heavy on Baptist colleges

By David Roach

Nashville—Nearly a third of the 102 institutions of higher education on a pro-homosexual activist group's list of "the absolute worst colleges for (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) youth" have Southern Baptist ties.

All schools on the list, which was published Aug. 29 by the college-focused organization Campus Pride, have a religious affiliation, with the vast majority affirming historic, orthodox Christianity. Thirty-one institutions listed (30.4%) cooperate either with the Southern Baptist Convention or a Baptist state convention that partners with the SBC.

To be included on the "Shame List," an institution had to either apply for an exemption to Title IX of the 1972 federal Education Amendments in order to enact policies based on the traditional definition of marriage or demonstrate a "past history and track record of anti-(LGBT) actions, programs and policies," according to Campus Pride news release.

In response to the list, SBC President Steve Gaines told Baptist Press, "Bible believing institutions of higher learning should have the right to peacefully and lovingly adhere to the tenets of our faith without being castigated by those of opposing views."

"We deserve the same tolerance that the LGBT community deserves. We should not be victims of hate speech by being caricatured with pejorative, false accusations such as being guilty of 'shameful acts of religion-based prejudice and bigotry' simply because we believe and seek to obey Scripture," Gaines said in written comments, citing a phrase from the Campus Pride website.

Campus Pride executive director Shane Windmeyer said the list "uncovers the religion-based bigotry that is harmful and perpetuated against LGBT youth on these campuses."

Two SBC seminaries are included on the list, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Midwestern President Jason Allen told BP "Campus Pride's inclusion of Midwestern Seminary on its 'Shame List' is just another reminder of how aggressively the secular culture is pressing in on

those who dare not bow down to the sexual gods of this age."

"Regardless of what shaming—online or otherwise—may come," Allen said in written comments, "our convictions remain unchanged and our calling undeterred: we will winsomely, yet boldly, speak the full complement of Christian truth on this issue and every other issue to which the Bible speaks. And we will humbly point all, including Campus Pride, to Jesus as the only one who saves."

"As we train our students, we seek to equip them to minister in a broken world, marred by human sinfulness and its consequences, including those harmed by the false promises of the sexual revolution. The good news is that Jesus Christ came so that whoever believes in Him—gay or straight—might be saved, and have their sins forgiven and their life transformed. That is the message Midwestern Seminary preaches and the message to which our students are giving their lives to declare," Allen said.

Southeastern President Daniel Akin told BP, "Southeastern is a school known for its biblical and theological convictions. This means we call sin what God calls sin. It also means we have a code of conduct for faculty and staff and students alike. And, it also means we love indiscriminately all persons and extend to them the same gospel of Jesus Christ that has changed and is continuing to change us."

Gaines, pastor of the Memphis-area Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn., noted, "Southern Baptists follow the commands of Jesus to love all people (cf. Mark 12:31) and to honor all people (cf. 1 Peter 2:17). That, of course includes people who identify as part of the LGBT community. Southern Baptists also are commanded to follow the teachings of sacred Scripture. Both the Old and New Testaments classify sexual activities such as fornication, adultery, homosexuality and lesbianism as sinful and inappropriate for all people."

"Bible believing Christians should oppose these sinful activities. We must do so with grace and kindness, loving any person engaged in such activity but resolutely standing on the teachings of Scripture," Gaines said. (BP)

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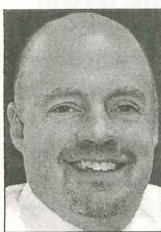
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UNBROKEN SPIRIT

The second greatest school in the world

I wrote this article from the passenger seat of our little Ford Fusion as David Robinson, assistant to the president, drove us back toward the hills of Oneida. That poor little car gets run into the ground, but it helps carry out the Lord's work at Oneida.

This is Oneida



Larry Gritton

Our travels had taken us to Florida for some meetings, contacts and visits with some longtime and new Oneida friends. On this four-day trip, I also had the privilege of speaking in chapel at my old school, Evangelical Christian School in Fort Myers. I told the ECS students and their teachers that they were a part of the second greatest school in the world. I am sure you can guess which school I said was the greatest school known to man. I know of no other school that does what God has allowed the Oneida school to do for so long. The ECS headmaster and

my good friend, Dr. John Hunte, may have disagreed and should disagree with my claim, but perhaps I need to get him to visit OBI in order to convince him of my assertion.

Of course, I couldn't help but tell the ECS students some about Oneida, but I also brought them a word the Lord laid on my heart for them. I shared Exodus 20:12, which tells us to honor our father and mother so that our days might be long. I used that scripture to challenge those students to be grateful for what their parents are doing for them in sending them to a Christian school. Having served there and also having paid tuition for my own children to attend there, I knew very well what this investment entailed. I also challenged them to consider what it might be like to have to go away to boarding school.

In many ways, the ECS students are much like our Oneida students. They are young people with real struggles and challenges. However,

most of those students have a solid Christian foundation at home. Some of our Oneida kids have this same blessing, but many do not. Many of the young people attending OBI have faced some very difficult things at home and in school. Oneida is often times a last chance, but it is also a new beginning for many of our kids.

Our road trip was about ensuring Oneida has the friends it needs to enable our current and future students can attend Oneida, even when their families can't afford it. Please continue to help us spread the word, find families who need us, and secure the resources we need to continue sharing the gospel and fulfilling the Great Commission right here at home. Friends in Kentucky, Florida and all over the country have enabled us to reach and teach so many wayward youngsters about Jesus, and for that we are eternally grateful.

Larry Gritton Jr. is president of Oneida Baptist Institute.
Website: oneidaschool.org.

Student thankful for influence of alumni

Many of our students who come to our campus end up here because of the impact our alumni have had on them. New student Wesley Russell is thankful for the impact that Clear

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

Creek alumni have had on his life and ministry. "I came to know Christ at Oak Grove Baptist Church #2 in 2010," said Russell. "Clear Creek alumnus Bill Meece sat down with me and showed me what the Bible said about sin and what God did to save me from my sin. It was on that July evening at church that I started my relationship with Jesus Christ and made Him Lord of my life."

"The first time I felt that the Lord was calling me to ministry was when I was 15 years old," said Russell. "It wasn't until I was 19 that I ended up

surrendering to that call God had placed on my life. During the four years of dealing with my call, I observed many of my mentors who had graduated from Clear Creek.

"Doug Saunders, Eric Douglas, Bill Meece, and Jonathan Grizzell. Tony Hall and Jonathan Grizzell talked and counseled with me on my decision," he continued. "Brother Tony Hall really helped with my deciding process. Praying for me always, talking, and just showing me what his work consisted of really gave me a passion for what Clear Creek was all about.

"My experience so far at Clear Creek has been nothing short of amazing. The atmosphere of brotherly love is what I love so much," Russell said. "When attending Clear Creek you have an amazing opportunity to grow, more so than any other institution.

"We have the opportunity to work

one-on-one with our professors and get to know them not only professionally, but personally.

"Also, the classes that are offered here are top notch. As far as equipping goes I am convinced that there is no better place to prepare yourself for kingdom work," added Russell.

"When you come to Clear Creek, expect to get a world class education at an underpriced cost," said Russell. "Clear Creek has preserved the conservative interpretation of the Bible and stresses a rightly divided Scripture. You will be loved, appreciated, used and equipped for what God has called you to do.

"When you come to Clear Creek, you get much more than a school ... you get a family."

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.

Be ready, live ready

There is an interesting convergence taking place this month. First, the 2016 Kentucky state missions theme of "Be Ready-Live Ready" and the national WMU 2016-18 theme, "By

EBO at Work



Joy Bolton

All Means," are like opposite sides of the same coin. In addition, the second national showing of the movie "The Insanity of God" took place on Sept. 13, and the LifeWay Explore the Bible series for this quarter is focused on a study of 1 & 2 Peter, letters written to encourage believers facing persecution.

The words of Peter are still a clarion call to believers today: But even if you should suffer for righteousness, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear or be disturbed, but honor the Messiah as Lord in your hearts.

Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you (1 Peter 3:14-15 HCSB).

There is no doubt that these are troubling days in our nation and world. Yet, we must always be ready to share the gospel by all means. We must live in such a way that people want to know why we have hope when things seem hopeless. We must live ready to share the Answer to hopelessness—Jesus.

Our national WMU president, Linda Cooper, is always ready to share the gospel. As a dental hygienist in Bowling Green, she laughs about having a captive audience and sharp instruments. But the reality is that she is known for the hope within, and people seek her out to share prayer requests.

She tells the story of getting on a

plane and a man noticed her smile and said, "Why are you so happy?" Her reply was, "Let me tell you about my Jesus."

This month we invite you to learn about Kentucky missions. There are videos and a Master Article on the web at kywmu.org/ebo. There you will find links to materials which will help you know how to pray for missions in Kentucky. These resources will inspire you to give sacrificially to the Eliza Broadus Offering in support of ministries through our state Baptist convention and across the state. Our state offering goal is \$1,250,000.

Be Ready-Live Ready. It's more than a slogan. It's a lifestyle!

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



Global Hunger Sunday promotion kit available

Nashville—Baptist Global Response, a Southern Baptist humanitarian aid organization, has published a new media kit to help churches promote Global Hunger Sunday on Oct. 9.

The kit contains a poster, promotional video, announcement slide, three versions of a bulletin insert and three hunger-related sermon outlines. Southern Baptist churches can use these resources to raise awareness about Global Hunger Sunday, an annual giving event for Global Hunger Relief.

Formerly known as the World Hunger Fund, GHR is a Southern Baptist initiative that funds hunger projects in North America and around the world. BGR serves as the administrator for GHR funds used in international food assistance and hunger-related projects.

BGR Executive Director Jeff Palmer says church involvement in GHR is a crucial part of efforts to end hunger.

"Every one of our GHR-funded projects overseas comes from a locally approved strategy," he said.

"The church in the United States is critical to our ability to respond to massive hunger needs globally.

"Through the prayers of the saints for those suffering, the gifts from our membership that fund our ministries, and the partnership of Christians who join us in hunger projects, BGR brings a wider influence of Southern Baptist and kingdom resources to those in great need."

Established in 2006, BGR uses these resources to connect people in need with people who care. It also works with international disaster relief efforts and community development, as well. But, hunger relief remains one of BGR's top priorities. Through GHR and Global Hunger Sunday, Southern Baptists help BGR work toward its goal to feed as many undernourished as possible. In 2015, the organization gave food assistance to 173,000 people.

In addition to BGR, other partners of GHR and Global Hunger Sunday include the International Mission Board, North American Mission Board, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, Woman's Mission Union, LifeWay Christian Resources and the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

Those interested in helping the hungry this year can find the Global Hunger Sunday media kit on the resources page of BGR's website, gobgr.org.

Visit www.kybaptist.org/hunger for links to resources provided by the Kentucky Baptist Convention, including a video about KBC's "Donate the Difference" emphasis. (BP)



Photo courtesy of Murray Ledger and Times.

Couple in 90s ties knot at Marshall Co. church

By Myriah Snyder

Aurora—93-year-old Effie Dugan, a resident of a town in the suburbs of St. Louis, Mo., decided to have her wedding to 94-year-old Forest Opperman at the church of her youth, Ferguson Springs Baptist Church in Aurora, Ky. The couple hopes to start their new lives together back in Missouri.

Dugan, a widow, married Opperman, whose wife of 55 years passed away a few years ago. Opperman got Dugan's number through a mutual friend, the owner of a hardware store in town. The pair was initially reluctant to begin dating.

"When he came to my door, I wanted to throw him out. I thought he was a Pentecostal preacher, but then, I decided to give him more of a chance," Dugan told the Murray Ledger and Times.

After a rocky start, the two finally realized they were in love. They dated for

about a year before getting married.

Dugan's father was one of the men who helped rebuild Ferguson Springs after it was destroyed by a tornado in the 1960s. Although the church has since moved buildings, the couple chose to wed at her mother and father's home church.

Howard Conner, the 79-year-old pastor of Ferguson Springs Baptist, told Dugan's daughter that he would be honored to perform the ceremony.

"Her daughter called and asked if I'd be willing to perform the ceremony. I said I'd be glad to. I didn't realize they were the age they were, but it didn't matter," Conner said.

"Nothing really excited me anymore, as far as being surprised. This was special though," Conner told the Ledger and Times. But once he heard their story, he was glad the couple wanted to get married at Ferguson Springs, he said. (WR)

Discerning ministry call focus of new book

By Patrick Hudson

Kansas City, Mo.—Jason Allen believes there are 10 questions that will help a Christ-follower decide whether or not God is calling them to ministry.

In the book "Discerning Your Call to Ministry," Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's president poses questions to help students, aspiring pastors, and even current ones, grasp whether ministry is for them. Allen gleams from Scripture, church history, and his own personal experience as a former pastor and seminary president to offer a view of the pastorate, assisting readers in making an informed decision about their service to God.

"The impetus of this book stems back to memories of confusion and a lack of direction as I was sensing God's calling in my own life," Allen said of the book that was released Sept. 6 by Moody Publishers.

"Now, years later as a seminary president," he noted, "I daily receive correspondence from earnest men and women who are at a similar point as I

once was. My desire is for them to read this book and obtain clarity, one way or the other, of their calling."

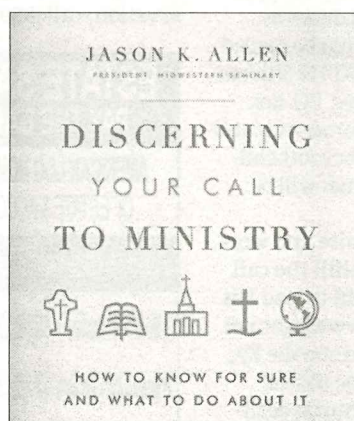
The primary audience for the book includes any person sensing a call to pastoral ministry, Allen said. But it also can include those who are already serving in various capacities within the local church and may have incorrectly sensed such a call.

"Most Christians have an undeveloped, insufficiently-informed understanding of what it means to be called to the ministry," Allen said.

"They are often in their own state of suspended animation, seeking certainty and assurance yet feeling ill-

equipped to follow God's call," he said. "These are urgent and consequential deliberations. After all, what could be more unsettling than to embark on the ministry unsure if God is indeed leading you?"

"God's call is too noble, too consequential, and too glorious to be neglected," Allen said. "Each person sensing a call to ministry must know for sure whether God has called them or not. My aim is to show them that they can." (BP)



Crossings hosts first annual fall festival

Announcing our First Annual Harvest Festival! For the first time Crossings Camps are opening their doors to host an open-house styled event for the public. We would love to have you come out with the whole family to enjoy fall-themed activities, games, and snacks.

Festivities—at its Cedarmore Camp in Baghdad on Oct. 1 and at its Jonathan Creek Camp in Aurora on Oct. 8—will begin at 1 p.m. and conclude at 7 p.m. with live music. We will have a pumpkin patch for you to pick pumpkins to take home with you for \$5. Activities include on-site recreational games like Bazoooka Ball and Zip Lines.

We will have medical release forms available for students to fill out

at the event in order to participate in these recreational activities. Please make sure a parent or guardian is in attendance to sign the form.

Dinner will be available for \$5 per person or \$20 per family.

There will be hot dogs, hamburgers, chips and a drink for dinner. Free snacks include popcorn, cotton candy, and s'mores.

We would love the opportunity to show you our property and get to know you! Let us know you're coming and RSVP at www.gocrossings.org. You'll be entered for a chance to win an iPad at the event. For any questions email events@gocrossings.org.



Church members prepare food for the community fair, and children enjoy the church's celebration for first responders.



First Shelbyville building bridges with BBQ

By Myriah Snyder

Shelbyville—Continuing its efforts to build relational bridges with the first responder community in Shelbyville, First Baptist Church hosted a community fair on Sept. 10-11.

The objective was for county residents to meet first responders, see their equipment, and get to know some of them personally.

In addition, the congregation roasted a 255 lb. hog and 300 lbs. of pork butts for 14 hours. First responders and their families were invited to be guests of honor at a banquet at the church on Sunday, when the church would host first responders for a special service.

"In an era when relationships with first responders and the community at large are sometimes strained, these tireless community servants sometimes feel disenfranchised and underappreciated," Maurice Hollingsworth, pastor of Shelbyville First, said.

Through the outreach, partnership

was built—just prior to a tragedy. On Sept. 16, Hollingsworth received a call from Paul Whitman, director of Emergency Management Services. There had been a traffic accident. While a father/son team was trying to repair their car, another car rear ended them. The son jumped out of the way, but the father was hit and killed.

Whitman asked Hollingsworth if he could come and minister to the family while EMS took care of other needs. The family has eight children, one of whom was turning four years old the following day.

"When I walked into the EMS office, every single person there knew who I was from the pig roast the previous weekend," Hollingsworth said. "All those hours taking care of a hog the previous week led to the potential for ministry in partnership."

Quoting 1 Corinthians 9:22, Hollingsworth expressed his thanks that his congregation had "used BBQ to build bridges into their community for the sake of the Kingdom." (WR)



September

- 22 Ky. Baptist Music Conference, Woodburn Church, Woodburn
- 23-24 Disaster Relief Chaplaincy Training, Clarkson Church, Clarkson
- 23-24 Men/Women Chorales Retreat, Living Hope Church, Bowling Green
- 23-24 Basic Training Journey for Hispanic Church Planters, First Church, Paducah
- 23-25 Converge Conference, Jonathan Creek Camp, Hardin
- 29-30 Cincinnati Vision Trip, Cincinnati
- 30-10/1 Basic Training Journey for Church Planters, Ky. Baptist Building, Louisville
- 30-10/1 Fueled Women's Leadership Retreat, Springdale Community Church, Louisville

MOUNTAINS TO THE MISSISSIPPI

COMPILED BY STAFF

ANNVILLE—Bond Church has called **Cody Powell** as its new pastor.

BELTON—Hazel Creek Church will hold homecoming Sept. 25. Singers will be Voices of Praise at 10 a.m., with sermon by **Carl Nelson** at 11 a.m. A meal will follow. **Terry Chaney** is pastor.

CENTRAL CITY—Cherry Hill Church will hold homecoming Sept. 25. Special singing at 10 a.m., and **Leroy Rearden** will bring the message at 11 a.m. Meal to follow. **Ronald Lee Metheny** is pastor.

FARMINGTON—Farmington Church will hold homecoming services Oct. 16. The Commonwealth Quartet from Gallatin, Tenn., will sing at 10 a.m. **Paul Chitwood**, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, will be preaching in the 11 a.m. service. A meal will follow. **Ben Stratton** is pastor.

HICKMAN—Sassafras Ridge Church will have its fall revival Sept. 25-28 with **Ben Stratton** preaching. **Charles Southerland** is pastor.

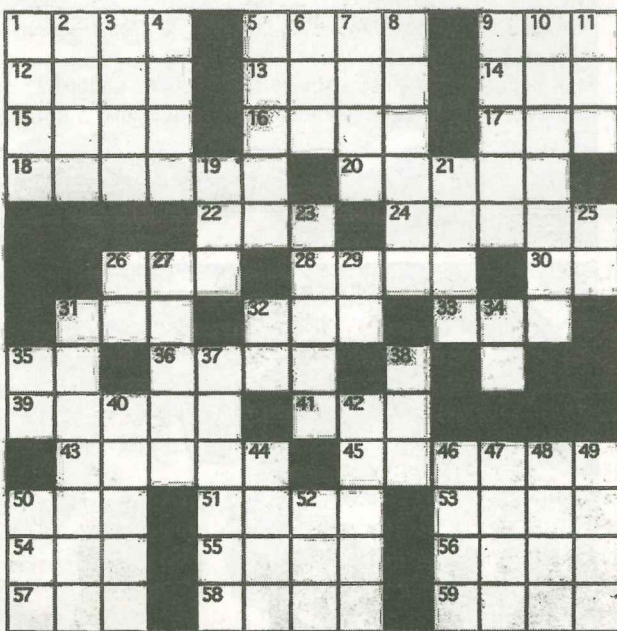
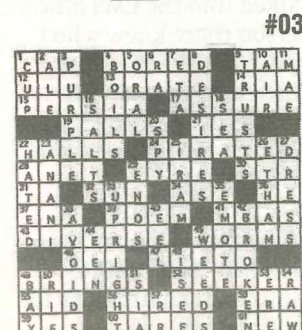
OWENSBORO—Ridgewood Church will hold revival Sept. 25-28 at 6:30 p.m., with **James Wedding** preaching. The Central Harmony Singers will perform on Monday, Sept. 26, at 5:45 p.m. On Sept. 30, Ridgewood youth will sponsor an outdoor movie night, featuring "God's Not Dead 2." **Randy Stallings** is pastor.

PLEASUREVILLE—Cropper Church has called **Jesse Huggins** as pastor.

Bible Crosswords

Across

1. "the _____ above the liver, with the kidneys" (stomach part mentioned in Leviticus 3:15 for an offering)
5. Gasp
9. Mordecai the _____
12. A king of Israel (1 Kings 16)
13. West African tribe
14. Japanese apricot
15. Disfigure
16. "We spend our years as a _____ that is told" (Psalm 90:9)
17. Uproar
18. Make possible
20. Aka Araunah the Jebusite
22. "Do not _____ because ye know not the scriptures" (Mark 12:24)
24. Makes less difficult
26. Summer drink
28. Actor Robert
30. Ancient Thebes (Jeremiah 46)
31. Mid. East. country
32. _____ Grande
33. Witty remark
35. I _____ (God)
36. "shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching _____" (2 Timothy 4:3)
39. Judah's daughter-in-law (Genesis 38)
41. Compass dir.
43. Hosea's wife
45. Area of Judea that included Beersheba
50. "all they are brass, and _____, and iron" (Ezekiel 22:18)
51. Appear indistinctly
53. Kaiser _____



54. Chemical suffix
55. "God _____ respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34)
56. Duke _____ (Genesis 46)
57. Cruise the _____ (pastime for the 90s)
58. "justified in the Spirit, _____ of angels" (1 Timothy 3:16)
59. _____ room
25. Egyptian king (2 Kings 17)
26. Preposition
27. "Your old men shall _____" (Acts 2:17)
29. Biblical interjection
31. "the people _____ a vain thing" (Psalm 2:1)
32. B&O, e.g.
34. _____ a roll
35. Preposition
37. Belonging to the son of Gad (Numbers 26)
38. "Take up thy _____, and go unto thine house" (Matthew 9:6)
40. French impressionist
42. "_____, called Peter" (Matthew 4:18)
44. _____ of Sharon (Song of Solomon 2)
46. "the breastplate of judgment the _____" (Exodus 28:30)
47. Less is _____ (fashion dictum)
48. Zeal
46. "that thine _____ may be in secret" (Matthew 6:4)
47. Mus. part
52. Chemical (suffix)

DOWN

1. "_____ unto me" (Matthew 11:28)
2. "Will _____ rob God?" (Malachi 3:8)
3. Auk genus
4. Arm, for example
5. Cephas
6. Alias (abbr.)
7. _____ contendere
8. Layered
9. _____ tree
10. "thou buildest thine _____ place in the head of every way" (Ezekiel 16:31)
11. Benign skin tumor
19. Actress Grant
21. Son of Caleb (1 Chronicles 4)
23. "I will _____ me up a faithful priest" (1 Samuel 2:35)

CLASSIFIED ADS

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 resumé for a pastor. Summersville is looking for a God-called individual who will lead the church forward and further develop congregation. Send resumé to Summersville Baptist Church, c/o Pulpit Committee, P.O. Box 68, Summersville, KY 42782.

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

SEEKING: Oak Hill Church, Sonora, Ky., is accepting resumé 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 resumé 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 Williams-town, Ky., a mission-minded and dedicated rural church, is seeking full-time or bi-vocational pastor. Resumé may be submitted by Sept. 30 to KnoxvilleBaptistSearch@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Raymond Church in Webster, Ky. (a small rural church) is prayerfully seeking a pastor who is dedicated to lead the progress and spiritual growth our church. Resumé will be accepted until Sept. 25. Send to P.O. Box 356, Irvington, KY 40146 or emailed to tcwilliams@bbtel.com.

SEEKING: Munfordville Church is seeking a full-time student & family pastor to organize and oversee children and student ministries of the church. The individual will be responsible for equipping and partnering with parents by providing them with resources to become actively and intentionally involved in the spiritual formation and discipleship of their families. Further responsibilities include development and implementation of programs, activities, camps/retreats, etc. for grades 7-12; development and directing children and family outreach opportunities; working with others in the church to coordinate overall ministry of children from cradle to 6th grade. The student & family pastor will report to the pastor. Additional responsibilities: Teach and model a moral lifestyle according to Scriptures; provide counsel and support for students and families; build relationships with students, parents and others; attend student functions where appropriate; perform other ministerial duties as needed or assigned. Resumé should be mailed to Munfordville Baptist Church, ATTN: Student & Family Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 445, Munfordville, KY 42765. Resumé may also be submitted electronically to mbcyouthchildrenministry@gmail.com. Resumé will be received through Sept. 26.

SEEKING: Seeking called praise and worship leader, willing vessel, to fulfill the call of Apostle Paul in Colossians 3:16 to lead His flock at Pleasant Grove Church, www.pgbc.net.

SEEKING: First Church of Paintsville Ky., is prayerfully seeking a full-time pastor. First Baptist is an established church desiring to reach the community for Christ and grow in Him. Candidates should have a minimum of a Bible college education while seminary training is preferred. Please submit resumé to fbcpaintsville@att.net.

SEEKING: Lead/senior pastor for Cedar Creek Church in Louisville, Ky. See church website for job description or email cedarcreekpsc2016@gmail.com to submit resumé and obtain job details. Accepting resumé through Oct. 19.

SEEKING: New Salem Church in London, Ky., is seeking a worship pastor and choir leader to build upon and strengthen its

worship music and experience. The church is accepting resumé for those being led to come. Send resumé to: 2182 North Laurel Rd., London, KY 40741 Attn: Worship Pastor/ Search Committee or email to newsalem-pastor@windstream.net.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth and children/associate pastor for Fern Creek Baptist Church. According to applicant's gifts and skills, position could also include a different combination with youth ministry. Applicant must exemplify a growing relationship with God, spiritual maturity, responsible authority, fervent evangelism, sound theology, and effective communication skills with all age groups. Applicants should have experience and education in ministry. Send resumé to: Fern Creek Baptist Church, Attn.: Personnel Committee, 5920 Bardstown Rd., Louisville, KY 40291, or email to linda@ferncreekbaptist.org. Resumé will be received through Oct. 7. Questions? Call 239-0316 ext. 103.

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

SEEKING: Gap Creek Church, a conservative Southern Baptist church located near the Cumberland Gap in northeast Tennessee, is looking for the man God has called to be its next pastor. Gap Creek is an outreach-minded, growing congregation with over a 200-year history. Send resumé, CD or preferably DVD of a sermon to: Gap Creek Baptist Church, Attn: Pastoral Search Committee, PO Box 177, Arthur, TN 37707. Please visit gapcreekbaptistchurch.org for more information about church, or email to gapcreekbaptist@gmail.com with any questions.

AVAILABLE: Ordained, conservative, Southern Baptist minister available for interim pastoring or pulpit supply in central Ky. area. Can be reached at 859-8692 text or voicemail or bryantgeorge62@gmail.com.

TRAVEL: Join Lexington Community Seniors, a faith-based group of 20 churches, for a fabulous tour to Hawaii, departing Oct. 5. The escorted group will spend 3 nights in Honolulu (visiting Pearl Harbor and other historical sights) then enjoy 5 nights on the beautiful island of Maui. Round trip airfare from Lexington or Louisville can be arranged. To obtain a free flyer, or make reservation, call (859) 278-7224.

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Baptist students, 450 strong, aid flood survivors in Louisiana

By Carmen Sisson

Denham Springs, La.—John Whitehead woke to an unfamiliar sight in mid-August—water had breached his house and was rising fast. The Louisiana State University student panicked for a few minutes, facing tough decisions. What should he save and what should he leave behind?

In the end, the answer was simple. Muddy water lapped against his waist as he struggled to heave his black Labrador retriever, Rascal, into his kayak. Then, he paddled away from everything he and his family owned in Denham Springs near Baton Rouge, knowing they would never see most of it again.

His parents, Darrell and Zanie Whitehead, were in Tuscaloosa, Ala., trying to get home. They talked by phone several times as the situation worsened.

"I called the fourth time, and he said, 'Quit calling me, I'm trying to save people,'" his father recounted.

By the end of the day, John Whitehead and his kayak had carried a number of people to safety, including two elderly women who were clinging to a chain link fence, with water up to their chins.

On Labor Day weekend, flood survivors like the Whiteheads in south Louisiana were on the receiving end of an even larger wave of help. LSU's Baptist Collegiate Ministry spearheaded a massive cleanup event, drawing more than 450 students from collegiate ministries in Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia and Tennessee.

The students pried up waterlogged wood flooring, tore out sheetrock and tried to salvage homeowners' keepsakes from encroaching mold.

At the Whitehead home, not much is left. The few possessions they own are stored in a 5-by-8-foot shed—with room to spare. But Darrell Whitehead, a former children's minister, is still grateful.

The family's church, Istrouma Baptist in Baton Rouge, has helped, and strangers have given love offerings. But

the students were a surprise. Whitehead estimates they saved him approximately \$10,000-\$12,000 for professional gutting, and they finished so far ahead of schedule that they were able to help neighbors with their cleanup efforts.

"When they were here, they worked," Whitehead said. "I never heard a complaint. Those BCM kids could have done anything on those days. They didn't have



Annie Pucciarelli, a member of First Baptist Church of Brandon, Fla., pulls nails while mudding out a home in Greenwell Springs, La. Pucciarelli joined 450-plus students from six states who gathered in Baton Rouge and nearby communities on Labor Day weekend to help survivors of the mid-August flood. Pucciarelli graduated from the University of Southern Florida and remains active with the college's Baptist Collegiate Ministries. (NAMB photo by Carmen Sisson)

to come work, yet they did."

It was an eye-opening weekend for some students, said Korey McCrady, director of Baptist Student Ministry at Navarro College in Corsicana, Texas. Many had never experienced a flood. Others had never used a sledgehammer or power tool.

"On the bus coming in, they were laughing and talking," McCrady said. "But when the bus turned the corner, they went silent."

For Arkansas State student Kristen Scarlett, a rough week on campus

seemed trivial when compared with the flood survivors' burdens.

"I thought, 'If the Lord made me an able-bodied person, why am I not there?'" Scarlett, who attends First Baptist Church in Jonesboro, had asked. "I need to live out that calling. If you're in good health, why wouldn't you?"

Some students hesitate to volunteer because of

the perceived time commitment, said Annie Pucciarelli, a student from First Baptist Church in Brandon, Fla. But she believes collegians are the perfect age, especially if they are not already juggling families and careers.

"I think this is the best time in my life," she said as she pulled nails from sheetrock. "Being able to help others is a great experience. You can see that what



John Whitehead (left) and Jacob Whitehead help their mother, Zanie Whitehead, carry a potted plant Sept. 4 at their Denham Springs, La., home. John Whitehead used his kayak to rescue many of his neighbors after heavy rain caused record flooding in mid-August. The men attend Louisiana State University, and the family attends Istrouma Baptist Church in Baton Rouge. (NAMB photo by Carmen Sisson)

you're doing is making a difference."

Pucciarelli praised Southern Baptist Disaster Relief for making it easy for cash-strapped college students to participate. Local churches provide lodging and meals. The only expense is fuel.

Students sometimes worry that they won't have the skills to tackle the work, but LSU student Cullen McDaniel, of Jefferson Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, dismissed that excuse.

"All it takes is people coming together over one goal," McDaniel said. "It's not about how long you can work or the skills you have. We need hands and feet on the ground. This has taught me to trust the Lord in everything (to) provide the healing, the comfort and the guidance you need to get through the trying times of life."

The students were a comfort to Baton Rouge resident Paulette LaComb, a member of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church. In her once-pristine home, students filled every room, with the sounds of hammers heard through the halls. If this were any other day, her house would be tidy and she would be in the kitchen, cooking jambalaya for her guests. Now the sink doesn't work and floodwater

contaminated her dishes. She applied for food stamps but her application was denied.

"I've been crying all week," LaComb said. "It was such a good feeling to see all these people coming to help. I felt like nobody cared but now I know they do. You've got to keep believing. You can't give up."

The community has united more since the tragedy, said Sarah Farley, BCM associate director at LSU. The Baton Rouge area has endured a lot this summer, Farley said, referring to several fatal incidents between residents and local police. But she believes the flood has washed away some of the anger and pain.

"The way God has used the flood to unite us is amazing. A lot of people criticize young people, but I think there's a lot of hope." (BP)

Those wishing to donate to SBDR relief can contact the Kentucky Baptist Convention. Donations also can be made through the North American Mission Board 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."

"It's not about how long you can work or the skills you have. We need hands and feet on the ground. This has taught me to trust the Lord in everything (to) provide the healing, the comfort and the guidance you need to get through the trying times of life."

Cullen McDaniel, LSU student



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