

the gospel resounds

Stories of the Lottie
Moon Christmas
Offering

Pages 8-9

WESTERN Recorder

News Agency
of the
Kentucky Baptist
Convention

November 29, 2016

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

Volume 190, Issue 24

IMB celebrates balanced budget

By Julie McGowan

Richmond, Va.—International Mission Board trustees celebrated a balanced budget, unanimously approving the 2017 budget during their Nov. 10-11 meeting near Richmond, Va. Trustees also appointed 50 new missionaries during a Sending Celebration.

"I am pleased to share with you that because of generous giving from Southern Baptist churches to the IMB, disciples have been made and churches have been multiplied over

the last year among the nations in truly breathtaking ways," IMB President David Platt told trustees.

"Furthermore, we are pleased to be able to present to you a balanced budget request for 2017 that projects growth in both fully supported missionary appointments as well as new pathways designed to see multitudes more men and women taking the gospel to people who have never heard it."

"We have a sense of glad

□ See *Balanced budget...* Page 2



New IMB missionaries (from left) Chris and Jamie Schilt, Jenny and Nathaniel Parker, and Melanee and Bob Gallina worship at a Sending Celebration Nov. 10. The appointees are part of 50 new missionaries sent by Southern Baptist churches. (Photo by Roy Burroughs/IMB)

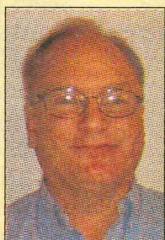
Stokes recognized by fellow DOMs

By Myriah Snyder

Lebanon—David Stokes, director of missions of the Central Kentucky Network of Baptists, was named "DOM of the Year" by the Kentucky Fellowship of DOMs at their annual banquet Nov. 14 in Florence.

Kentucky directors of missions bestow DOM of the Year each fall to a colleague they believe is worthy of the recognition, Eric Allen, missions mobilization team leader with the KBC, said.

"David (Stokes) is most deserving of this year's DOM of the Year award. He has shown innovation and creativity in the restructuring of the Central Kentucky Network of Baptists, formerly Elkhorn Baptist Association," Allen said. "He is a strategic planner and passionate about church



David Stokes

planting. I am so grateful for his leadership and partnership."

Stokes, a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has been director of missions for the Central Kentucky Network of Baptists for nearly three years. He has spent nearly 40 years in the ministry, most recently as senior pastor of the Baptist Church at Andover.

"I'm certainly humbled and honored to receive the award," said Stokes, who wasn't able to attend the meeting. "My heart's desire is to help strengthen our churches and to start new churches and to impact our area with the gospel. I'm just thankful that I get to work with a great network of churches and have such a great support staff that make it possible for us to make a difference." (WR)



Messengers to the Kentucky Baptist Convention Annual Meeting at Florence Baptist Church approve a \$22 million Cooperative Program budget for 2017.

Kentucky Baptists boost CP budget goal by half million, denounce human trafficking

By Todd Deaton

Florence—Messengers to the Kentucky Baptist Convention Annual Meeting in Florence approved a Cooperative Program budget goal of \$22 million, elected the pastor of the state's oldest Baptist church as president, denounced human trafficking and encouraged church members to consider adoption.

Meeting at Florence Baptist Church Nov. 15, messengers approved a \$500,000 increase to the convention's CP budget after Kentucky Baptist churches far exceeded projections for the previous fiscal year. Kentucky Baptists gave more than \$22.3 million through the Cooperative Program and an additional \$8.9 million through special offerings for state, national and international missions work.

"Increasing the CP budget goal for a second straight year is a wonderful surprise," said KBC Executive Director Paul Chitwood. "Knowing the challenges facing so many of our churches and yet to see them giving more, not less, to get the gospel to Kentucky, North America, and the nations is inspiring and humbling. We thank God for every dollar that will be given and every person who will give it."

Year-end reports showed Cooperative Program giving totaling \$1,064,362 more than the projected \$21.25 million, exceeding budget goals for the first time in a decade. Actual CP contributions totaled \$22,314,362, according to Lowell Ashby,

leader of the KBC's Finance and Business Services Team.

Of the \$1 million increase, \$494,898 will be forwarded to the Southern Baptist Convention; \$171,404 will go to KBC agencies and institutions, and \$397,536 will go to KBC Mission Board operations.

The 2017-18 budget will equally divide Cooperative Program receipts of \$22M between KBC missions and ministries and Southern Baptist Convention causes. KBC and SBC will also equally divide the 7% allocation for shared CP resourcing; 3½ percent each with \$10.23M being forwarded to the SBC.

New officers

Bill Langley, senior pastor of Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown, was elected as KBC president by acclamation. He was nominated by Dan Summerlin, pastor of Lone Oak Baptist Church in Paducah and a past KBC president.

Langley served as president of the Kentucky Baptist Pastors' Conference, also held at Florence Baptist Church, immediately prior to the annual meeting.

"Bill's roots grow deep in Kentucky Baptist life," Summerlin told the Western Recorder in nominating Langley, noting that his profession of faith came as an 8-year-old at Severns Valley, where he now pastors.

In his nomination speech, Summerlin

□ See *Annual meeting...* Page 11

Balanced budget

Continued from Page 1

celebration with responsible projections," Platt said. "As we are communicating to churches, we want to say two resounding words: Thank you."

The budget presented to trustees represents a reversal in a trend of recent years that has seen a decline of missionaries on the field. The budget proposes an increase in full-time, fully funded missionary appointments for 2017, Platt said, while also opening the door for missionaries to go through other pathways.

Rodney Freeman, vice president of support services and IMB treasurer, led trustees through a review of the 2017 Fiscal Resources Strategy Plan during their sessions and in the Support Services committee meeting. He recapped the budget proposal during the Nov. 11 plenary session. The 2017 budget request is balanced with receipts and expenses both projected at \$270 million. Freeman noted the budget proposal reflects short-term financial responsibility and long-term organizational stability.

Key factors presented with the budget include the following:

- The budget relies on the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.
- LMCO giving projections for the 2016 calendar year are on pace to be the largest offering in IMB history, with projections the offering could exceed the 2015 record giving by 10 percent.
- The 2017 budget proposal projects growth in fully funded missionaries plus new pathways that take the gospel to all peoples.

Additional personnel

IMB projects appointing 451 new personnel in 2017, which represents a 3 percent net increase in total field personnel (100 additional field personnel). Of those newly appointed, 351 will replace personnel who retire, complete a mid-term assignment or transition through resignations or other departures. In 2016, 310 missionaries were appointed, bringing IMB field personnel to 3,651.

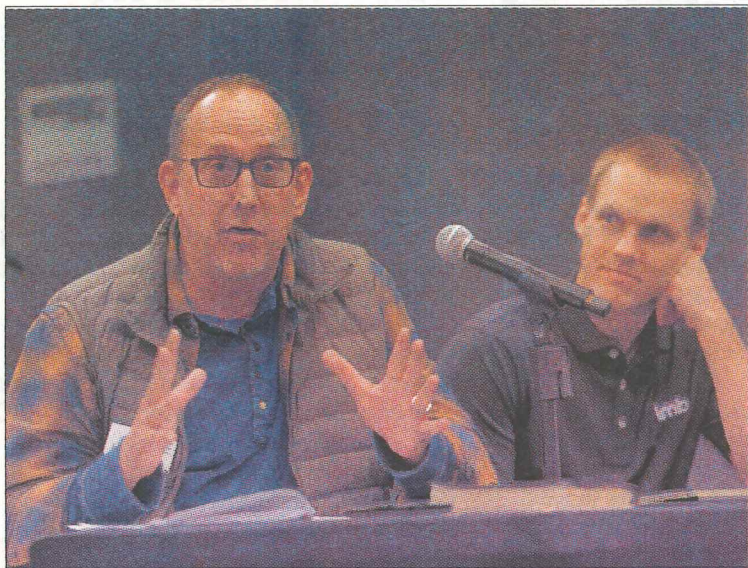
"We are very excited to have these funds in the budget to send additional personnel, and these funds will only be used to send additional personnel," Freeman told trustees.

Freeman also reported that IMB contingency reserves are projected to be at five and a half months of operational expenses in 2017. The figure falls within SBC Executive Committee guidelines, which allows for a maximum of six months of operational expenses in contingency reserves.

Platt reminded trustees what the budget numbers represent: 40,000 Southern Baptist churches partnering together through the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering to send and support missionaries around the world.

Trustees also voted to affirm a revised mission statement for the organization, which states: The IMB partners with churches to empower limitless missionary teams who are evangelizing, discipling, planting and multiplying healthy churches, and training leaders among unreached peoples and places for the glory of God.

The appointment of 50 new missionaries highlighted the meeting during a special Sending Celebration broadcast to churches, families and individuals via live stream. (BP)



Scott Harris (left), chairman of the IMB board of trustees, asks trustees to pause during their Nov. 11 plenary session to pray for IMB field leadership and senior leadership. Harris is missions minister at Brentwood (Tenn.) Baptist Church. (Photo by Roy Burroughs/IMB)



Outgoing president Andrew Dyer (right) passes the gavel to Bill Langley, the incoming president from Elizabethtown.

Severns Valley pastor elected KBC president by acclamation

By Todd Deaton and Myriah Snyder

Florence—Bill Langley, senior pastor of Severns Valley Baptist Church for seven years, was elected president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention by acclamation Nov. 15 during the KBC Annual Meeting at Florence Baptist Church.

Kenny Rager, of Owensboro, and Josh Landrum, of Shepherdsville, also ran unopposed for the offices of first and second vice president, respectively.

Nominated by Dan Summerlin, pastor of Lone Oak Baptist Church in Paducah and a past KBC president, Langley had served as president of the Kentucky Baptist Pastors' Conference immediately prior to the annual meeting.

Summerlin highlighted three reasons why Kentucky Baptists should elect Langley as their president: his character, his competency as a leader, and his commitment to the Cooperative Program.

"Throughout our state, people respect him for living the Christian life and for modeling Christ," Summerlin said. "He preaches on evangelism and backs up what he proclaims."

Severns Valley has baptized more than 500 new believers and given more than \$2.1 million through the Cooperative Program since Langley became its pastor, Summerlin noted. A consistent leader in the state in Cooperative Program giving, the Elizabethtown congregation has contributed more than \$12 million since 1928.

A graduate of the University of Kentucky, Langley holds a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a doctorate from Louisiana Baptist University.

Langley told Kentucky Baptists that he will do all he can to help pastors and church leaders fortify the biblical stands their churches take.

"Our nation is in a moral freefall," Langley said. "We are seeing conservative, Bible-believing Christians and churches under attack like never before."

Rager, pastor of Life Community Church in Owensboro, was nominated by Jamus Edwards, pastor of Pleasant

Valley Community Church, also in Owensboro.

"You know, there are those people who talk about the Great Commission a lot, and yet there are fewer who fulfill the Great Commission. But, if there has ever been a Great Commission pastor, that pastor is Kenny Rager," Edwards said. "You will be very hard-pressed to find another brother in the Lord who is more deeply committed to evangelism and seeing people come to faith in Jesus Christ than is Kenny Rager."

In a few short years Rager has led his young church plant, Life Community, to be generous supporters of the Cooperative Program and baptize more than 100 people. Edwards continued, "As a church planter and a pastor, Kenny's driving passion is clear in his personal life, in his family life, and in his ministry, and that passion is to see as many people come to faith in Jesus Christ."

Rager has been pastor of Life Community since 2012, served on the KBC Daviess-McLean Baptist Association.

Josh Landrum of Bullitt Lick Baptist Church in Shepherdsville, was nominated by Tim Scott, pastor of Milton Baptist Church.

"As a husband to Cassie, a father, pastor, or simply a friend, Dr. Landrum seeks to earnestly model Jesus Christ," Scott said. "He loves our convention and has a heart to lead us into greater cooperation with one another as witnessed through his various roles in the local association and state convention work."

"Dr. Landrum further represents what our convention is all about, reaching our state, nation and world with the gospel of Jesus Christ," Scott added, noting that Landrum had participated in 10 national and international mission trips and led his congregation to support two church plants.

Landrum has been pastor at Bullitt Lick since July 2014, served on the KBC's Committee on Constitution and Bylaws and Tellers committees, and a member of the administrative team for Nelson Baptist Association. (WR)

TOP TEN

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Hillvue Heights, Lighthouse lead state in baptisms

Florence—The Kentucky Baptist Convention celebrated churches that are leading the state in baptizing new believers.

A total of 20 churches were recognized with awards for achieving the highest number in total baptisms and for having the best per-capita ratio of baptisms to members.

"We want to celebrate people coming to Christ and following in obedience to believer's baptism," said KBC Evangelism and Church Planting Team Leader Todd Gray, who announced recipients at the KBC Annual Meeting in Florence.

Hillvue Heights Church in Bowling Green led the state last year with 531 baptisms, while The Lighthouse at Nolin Lake topped the per-capita ranking with 31 baptisms by a church with a primary worship attendance of 49 people.

"What these awards really say about Kentucky Baptist churches is they are effective at reaching people and evangelism," Gray said.

The evangelism efforts of the churches contributed to the KBC's reporting of 14,456 baptisms, the highest number since 2012.

The top 10 baptizing churches:

- Hillvue Heights Church, 531 baptisms
- The Creek Church, 219 baptisms
- Valley View Church, 136 baptisms
- Crossland Community Church, 97 baptisms
- Grapevine Baptist Church, 96 baptisms
- Providence Baptist Church, 92 baptisms
- Garner Missionary Baptist Church, 86 baptisms
- Immanuel Baptist Church, 84 baptisms
- Mill Creek Baptist Church, 78 baptisms
- Living Hope Baptist Church, 75 baptisms

The top 10 baptizing churches per capita:

- Lighthouse at Nolin Lake, 49 wor-

ship, 31 baptisms

- New Hope Fellowship Baptist Fellowship of Gratz, 30 worship, 17 baptisms
- Trinity Baptist Church, 45 worship, 24 baptisms
- Canadatown Community Fellowship, 28 worship, 14 baptisms
- New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, 55 worship, 25 baptisms
- Lifehouse Church, 50 worship, 22 baptisms
- Deanfield Baptist Church, 20 worship, 8 baptisms
- Advance Baptist Church, 62 worship, 24 baptisms
- McKinney Baptist Church, 26 worship, 10 baptisms
- Victory Baptist Church, 105 worship, 36 baptisms

Baptism statistics come from self-reported numbers submitted through the Annual Church Profile, used throughout the Southern Baptist Convention to collect vital statistical and leadership information. (KBC)

Anchor in the Rock, Dyer urges Kentucky Baptists

By Myriah Snyder

Florence—Anchor yourselves in the word of God, Andrew Dyer, immediate past president of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, urged pastors and laity attending the KBC Annual Meeting Nov. 15.

Dyer, who assumed the role of president when Kevin Smith left the state to become executive director of the Baptist Convention of Maryland and Delaware, shared that he doesn't "know what a presidential address is, but I'm an expositor."

In a video introduction, Smith said of Dyer, "He is a mission-minded brother. He is an evangelistic brother. He is a Bible preacher. He is a very well-prepared man of the gospel of Jesus Christ and of the great commandment to love Jesus Christ with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and to love our neighbor. Please hear him."

Dyer walked messengers through Psalm 19. Although the first part of the passage speaks of God's general revelation through creation, Psalm 19:7-9 deals directly with the word of God, Dyer noted. The passage not only identifies what God's word is, but also what it does, he said.

"As good a job that we do (as Baptists) of identifying what God's word is, we often neglect what it does," Dyer said. "It's not just (that) we have to have a high view of what God's word is; we have to have a high view of what God's word does."

He identified six things from Psalm 19:7-9 that God's word is and does. The passage reads, "The instruction of the LORD is perfect, renewing one's life; the testimony of the LORD is trustworthy, making the inexperienced wise. The precepts of the LORD are right, making the heart glad; the command of the LORD is radiant, making the eyes light up. The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the LORD are reliable and altogether righteous."

"What do I need to do in my life if I am going to anchor in the word of God?" Dyer said, bringing his sermon to a practical level. He answered by drawing from verse 14: "How are the words of my mouth going to be acceptable in His sight? When the words of my mouth match the words of His mouth, when we speak what God has spoken."

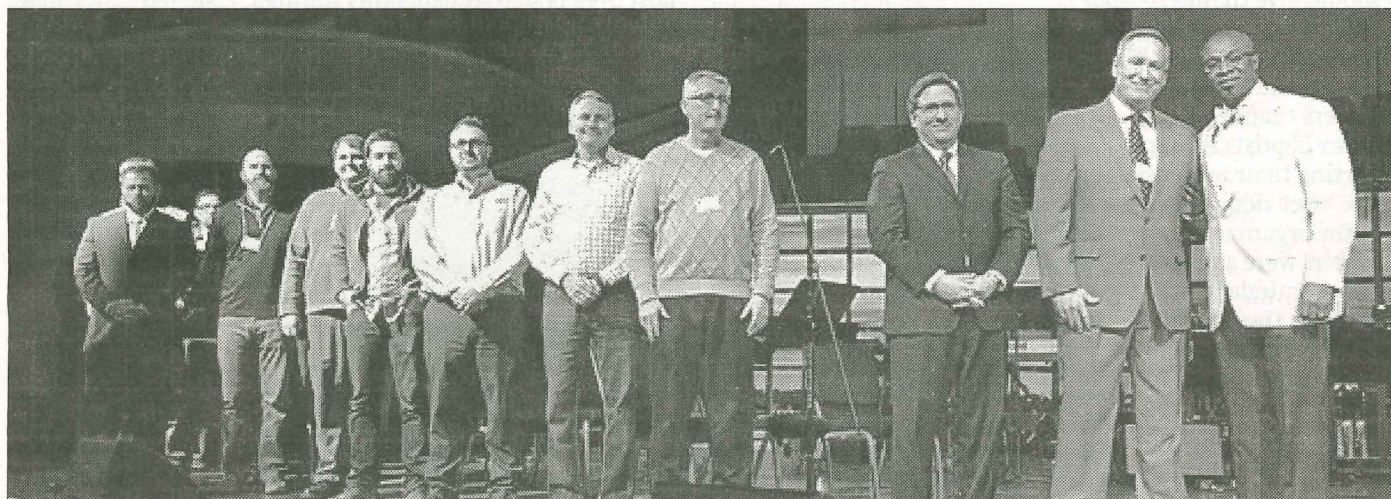
He continued, "You want God's word to come out of your mouth, it must start because God's word is in your heart."

Dyer concluded, "Brothers and sisters, Kentucky Baptists: waves of uncertainty will come. A tsunami of opinion will beat against our churches, and against the word of God. The winds of doctrinal compromise will blow, but the church, the convention, the family, the life that is anchored in the Rock will stand."

"God has spoken, and we must speak what God has spoken," he reiterated. "That is an anchor of hope. Let us anchor well." (WR)



Andrew Dyer



Kentucky Baptist Convention Associate Executive Director Curtis Woods (right) recognizes Bill Langley, of Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown (second from right), and the pastors of other top churches in Cooperative Program giving at the KBC Annual Meeting in Florence.

Bowling Green pastor, top churches touted for CP support

Florence—A Bowling Green, Ky., pastor and 17 churches were singled out as models of unwavering faithfulness to cooperative missions giving during the Annual Meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Tom James, lead pastor of Eastwood Baptist Church, received the Distinguished Leadership Award for his lifelong devotion to the Cooperative Program. He has served the 1,400-member congregation and the community of Bowling Green since 2004.

At last year's annual meeting, Eastwood Baptist achieved the \$4 million milestone for giving to missions through the Cooperative Program, which contributed to the increase in baptisms and church plants in Kentucky and around the world.

"Tom James is a convictional leader," said Curtis Woods, Kentucky Baptist Convention's associate executive director. "He embodies the 'four pegs' of our convention: he has a high view of scripture; he adheres to the Baptist Faith and Message; he is passionate about the Great Commission; and he honors cooperation."

"Eastwood Baptist is a shining example in CP giving," Woods said.

On behalf of all Kentucky Baptists, Woods thanked the top Cooperative

Program-giving churches for believing that "together, we can do more" to spread the news of Jesus Christ throughout Kentucky and the world.

The top contributors in total giving through the Cooperative Program in the fiscal year 2015-16 were:

- Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown, \$356,867
- Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington, \$337,758
- Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Paducah, \$312,167

Top CP supporters in per capita giving for the year were:



Outgoing president Andrew Dyer awards Tom James, lead pastor of Eastwood Baptist Church, with the Distinguished Leadership Award for his devotion to the Cooperative Program.

- Mexico Baptist Church, Marion, \$302
- Countryside Baptist Church, Morganfield, \$280
- Faith Family Church, Hopkinsville, \$278

Also, 17 Kentucky Baptist churches reached milestones in their Cooperative Program giving history.

\$12 million milestone: Severns Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethtown

\$8 million milestone: Porter Memorial Baptist Church, Lexington

\$5 million milestone: Second Baptist Church, Hopkinsville

\$4 million milestone: Shelbyville First Baptist Church, Shelbyville

\$3 million milestone: Hurstbourne Baptist Church, Louisville; First Baptist Church, Princeton; Shively Baptist Church, Louisville; Versailles Baptist Church, Versailles

\$2 million milestone: Bruner's Chapel Baptist Church, Harrodsburg; Harlan Baptist Church, Harlan

\$1 million milestone: Central Baptist Church, Paris; Dripping Springs Baptist Church, Olmstead; First Baptist Church, East Bernstadt; First Baptist Church, Sebree; Hillvue Heights Church, Bowling Green; Ormsby Heights Baptist Church, Louisville; Waco Baptist Church, Waco. (KBC)

Touching lives, healing hurts

The 2016 Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting was a tremendous time of celebration as messengers had opportunity to hear updates on the work of the Mission Board and its entities. I sensed a wonderful spirit of thanksgiving and unity unlike any I've experienced in the past. My appreciation goes to the host church, Florence Baptist, and to all of the KBC officers, staff members, volunteers and messengers who made the annual meeting and Pastors' Conference a blessing for all who were in attendance.

Together We are the KBC



Paul Chitwood

During the holiday season of giving thanks and celebrating God's gift of our Savior, I want to make you aware of some of the practical ways Kentucky Baptists are touching lives, healing hurts, and sharing the gospel through Kentucky Baptist Convention Disaster Relief (KBCDR). As I do so, I want to thank every person who gives their tithes and offerings in a church that

participates in cooperative missions through the Cooperative Program. Your gifts fund KBCDR. Thank you for this eternity-changing ministry!

First, I'm pleased to share with you that well over 800 hospice care buckets to help families comfort those with HIV/AIDS were collected during the KBC annual meeting in Florence. Churches also made monetary donations of thousands of dollars to help support this project undertaken in partnership with Baptist Global Response.

In addition, over the past year, KBCDR trained 802 volunteers to participate in relief work. In a special initiative, some of our disaster relief teams have begun working with Baptist churches in sub-Saharan Africa where they trained 75 volunteers in South Africa, Mozambique and Zambia.

New and seasoned volunteers have responded to needs created by floods in South Carolina, Missouri, Louisiana, Michigan, eastern Kentucky and West Virginia. They responded to needs in Kentucky created by tornadoes in Mayfield and Ohio County and Hurricane Matthew as it impacted people and property in Florida and North Carolina. Our volunteers helped ensure clean water for people in Flint, Mich., by installing water filtration systems in 275 homes. They also helped provide clean water overseas by assisting with wells and filters in Zambia and South Africa. DR workers fed 3,500 hundred hungry families in the African countries of Lesotho and Madagascar and did medical and trauma care in Iraq. Here in the US, KBCDR workers prepared 52,938 meals, distributed 89,736 cases of bottled water, did flood clean-up on 381 homes.

These combined projects and relief work created significant ministry opportunities. Our workers and chaplains made 7,474 ministry contacts, distributed 767 Bibles, and saw 57 decisions for Christ. Every church that gives through CP can celebrate this ministry as their own.

KBC staff member, Coy Webb, coordinates our DR work and would be pleased to share with you and/or your church about upcoming training opportunities and ways to get more involved with KBCDR. Coy can be contacted by phone at 502-489-3527 or email at coy.webb@kybaptist.org. Information is also available on the KBC website at www.kybaptist.org.

A 'Big Thank You' to Kentucky Baptists

As conventions go, the recent one in Florence was a quiet, harmonious one, yielding few surprises. The overall spirit was almost celebratory. In fact, one could sum it up in three words: a "Big Thank You."

No motions were introduced in either the morning or afternoon business sessions. All resolutions went off smoothly—adopted without discussion or amendments. A \$500,000 increase in the convention budget was approved without even a bat of an eye. And, all three officers ran unopposed, affording Wilma Simmons, recording secretary, the opportunity to cast a single vote on behalf of approximately 750 convention messengers.

That is not to say that nothing happened in Florence of great significance. Every convention has a unique timbre. The Florence annual meeting was no exception. Its proceedings exuded a distinct impression of thankfulness.

In 2016, the Kentucky Baptist Convention surpassed its Cooperative Program budget projections for the first time in a decade. Kentucky Baptists didn't just meet the goal of \$21.25 million, they exceeded it by \$1 million. That's something to be celebrated! It's also a blessing for which we should give thanks to God.

Throughout this year's meeting, each of the KBC agency and institution leaders thanked Kentucky Baptists for supporting their ministries. The brief video snippets of the organizations' leaders were a poignant reminder that through the Cooperative Program, Kentucky Baptists are supporting more than national and international missionaries; they also are touching and changing thousands of lives here in the commonwealth. In case you missed it, here is some of what they had to say:

"WMU challenges followers of Christ to understand and be radically involved in the mission of God," said Joy Bolton, of Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union, listing a myriad of organizational programs and state and national offering promotions. "Kentucky WMU helps churches learn, pray, give, go and send people on mission, including students and their leaders."

"The Cooperative Program is essential in everything we do. You are changing lives every day, and you have no idea what a difference it makes," said Dale Suttles, of Sunrise

Children's Home. "Through your generous donations to the Cooperative Program, you make our ministries (to children and their hurting families) possible."

"Your generous gifts to the Cooperative Program enable the Western Recorder to continue faithfully telling the stories of how God is at work among the churches, the associations and the state convention," we reminded messengers. "Western Recorder exists to inform, inspire, encourage and enliven Kentucky Baptists as they engage in missions and ministry."

"Without the Cooperative Program many of our students from Kentucky to the Far East would not be able to attend at Oneida," said Larry Gritton. "Every dollar matters, and each dollar plays a vital role in helping us to change young lives that will one day engage and change the culture for Christ both at home and abroad."

"We appreciate the opportunity that you give us to provide a quality education for our students who come from all walks of life," said Larry Cockrum, of the University of the Cumberlands, which recently topped 7,000 students.

"Through the financial funding support of the Cooperative Program, the Kentucky Baptist Foundation is enabled to provide, at no cost, state stewardship seminars in the churches to help members become generous givers through their estate plans," said Richard Carnes, of the Baptist Foundation.

"With the help of Kentucky Baptists, we are privileged to host over 14,000 students this summer," said Jeff Dalrymple, of Crossings Ministries. "I'm happy to report that every one of these students has heard the Bible taught, the gospel proclaimed, and Christ exalted."

"Your support of the Cooperative Program is an investment in kingdom work," said Donnie Fox, of Clear Creek Baptist Bible Institute. "When you give to the Cooperative Program, you are enabling us to fulfill our mission that God gave us 90 years ago, and that is, to provide ministry training for those whom God has called to Christian service."

Fittingly, in expressing the appreciation of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, messengers in Florence approved a resolution commending pastors for serving faithfully, courageously and sacrificially in the face of a culture that has become increasingly hostile to the gospel. The resolution, in part, also praises the pastors for continuing to lead their

churches to work cooperatively with other congregations across the state and nation in seeking to reach the lost and through increasing their giving through the Cooperative Program.

And, because of this, we say, "Thank You!"

After Thought

By Todd Deaton



WESTERN Recorder

Shine Like Stars * Philippians 2:15

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Letters to the editor:

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



Gaines: 10 things Christians can do after election

By Lonnie Wilkey

Sevierville, Tenn.—Following the recent election of a new U.S. president, Southern Baptist Convention leader Steve Gaines challenged American Christians to once again ask, "What can I do for my country?"

In a Nov. 13 message to Tennessee Baptists, Gaines shared a well-known quote from John F. Kennedy's inaugural address in January of 1961: "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country?"

Gaines, SBC president and pastor of Memphis-area Bellevue Baptist Church, cited 10 things that Christians can do:

- **Pray for your country.** Gaines observed there are some people in the U.S. who say they should not pray for the country's success. "There is nothing wrong and everything right for Christians who live in the United States of America to pray for God to bless our country," Gaines said. He urged Christians to pray for the president, president-elect and others in leadership whether or not one agrees with their views.

- **Prioritize your family.** No country will be stronger than the families who live in that country, said Gaines, emphasizing the importance of strong, godly families.

- **Work for a living.** Gaines noted that God did not create men and women to be lazy. "Unless you are physically or mentally challenged, you are supposed to work," he said. Gaines said the church or government does not owe anything to people who are able but

choose not to work due to laziness.

- **Be involved in the local church.** "The United States needs more Bible-believing, Jesus-exalting churches," Gaines said. He added that Christians are the "conscience and heart" of the country.



Steve Gaines

- **Love your fellow man.** "Christians are commanded to love everyone, not just other Christians," he said. He said Christians "are to love even those who are engaged in open sin; we just don't love the sin." Additionally, Christians are commanded to love people of all skin color and ethnicity. "All lives matter to God. Jesus died for all people," he said.

- **Minister to "the least of these."** Find a need and meet it and find a hurt and heal it, Gaines urged. "We must care for those who are in need."

- **Take care of your finances.** Gaines challenged the crowd to tithe, avoid debt, and save for future needs. How Christians use the money entrusted to them by God says a lot, he said. "Your checkbook tells where your heart really is. ... God gives you that money to be a steward. You don't own anything," he said. "Until you learn how to deal with money, God can't bless you or your church."

- **Share the gospel of Jesus Christ with lost people.** "One of the best things you can do is to win lost souls for Jesus Christ," he said.

- **Make disciples.** "Once you've won someone to Jesus you don't throw them in a corner. You take care of them, love them, and disciple them," Gaines said.

- **Know you are saved, be filled with the Holy Spirit, and live a holy life.** Gaines noted there are people who made a decision for Christ 30 years ago yet today never go to church or pray. "Where there is no fruit, there is no root," he said. He challenged Christians to make sure they know they are saved and then be filled with the Holy Spirit and live holy lives.

America is in trouble, Gaines said. The answer, he said, is Christians and local churches. "We have to wake up and focus on God. We have to be salt and light," he said. "We have to love our country enough to stand up for our Lord Jesus Christ." (BP)

Establishing social media guidelines

Q: After such a contentious and nasty presidential election, we have decided to establish some guidelines for ourselves and our teenagers as to the way we use social media. What ideas might you have for Christian parents?

A: Colossians 3:12 reminds us that "... as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience." This idea of "putting on" and "putting off" is an important one in the Bible. Nowhere is this more fleshed out in our society and families than in the way we put on and put off certain practices with regard to social media.

When Paul writes in Ephesians 4 about "putting off" the "old man," he specifically references such things as anger, rotten talk that tears down others, bitterness, wrath, insults and slander. Instead, we are exhorted to "put on" the "new man," who is characterized by kindness, compassion, forgiveness and love. Galatians 5:22 echoes much of this as we are reminded that the "fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

One could argue that what we "put on" social media simply mirrors what is in our hearts. While there is truth to that statement, it is equally true that much of what goes through our minds should never be exposed to the light of day, but be carefully and prayerfully filtered. For many young people (and unfortunately

older ones as well whose wisdom does not match their years), Spirit-led filtering is short-circuited by a readily available "on ramp" to the internet superhighway of 24/7 impulsivity. Stimulated by a culture of narcissism and temporarily emboldened by anger, anxiety, or lust, it is easy for all of us to get carried away and allow emotions to hijack our thinking processes.

Here are a few common sense guidelines for teenagers (and the rest of us). Post positive. Post sparingly. Practice pruning in your social media usage. Keep devices out of the room in which you sleep. Practice self-control. Decide in advance to avoid reading rants. Build others up. Exalt Christ.



Scott Wigginton

Oh, you better not fret I'm telling you why

The stockings. The fudge. The party. The gifts. The guests. On and on goes the bubbling list of to-do's before Christmas. How can a Christian avoid worry during such a crazy season of year?

In a Bible story about two sisters, Martha is critiqued because of her stress and agitation. Reread the story.

"As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what He taught.

But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."

But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her." Luke 10:38-42

Here are four reasons to stop worrying.

1. **Worry accomplishes nothing.** "Can all your worries add a single moment to your life? And if worry can't accomplish a little thing like that, what's the use of worrying over bigger things?" - Luke 12:25-6.

2. **Worry makes you look bad.** You scowl. You fidget. You whine. You drive people away. And frowning may cause wrinkles! "Anxiety weighs a person down" - Proverbs 12:25a.

3. **Worry doesn't reflect well on your Savior.** People may think you don't trust God. "I (Jesus) am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled

Preparing for the new retirement

A century ago, retirement was virtually unknown to most folks. One continued to work until death. Of course, very few lived to their 70s and 80s. A half century ago, retirement was becoming a regular part of American culture, but it was generally viewed as a relatively short period of years marked by reduced activity and significantly less financial need.

Modern retirement has different characteristics and temperaments from earlier retirements. Your planning for retirement should reflect these changes. Here are six ways your retirement will differ from previous generations:

1. Many retirees will live a long and active life in retirement that may be as much as a third of one's total life span.

2. Retirement will be divided into several phases: a) retirement earnings phase with continued work, b) active "go-go" phase marked by pursuit of the "good life," c) passive "slow-go" phase, d) final phases characterized by failing health

3. The cost of retirement lifestyle will be similar to the cost of pre-retirement lifestyle. Increased activity, added interests and new technologies mean the costs of living in retirement will be much higher in proportion to one's working years than was true in the past. Increased medical cost will be an increasingly important factor.

4. Inflation will increase the need for income by two or three times during retirement.

5. Taxes, estate planning and insurance have become vital parts of the retirement planning process. Recent changes in tax laws increase the need for awareness of these issues as you plan for retirement. Many have purchased or are considering the need for long term care insurance.

6. Retirement issues are unique for everyone. More people are "retiring" early. At the same time, an increased number of people are working well into the 70s. A growing segment of our population are saying they never plan to retire—almost like it was a century ago.

The question for you as an individual is, "Have you applied these factors to your own retirement planning?" Too many are barely saving enough for the old retirement. Are you saving enough for the new retirement?



Don Spencer

Fresh Ideas



Diana Davis

or afraid." - John 14:27

"Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you." - Psalm 55:22a

"Then Jesus said, 'Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.'" - Matthew 11:28

4. **Scripture actually instructs Christians to not worry.** - Philippians 4:6a "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything." - Matthew 11:28

"Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me." - John 14:1

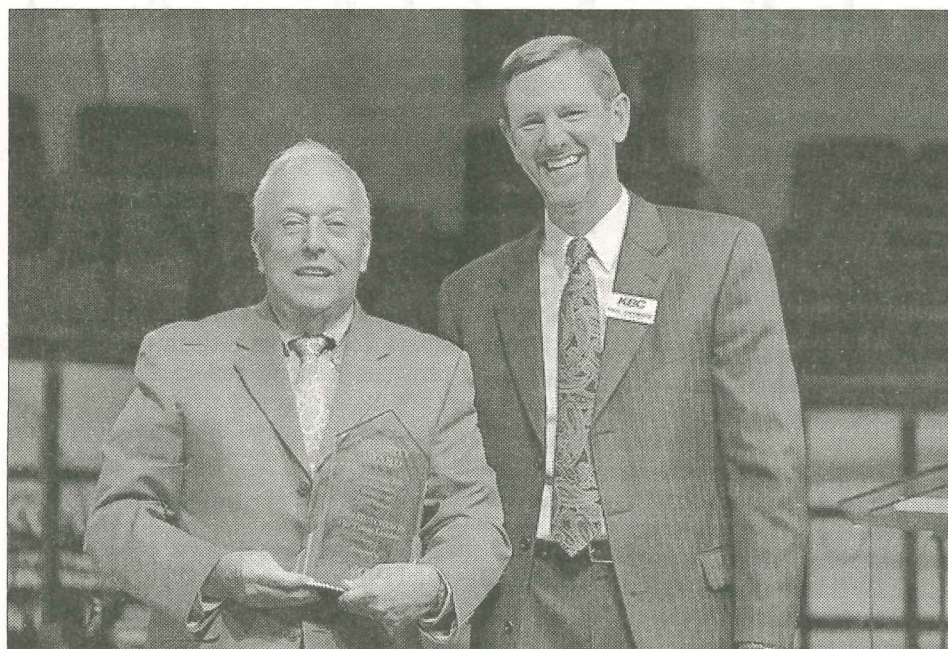
"That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life..." - Luke 12:22-32

So here's one simple tip about how to avoid fretting during this Christmas season, or any other season of your life: Don't

Don't worry. Don't fret. Don't stress. Jesus

lovingly reprimanded Martha, reminding her "there is only one thing worth being concerned about." Discover that one thing, like Mary, and focus on Him. Don't worry about all the details.

This Christmas, be fret-free. Yes, Scripture instructs to be busy about His work. Yes, the kids need dinner. Yes, Christmas is a special time. But prayerfully lower your over-achiever expectations to a level that allows peace and joy. Live focused, as if this might be your last Christmas on earth. Your perfect party or Christmas lighting will not bring nearly as fond of memories as your perfect joy and peace. Don't worry. (BP)



Chip Hutcheson, publisher of Princeton Times Leader newspaper, receives the Integrity Award for News Coverage of Faith Issues from KBC Executive Director Paul Chitwood. (Robin Cornetet/KBC)

Princeton publisher receives Integrity Award for religion news coverage

Florence—Princeton newspaper publisher Chip Hutcheson is the 2016 recipient of the Integrity Award for Coverage of Faith Issues, an honor bestowed by the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

KBC Executive Director Paul Chitwood awarded the prize to Hutcheson during the annual meeting of Kentucky Baptists at Florence Baptist Church in Florence.

"Our selection committee was impressed by the thorough, thoughtful coverage Hutcheson provided this year," Chitwood said. "His portrayal of news events was fair, accurate and well-balanced."

Hutcheson, a 2012 Kentucky Journalism Hall of Fame inductee, has served Princeton and its surrounding communities with news reporting since 1976.

"A community newspaper strives to cover every aspect of life in that community, and certainly coverage of what churches are doing is an essential component of news coverage," said Hutcheson. "There are many newspapers that don't place a high value on religion coverage. That is unfortunate because there are some compelling stories that would be informative and useful to the public."

In addition to working as editor and publisher of The Times Leader, a

twice-weekly 4,700-circulation newspaper, Hutcheson started a new weekly publication in Oak Grove in 2008 and served as the newspaper's publisher until last year.

Hutcheson is formerly the president of the National Newspaper Association (2015) and the Kentucky Press Association (2010). He was awarded KPA's "Most Valuable Member" in 2011.

KBC Communications Director Roger Alford, who nominated Hutcheson for the award, said Hutcheson understands the impact religion has on the lives of everyday Kentuckians.

Hutcheson was elected KBC president in 2013 and served as chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention's Committee on Nominations the following year. He also served on the board of directors of the Western Recorder and Kentucky Ethics League.

Among his civic contributions are serving as president of the Princeton-Caldwell County Chamber of Commerce, a board member of First Southern Bank of Princeton, and board member of Caldwell County's free clinic and health advisory council.

Hutcheson and his wife, Karen, are members of Southside Baptist Church in Princeton, where he has taught Sunday School for 39 years. (KBC)

Dyer announces committee appointments

Florence—Convention President Andrew Dyer, pastor of London's Corinth Baptist Church, kicked off the Annual Meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Convention by welcoming messengers and quickly getting down to business by announcing three appointments to the KBC Committee on Committees.

The new appointees' terms will end in 2019. They are:

- Blake Lawyer, pastor of Christ Community Church in Shelbyville, from Shelby Baptist Association in Region 4.
- Ricky Simpson, pastor of Evergreen Baptist Church in Frankfort, from Franklin Baptist Association in Region 5.
- Darryl Cornett, pastor of First Baptist Church of Hazard, from Three Forks Baptist Association in Region 8.

The Committee on Committees' responsibility is to make nominations for the Kentucky Baptist Convention's permanent committees.

Other committee members are Joe Bufford (Region 2, Christian County Baptist Association), Richard Carwile (Region 3, Nelson Baptist Association), George Drake (Region 8, Red River Baptist Association), Donnie Patrick (Region 5, Oldham-Trimble Baptist Association), Wes Pinkley (Region 3, Salem Baptist Association), and Jamaal Williams (Region 4, Long Run Baptist Association).

Ex-officio members include KBC Executive Director Paul Chitwood and the new convention president, Bill Langley, pastor of Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown. (KBC)

Nine churches affiliate with convention

Florence—Nine congregations were welcomed into the Kentucky Baptist Convention, joining a family of nearly 2,400 Baptist churches.

Committee on Credentials Vice-Chair Allen Bonnell presented the churches for affiliation during the Kentucky Baptist Convention Annual Meeting in Florence.

The newly affiliated churches are:

- Beaver Creek Southern Baptist Church in Topmost
- Eagle Creek Baptist Church in Sadieville
- Ekklesia in Bowling Green
- Filipino International, Louisville
- Salt and Light Baptist Church, Crestwood
- Summit Community Church,

Hazard

- Thoroughbred Community Church, Nicholasville
- Water's Edge Church, Henderson
- Zion Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Ekron

Congregations joining under watchcare status are Connecting Christian Church and Lampton Baptist Church, both in Louisville.

Churches under watchcare typically are beginning their acquaintance with the missions and ministries of the KBC.

Also, the Purchase Area Baptist Association has been accepted as a fully affiliated association with 16 member churches and will have representation on the Mission Board of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. (KBC)



"A lively hope comes from the presence of God and endures regardless of the circumstances," said Jeff Noffsinger, pastor of Dripping Spring Baptist Church in Olmstead, in his address to messengers at the KBC Annual Meeting in Florence. (Robin Cornetet/KBC)

Noffsinger: Offer the world 'lively hope'

Florence—Kentucky Baptists should not only be a people of hope among the hopeless, but a people of a "lively hope," said Jeff Noffsinger, the rural Kentucky pastor who delivered the annual convention sermon in Florence.

"Maybe you've experienced seasons of life, or maybe you're in one right now where you feel crushed, devastated, even torn by the feeling of hopelessness," Noffsinger, pastor of Dripping Spring Baptist Church in Olmstead, told hundreds of Kentucky Baptists at Florence Baptist Church. "People can feel this way; pastors can feel this way; and, at times, the church can, too. And there are many in this world today who feel hopeless, forgotten, and lost."

Stepping in for Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board, Noffsinger noted that the Apostle Peter comforted and encouraged the Christians of his day, urging Kentucky Baptists to remain faithful to Christ in good times and bad.

"To say that we're living in some very tense times is an understatement," he said. "The volatility of our nation coupled with the depravity of the culture leave many wondering what's going to happen next," he said. "If there ever was a day and time in which the children of God and the church of the Lord Jesus Christ needed another touch from our Heavenly Father, it is now."

Noffsinger challenged attenders to help those who have lost hope.

"And there are many in this world today who feel hopeless, forgotten, and

lost," he said. "That is why it is our responsibility, the New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ, the children of God to give hope to the hopeless around us. But not just give them hope, give them a lively hope."

In Peter's day, Christians were beaten, stoned, imprisoned, and executed because they believed in Christ, Noffsinger said.

"The children of God and the apostles were not immune to such suffering and persecution, and that is why Peter wrote to these suffering saints to give them comfort, encouragement and a lively hope," he said.

Peter reassured Christians of his day that the inheritance they've been given by faith will not fade away and is preserved for them in Heaven.

"A lively hope comes from the presence of God and endures regardless of the circumstances," he said. "The very presence of God with us by the Holy Spirit gives us the ability to persevere and endure because it is by the power of God."

Noffsinger reminded Kentucky Baptists that they don't have a shy or timid hope that is concerned about political correctness.

"We do not possess a silent hope that must not be shared in public," he said. "We do not possess a sorry hope that fears offending people. We possess a hope on a precious foundation that we know is preserved forever that will persevere by faith and give praise unto our Father." (KBC)

Grace and Truth essential in ministry, PC speakers urge

By Myriah Snyder

Florence—“Jesus isn’t 50 percent grace and 50 percent truth. He’s 100 percent grace and 100 percent truth. Both tracks are needed,” an evangelist and senior vice president for spiritual development at Liberty University told Kentucky Baptist pastors.

“In Christian ministry, we need grace and truth if we really are going to be like our great model, our Savior, Jesus Christ,” David Nasser explained during the Kentucky Baptist Pastor’s Conference on Nov. 14.

The central theme of “Grace and Truth” was proclaimed by a strong lineup of speakers at the traditional get-together for pastors on the eve of the Kentucky Baptist Convention’s Annual Meeting.

Nasser focused on the fact that John 6:35—where Jesus shares that He is the Bread of Life—comes after Jesus feeds the masses.

Nasser pointed out that Jesus, the greatest preacher ever, finds 15,000 hungry people and He doesn’t preach. Instead, He says, “They’re hungry; let’s feed them.”

“Because of this, they go looking for Him again. That’s when we run into John 6:35,” Nasser said. “Jesus gives the undeniable truth of the gospel: ‘I am the Bread of Life. Everything else is nothing except me. I am everything you’ve been wanting.’

“Jesus puts that truth at the back end, but He earns the right to speak that to



David Nasser challenges pastors to be like Jesus in grace and truth. At right, Curtis Woods encourages attendees to “respond rightly to the truth in order to truly experience His grace.”

them by just loving very unthankful, unloving people,” he emphasized.

Jesus, Nasser said, “wraps the gospel in a fish sandwich.”

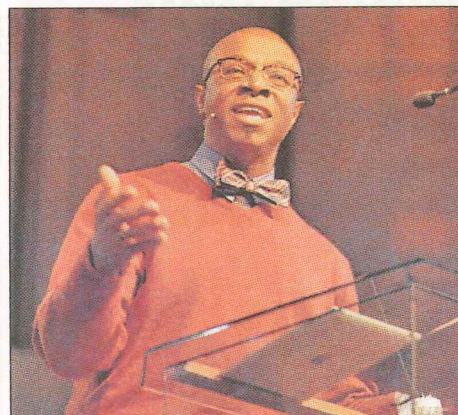
Nasser shared a story of a maid at a hotel receiving the gospel only after church members showed her compassion.

He also told about Liberty University hosting a blood drive in honor of the Orlando nightclub shooting victims. “The enemy of truth is tolerance, but the best friend of truth is grace,” he said.

God never called us to walk away from truth because when we walk away from truth we walk away from Christ who is Truth, Nasser added.

He urged Kentucky Baptists to show “grace and truth, the way of Jesus teaming up with the word of Jesus.”

“The kingdom of light has to invade the kingdom of darkness, and we can only do that successfully when we, as churches, and we, as individual followers



of Jesus Christ, are filled with grace and truth,” said Bill Langley, pastors’ conference president and senior pastor of Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown.

Langley said only 3 percent of evangelical churches are reaching people identified as lost, while others are experiencing growth through changes in membership, or as he called it, “swapping sheep in the pen.”

Kenny Rager, newly elected first vice president of the KBC and pastor of Life Community Church in Owensboro, encouraged fellow pastors to “keep on preaching” about Jesus even when people defiantly plug their ears to the truth.

Rager urged pastors to train their people and be sure they have tools and a good understanding of doctrine. Be sure they are not going to say “weird stuff,” he said.

“Keep your eyes open to culture, preach Jesus, and be a champion for poor

in your community,” he said.

Eric Geiger, a vice president of Lifeway Christian Resources in Nashville, Tenn., said the pastor’s job is to equip church members to care for the needs of others and to share the gospel.

“Your ultimate joy should be found in the fact that your name is written in heaven,” he challenged. “If you rejoice more in what God’s doing through you than what He’s doing in you, then ministry has become your idol.”

Curtis Woods, associate executive director of the KBC, said pastors need to be certain they’re spiritually healthy personally so that they can be effective in their ministries.

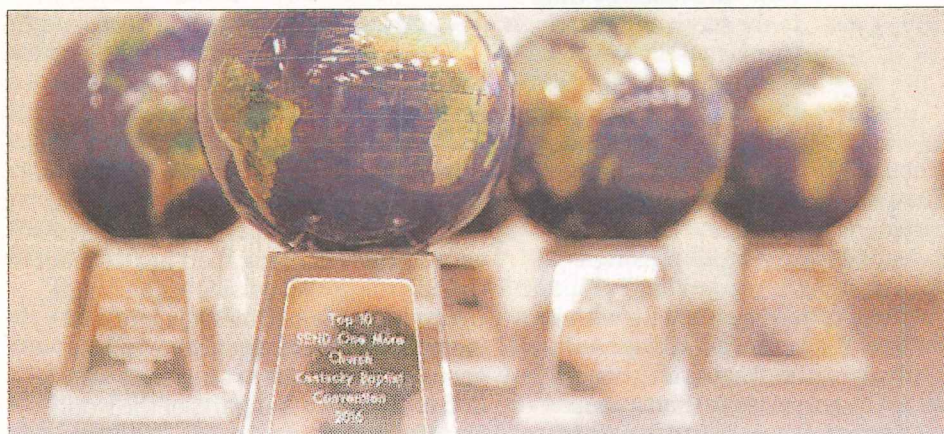
“We must respond rightly to the truth in order to truly experience His grace,” Woods said.

He added, “There is absolutely no way that we can be the men and women God is calling us to be without truly accepting His holiness.”

Mel McGowan, co-founder of PlainJoe Studios in Corona, Calif., shared his journey from being a part of Disney’s kingdom to God’s kingdom and how churches can use storytelling principals in church architecture.

“There are people who are dying; they are hungry; they are wired for the connection that we as a church can offer,” McGowan said. “Let’s tear down those walls even as we are designing new ones.” (WR)

Robin Cornetet of the KBC Communications team contributed to this article.



KBC recognizes Top 10 ‘sending’ churches

Florence—The Kentucky Baptist Convention recognized 10 churches for leading the state in raising member participation in missions projects.

The Send One More awards were presented at the Kentucky Baptist Convention Annual Meeting at Florence Baptist Church.

“Unbelievers will not come to church simply because we invite them. We must be ‘sending’ churches,” said KBC Missions Mobilization Team Leader Eric Allen. “We have to go outside the walls of the church, build relationships and make sure people have the opportunity to hear about Jesus.”

Allen described a “sending” church as one that enlists, equips and mobilizes believers to engage the world with the gospel through such avenues as local community ministry, church planting efforts, disaster relief work, vocation as ministry, and short- and long-term missionary service.

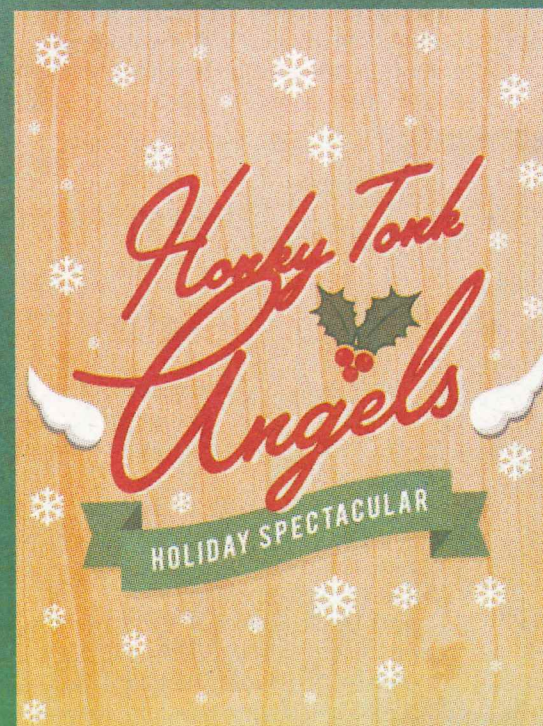
The Send One More award recipients

are for 2016:

- Fairlane Baptist Church in Alexandria, Curtis Combs, pastor
- Elk Lick Baptist Church in Lewisburg
- Green River Baptist Church in Cromwell, Kelley Harris, pastor
- First Baptist Church of Fredonia
- Brooksville Baptist Church in Brooksville, Tony Cox, pastor
- Oak Grove Baptist Church in Cadiz
- Nicholasville Baptist Church in Nicholasville, Craig Tackett, pastor
- New Ebenezer Baptist Church in Hopkinsville, Neil Immel, pastor
- Boone’s Creek Baptist Church in Lexington, Charles Dixon, pastor
- Knoxville Baptist Church in Williamstown, Craig Batson, pastor

The top sending churches were determined by dividing average mission participation by a church’s average worship attendance and then ranking the percentages of improvement from 2014 to 2015. (KBC)

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The Copland family connects through social media in Italy

In an ancient Italian city laid out by Romans, Nick and Shannan Copland use modern tools to meet people and shape relationships.

Nick, 32, and Shannan, 28, IMB workers who serve in Verona, Italy, are naturals—in any language—when it comes to making friends. Nick is extrovert extraordinaire, and Shannan radiates sweetness and sincerity. To forge friendships that may lead to opportunities to share biblical truths in northeast Italy, they use interests they've always had to connect with individuals: among those are food and outdoor pursuits.

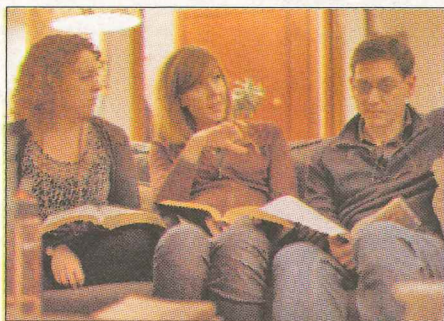
The couple started three online groups with different emphases and advertised them through Facebook, Meetup.com and Couchsurfing.com. For example, through Appertivo Italiano Verona, they advertise get-togethers at local restaurants to enjoy tasting menus. On designated evenings, Shannan and Nick meet with group members who have signed up, usually 8 to 12 people, to dine, get to know one another, and share their stories.

Spiritual challenge

The beautiful city of Verona has all the trappings of a wealthy European city, but is spiritually impoverished. Like other postmodern Italian cities, Catholicism's tight grip through the centuries has slipped in recent years. To younger generations the organized church has little relevance to their lives. While Catholic traditions such as infant baptism are deeply imbedded in the culture, a genuine relationship with Christ is almost unheard of. Catholic churches here still hold mass mostly for older Veronese, Shannan said. But other church buildings are museums or have been remodeled into pizzerias, restaurants, or banks.

Bridging to the truth

In Italy, relationship building is key to finding natural ways to share spiritual truths. And that's where the Coplands' social networking sites have helped, offering neutral ground on



which to meet people who share similar interests.

"Our smallest group for the longest time was Mountain LIFE Verona," Nick said. It was a group created to draw together people who enjoy hiking, rock climbing, and outdoor pursuits. Verona is situated near the Italian Alps, Lake Garda and numerous other beautiful areas for hiking. Then, in February of this year, "we selected a (particular) hike and it kind of went viral around Verona and 2,300 people clicked that they were interested in the event," he explained, laughing. "On the actual day of the event, 130 showed up."

"The Mountain LIFE group is excellent for getting to know people," Shannan explained. "When there's a smaller group it's perfect because when you're hiking for a few hours all you have is conversation with people to get to know them and for them to get to know you. Those are the best introductions."

The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is what allows the Coplands to bring the gospel of Christ to northeast Italy—a region in which Southern Baptists have never worked before this couple planted their lives in Verona.

"People here that know us, we're known as the people who bring people together," Nick said. "We're very community-oriented. We're here for the people." (IMB)

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Norway: Dove family believes God is up to something big

IMB church planting catalysts Zack and Jennifer Dove were geared up to plant their lives in Oslo, Norway in 2013. They had fine-tuned their expectations toward an urban city setting, but then, a few months before landing in Oslo, circumstances shifted them south.

"We went through almost a grieving process with it, but then we realized ... that God was calling us to work with and minister to Norwegians, and Sandefjord's in Norway." Two hours by train to the south and three years later, the Doves see exactly why the Lord put them in the coastal town of 50,000.

Though Norway has been considered a Christian nation for a thousand years, spiritual life has withered in recent decades and church buildings often stand empty. As in many other European countries, postmodern thought with its relativism and lack of definitive truths is the cultural norm. That context makes sharing the gospel more than a simple event. Instead, it's an everyday part of their lives as the Doves deepen relationships and bridge their conversations in the community toward gospel truths.

"Zack will say often, we need to let the gospel be the filter. We don't need to let cultural norms be the filter ... and so just share a little bit and see where it lands and plant that seed," Jennifer explained.

Starting the journey

In their first years of marriage, the thought of living cross-culturally hadn't crossed the young couple's minds. Then, in 2007, they traveled from Atlanta to Mariupol, Ukraine to adopt their son William. They also visited American friends living in the country, who one afternoon drove them to a poor village to meet with Christian believers.

"(The villagers) didn't have a lot but just had so much joy. They had just gone through a really bad storm. A lot of them had severe damage to their homes... which weren't much to begin with," Jennifer said. When it came time to pray,

"We know that God has a plan. We're watching for it to unfold and just waiting anxiously for Him to show us where we can be a part of that plan."

Jennifer Dove, IMB church planting catalyst in Norway

the Doves wanted to pray for the believers' homes and the damage the village had suffered, but the believers instead wanted to pray for Zack and Jennifer and the child they were adopting.

Jennifer said that humbling experience started changing their hearts about sharing the gospel outside of the American context. "Sometimes it just takes a moment like that for your eyes to be open, for your heart to be open to what God is doing in other parts of the world," Jennifer said.

The right place

When they arrived in Sandefjord with their boys, William, now 14, and Daniel, 11, they learned that it is one of the least evangelical counties in southern Norway. "There's a need here and while it looked at first that there were ... other reasons for why we ended up (here), we know now that God wanted us here and it was God's plan for us to be here."

"I really feel like Sandefjord is on the verge of something big, that God is really up to something in this city," Jennifer continued. "We know that God has a plan. We're watching for it to unfold and just waiting anxiously for Him to show us where we can be a part of that plan."

"Just knowing that people are praying is such an awesome thing and then just knowing that people are giving to Lottie Moon (Christmas Offering), that's such an encouragement—to know that there are people giving their tithes and their offerings so that we can go out and reach the people here in our community." (IMB)

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South America: The Harris family works with Jewish community

It's not easy for David Harris* to arrange an evening meal with a friend he's made since moving to South America. Weekends are off limits because Aaron* is an Orthodox Jew and carefully observes the rituals of Shabbat, the Sabbath. On weekdays their meals together have to be taken at kosher restaurants, of which, perhaps surprisingly, there are plenty in their city.

"I went with him to a kosher McDonald's. It wasn't my favorite burger experience," David recalled. But the fact that kosher McNuggets exist in the city shows the strength of the Jewish community there, the largest in Latin America.

Learning faith traditions

David and his wife, Hanna Harris*, both 25, grew up in Baptist churches in Kentucky, but as IMB Journeymen, they spend their days at a Messianic Center in the heart of the Jewish community in a South American megacity. Or you might find them frequenting a local Jewish synagogue, taking a Hebrew class, or building relationships in the neighborhood in a variety of ways.

The couple moved last year from a small town in Kentucky to a city with more than 13 million in its metropolitan area. They are there to share gospel

truth with the Jewish community of more than 200,000. Since the first Jews immigrated to this city in the 19th century, there has been a thriving community there, which grew with further influxes, particularly in the 1930s and after World War II when thousands of Jewish refugees fled Europe.

Many who live there are cultural Jews—from Jewish parentage but not practicing Orthodox Jews. Because of their flexibility, they are easier for David and Hanna to interact with. Nevertheless, the two have been on a learning curve since arriving in September 2015.

"It's been a really huge journey coming from not having a Jewish background," said David. Even though his grandfather was a Messianic Jew, he grew up in a very Baptist environment. "We're trying to soak up as much of the language and culture as we can," Hanna explained.

Christian expressions

Working with others at the Messianic center, the Harrises celebrate Jewish holidays based on Old Testament stories, but always use those opportunities to bridge to New Testament truths. For example, during the Jewish holiday of Purim in March, which celebrates Esther's part in



saving her people from Haman's plot to kill the Jews in the ancient Persian Empire, David and Hanna helped with a play performed at the community center for the neighborhood. It drew in more than 100 visitors.

One of their deep desires as they seek to touch lives there, is to equip believers to share their faith.

"We want to see Jews come to faith in Christ," David said. "We also think it's important to be modeling evangelism and to be modeling how to study the Bible. Though it sounds really basic, one of the core aspects is knowing the Bible." (IMB)

*Names changed

Haun family ministers with medicine, media in West Africa

After 10 years of medical school, residency and training, surgeon Heidi Haun spent one May morning in a West African courtyard pounding gravel into dirt with dozens of ladies. As the women worked, a drummer beat time and the women chanted traditional songs. It was a joyous scene with laughter and jokes as the women—bent over double—rhythmically beat in unison, each pounding the courtyard dirt smooth. Heidi, 34 weeks pregnant, bent and pounded alongside them with a sampanni, a wooden bat-like tool.

"The courtyard is the thing in which all women take pride," explained Talata James, a Mamprusi woman. "A house without a courtyard gives a woman no joy. Her children won't have a place to play." Family members eat, work, visit with friends, and spread grains to dry in their courtyard.

Community

Pounding a courtyard is not in Heidi's job description as general surgeon at the Baptist Medical Centre in Nalerigu, Ghana. She and her husband, William, are IMB missionaries there. But making connections and living in community is important in having opportunities to share the gospel. That's the same reason William, a media specialist, might spend a day digging weeds out of a friend's field. Working alongside a friend last year allowed William to share God's story one-on-one for the first time entirely in Mamprusi, the language he and Heidi are learning as they live among the Mamprusi in Northern Ghana. As he planted seeds of gospel truth, he helped sow three acres of corn.

Balancing act

It's not that William and Heidi don't have enough to do. In fact, every single

day is tough with the never-ending demands of patients' critical needs and living in a remote area. They have two children, Trey, 10, whom they home-school, and Karen Jane, or KJ, now 17 months old, who was born in Nalerigu. In fact, Heidi performed surgeries up to two weeks before she gave birth, to the point that, belly against the operating table, Heidi could often feel KJ's in utero kicks against her surgery patients.

Life in Ghana takes time and requires planning, extreme effort, and teamwork. William home-schools Trey to allow Heidi more time for language study and surgery. When William travels for media assignments, Heidi manages the home front in addition to her medical responsibilities. Yet they have planted their lives there and work hard to become a part of the community with the foremost goal of sharing the gospel.

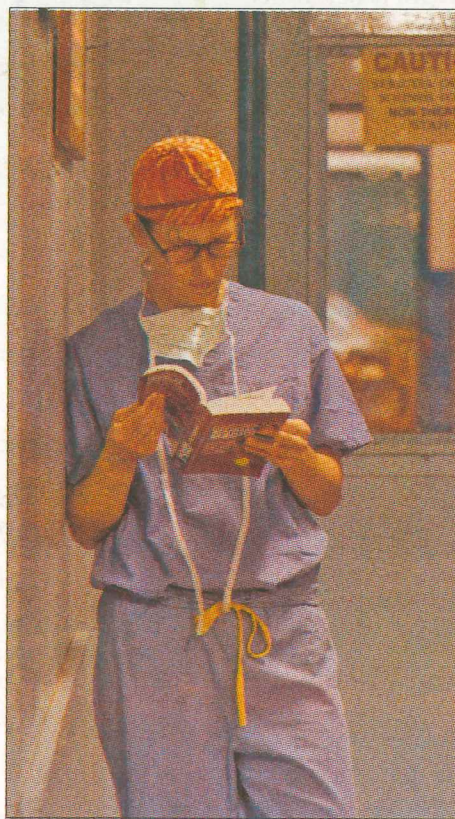
Hot days and long nights

On a really hot Sunday—109 degrees outside and no fans inside—William preached in their little village church. The dry season is known in the local language as the "days of sweat," and sweat he did as he preached from the Old Testament.

"I love going through the Old Testament," William explained. "We live in an oral culture (here) and people really connect with stories. I love how I can share these Old Testament stories and show how these stories point forward to Christ." Afterwards, he reflected on the value of living in a place long-term.

"It's just nice to be a part of the culture and the community. It allows me to take scripture and apply it to their lives in a way that I wouldn't be able to do if I hadn't made the effort to learn the language and the culture."

On another night, near midnight,



Heidi had just finished up surgery and returned home. The patient was a woman who sells cabbages under a mango tree on market days in town. Heidi planned to perform surgery earlier in the day, but the operation was delayed by an emergency c-section. Still, after surgery that night, Heidi said the woman reached out to grasp her hand and thank her.

"I think that's the neatest thing about having patients that live here in town ... it leads to opportunities for relationship and gospel sharing," Heidi explained. "I look forward to the opportunity to share Christ with her—more than just a patient-doctor relationship." (IMB)

LOTTIE MOON PRAYERS

Pray for the missionaries featured during the holiday season:

The Copland family

Nick and Shannan as they continue to build relationships and share their lives in this northern Italian city.

Their marriage in the midst of ministry. In April the Coplands became parents for the first time when they had a baby girl, Evi.

The Dove family

For the house church in nearby Tønsberg as believers there boldly share their faith, and for a multiplying movement to take hold.

For an awakening and revival among existing believers: that they would see fruit through sharing their faith and seeing people follow Jesus.

The Harris family

Jewish leaders to come to know Jesus. If the leaders come to know Jesus, it would radically change the community.

U.S. churches that feel led to partner with the Messianic Center in the work to reach the Jewish community in this South American megacity.

The Haun family

Heidi and William Haun's respective jobs in surgery and media can be time consuming. Pray that they will manage time wisely to avoid exhaustion and burnout.

Doctors to have special insight in diagnosing and treating patients. BMC has very limited labs and diagnostic tools.

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.



Billy Graham Crusades' Cliff Barrows dies at 93

By Diana Chandler

Pineville, N.C.—Clifford Burton "Cliff" Barrows, who served as music director of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association for more than 60 years, died Nov. 15 in Pineville, N.C., after a brief illness. He was 93.

The Marvin, N.C., resident had traveled the world with Billy Graham since the noted evangelist's first crusade in 1947 in Grand Rapids, Mich., the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association reported.

Barrows' contributions to the ministry were immeasurable, Graham said in a statement upon the musician's death.

"There wouldn't be a Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in the way it is today without him. He was used of the Lord more than anyone else to keep us together with his strength, energy, devotion and love for the Lord," Graham said. "Cliff set an example and was a role model of what a Christian ought to be. His contribution to my ministry cannot be measured in human terms."

Barrows was known to BGEA President and CEO Franklin Graham as "Uncle Cliff."

"Not only was he one of my father's closest friends, but he was a friend to all of us on the team and in the family," Franklin Graham said. "Growing up, and until the day of his death, I called him Uncle Cliff. He was very much a part of our family."

Barrows met the patriarch Graham in 1945 while the song leader was on his honeymoon. The two men

soon formed the first team of what would become known as BGEA. Barrows was director of music programming—and later television and radio programming—for Billy Graham Crusades, and hosted the weekly Hour of Decision radio program heard internationally for more than 60 years.



Cliff Barrows

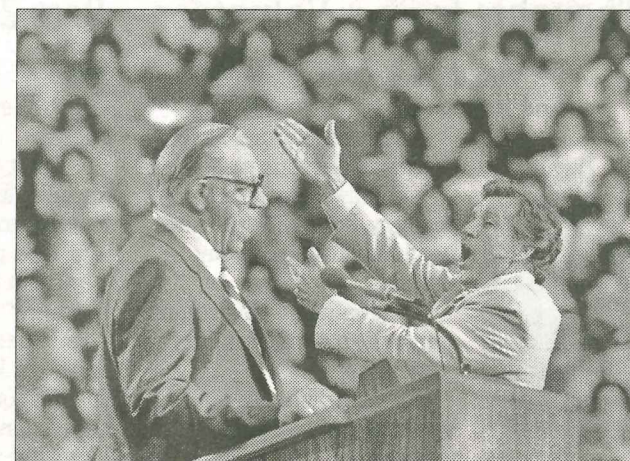
"Sometimes he could just step up and preach a lot better sermon than me because God gave him the gift—not only of organization and music, but also of preaching and teaching," Billy Graham said of Barrows. "We have a little conference center near my home where I would go to hear him when he was there and he certainly was a powerful speaker."

LifeWay Worship Resources Director Mike Harland called Barrows "the Father of every one of us who aspire to lead the church in singing the song of faith."

"Whatever the job of leading congregational singing is, that's what Cliff Barrows did. And whoever that leader is supposed to be, that's what he was to the rest of us," Harland told Baptist Press. "And whatever the relationship between preacher and song leader can be, that's what we all saw in his relationship with Dr. Billy Graham."

Frank Page, president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, expressed deep sadness at Barrows' passing.

"He was a man without guile and a man in whom the Holy Spirit found a welcome place," Page said. "He



Cliff Barrows and George Beverly Shea sang "How Great Thou Art" at the 1980 Indianapolis, Ind. Billy Graham Crusade. (BGEA photo)

will be deeply missed by millions and remembered as a man who served our Lord and his friend Billy Graham with absolute selflessness and joy."

Barrows was inducted into the Nashville Gospel Music Hall of Fame in April 1988, the Religious Broadcasting Hall of Fame in February 1996, and the inaugural class of the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists' "Hall of Faith" in 2008.

Jerry Johnson, president and CEO of National Religious Broadcasters said Barrows reminded him of joy.

"He spoke with joy, sang with joy, and led God's people to sing with joy at the Billy Graham crusades," Johnson said. (BP)

Annual meeting

Continued from Page 1

highlighted three reasons that Kentucky Baptists should elect Langley as their president: his character, his competency as a leader, and his commitment to Cooperative Program.

"Throughout the state, people respect him for modeling the Christian life," Summerlin said. "He preaches on evangelism, and he backs it up with his lifestyle."

Langley said that his primary goal as president would be to encourage Kentucky congregations to concentrate on evangelism and discipleship in a time of great challenges and opportunities.

"This is not a time to 'hold the fort,'" he urged. "This is a time to advance and enlarge the kingdom."

During Langley's seven years at Sevens Valley, more than 500 new believers have been baptized and the church has given more than \$2.1 million through the Cooperative Program. The Elizabethtown congregation consistently is a state leader in CP giving, contributing more than \$12 million since 1928.

"I am a strong advocate of the Cooperative Program for a very pragmatic reason: We can do much more together than we can do by ourselves," Langley said.

A graduate of the University of Kentucky, Langley holds a master of divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a doctorate from Louisiana Baptist University.

Serving with Langley will be Kenny Rager, of Owensboro, and Josh Landrum, of Shepherdsville.

Rager, a church planter and pastor of Life Community Church, and Landrum, pastor of Bullitt Lick Baptist Church, both ran unopposed for first and second vice president, respectively.

Resolutions

Messengers focused attention on human trafficking, a \$32 billion illegal



The combined Kentucky Baptist Men's and Women's Chorales lead messengers in worship during the afternoon session of the KBC Annual Meeting.

industry that ensnares an estimated 27 million people worldwide, with the average girl groomed for prostitution being between 12 and 14 years old.

In a resolution, Kentucky Baptists called on law enforcement and prosecutors to do all in their power to end the atrocity of human trafficking, and for Kentucky Baptists to become educated on how to prevent it and how to minister to those victimized by it.

"This is a horrendous crime that must be addressed," KBC Executive Director Paul Chitwood stated prior to the resolution's adoption. "Human beings should not be treated as property and used in forced prostitution or involuntary labor."

Messengers also approved a resolution promoting foster care and encouraging church members to consider adopting children.

Noting that the state now has custody of nearly 8,000 children who have been removed from homes because of abuse or neglect and are in some type of foster care, the resolution states, "We understand we have a Christian responsibility to provide physical care to those in need and to adopt orphans as we have opportunity."

The resolution also urges Kentucky Baptists to support Sunrise Children's

Services, a ministry of the KBC, which since 1869 has been taking care of orphans in the state.

Another resolution adopted honored the pastors of Kentucky's 2,400 Baptist churches, who are serving faithfully, courageously and sacrificially in the face of a culture that has become increasingly hostile to the gospel. The statement also praises KBC pastors for leading their churches to increase Cooperative Program giving.

"Kentucky Baptists have been blessed with many great pastors whose pulpits flame with righteousness, who lead courageously, who bravely confront an American culture and government that is hurtling downward to new depths of moral decadence," the resolutions states.

In his annual report, Chitwood emphasized that pastors are "gatekeepers" for the Cooperative Program, playing a vital role in teaching their congregations how Southern Baptists work together to reach the state, nation and world for Christ.

"They defend CP in budget committee meetings and during business meetings," Chitwood reminded Kentucky Baptists. "And they preach responsibility to the Great Commission for every church and every church member. Thank God

for the men of God who still believe in evangelism and missions, still love the Lord and the lost, and still want to see their neighbors and the nation reached for Christ."

Chitwood also highlighted the "sacrifice, the faithfulness, and the conviction that causes churches to continue to give to reach Kentucky, North America and the nations with the gospel."

In other actions:

- Messengers approved a guideline change, clarifying that only members of cooperating affiliated Kentucky Baptist churches are eligible to be nominated for and to serve on convention committees.

"While such an understanding has likely been assumed over the years, the committee believes the new language will remove any possible ambiguity," Mark Maynard, chairman of the Committee on Constitution and Bylaws, explained.

The new guideline specifies: "Should at any time a committee member's church membership cease to be in a cooperating affiliated church, the committee member will be considered as having resigned from the committee."

- Princeton newspaper publisher Chip Hutcheson received the Integrity Award for Coverage of Faith Issues, bestowed by the KBC Communications Team.

Hutcheson, a 2012 Kentucky Journalism Hall of Fame inductee, has served Princeton and its surrounding communities with news reporting since 1976. Editor of the Times Leader, Hutcheson is a former president of the National Newspaper Association and the Kentucky Press Association.

- Prestonsburg pastor Tommy Reed was chosen to preach the convention sermon when Kentucky Baptists gather at Louisville's Highview Baptist Church next year.

Reed has served as pastor of First Baptist Church of Fitzpatrick since 2003 and is a member of the KBC Mission Board and its Missions Mobilization Committee. (WR)

Thoughts from a Volunteer - Part 2

Want to know what volunteers find at OBI? Here's a partial list:

This is Oneida



Larry Gritton

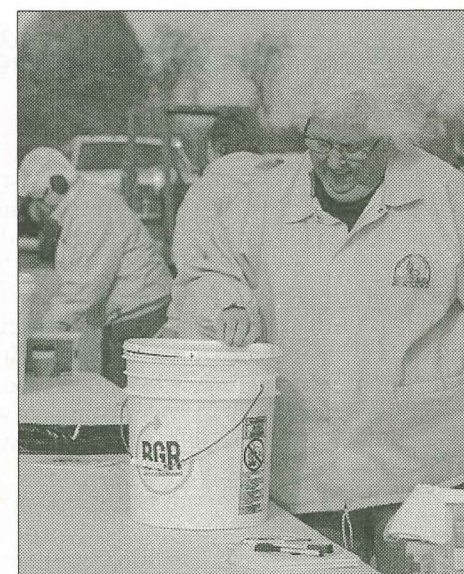
- Laughter comes easy there. It's a joyous place.
- It may be rainy, cloudy, or foggy, but the Son shines twenty-four hours a day there.
- Being just a tiny cog in a big wheel can be mighty fulfilling.
- That serving in a place like that can be habit forming.
- That the most valuable, precious things in the world aren't things at all.
- That the place is full of your friends, even if you haven't met them yet.
- That if it weren't for volunteers, that particular place would have to

close.

- Not everyone is driven by big bucks.
- That place and others like it are founded and operate on the "five loaves/two fish model."
- God provides.
- That place makes "the middle of nowhere" the place to be.
- When you leave that place tired and sore, leaving behind all the work you did for no pay, you're thinking, "I hope I can come back."
- Love is a verb.
- That place makes a difference and it does so in places you'd never dream of.
- Apparently somewhere along the line somebody decided "Keep It Simple and Trust God" was the way to go. It appears to have been a good decision.

- Ya hungry? It's your own fault.
- You can't wait to go back and take more people with you.
- If you aren't careful you can be blessed there.
- They say it's more blessed to give than to receive, but for the life of me, I can't figure out how to give to Oneida without receiving.
- Oneida is a place where God routinely works miracles and people are motivated by love.
- You may think you're sorting clothes, painting, or moving furniture, but you're really molding a youngster's life.
- Oneida Baptist Institute 1899 — I hope it is still operating when the Lord returns!

Larry Gritton Jr. is president of Oneida Baptist Institute. Website: oneidaschool.org. Phone: (606) 847-4111. Follow OBI on Facebook and Twitter.



DR volunteers Elaine Koch, Donna Castle and Karen Smith (left to right) help prepare hospice buckets to be sent to Sub-Saharan Africa.

Clear Creek bi-vocational certificate

Recently I shared with you about an exciting opportunity for bi-vocational ministers in our Kentucky Baptist Convention to receive some ministry training at Clear Creek tuition free. We filled those initial

Clear Creek Chronicle



Donnie Fox

openings for the tuition-free, bi-vocational certificate very quickly. I am excited to announce that we have expanded our offering for this tuition-free certificate above the original 25 offerings to offer a few more openings to bi-vocational ministers.

We are also expanding these last few openings to anyone who is serving either in Kentucky or outside of Kentucky. Please share this great opportunity if you know someone who needs to take advantage of it.

Starting in the spring 2017 semester, these bi-vocational ministers will have the opportunity to complete the

certificate tuition-free through the gracious Cooperative Program support of our Kentucky Baptist Convention churches and the financial support of individual donors who have provided scholarships to cover tuition. Students will only be responsible for a registration fee, part-time Student Service Fee and the cost of their books each semester.

The bi-vocational certificate will consist of 18 credit hours. Coursework will include 8 hours in Bible, 6 hours in doctrine and theology, and classes in church revitalization and spiritual formation. The certificate will be completed across three semesters, by taking seven hours per semester the first two semesters and then four hours the last semester. The entire certificate will be delivered online to accommodate the busy schedule of the bi-vocational minister. The online cohort will begin together and take every class together.

The opportunity to earn this

certificate tuition free is extremely limited and will only be offered to applicants who are serving as bi-vocational ministers and who have never taken classes at Clear Creek before. Our first spring semester online cohort will begin their certificate work in January 2017 and will complete their studies in May of 2018. There will not be a new cohort started until this first cohort has completed their studies.

One of Clear Creek's core values is "A Servant of the Churches: We are a community that exists to train individuals sent to us by the churches. We commit ourselves to serve the needs of the churches."

If you would like more information about our bi-vocational certificate, please contact Clear Creek's admissions director, Greg Young, at greg.young@ccbbc.edu.

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.

Preparing for the future

Scripture and life experiences teach that there are important differences between capital and income. Income is earned on a regular basis and is spent meeting daily needs. Unspent income typically becomes part of our capital and is invested in savings accounts, houses, retirement accounts, businesses and more. We work hard to accumulate sufficient capital over our working years to enable us to live off the income the capital produces when we cease working to earn a regular salary.

Another word for capital might be "endowment." An endowment is simply a collection of assets that are invested to produce income that can be used for personal or charitable purposes. We most commonly think of

endowment as financial assets and investments, but the Old Testament contains significant examples of God using capital to advance His Kingdom. In reading Genesis 41 we learn of a time early in Israel's history when God used Joseph to advise the king of Egypt to store grain in anticipation of a looming seven years of famine. God inspired Joseph, and this grain storage became an endowment that kept the people from starvation. From this saved population descended the Savior of the world.

As we evaluate what God has entrusted to us in the way of capital assets within our estates, we must acknowledge the three possible destinations for our assets. We can transfer assets to loved ones, to Christian ministries that have significantly impacted our lives, or we can endow the U.S. Government through taxes paid to the Internal Revenue Service.

Fortunately, many faithful Baptists are looking at the ministries of their churches and prayerfully considering what God is inspiring them to do. Individuals can help sustain Christian ministries during a time when their local church may experience a "famine" of financial support for regular ministry efforts.

To make intentional plans to care for your families and the ministries God is inspiring you to support, the Kentucky Baptist Foundation is a resource to call upon. If you have questions or desire a private estate stewardship consultation, please contact the Foundation's trust counsel, Laurie Valentine, or me at our toll-free number (866) 489-3533.

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

Kentucky Baptists reaching out to help AIDs victims

Florence—Kentucky Baptists teamed up with missionaries to share the gospel in Sub-Saharan Africa when they brought hospice buckets by the truck loads to Florence.

The 825 hospice buckets collected at the Kentucky Baptist Convention Annual Meeting at Florence Baptist Church will be sent overseas through a partnership with Baptist Global Response.

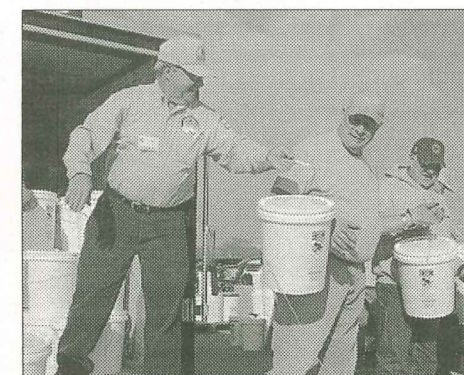
"More people are dying of AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa than in any other part of the world, and with the help of something as small as a hospice bucket, their eternal lives with Christ could be secured," said Paul Chitwood, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for two-thirds of the world's new HIV infections, according to the World Health Organization. The region reported 25.6 million people living with HIV in 2015.

Hospice buckets collected at the annual meeting will be added to the 778 buckets churches brought to the Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union earlier this year.

Southern Baptist missionaries on the other side of the globe will receive the shipments and use the buckets to open doors to sharing the gospel.

"That's what it's all about, getting the Word and the love of God out to people," said Kentucky Baptist Disaster Relief leader Bill Johnson, a member of Liberty Missionary Baptist Church in Cannonsburg. (KBC)



DR volunteers Chris Cropp, Charles Castle and Jerry Gray form a bucket brigade to load the truck for BGR.



Luther posting his 95 theses in 1517. (Painting by Ferdinand Pauwels, 1872.)

Why celebrate Reformation after nearly 500 years?

By Ben Hawkins

Had he used a hammer, one could perhaps say that its sound would reverberate across Europe and, eventually, across the globe.

But it's not fully certain that Martin Luther carried a hammer when, on Oct. 31, 1517, he approached the Castle Church in the small university town of Wittenberg, Germany, where he served as both priest and professor. Luther may have used paste, according to Reformation scholar Andrew Pettegree at the University of St. Andrews, when he posted a set of 95 Theses for public debate on the church door, which served at the time as a community-wide bulletin board.

Earlier that fall, Luther had introduced 97 different—though related—theses to faculty members at the university, and he was met then with some lively discussion from interested scholars and, no doubt, yawns from others.

But not so with his 95 Theses of Oct. 31. Soon, these declarations from Luther's pen

would go to print not only in Latin, the professional language of churchmen and academics, but also in the languages of the common folk—with sometimes revolutionary results.

These pungent theses criticized abuses of church power—especially the pope's attempt to raise funds for renovating St. Peter's Basilica in Rome by guaranteeing salvation to all who would simply donate to the building project.

"As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs," Johann Tetzel, a famed seller of the

pope's salvific guarantees (called "indulgences"), preached as he made his rounds throughout Germany.

In the 95 Theses, Luther decried such cheapening of God's grace, which distorted and watered down the message of salvation merely to collect cash. Instead, he insisted that the Christian life should be filled with repentance and that the "true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God."

"Christians," he wrote in his final two theses, "should be exhorted to be diligent in following Christ, their head, through penalties, death and hell; and thus be confident of entering into heaven through many tribulations rather than through the false security of peace."

Whether Luther fastened his message to the Wittenberg church door in 1517 with nails or glue, his message has stuck with us for centuries.

In fact, Christians across the globe will celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation that Luther started next year on Oct. 31.

"Christians should be exhorted to be diligent in following Christ, their head, through penalties, death and hell; and thus be confident of entering into heaven through many tribulations rather than through the false security of peace."

Martin Luther in his 95 Theses

But, perhaps for many Christians, the question remains, "Why?" What is this Reformation? Why does it matter for people living in the 21st century? And, most importantly, what did God have to do with it? Of course, no one can sufficiently answer these questions without delving into the complexities

of history, searching out the story of the Reformation for oneself.

As Baptist church historian A.H. Newman wrote more than a century ago, any attempt to describe the workings of God

Why you should serve as a Crossings summer staffer

By Mitch Wiley

I was at a crossroads in my life during the summer before my senior year of high school. What was I going to do with my life? I will never forget dusting a cobweb off my Bible as I packed for a week of camp—a week I was not particularly ready for or excited about.

Fast forward a week later and the trajectory of my life had completely changed as God worked wonders in my life while at Crossings' Jonathan Creek property. That was in 2010. The upcoming summer of 2017 will be my fifth summer working for Crossings—the first three of which I spent as a summer staffer during my college years.

I can point to various gifts God has given me and ways he has grown me and transformed me throughout the course of my life so far. No doubt a handful of local churches and pastors have been the primary means of my growth. Yet, Crossings impact runs a close second place and has been significant. I can confidently say that it was being a summer staffer in college that brought about the greater transformation and growth in my walk with the Lord.

As a summer staffer, every day is a spiritual battle—a crazy, loud, fun and dynamic spiritual battle. Your day is spent hanging out with middle and high school students, leading a small group, running team building games and recreational activities like zip-lining and laser tag, lifeguarding, listening to

biblical teaching, serving in the dining hall, and cleaning the occasional toilet.

And that's just one day.

If you work as a summer staffer, you will quickly learn your inadequacy to do this much work on a daily basis. You will be stretched and challenged far outside your comfort zone. But as many Christian thinkers have pointed out before: Growth is achieved outside of our comfort zones. As a summer staffer, I learned to find strength in the Lord and to depend on the Lord to bring life change.

I had the opportunity to return last summer and lead in programming. God was drawing back again to the harder route. But, also to a fruitful route where I knew God would grow me, stretch me, and transform me into His image. It is a joy to serve thousands of students every summer—proclaiming the gospel, teaching the Bible, building relationships, and watching God transform their lives.

Have you considered serving on summer staff at Crossings? Do you know a college student who should serve as a staffer? I can promise you this—staffers work hard, but God always shows up to change them and to use them to change others. You can apply today at www.crossingsstaff.org.



during the Reformation defies simple explanation.

"And here we must remember," Newman writes, "that the cause of God on Earth progresses not in straight lines like a railroad train across yonder prairie, but like yonder tossing ship on yonder surging ocean."

Likewise, any serious investigation into the lives and doctrines of the Reformers—men like Martin Luther, Martin Bucer, Huldrych Zwingli or John Calvin—should at least cure Baptists of "blind hero-worship."

After all, as Newman writes, these very same Reformers who proclaimed Christian liberty "would not have hesitated to urge our extermination by fire, sword, or water, if we had been their contemporaries"—simply because we deny infant baptism and teach that water baptism should not precede a profession of faith.

Here we must remember that God often works through us in spite of ourselves. Newman reminds us that, "owing to the perversity of men," God's cause does not make "clear and constant progress," although it indeed progresses. "Sometimes it seems to lose ground; but, after all, the apparent loss is transmuted by divine alchemy into means of future gain."

And this should be an encouragement for us, as we maneuver the difficulties of

our own age.

Luther himself, who tended to see human efforts not only as vain but also often as a joke, recognized that God alone could advance His cause. For this reason, he once quipped that he had done nothing at all to make the Reformation succeed.

"I simply taught, preached, and wrote God's Word; otherwise I did nothing," Luther said, as reported by Timothy George in "Theology of the Reformers." "And then, while I slept, or drank Wittenberg beer with my Philip (Melancthon) and my (Nicolaus von) Amsdorf, the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that never a prince or emperor did such damage to it. I did nothing. The Word did it all."

And, perhaps, this is ultimately why we should celebrate Luther and the rest of the Reformers, for they trusted Scripture to make an impact in their age. Despite numerous obstacles, they endeavored to publish it widely both in print and proclamation. And, without nails or glue, God's Word has continued to stick with us for centuries, resounding across the globe.

Such was the core truth of the 16th-century Reformation, and such should be the crux of all our endeavors: "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever" (Isaiah 40:8). (BP)



December

- 6 Power Lunch, Baptist Building, Louisville
- 6 Committee on Public Affairs, Baptist Building, Louisville
- 12 Administrative Committee, Baptist Building, Louisville
- 12-13 Mission Board, Baptist Building, Louisville

Obituary

Larry Walton Brown

Larry Walton Brown, 75, of Morgantown, died Nov. 11 at Hospice House of Southern Kentucky in Bowling Green.

Brown was a longtime pastor, serving numerous churches in Kentucky and West Virginia from 1974-2014. He was a member of Green Brier Baptist Church in Utica.



A former trustee of Campbellsville College, he served the Kentucky Baptist Convention in several capacities. "In all these things, his only boast was Jesus, his hope and righteousness before God," according to family and friends. "He would not want any of the credit for the good things in his life, but knew they were the mercies and goodness of God."

Brown is survived by his wife of 55 years, Wanda Reynolds Brown, a son, two daughters, a sister, two brothers and 11 grandchildren. The funeral was held Nov. 14 at First Baptist Church of Sonora.

Your church newsletter and the Western Recorder

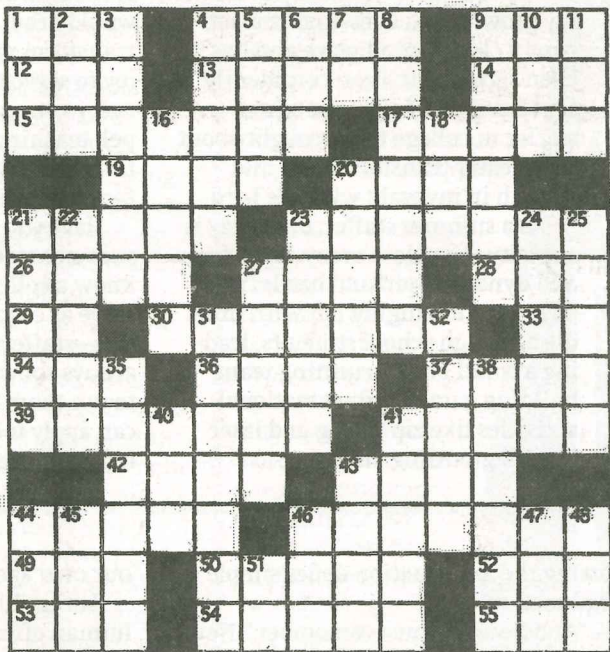
Mailed to every church family for about the price of a postcard! For more information, call (866) 489-3535.



Bible Crosswords

Across

1. Pronoun
4. Essential
9. Genetic inits.
12. Wrath
13. _____ the Netophathite (Jeremiah 40)
14. "having Bethel on the west, and on _____ the east" (Genesis 12:8)
15. "let thy cattle gender with a _____ kind" (Leviticus 19:19)
17. "Let us _____ before the Lord our maker" (Psalm 95:6)
19. "take thine _____, eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12:19)
20. Component of teen's "uniform" (p1.)
21. "The street" on the Left Bank
23. Evangelist's family
26. Prophet who interceded for Judah (2 Chronicles 28)
27. "Claudius commanded all Jews to depart from _____" (Acts 18:2)
28. Saturate in liquid
29. Brit. isl. off Normandy
30. Tumors (KJV)
33. Cathode (abbr.)
34. Santa _____
36. Slave
37. Layer
39. "his meat was _____ and wild honey" (Matthew 3:4)
41. Belonging to Shakespeare (with "the")
42. Actress Peggy
43. "Jubal, father of all such as handle the _____ and organ" (Genesis 4:21)
44. "Otello" is one



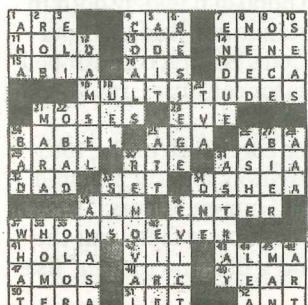
#08

46. Those who bring about
49. "the Lord shall _____ the bough" (Isaiah 10:33)
50. "O _____, where is thy victory?" (1 Corinthians 15:55)
52. Sup
53. Fine point (abbr.)
54. "_____ into his gates" (Psalm 100:4)
55. Former Ford model

Down

1. "Your life is _____ with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3)
2. A son of Bela (1 Chronicles 7)
3. Extreme
4. Usually a sentence from a Bible chapter
5. _____ dixit
6. Article
7. Twelve-step group (abbr.)
8. "who...can be _____ unto the Lord?" (Psalm 89:6)
9. Belonging to the son of Zorobabel (Luke 3)
10. Negative vote (var.)
11. Bother
16. Escape
18. Masculine name
20. Bodily swelling

#07



CLASSIFIED ADS

SEEKING: First Baptist Church, Carrollton, Ky., is seeking a part-time music minister. Send resumé to fbc.carrolltonky@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Providence Baptist Church is seeking a part-time youth minister. Contact searchcommitteeabc@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Truth Baptist Church is accepting resúmes for a pastor. The church is looking for a God-called individual who will lead the church forward and further the development of the congregation. Resumé deadline is Dec. 1. Send resúmes to Truth Baptist Church, c/o Pulpit Search Committee, 355 Shelby Ave., Radcliff, KY 40160, or P.O. Box 582, Radcliff, KY 40159.

SEEKING: Mallard Point Church in Georgetown, Ky., is searching for a bivocational senior pastor to provide leadership and a clear vision for growth of the church. Mallard Point is a small, mission-minded church. The successful candidate must hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited college, with additional seminary degree preferred. Must have preaching/teaching experience, possess strong interpersonal skills, and ascribe to the Baptist Faith and Message 1963. Send resumé to mpbcnline@gmail.com.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church, London, Ky., is accepting resúmes for a full-time senior pastor. Deadline is Dec. 31. Send resúmes to firstbaptistlondon@yahoo.com.

SEEKING: FBC Walton, Ky., is seeking a PT-minister of music. Applicant must be able to lead in a blended worship environment. Must hold to BF&M 2000. Please send resumé and letter of interest to FBCWMinMus@fiopics.com or to 47 S. Main St., Walton, KY 41094.

SEEKING: Woodstock Church, a conservative Southern Baptist Church located in Somerset, Ky. is in search for an experience full-time pastor. Woodstock is in a rural setting with a parsonage available. Send resumé, CD or DVD of a recent sermon to: Woodstock Baptist Church, Attn: Pastoral Search Committee, 12600 Hwy 39, Somerset, KY 42503

SEEKING: Irvington Church in Irvington, Ky., is seeking a part-time music minister. Proficiency on piano is preferred. Send resúmes to Irvington Baptist Church, P.O. Box 371, Irvington, KY 40146; or to ibc.ky.pastor@gmail.com by Dec. 31.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Highland Heights in northern Kentucky is prayerfully seeking a God-called minister dedicated to serving Him and His people, leading them to grow spiritually through

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Call (502) 489-3428 or visit westernrecorder.org



God-inspired messages from His Word, and encouraging each to use his spiritual gifts to help reach others so that the church will grow abundantly in Him. Resúmes will be accepted until Jan. 1, 2017, and may be sent to First Baptist Church, Highland Heights, ATTN: Pastor's Search Team, 2315 Alexandria Pike, Highland Heights, KY 41076. Resúmes may also be submitted electronically to fbchh@hotmail.com.

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

SEEKING: Small country church (no parsonage) searching for a pastor. Call (859) 824-5036.

SEEKING: Premium Baptist Church is seeking a bi-vocational pastor. Premium is a rural Southern Baptist church near Whitesburg, Ky. Applicants must live or be able to move within driving distance of the church. Send resúmes by Dec. 31 to Premium Baptist Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 102, Roxana, KY 41848, or email premiumbaptistchurch@gmail.com.

SEEKING: Stanford Baptist is seeking a part-time youth director and a part-time children's director or one full-time person to serve as director of both. Send resúmes to Stanford Baptist Church, 204 Church St., Stanford, KY 40484.

AVAILABLE: Will serve on staff part-time per job description for senior care or music. Email for bio. Graduated Campbellsville University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Retired (LTC) Army Chaplain. Email kychaplainwade@gmail.com

FOR RENT: Destin, FL beach house. 6Bed/4Bath. 1/2 block to beach. Perfect for family vacations. VRBO.com/454133. (502) 727-7426.

SEEKING: Trinity Church in Lexington, Ky., is accepting resúmes for a full-time senior pastor. Applicants may email resúmes to trinitypst9@gmail.com. Applications accepted through Dec. 31.



Caught up in the sermon, Pastor Tim is the only one in the sanctuary unaware of the trouble he's in.

Possible record-breaking buck, birthday, baptism in same week

By Erin Roach

Nashville—As his pastor said at Stephen Tucker's baptism, it had been a good week. First he bagged a 47-point buck that may break the world record for largest antlers ever measured, then it was his birthday and then he followed the Lord in believer's baptism.

Tucker, of Gallatin, Tenn., was baptized Nov. 13 at First Baptist Church of Hendersonville, Tenn., where pastor Bruce Chesser explained Tucker had been a believer for years but had not demonstrated his faith through baptism. Last week, Tucker decided it was time.

As he testified to the congregation that Jesus is his Lord and Savior, Tucker's name was quickly making the rounds on Internet news sites as articles recounted how he pulled off every hunter's dream.

Tucker, 27, first saw the prize buck on a Sumner County farm Nov. 5 and tried to shoot him with a muzzleloader, but the gun misfired.

"The first time I saw him Saturday he came out about 30 yards," Tucker told WSMV-TV in Nashville. "I kind of locked up a little bit and I finally calmed myself down enough to shoot, and then my gun wouldn't shoot."

He saw the whitetail deer from about 150 yards away later that day, "but he didn't get what he felt was a clean and ethical shot," Field & Stream reported.

"I was just hoping I would see him again after I passed up the shot the second time I saw him," Tucker told The Tennessean. "My thinking was the second time I saw him was, as far away as he was and as big as he was, I wanted to make sure that I killed him. I didn't want to cripple him."

Two days later, Nov. 7, Tucker got another chance.

"That morning, he came out in front of me, but it was too dark to see," Tucker



Stephen Tucker of Gallatin, Tenn., was baptized, had a birthday and shot a potentially world-record-breaking buck all in the same week. (Photo from Facebook)

told The Gallatin News. "He had a scrape right behind my blind. Thirty minutes later, I heard something, so I turned to my right and didn't see him. When I turned back around, there he was."

The buck was 40 yards away.

"I tried to focus," Tucker said. "The other two times I had seen him, I was torn up. I had been coaching myself up this time."

When Tucker shot the deer, the animal ran about 80 yards, according to The Gallatin News. "When we went down there, we couldn't find a blood trail. It wasn't until about 50 yards that we found a good blood trail. I started to get nervous. I started wondering if I had taken a good shot. I was relieved when we found the blood, and in about 30 more yards, there he was."

Tucker took the deer to a local bait shop, where the owner "was pretty speechless about it," he recounted. The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency website "wouldn't even allow him to check it in," Tucker said. "It kept saying that it was an invalid rack point number. He had to write a manual ticket."

The 47 points totaled more than 300 inches in length. Because the buck's rack was so unique, Dale Grandstaff, a captain with the TWRA, measured it using Boone & Crockett Club requirements for non-typical racks, the agency said.

Grandstaff calculated a green score of 308 3/8 inches.

"When I first saw the buck, I thought this is going to be a state record for sure because it had about the same number of points as our standing record, but it surprised me when I measured it and it went above 300 inches," Grandstaff said, according to a TWRA news release. "That is something you just don't ever expect to measure as a certified scorer."

The current world record buck, killed in Iowa in 2003, is 307 5/8 inches. Boone & Crockett requires a 60-day drying period during which the antlers of Tucker's deer could shrink below world record status, TWRA said, but he's almost certain to break the Tennessee non-typical record of 244 3/8 inches, which came from a buck also killed in Sumner County in 2000.

The antlers from Tucker's deer are in a vault, and the rack will be measured again in January.

Meanwhile, he told The Gallatin News he plans on using every part of the trophy animal.

"We didn't even let him hang," Tucker said. "Once we skinned him, we cut him up and packed the meat."

Tucker said he's eager to see the dry score, which could set the new world record for non-typical whitetail deer. (BP)

Combat veteran and wife move from PTSD toward healing

By Faith Morgan

Columbia, S.C.—"Do you feel safe in our home?" Kathy Langston asked her husband, Navy Chaplain Mike Langston.

"No, I don't," he replied.

It was four years after his last tour of duty. Their family understood deployment. Mike had been gone a total of nine and a half years during their marriage.

But they weren't ready for this; the "best friend" relationship that had defined their marriage had become a distant memory replaced by tension and misunderstanding. Mike's answer to that single question was the catalyst Kathy needed to shift her perspective.

"I can tell you exactly where I was standing in the kitchen when it broke through my head down to my heart," Kathy said. "I realized I was wrong. He wasn't angry at me, and I had totally misinterpreted everything." The realization, she said, was "an act of the Holy Spirit."

"I came home from a war environment," Mike said of deployments primarily in Afghanistan and Iraq. "One day I'm on the battlefield; the next day I'm in my living room. How do you turn that off?"

"Inside, I knew something was wrong, but I couldn't tell anybody because I was ashamed that as a former Marine, as a

chaplain who had been on the battlefield helping other people, I was broken. Where does a chaplain go when he needs a chaplain?"

Mike was eventually diagnosed with moderate to severe PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder).

"A governor controls how an engine runs, and if you lose that, you lose that control. PTSD does that to the internal makings of our body. We lose that governor," Mike explained. "I worked with the psychiatrist, and I started learning different techniques and tools to help me be able to ratchet down that intensity."

"That started a seven-year trek of moving toward healing and hope," he said.

"In that process, I felt like, sometimes, God had abandoned me," Mike said. "I asked, 'Where are You, God? Why me? What's going on? Where are You in the midst of all this pain and hurt?' After I started therapy, Kathy started educating herself on all the issues of PTSD."

"She started becoming my helper alongside of me," Mike said. "She told me that in our marriage vows, it said for better or worse, and she took that literally. She said, 'These were the bad times, and I wasn't going to let you get to the point where you self-destructed.'"

A hallmark moment in the healing process came in October 2014 when Mike was asked to speak at a Blue Star Mothers event for mothers of servicemen. There, he publicly revealed his PTSD diagnosis for the first time.

"I stood up and said, 'My name is Captain Mike Langston. I've been diagnosed with moderate to severe PTSD. I'm undergoing treatment, and I'm moving to healing with a sense of hope in my Lord Jesus Christ.'"

"Each time I tell my story it's a little easier," Mike said.

As the Langstons began to reach out and share more often, they saw a gap in Christian resources for those affected by PTSD. They have coauthored the book "A Journey to Hope: Healing the Traumatized Spirit" as a way to bridge that gap, not only for service members and their families, but also for churches.

A ministry of healing, Kathy stated, is the responsibility of the body of Christ.

"You are able to sit here in church and worship because men and women are over there getting scars and wounds," she said. "We need to provide a safe place where the love of God is shared with those who are wounded. In our world today, we're so busy and we're so clogged up with things that trauma is one of the



Navy Chaplain Mike Langston is shown during his final change in command ceremony before his retirement from fulltime duty in the U.S. Navy in 2011. (Photo courtesy Mike Langston)

only ways the Spirit can reach us anymore to bring us into a closer relationship with God.

"We are responsible for those around us when they are so traumatized that they have to protect themselves," Kathy added. "That is true of any long-term trauma victim—whether it's abuse or war or law enforcement or something else."

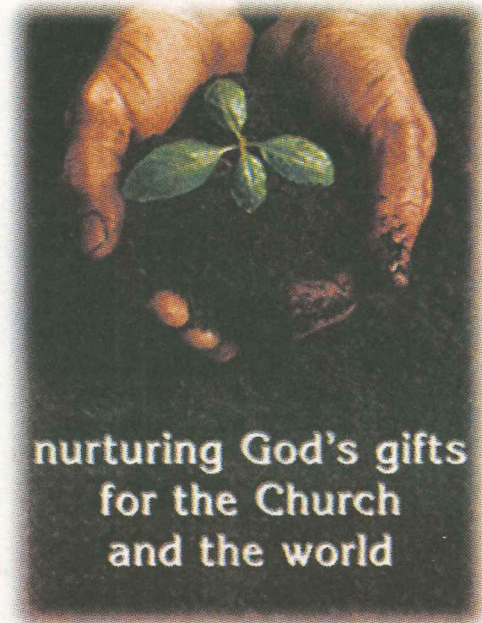
Mike, now retired after a 36-year military career is a professor of chaplaincy at Columbia International University's seminary and school of ministry in Columbia, S.C. Kathy is a professor, teaching professional communication at the University of South Carolina. (BP)

Stewardship Convictions Every Christian Should Consider

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and we are called to be His stewards.

How we plan our estates likely will be
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