

FIND MANY ACTIVITIES, EVENTS

Word&Way's Mid-Year Event Calendar is an informative guide to special activities for all ages throughout the remainder of 2013.

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MBF ANNOUNCES NEW OPTIONS

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Graduates, take a moment to honor God and thank those who have helped you; and remember, learn throughout your lifetime.

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Word&Way

SERVING BAPTISTS FOR OVER A CENTURY



FULBRIGHT PROFESSOR

SBU's Delta Cavner gets ready to lead two short-term trips before heading to Ethiopia on a Fulbright Scholarship.

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Communication BREAKDOWN

WHETHER INTENTIONAL OR NOT,
A BREAKDOWN IN COMMUNICATION
IN CHURCHES OR OTHER RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS
MAY CAUSE PEOPLE TO FEEL
MISTRUSTFUL AND ISOLATED.

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To have a meaningful conversation with disoriented individuals, it is essential to build trust with them in relationship based on care, esteem and dignity.

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High-profile church leaders, including Frank Page and Rick Warren, will meet in Dallas this spring to address mental illness.

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Foundation okays investment options

ROACH, Mo. — The Missouri Baptist Foundation soon will offer new stock and bond funds through two new investment options for its clients.

Foundation administrators announced the new option at the MBF board meeting May 3 at Windermere Baptist Conference Center. A prospectus will be posted on the Foundation's website at mbfn.org.

Board members approved a five-year contract with Sun Guard for accounting services, and higher minimums were set on funding for gifts through the Foundation.

Staff noted the Foundation had seen good investment performance with Common Fund for the 12-month period through

March, with the balanced fund at 8.1 percent, the income fund at 3.8 percent and the diversified fund at 6.9 percent.

At the May 3 session, board members offered a memorial recognition for Linda Darity, an employee who died March 19. Darity had established a scholarship for art ministries to be used at Southwest Baptist University, William Jewell College, Hannibal-LaGrange University and Missouri Baptist University.

In addition, trustees recognized the 100th anniversary of The Baptist Home and Dan Bench's years of service as volunteer coordinator and then volunteer president/CEO at Windermere.

Pat Taylor: SBU to end year in black

BOLIVAR, Mo. — Southwest Baptist University will end its 2012-2013 academic year in the black, SBU trustees learned at their board session May 7.

President C. Pat Taylor also projects the school should receive more than \$5 million in gifts for the year.

At the meeting, held on the main campus in Bolivar, trustees approved a preliminary budget for the 2013-2014 academic year. The balanced budget stands at \$53.7 million, up from about \$52 million for the cur-

rent year.

In addition, board members adopted a resolution to meet only twice each year in the future, dropping from the current three sessions.

In the past, trustees have met in February, May and October. With the change, the board will meet in April and October.

Trustees made the February meeting optional so that they can call a session, if needed.

Meetings for the 2013-14 academic year include Oct. 14-15, 2013, and April 14-15, 2014.



C. Pat Taylor

Word & Way to launch strategic planning study

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. — *Word & Way* will launch a strategic planning process to position itself for the future.

Trustees approved the effort during their regular session May 14 at the paper's offices in Jefferson City, Mo.

To be lead by board chair Kevin Payne and members of the editor's advisory committee, the process will look at purpose, mission, vision, and the geographical and philosophical scope of the ministry. Trustees also will consider current and possible partnerships, media formats and staffing needs, among other matters.

At the meeting, Dale Siebenek of Evers & Company presented a clean audit report.

Presbyterian MK charged with car fires

A missionary kid who lived 12 years in South Africa faces felony crimes related to recent car fires on the campuses of Missouri Baptist University and Covenant Seminary in St. Louis.

Andrew Wos, 24, of Eureka, Mo., was charged May 14 with four counts of knowingly burning or exploding, a Class D felony punishable by up to four years in prison.

Wos is accused of setting fire to two cars in a parking lot at Missouri Baptist University in the early morning of May 1. He allegedly attempted to burn two additional cars the same day at nearby Covenant Seminary that did not ignite.

A Missouri Baptist University online student news outlet described Wos as a St. Louis native who lived as a missionary in Cape Town for 12 years, in a January story about international students at the school.

His parents were reportedly missionaries to South Africa through Mission to the World, missions agency of the Presbyterian Church in America.

Judge green-lights lawsuit settlement

A federal judge ruled May 2 that a Baptist childcare agency at the center of a long-running legal dispute between Kentucky lawmakers and citizens represented by the ACLU and Americans United for Separation of Church and State cannot block a settlement of the lawsuit agreed upon by the involved parties March 12.

Sunrise Children's Services, formerly known as Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, claimed settlement of the 13-year-old lawsuit over taxpayer funding of religious organizations would burden the Kentucky Baptist Convention agency with requirements not placed on other providers of social services that contract with the state.

Foster care is one of a number of services that Kentucky provides through contracts with Baptist-affiliated Sunrise Children's Services.

U.S. District Judge Charles Simpson, however, ruled that nothing in the settlement prevents future litigation to resolve any remaining First Amendment claims. A portion of the settlement that requires specific monitoring of Sunrise Children's Services for compliance is something that would be voluntarily assumed if the agency chooses to enter into future contracts with the Commonwealth.

The long-running dispute started in 1998 when Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children fired a therapist and residential counselor named Alicia Ped-

reira after discovering that she was a lesbian.

Pedreira lost a discrimination claim under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A separate claim joined by Kentucky taxpayers, including former Southern Baptist Seminary Professor Paul Simmons, however, argued that financing agencies that discriminate against gay employees and teach children sectarian beliefs violates the First Amendment's ban on government establishment of religion.

A U.S. district court in Louisville dismissed the lawsuit

in 2008, but the following year the 6th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals reversed the ruling and reinstated the Establishment Clause claim.

A second amended complaint filed in 2012 objected to "the receipt and use of taxpayer funds by KBHC in light of the fact that it is pervasively sectarian and the fact that it uses taxpayer dollars for religious indoctrination."

Sunrise says losing access to state funding would drastically curtail services it provides to nearly 2,000 children each year.

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Quest for online spiritual formation is gaining steam

BY JEFF BRUMLEY
Associated Baptist Press

Ministers of spiritual formation are turning to the World Wide Web to counter the interference that hectic schedules, frequent traveling, social media and all the other demands of modern life can have on healthy discipleship.

Jayne Davis, minister of spiritual formation at First Baptist Church in Wilmington, N.C., said pastors and congregations must be creative on the Internet, where people are increasingly finding much of their spiritual sustenance from questionable sources.

"There seems to be a growing hunger for Christian education and discipleship in an age where people are on the go and where the old models are just not working for us," Davis said.

It's why Davis is spearheading a dedicated spiritual formation page at hopefulimagination.com, a ministry designed to offer services and encouragement to struggling congregations. Davis' section was added in April to offer ideas and resources for spiritual formation ministers and others interested in the discipline.

The page currently offers information about workshops, coaching opportunities, retreats, e-conferences and Davis' blog. More components will be added in what Davis said is an attempt to create "a virtual community of spiritual formation ministry."

There is still a place for in-person retreats and training, Davis added, but accommodation must be made for those who can't attend.

"We fall into the trap of thinking if people don't show up, they aren't interested," she said. "But the reality is they are busy and they are mobile."

DISCIPLINE MISUNDERSTOOD

Spiritual formation's increasing move into cyberspace comes at a challenging time for the discipline as a whole. While growing in acceptance in American seminaries, who see its benefits for the ministers they are producing, vague definitions and an association with Catholicism make it an uphill sell in many congregations.

"I think many churches don't understand it, but ministers of spiritual formation are replacing Christian education ministers," said Molly Marshall, president of Central Baptist Theological Seminary, where she also serves as professor of theology and spir-



Jayne Davis

itual formation.

Christian education is increasingly seen as a part of spiritual formation, which also includes a more holistic approach to helping Christians grow in spiritual maturity, Marshall said.

"Christian education is usually thought of as what one does in Sunday School...and (spiritual) formation speaks about being conformed to the image

"We fall into the trap of thinking if people don't show up, they aren't interested," she said. "But the reality is they are busy and they are mobile."

Jayne Davis

of Christ," she said.

The Protestant spiritual formation movement emerged after Vatican II, which "sparked a sort of liturgical renewal that took place in Protestant, Baptist and Anabaptist contexts," said Sarah Erickson, a Presbyterian minister and director of lifelong learning at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Ga.

"We could point back there to how non-Roman Catholics started to reclaim the spiritual,

pietistic practices ... and how they could reclaim and rename them," said Erickson, whose program offers the certificate in spiritual formation at Columbia Theological.

'BUT IS IT BIBLICAL?'

But its origin may give pause to some churches' acceptance of spiritual formation.

Debbie Swindoll, executive director of the Evangelical Center for Spiritual Wisdom, said questions also arise over whether the practice is scriptural.

"Within many evangelical churches there are pockets of people resistant to the term itself as it is often misunderstood as promoting New Age meditative practices or encouraging Christians to rely on works for spiritual growth," Swindoll said in an email to ABPnews.

So the center's website offers stories from individuals whose lives have been changed through spiritual formation. It also offers a Bible-based spiritual formation curriculum called "Life with God" and a link to books, blogs and other online resources.

EXAMINE 'SPIRITUAL DIETS'

A strong presence online is a must for spiritual formation advocates because it can help overcome another challenge to healthy discipleship, Davis said: the growth of easy-to-digest "spiritual" quotes, poems and sayings abounding on Facebook, Twitter and e-mail.

"That's what we consume and...that's become our whole (spiritual) diet," Davis said. "So how do we find some things that are nutritious and readily available?"

The answer depends on spiritual formation ministers becoming more tech savvy.

"We have to be where they are, and right now," Davis said. "They are in cyberspace, and they are...on their iPhones and their iPads."

Letters from Page, Land oppose Scout proposal

NASHVILLE (BP) — Southern Baptist leaders Frank Page and Richard Land have written letters expressing strong opposition to a proposal that would leave in place the prohibition on homosexual Scout leaders but would allow youth who identify as gay to join.

Boy Scouts delegates will consider the proposal at their national meeting May 24. The letters were released the same week that Boy Scout troops across America rallied (May 17) against the proposal. The rallies were sponsored by OnMyHonor.net, a coalition of concerned parents, Scout leaders, donors, Eagle Scouts and others who oppose the proposal.

Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, addressed the letter to all the voting delegates. Page's letter was part of an email sent by the Middle Tennessee Council of the Boy Scouts of America to all 1,400 delegates urging them to defeat the proposed resolution.

"For over a century," Page wrote, "Scouting has helped our youth develop character and leadership skills forever impacting their lives. I am distressed by the recent proposed resolution which would introduce the subject of sex and sexual orientation into the program of the Boy Scouts. For one hundred and three years Scouting has been a safe haven from such topics rightfully reserved for parents. Such an introduction is inconsistent with the principles found in Scouting's sacred Oath and Law."

Page concluded, "I encourage you and pray that you will do the right thing and vote NO on the resolution, thus retaining your current membership policy and the timeless values

on which Scouting was founded. Please stand with courage for moral integrity that causes Scouting to be revered by the vast majority of Americans."

Page's letter included links to two videos where several Eagle Scouts — the highest advancement rank in the Boy Scouts — expressed their concern over the proposal.

"One of the points of the Scout law is a Scout is clean," said Dax Bushway of Colorado Springs, Colo., who was in the Boy Scouts from 2003-11 and earned the rank of Eagle Scout. "That can mean a number of different things. It can mean physical cleanliness, but it really has a deeper meaning than that. A Scout is clean in his thoughts, his words, his actions. Homosexual acts are not considered clean in the Boy Scouts."

Land, outgoing president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said the ERLC's position on the Boy Scouts' latest proposal "differs in no respect" from the entity's position on the previously proposed option to allow local leaders to set membership standards.

"In short, the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission remains opposed to any change in the Boy Scouts' membership policy," Land wrote to Chief Scout Executive Wayne Brock and Boy Scouts of America (BSA) President Wayne Perry.

ERLC, Land wrote, considers the proposed policy to be a serious departure from the Boy Scouts' moral foundation and traditional values. The admittance of openly homosexual youth into Scouting does not comport with Boy Scouts' mission, Land wrote, and it is at odds with the Scout Oath.

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3236 Emerald Lane, Suite 400
Jefferson City, MO 65109
Phone: (573) 635-5939
Fax: (573) 635-1774
E-mail: wordandway@wordandway.org
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Editor

Bill Webb (ext. 206)

Associate Editor

Vicki Brown (ext. 205)

Bookkeeper

Margene Neuhart (ext. 204)

Advertising/Marketing

Ken Satterfield (ext. 208)

Communications Assistant

Jan Conley (ext. 202)

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"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy."

Acts 2:17-18
NIV

Now let the learning begin!

Graduation is in the air. Ironically, while the job market may look a bit sparse to college graduates in general and to some high school diploma recipients, this is a good season for the graduation industry.

Graduations are almost as prevalent as spring flowers. These days, they begin at the preschool level and continue through middle school, high school and on through college, seminary, trade schools, etc.

Many of us chuckled when we first saw pre-elementary students wind up their "careers" as preschoolers and accept diplomas while dressed in pint-size caps and gowns. Perhaps we wondered whether such events were inspired by greeting card companies, toy stores, ice cream and cake companies, and the like.

These days, it seems, high school seniors are pretty experienced at crossing the stage to accept a diploma. They are true experts at graduation by the time they have logged a few more years of hard work to earn the right to clutch a frameable degree on a university stage.

All kidding aside, incremental recognition of these educational rites of passage is a positive development in contemporary culture. Celebrating educational progress is one of the best things families, communities, churches and cultures can do for a number of reasons.

To celebrate productive endeavors in anyone's life is a way to affirm that individual as a person of worth. Not everyone is gifted the same. Locally and globally, each person's circumstances and opportunities vary. Motivation and personal ability varies. Some excel with less effort than others. Some work hard to achieve at minimal levels. Society tends to elevate those who score highest and overlook those who perhaps strive the hardest with less success to show for the work. "Well done" should apply more widely than we typically use this compliment.

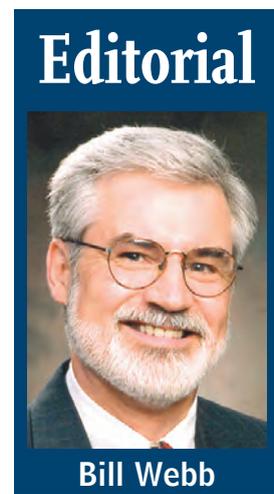
Hard work is not the only demand for

students. College and university studies are expensive. While scholarships lessen the economic blow, many students find themselves with mountains of student loans as they graduate. It is no small responsibility to take on such burdens in pursuit of educational goals.

Celebrating educational milestones also affirms the value of educational pursuits. Every person needs the basic tools for living. The structure of the educational experience helps students in thousands of

ways to maximize their God-given talents and abilities. Education is valuable, and it is to be valued.

Education helps the educated grow as people who see potential not only for themselves but for the larger world.



Bill Webb

Many of us grew up in a time and in circumstances in which our parents were keenly aware that education could help their children be more successful than Mom and Dad. That often was translated financially. Life would not be as hard for children as their parents. The children could experience the "American dream" at a level their parents could not. For many of us, education was identified as the gold key for potential economic success.

What often happens in educational pursuit is that students — young and not so young — see the potential not only for themselves but for others. Students see their lives best lived when integrated into the larger world, often through service vocations. Their goals are not limited to making good livings but helping improve

the community, nation and the world.

Obviously, this expands education to include not only the classroom and teachers and profs but parents, friends, spiritual institutions and leaders, and others. Those who are best educated in life sit at the feet of a wide variety of "schoolmasters" in the course of their lives.

People of faith understand this as well as anyone.

Graduates, you are getting a lot of advice these days. Here is a little more:

Value your education.

Use the tools you have gained to honor your own hard work and, in so doing, honor the institution and educators who helped you achieve. If you amassed student loans, be diligent in repaying them. They can be exorbitant, but default is not a wise option for someone aspiring to make his mark in the "real world."

Continue your education.

This may be obvious to high school grads anticipating college or another form of vocational training. Maybe even college grads who have decided to pursue graduate studies.

But the idea is to treat education already completed as having provided the tools for lifelong learning. At its best, formal education is not an end in itself but preparation for life. An appropriate response on the day after graduation is to shout, "Now let the learning begin!"

This pursuit, tempered with the wisdom that comes with years lived and real-life experience, makes us who we will become. It takes time. Graduation is an achieved goal. But it is the beginning, not the end. Constant change in the workplace and in the world make ongoing study important.

Congratulations to our graduates. As you embark on the next journey of life, remember those who have helped you and give thanks to the God who inspires and continues to guide you.

Bill Webb is editor of Word&Way.

Draw near to God

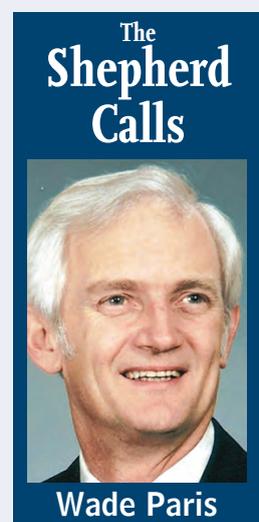
Many years ago, two of my children and I were working in the garage. I was helping my oldest son, Steve, with a science project. My 6-year-old daughter Susan wanted to help.

She kept saying, "I want to do something." At first, I ignored her. Then, I tried to explain she was too small. Then, I promised she could do something later. Finally, I told her clearly, "You cannot help now. In a little while, I'll have something for you to do; but if you ask me again, I'm going to send you to bed."

She moved over to the other side of the garage and busied herself with something else.

Later, her brother was driving some nails, and I said, "Leave the nails sticking out about a quarter of an inch."

"What for?" he asked.



Wade Paris

"Well," I said, "Susan wants to do something. We'll let her drive these nails the last quarter of an inch."

The words were not spoken to her, but she heard. She soon made her way over to where we were. She didn't say a

word, but she made sure I saw her. She

wanted me to know she was near when I was ready for her.

The Bible says, "Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you." That makes some sense, doesn't it? When we need help, we often ask the nearest person. Urgency may compel us to do so. If we are far away from God, we may not even hear when he calls.

It is an extreme pleasure to serve the Lord. It is much akin to the child's joy in helping his/her father. However, we must stay near to God, or we will miss opportunities for this kind of joy.

Wade Paris writes a weekly syndicated newspaper column, "The Shepherd Calls." A book of his selected columns titled Angels We Have Heard is available from store.believerspress.com and amazon.com.

Demystifying Christian vocation

"I am working in the field of adoption. I wasn't able to find a church position after I finished seminary."

"I oversee the freshmen dorms at a state university. You would not believe what comes through my door, but I am not sure this qualifies as Christian vocation."

These comments came from two 30-somethings, concerned about their fidelity to a call from God. I visited a sister seminary this past week to offer lectures and listened to these graduates describe their work, both feeling as if they were not really in ministry.

I think it is time to demystify our language about what it means to be "called" and how we exercise our giftedness. This will grow increasingly important as we realize that guaranteed lifetime employment in a congregational setting will most likely become less of an option for seminary graduates. Rather than relegating persons who serve in other contexts to a differing status, it is important that we rethink our theology of vocation.

Rather than the old language of "full-time Christian vocation," which meant paid pastoral staff work or long-term missionary appointment, our day requires a more comprehensive and imaginative description.

I believe that some of the most important ministry will occur beyond the walls of the church. Those not considered religious "professionals" will offer much of it.

Educators, engineers, endocrinologists, essayists, entrepreneurs and entertainers — to just name a few "e" professions — have distinctive contributions to make, and they can be expressions of gifted Christian vocation.

Are the gifts we use in the service of the church different from the gifts we use in our other work? What makes a gift "spiritual?"

GUEST OPINION

Molly T. Marshall



Jürgen Moltmann helps correct some misconceptions about the nature of spiritual gifts by linking call and endowment. Instead of opposing natural gifts to spiritual gifts, he sees that when people are called (1 Corinthians 7:17), God "puts their whole life at the service of the coming kingdom, which renews the world."

When offered to Christ, all gifts become charges, and nothing can be called unclean. Powers and energies that a person might regard as mundane can become instruments of the Spirit.

New thinking about vocation can assist in bridging the secular-sacred divide that has long plagued Christian thinking. Emergent Christianity finds these categories a false dichotomy and strives for a porous interface.

Anything that gets labeled as "secular" seems to be of negligent concern to God — or Christians, for that matter. Cultural and civic life matter, and Christian witness in them must be strengthened. Indeed, there are many channels for God's work in the world, and divine power enlists human agency wherever possible.

As a person engaged in theological education, I care

deeply about preparing persons for certain leadership roles for congregations, but I do not see our school's mission as confined to that. We are preparing people to serve the common good in myriad ways.

There is a mission to humanity that is more encompassing than churches often envision. Our graduates exercise their callings through social services, public policy, collegiate ministries, health care, teaching in public schools, journalism, sustainable farming, hospice and counseling. All are contexts for transformative investment.

And all are worthy of being considered Christian vocation. Even as we encourage churches to "cultivate a culture of calling" so that new generations of pastors will emerge, we must not neglect a wider vision of vocation for the whole people of God.

I had an opportunity to speak again with these capable Christian ministers after the lectureship, and I inquired whether I had affirmed that what they are doing is truly Christian vocation.

They said that they sensed a new dignity in their professions and that they had not "left ministry." I commended them for their remarkable work. They have opportunity to be the hands and feet, indeed the very presence of Christ, with those whose lives they intersect. (ABP)

Molly T. Marshall is president and professor of theology and spiritual formation at Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Shawnee, Kan.

Success or significance?

Novelist Walker Percy often said that the trouble with most people is that they are not up to anything significant.

In his book *Halftime: Moving From Success to Significance*, Bob Buford suggests that many of us come to a point in our life when we realize that we have been in a futile pursuit of success, when what we desperately need is significance.

The same is often true of churches. Asking each other to sacrificially give our money, time and energy simply so that we can take care of ourselves or be bigger and more comfortable is a short road to frustration and irrelevance. It leads to a shallow notion of success.

Congregations that are self-absorbed find that they can never provide enough of anything. There is always an appetite for more programs, facilities or events that never quite satisfy our hunger for entertainment and/or nourishment. Staff are here to meet our expectations. When they do, we take great pride in them. When they do not, we critique them with brutal tactics.

I believe we are called instead to give ourselves to something of great significance. God has called us to join him in creating nothing less than his kingdom work here on earth. We pray it without thinking when reciting the Lord's Prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done here on earth as it is in heaven." When we give ourselves fully to that significant task, real success is inevitable.

Over the next few weeks, thousands of youth and adult mission trips or endeavors will take place across our nation. From congregations of all sizes and shapes, we will send out teams to selflessly do the work of the kingdom.

At no small sacrifice, a small army of men, women,

GUEST OPINION

Bill Wilson



boy and girls will fan out around the globe on a mission from God. Some will do great good. Others will try not to inflict too much harm. In the end, most of them will share a common experience.

When the team returns, what their congregations will hear goes something like this:

"I didn't really know what to expect, but I went anyway. The food was strange, but I ate it anyway. The people were different, but I loved them anyway. The idea of helping others in Jesus' name was new, but I tried it anyway. I am a different person than when I left here. I am so thankful to be part of something that truly makes a difference, something that is actually significant!"

At that point, everyone and every church will face a choice. Will we simply revert back to a life focused on success (as defined by our culture), or do we continue to explore what a life focused on significance might look like?

Too often our everyday lives are lived outside the arena where God is at work. We busy ourselves with our consumer lifestyles, pursuit of pleasure and drive to appear successful.

Part of our journey toward being a vibrant and alive church is to remind each other of the things that are truly significant. Far too many of us are engaged in the pursuit of happiness to the exclusion of the pursuit of significance.

Our mission projects and trips should remind us of what life in the kingdom is supposed to look like. It is less about us and more about others; focused not on what we want, but upon what God needs; more interested in serving than being served; giving rather than getting.

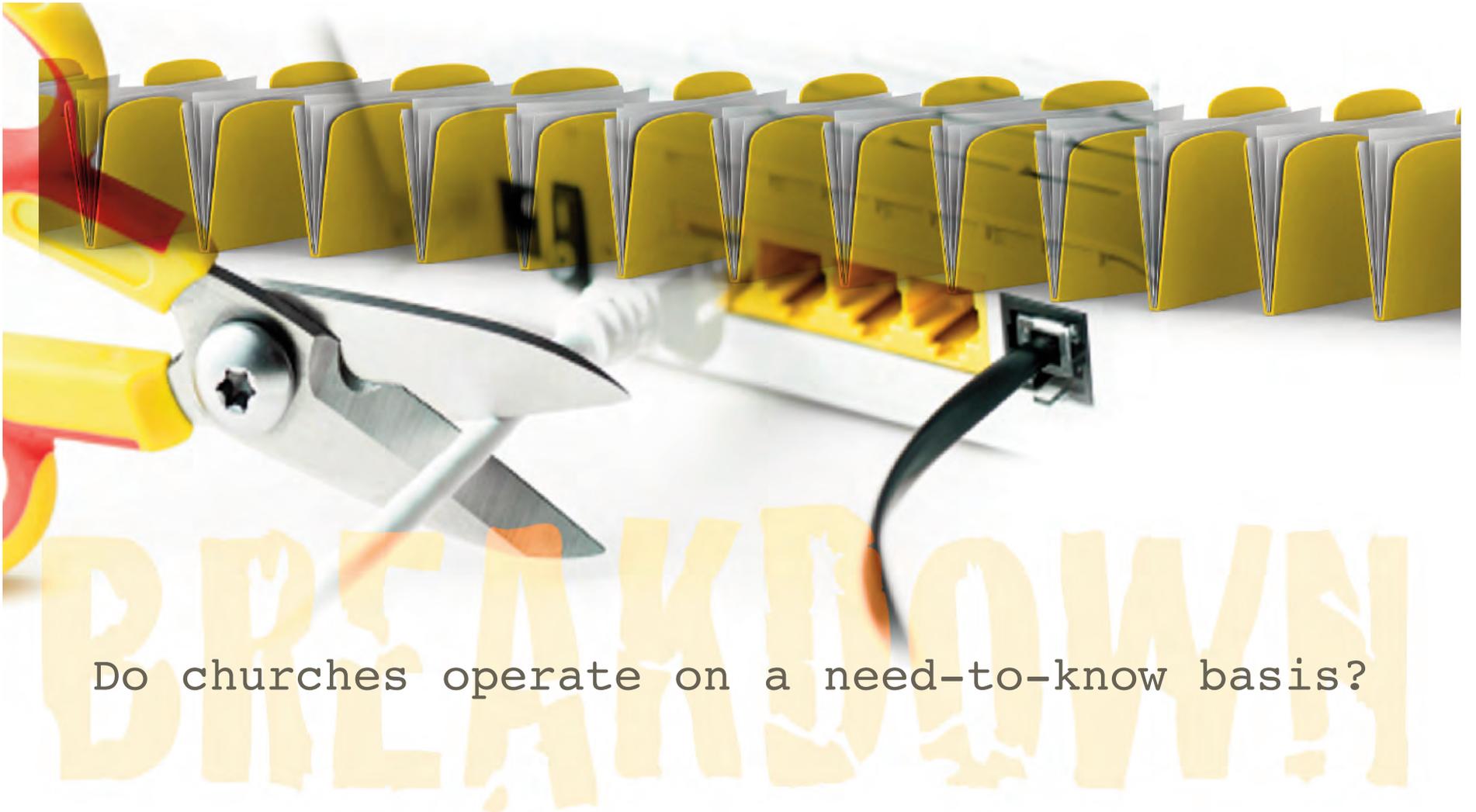
Jesus made it as simple and as clear as he could: You find your life when you give yourself away (Matthew 16:25).

Alas, we are slow learners. We have been immunized to the power of these life-giving words by a steady diet of consumerism and self-absorption. This summer, I hope you and your church will heed the repeated illustrations God is sending you that reinforce this essential trait of significant and abundant living.

Give yourself away, and find yourself. Not just on a mission trip, but on your street, in your home, in your school, at your job. It's your mission and your calling from God.

We have more than enough success stories to go around. What our world desperately needs is for you to live a significant life.

Bill Wilson is president of the Center for Congregational Health in Winston-Salem, N.C.



Do churches operate on a need-to-know basis?

By VICKI BROWN

Word&Way Associate Editor

Many churches have cut back the number of business meetings held each year. Some have scaled back publications — particularly mailed-out print versions.

Some large churches with communications staff or a department have eliminated them or severely reduced their resources.

Does communication make much difference in churches? Can't most members find out what they need or want to know? The complex answer often boils down to the distinction between "need" and "want" — and who controls the desired information.

Sensitive personal matters — and confidential pastoral counseling sessions — should be protected, but keeping members informed and facilitating communication at all levels within a congregation must be nurtured, church-health expert Bill Wilson believes.

Doesn't just happen

"Communication gets off track internally first... because we just assume communication will happen," noted Wilson, president of the Center for Congregational Health based in Winston-Salem, N.C. The center offers communication training for church leaders.

"When people think of upgrading communications, they talk about the mechanics," he added. Early on, center staff thought in those terms as well, until they realized "just giving people more tools doesn't get to the issue."

Church conflict can contribute to communication breakdown. As a center consultant, Wilson assists congregations with conflict management. Often the first comments he hears from members are complaints such as: "We just don't know what's going on," or "The pastor only talks to certain people."

"Most clergy don't do this (communicate) well. We encourage them to talk with someone in their church or someone they know who works as a publicist, in public relations or who is a communications person," he said.

"They have to start with the understanding that

communication is not: 'Can you preach a sermon, write a column or post a blog?'"

Truth in love

Pastors and staff, lay leaders and church members in general need to rethink what "communication" means. Wilson challenges them to consider what the Bible teaches. Pointing to John 1:1, he said, "Jesus is the Word.... God is conveying truth to people, and he uses several ways to communicate."

Part of the problem is today's "low-trust kind of culture," Wilson acknowledged.

The Bible commands believers to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), which means they do not have the option to keep quiet. They also must make sure the truth can be determined. Then they must express that truth in Christ-like love, which "is the hardest one of all," he said.

The broader culture often contributes to the way people respond at church, Wilson believes. The Bible calls Christians to rebuke and exhort one another, as well as to be tenderhearted, forgiving and gentle.

But believers watch the news and listen to political commentators who build their careers as provocateurs. Christians hear "snarky" news presentations and then they "throw verbal hand-grenades in church meetings," he added.

Wade Burleson, senior pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Enid, Okla., believes church leaders should be transparent and most information should be available to members who want it.

"Full, open transparency is essential for a good congregation," he said.

Facilitate openness

How can church leaders cultivate openness and transparency? How can congregations learn to communicate internally?

Members often nod their heads in agreement at business meetings, in the hallways or at events, and then express their feelings in other venues.

"We tend to wait until there is a major issue before we realize we need to learn to communicate," Wilson said.

"How can we bring the parking lot conversation into the church? How can we have an honest, transparent meeting and still walk away from it as brothers and sisters?"

Burleson believes members should ask questions and attend meetings. Church staff, including pastors, should be proactive if they discover a problem.

Once in a church he led, Burleson discovered a group of members who questioned a decision. Members did not ask him about it directly. Instead, they chose to meet to discuss the issue.

When Burleson discovered their plan, he contacted the leader and offered to meet with them, answer their questions and provide any additional information they wanted. He was able to satisfy the group's need.

The larger or more complex a church is, the more difficult communication might become, Glenn Akins, Baptist General Convention of Virginia assistant executive director, believes. He is a member of Bon Air Baptist Church in Richmond, a multi-site congregation.

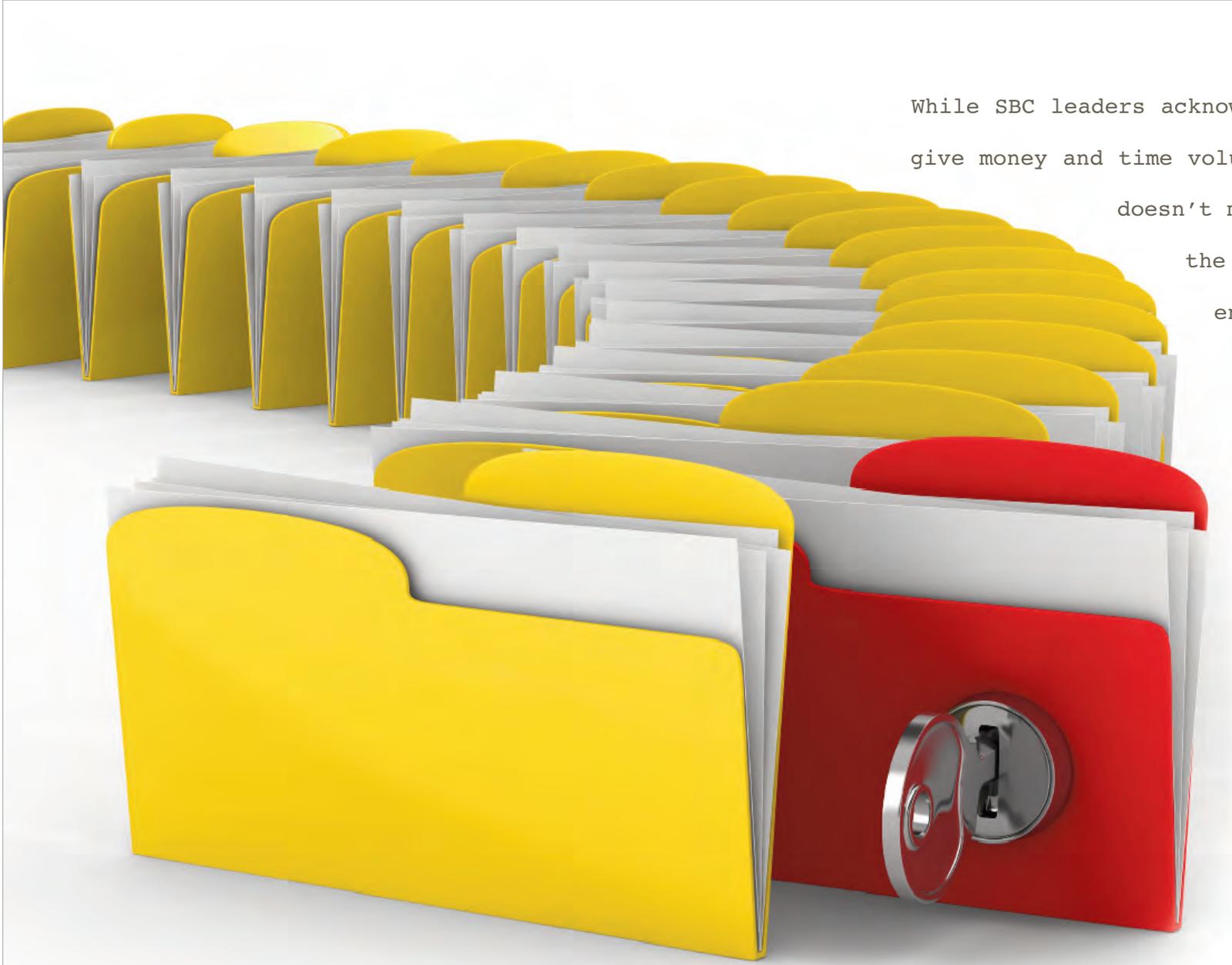
Akins generally takes a business approach to church governance. "The larger and more complex a church is, the more members must rely on the management" in whatever form that takes — lead pastor, executive pastor or group of elders. "But there must be some level of transparency or accountability built in," he said.

"It gets muddy when laypeople get down into management," which is more evident in larger churches. "They can't have every lay-leader involved in personnel management," he said.

Akins also believes most church members, at least at Bon Air, are not interested in decision-making, but they do want to be informed about the decisions that are made.

"My experience as a pastor was that you could get most any information as long as you didn't go beyond the understood boundaries," Wilson said. In Baptist life, each congregation develops its own boundaries.

Based upon his ministry in the local church and now as a consultant, he said the old adage, "Tell the truth and trust the people," really does work most of the time."



While SBC leaders acknowledge members give money and time voluntarily, that doesn't mean people in the pew should be entitled to any information they want.

Do denominational entities operate transparently?

BY VICKI BROWN

Word&Way Associate Editor

Baptists follow the congregational form of church governance — every member who wants can have a say in the way the church and the denomination operate.

But how much access does the average church member have to information about operations of national Baptist bodies and affiliated agencies? That depends on what the member wants to know and often upon whether the institution chooses to release it.

Wade Burleson, senior pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Enid, Okla., believes the Southern Baptist Convention has “lost the principle of transparency.”

An active participant in denominational life, including two terms as president of the Oklahoma Baptist General Convention, he was named a trustee for the SBC International Mission Board in 2005. He came under fire almost from the beginning because he publicly disagreed with board decisions. He did so “because I felt I had an obligation to tell what happened,” he said.

“Jesus said his followers would be known for their love and transparency,” Burleson explained in a recent interview.

Over personnel, “the law is very clear, and I think that personnel issues should be confidential,” he said. “But when it comes to all other information, we should be transparent.... No pastor, board member or Southern Baptist leader has the right to keep information from the people.”

Many agencies apparently do not operate from that perspective. While SBC leaders acknowledge members give money and time voluntarily, that doesn't mean people in the pew should be entitled to any information they want. The general rule seems to be: It depends upon the question.

But at least a few SBC leaders believe the denomination practices openness for the most part. “I think it is pretty transparent...a lot more than many other denominations,” noted Richard Land, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. “The litigious society in which we live makes it difficult.”

IMB spokesperson Wendy Norvelle agreed. “It would be difficult to find any organization as open to its constituents as the agencies of the SBC,” she said. Certain personal details about missionaries, sometimes even the name of the country in which they serve, must be kept confidential.

Often denominational entities want to get word out to church members but feel stymied in the attempt. “The challenge from the convention is that we desperately want to get information to the person in the pew.... We spend lots of time and money (trying to provide convention information) by whatever means,” Baptist General Association of Virginia Assistant Executive Director Glenn Akins said.

But when an individual seeks details, again it depends on the nature of the question.

For example, if Joe or Jane, a member of Regardless-of-the-Size Baptist Church in Anywhere, USA, wants to know how much an agency head earns, Joe and Jane might not be able to find out specifics.

The policy most Southern Baptist-affiliated entities have adopted allows providing the salary range, but not the actual figure. Several agency leaders, including the SBC vice president for convention finance, said they are accountable only to their boards and the Executive Committee for the details.

The SBC includes general budget information for the EC and the agencies in each annual book of reports and posts those reports on its website.

Each entity can decide how much it wants to disclose. The ERLC is willing to answer any questions, Land said, including divulging his salary. However, the agency requires anyone who receives information to sign a nondisclosure agreement.

While some entities may release information, sometimes it's couched in terms to protect the agency.

Then-Missouri Baptist Convention Executive Director David Clippard terminated several workers under his organization plan in 2002. Official convention minutes listed the individuals as having “resigned.”

Accountability

Some see giving specific information as simply being accountable. Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Heartland (formerly CBF of Missouri) publishes each of its workers' salary and benefits in the annual budget that it distributes. “We want to make sure the people we relate to and partner with know what we're doing,” Associate Coordinator Jeff Langford explained.

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

Many Baptist leaders struggle to find the balance between releasing too much or too little. “There have been colleagues across the states who have wrestled with how much and what kind of information to share, with whom and at what expense,” Akins said.

Churches and groups ask for information for a variety of reasons. Sometimes a church might ask for the names of all deacon chairs or all Sunday school directors in an area. The Virginia convention finds out how the information would be used and determines whether to release the names.

Akins sees agencies as stewards of the information they receive from congregations and individuals. “We always walk a thin line. I’m a steward and how do I protect that information,” he said.

He will give information about specific projects to those directly concerned. “Every donor has a right to know what happened to their gift,” he added.

American Baptist Churches-U.S.A. operates under covenant agreements with autonomous and

interdependent partners. Each partner manages its own affairs, including information, and property.

‘Openness’ in secret

Because Baptists rely heavily on volunteer giving and service, often meetings or proceedings are closed, particularly to reporters, to foster expression, Land said. In most SBC agencies, “the media are free to come and are free to cover meetings, but they cannot tell who says what unless they get the person to say the same thing outside of the board meeting,” he explained.

“I do think ... that unless you have something like that in place, having the press there does impede or hinder board members from expressing honest opinions.”

When then-SBC President Johnny Hunt authorized creation of the Great Commission Task Force in 2009, he vowed the meetings would be open, Baptist Press reported after Hunt met with editors of the Florida, Georgia, Illinois and Southern Baptists of Texas state papers by conference call that June.

“I would be real open to say that we look forward to every meeting that there will be a state editor there to be able to document the meeting. We have nothing to hide,” Hunt is reported to have said.

However, all meetings were closed, and then all written and audio records were sealed to preserve confidentiality when the task force report was released in June 2010.

Albert Mohler, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary president and task force member, claimed open meetings and records would “rob” history and cre-

ate a “chilling effect” on other committees. Participants would fear recording meetings if people would have immediate access to the records.

A control issue

Despite arguments for confidentiality, Burleson believes the underlying issue, at least for Southern Baptists, is control.

Burleson cited Albert McClellan, former executive director of the SBC Executive Committee, who claimed in 1980 that in 43 years, the Executive Committee had had fewer than six executive sessions. Burleson believes closing meetings is more the norm, rather than the exception, these days.

Every IMB board meeting he attended included a closed-door session, he said. “There were things said and things done” in those sessions that “shouldn’t have been said and done.”

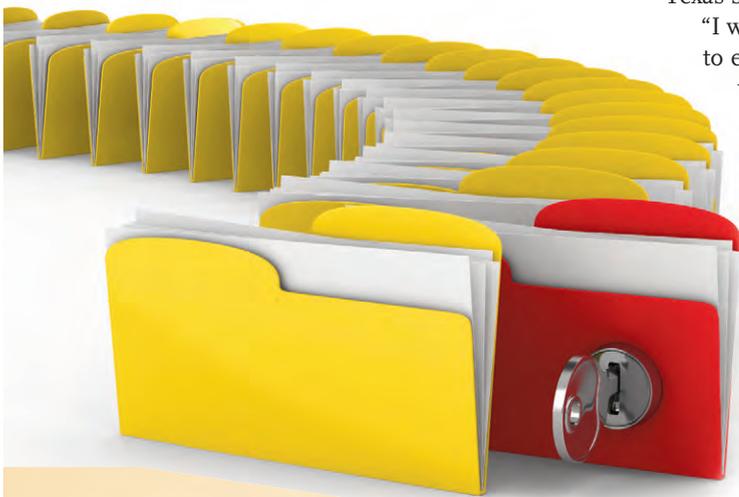
“When you operate in secrecy, it is in the belief that you can control better in secrecy,” Burleson said.

The primary reason he has remained in the Southern Baptist fold and encourages others to do so is because he believes that the atmosphere will change.

“The SBC needs to wake up to the fact that there’s nothing to fear. ... Don’t try to control.”

Other church governance models, such as the episcopal form the United Methodists and others follow or the Roman Catholics’ papal form, allow more rigid control. The more hierarchy, the more like the government it becomes, some avenues for decision-making are closed, noted Bill Wilson, president of the Center for Congregational Health.

“I think it does create more feeling that members aren’t being listened to,” he said. “But the bottom line is (to work toward) a culture that says we want to be transparent and open whatever the polity.”



Social media and public records offer options to fact-finders

BY VICKI BROWN

Word & Way Associate Editor

Do people in the pew have any options for finding information if their local church, state organization or national denominational body refuses to divulge it?

Not many — but technology and government offer a couple of options.

Blogosphere and social media

When Wade Burleson felt Southern Baptists weren’t getting the information they deserved from the International Mission Board, he turned to blogging.

Elected as an IMB trustee in 2005, the Enid, Okla., pastor pushed for transparency in the missionary-sending agency and openly criticized on his blog board decisions requiring IMB-appointed missionaries to have been baptized in a Southern Baptist-affiliated church and disallowing private prayer language.

“The problem with the IMB was that the IMB trustees took it upon themselves of narrowing the doctrines of cooperation ...and going beyond the *Baptist Faith & Message*,” the Southern Baptist Convention’s doctrinal statement, he said in a recent interview. “I felt I had an obligation to tell what happened.”

None of the trustees had written or read a blog, including his, Burleson said. “But they were furious because they felt I was violating confidentiality.”

Their anger intensified in 2006 when Burleson continued blogging about the agency in the face of a new rule — trustees “must publicly affirm” approved actions they do not “privately support.”

Burleson believes “there was a fundamental shift” at Baptist Press, the denomination’s news agency, and at most state convention news journals. Most became a public relations arm of their respective agencies “because the trustees are controlled by (national and state convention) executive committees.”

By blogging as a means to get information to people in the

pews, Burleson believes “frankly, I was doing what BP should have been doing.”

Many religious organizations, including Baptists, have adopted technology — websites, blogs, Facebook, Twitter and other social media — to get their message out.

But some see a danger in their use.

Glenn Akins, assistant executive director for the Baptist General Association of Virginia, sees blogging and social media as an “extreme form” as a means of holding someone accountable — one that only “someone with a burr under his saddle” would turn to after exhausting “normal” channels to get information.

“When a system isn’t held accountable, people will go to extremes,” he said. “It’s unfortunate that they can’t get to the issue in another format.”

Richard Land, president of the SBC’s Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, wants people to be more transparent in social media and believes those who criticize should do so openly. “People shouldn’t be blogging and tweeting about churches unless they are willing to sign their real names,” he said.

Burleson also urges some caution. “Blogs have taken the place of the free press,” he said. When looking for information, readers should consider whether the blogger has professional credentials. “Some blogs can be discounted.”

Legal

Like government bodies, nonprofit organizations have some legal regulations and constraints, particularly under the Internal Revenue Service. Many forms not-for-profits are required to file are public record, which means citizens can access the information, often online.

But houses of worship and most religious organizations fall in a different category.

For example, most charities and nonprofits are required to file an annual information return — IRS Form 990 or Form 990-EZ — or an annual electronic notice of their tax-exempt status. However, several exceptions to the requirement mean most religious organizations do not have to file.

Affiliated agencies that might have been required to file

often are exempt as well if they are included under a larger organization’s group exemption.

Consider B&H Publishing, the not-for-profit publishing arm of LifeWay Christian Resources, which, in turn, is a nonprofit affiliate of the not-for-profit Southern Baptist Convention. The SBC does not file a 990 or an electronic notice because it is a convention of churches. Neither LifeWay nor B&H is required to file because both are covered by the SBC’s group exemption.

Some agencies, such as the Missouri Baptist Foundation, file as independent entities. The foundation began filing the 990 after its trustees removed the organization from Missouri Baptist Convention control.

Nonprofits that file 990s are required to release a copy to anyone who asks. Individuals also may request a copy directly from the IRS, or can find them through GuideStar, a nonprofit group that many foundations use to verify information before issuing grants.

Other documentation about a church or specific agency might be available through state or federal courts if the entity has been a party to legal action.

According to a 2011 study by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, religious organizations sometimes are involved in four types of court cases — property disputes, employment, member treatment or discipline and employee misconduct.

In roughly 100 years of case law, the U.S. Supreme Court has developed the principle that the government may regulate religious institutions only in so far as it does not tamper with the church’s internal governance or interpret doctrine.

Most court proceedings also are public record and are available through state and federal court systems, or by searching the Internet for names of the parties involved.

Often government agencies contract with religious entities, such as children’s homes or facilities for older adults, to provide services. Much of the information relating to transactions between the governmental body and the religious agency is public record.

Citizens, as well as journalists, can claim public information that an agency refuses to release by filing freedom of information requests.

2013 Word&Way Mid-Year Planning and Event Calendar

Word&Way publishes its Planning and Event Calendar semi-annually as an informational guide to special events throughout the year. All events are located in Missouri unless otherwise noted. Many events are free, but a program fee may be charged. Lodging prices will vary.

To include your event in the next calendar, contact Ken Satterfield at ads@wordandway.org or 573-635-5939, ext. 8, for the 2014 Events Calendar that will run in the Dec. 19 issue.

You can link your site to Word&Way's online calendar (wordandway.org/calendar).



31-June 2 — Missouri Department Of Conservation's Discover Nature Women's Workshop, Windermere Baptist Conference Center, Roach

The Discover Nature Women's Summer Workshop offers hands-on training for many popular activities, such as fishing, canoeing, archery and shooting sports.

For women 18 years and older. Girls ages 14-17 welcomed, if accompanied by an adult woman.

Program reservations and information: mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/programs/discover-nature-women/summer-workshop or Lynn Merritt-Goggins, 573-522-4115, ext. 3808.

Lodging and meal reservations: Windermere, 573-346-5200. Prices: windermereusa.org.



May 31-2 — Missouri Department Of Conservation's Discover Nature Women's Workshop, Windermere (See May 31.)

1 — Strawberry Festival, First Baptist Church, Arnold

2012 Missouri State Rd.

Sponsored by Missouri Baptist Children's Home.

Information: 800-264-6224 or mbch.org.

8 — HomeComing, The Baptist Home-Chillicothe

A festive celebration emphasizing visits with residents from home churches and families. Traditional bake sale benefits residents. Music and entertainment with picnic lunch served in and around the gazebo. Our Auxiliary will provide some innovative activities for residents and visitors alike.

Information: Connie Garber or Joyce Stark, 660-646-6219, or cgarber@thebaptisthome.org.

12-14 — Camp Connect Mission

Camp, Windermere

Cost: \$175 (campers and chaperones).

Camp Connect provides a quality church camp experience with a mission emphasis for children grades 4-6. It is based on Luke 2:52: "Jesus became wise, and he grew strong. God was pleased with him and so were the people."

This year's theme is "Beautiful Feet" as campers will have a fun and meaningful time exploring the lives of desert-dwelling Bedouins, learning about world hunger and discovering more about God's love for us. Joseph's life will show that God has a plan for each of us including special gifts, forgiveness and a family of support.

Information and registration: campconnect.org.

14 — Churchnet Board of Directors Meeting, First Baptist Church, Jefferson City

301 E. Captiol Ave.

10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Information: 888-420-2426 or help@thechurchnet.org.



1-6 — Baptist World Alliance Annual Gathering, Jamaica

Information: tinyurl.com/BWA-2013-gathering, 888-420-2426 or help@thechurchnet.org.

8-12 — RA/Challenger Camp, Windermere

Royal Ambassadors are boys in grades 3-5, and Challengers are in grades 6-12. The purpose is to build virtue into the lives of boys who one day will be the leaders in Southern Baptist churches. RA's reaches boys for Christ and leads them to become ambassadors for Christ through commitments to developing biblical character and virtues by living the "on-mission" lifestyle of the Royal Ambassador Pledge. At RA Camp Windermere, boys get to take part in Bible study, song and outdoor activities like canoeing, fishing, archery and much more.

Information: Larry Pape at 636-398-8997.

13 — Ozarks Berry Festival, Remington's Entertainment Complex, Springfield

1655 W. Republic Rd.

Sponsored by Missouri Baptist Children's Home.

Information: 800-264-6224 or mbch.org.

25 — The Baptist Home Centennial Celebration Dinner, First Baptist Church of Chillicothe

Dinner for trustees, residents and area donors.

Information: Lynn Jackson or



Missouri Baptist University, William Jewell College, Hannibal-LaGrange University and Southwest Baptist University offer many programs and events throughout the year. Here, MBU thespians, including President Alton Lacey (second, left) perform "I'm so glad we had this time together: a Carol Burnett Revue" at MBU's annual Senior Adult Day March 8.

Richard Hurtgen, 660-646-6219, or ljackson@thebaptisthome.org.

26 — Board of Trustees Meeting, The Baptist Home-Chillicothe

Information: Kathie Jones, 573-546-2709, or desk@thebaptisthome.org.



8-9 — Global Leadership Summit,

multiple Missouri locations

9 a.m.-5 p.m.

The Global Leadership Summit exists to transform Christian leaders around the world with an injection of vision, skill development and inspiration for the sake of the local church. The Summit is telecast live from Willow Creek Community Church near Chicago. Scholarships and discounts available through Churchnet.

Scholarship and discount information: 888-420-2426 or help@thechurchnet.org.

Information and area locations:

willowcreek.com/summit.

8-18 — 2013 Missouri State Fair, Sedalia

Tickets: Regular \$8 (adult), \$6 (seniors, age 60+), \$2 (child age 6-12) and free (age 5 and under). Parking: Free.

Theme: Chicks Dig It!! 111 years of showcasing Missouri agriculture, tradition and affordable family entertainment. Visitors will enjoy the state's largest ag expo and hours of

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THE BAPTIST HOME CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JUNE 8, 2013

CHILICOTHE HOME COMING

The Baptist Home, Chillicothe, MO ~ www.thebaptisthome.org/events

For more information contact:

Connie Garber ~ (660) 646-6219, cgarber@thebaptisthome.org

AUGUST 31, 2013

ARCADIA VALLEY HOME COMING & AUCTION

The Baptist Home, Ironton, MO ~ www.thebaptisthome.org/events

For more information contact:

Connie Francis ~ (573) 546-7429, cfrancis@thebaptisthome.org

SEPTEMBER 27, 2013

ARCADIA VALLEY GOLF TOURNAMENT

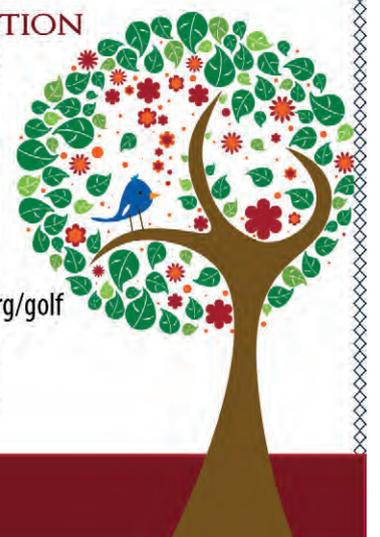
Crown Pointe Golf Club, Farmington, MO ~ www.thebaptisthome.org/golf

For more information contact:

Colin Hedrick ~ (866) 454-2709, chedrick@thebaptisthome.org



PO Box 87, Ironton MO 63650
(866) 454-2709 ~ desk@thebaptisthome.org
www.TheBaptistHome.org/events



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free family-friendly entertainment. This year's features include concerts by Gary Allan, The Oak Ridge Boys' 40th Anniversary Tour and free entertainment including Thank a Farmer Magic Show, Bronkar's Circus of Sound and full-contact jousting.

Schedules, concert lineup and special discounts: 800-422-FAIR (3247) or mostatefair.com.

13-14 — Churchnet Board of Directors' Retreat, Windermere

Information: 888-420-2426 or help@thechurchnet.org.

15-18 — 2013 Welcome Week, Southwest Baptist University, Bolivar

New student orientation week. Information: sbuniv.edu or 800-526-5859.

27 — Day/Evening Classes Begin, Hannibal-LaGrange University, Hannibal

Information or to schedule a visit: HLGU Admissions Office, 800-HLG-1119 or hlg.edu.

30 — "The Elixir of Love" Opera, Missouri Baptist University, Saint Louis

7:30 p.m. Written in 1831, "The Elixir of Love" is one of the most performed operas worldwide. In MBU's western twist on this classic opera, follow the story of a young man in love who meets an oil salesman who has a tonic for everything, including a magic love potion.

Information or to buy tickets: 314-392-2345 or mobaptickets.com.

31 — Annual Auction and Homecoming, The Baptist Home-Arcadia Valley

Annual auction now in its 34th year, for the benefit of residents. Information: Sherri Snider or Connie Francis, 573-546-7429, or

cfrancis@thebaptisthome.org.



5-8 — The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged) (Revised), Missouri Baptist University

5-7: 7:30 p.m.; 8: 2 p.m. This provides an uproariously funny look at the Bard's work. In just 90 minutes, three actors present (to some degree) every single play written by Shakespeare. The results are interesting, cringe-worthy, touching, strange...and, above all, hilarious! Information or to buy tickets: 314-392-2345 or mobaptickets.com.

7-8 — Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty Board Meeting, Washington, D.C.

Information: bjcpa.org, 888-420-2426, or help@thechurchnet.org.

11-13 — Three Days in September, Hannibal-LaGrange University

10 a.m. Campus renewal services held Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings. Information: Carroll Missions Center, 573-221-3675, ext. 3195.

14 — Apple Festival, First Baptist Church, Peculiar

11902 E. 213th Ct. Sponsored by Missouri Baptist Children's Home. Information: 800-264-6224 or mbch.org.

17 — Missouri Baptist Foundation Annual Conference

Site and final schedule: TBA. Cost includes breakfast and lunch. Registration: 8 a.m. Program: 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Annual conference to educate, motivate and investigate the financial market, stewardship and com-

munication of ministry and mission efforts. Includes a special guest speaker.

Information: 800-776-074. Updates and RSVP: mbfn.org.

27 — Sixth Annual Baptist Home-Arcadia Valley Golf Tournament, Farmington

Crown Pointe Golf Course, 4215 Hunt Rd. Information: Colin Hedrick, 573-546-2709, or chedrick@thebaptisthome.org.



4-5 — Homecoming, Southwest Baptist University

Root for the Bearcat football team! Information: 800-526-5859 or sbuniv.edu.

4-6 — Homecoming/Family Weekend, Hannibal-LaGrange University

Information: HLGU Alumni Services, 573-221-3675, ext. 3122.

5 — Fall Spartan Preview Day, Missouri Baptist University

9 a.m.-1 p.m. (Also Nov. 15.) Experience a hands-on morning that is sure to yield answers and incite enthusiasm about life at a premiere Christian university, academically and spiritually. Information and registration: 877-434-1115.

12 — Rollin' on the River Cruise, Hannibal

Mark Twain Riverboat, 100 Center St. Benefit for Missouri Baptist Children's Home. Information: 800-264-6224 or mbch.org.

19 — Fall Visitation Day, Southwest Baptist University

A great day for students and families to tour the campus, visit with faculty in various academic areas, have financial aid questions answered, interact with current students, visit with athletic coaches and more. Dress casual, bring questions and plan for a great day! Information: 800-526-5859 or sbuniv.edu.

24-27 — Fabric & Friends Quilt Camp Fall Event, Windermere

Enjoy a weekend of quilting, whatever your skill level! Open to any interested quilter. Reservations: Windermere, 800-346-2215. Program information: Fabrics & Friends, 573-346-5036, or fabricsandfriends.com.



2 — Trojan Turkey Trek 5K Run/Walk, Hannibal-LaGrange University

Information: Carroll Missions

Center, 573-221-3675, ext. 3195.

7 — The Baptist Home Centennial Celebration Dinner

For trustees, residents and area donors. Location TBA. Information: Contact Kathie Jones, 573-546-2709, or desk@thebaptisthome.org.

8 — Board of Trustees Meeting, The Baptist Home-Arcadia Valley

Information: Kathie Jones, 573-546-2709 or desk@thebaptisthome.org.

9 — Fall Visitation Day, Southwest Baptist University (Also Oct. 19.)

A great day for students and families to tour the campus, visit with faculty in various academic areas, have financial aid questions answered, interact with current students, visit with athletic coaches and more. Dress casual, bring questions and plan for a great day! Information: 800-526-5859 or sbuniv.edu.

12 — Harvesters Holiday Luncheon, Jefferson City

Missouri Baptist Building Gold Room, 400 E. High Street. Time and schedule: TBA. Harvesters are former employees who have worked for any Missouri Baptist institution, agency or association, or their surviving spouses. This year's guest speaker is Bobby Shows. Information: 573-761-0717 or

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MBF Announces the 2013 Fellowship of Christian Stewards

Nelson Fellow
Mrs. Verna Haun

Nelson Fellow - Posthumous
Dr. David Bennett

Estate Stewardship
Drs. Gordon & Karen Hatcher

Vocational Achievement
Mr. James Nelson

Charitable Giving
Mrs. Patty Penny

Ministry Achievement
Rev. Jeanie McGowan

Emerging Leader
Mr. Micah Flint



800-776-0747
www.mbf.org



A Life of Direction Starts at Southwest

Southwest Baptist University

www.SBUniv.edu/visit | 800.526.5859 | Bolivar, MO

Plan your estate to be ready for any storm

Have you heard the story of the farmer who hired a man to work on his farm?

The farmer asked in the interview, "Are you a good farm hand?"

The man answered, "I can sleep when the wind blows."

The farmer hired the man and found out exactly what he meant when the first storm blew in late one evening.

The farmer rushed into the hired hand's living quarters and yelled, "Get up! A storm is coming! Tie things down before they blow away!"

The hired hand rolled over in bed and repeated what he had told the farmer in the interview: "I can sleep when the wind blows."

The farmer was so irate he would've fired the hired hand on the spot, but he hurried outside to prepare for the storm. To his surprise, he found all the haystacks covered, the cows in the barn, the chickens in the coops, and the doors shut tight.

The hired hand went to bed every night prepared for a storm. He was ready each night so that he could sleep peacefully.

Being ready is the strategic position in estate stewardship planning. If you were incapacitated or died today, what would happen to your loved ones and your property? Are plans in place to bring them peace through this difficult loss and provide confidence to settle your estate in ways that honor you, them and God?

It is important to develop estate plans and to review them periodically after they are officially made.

There are "Four P's" to remember in developing an estate plan — people, property, planning and professionals. These are important elements in making estate plans for the first time or when reviewing them.

People. Who are the important people in your life? This

may include family and close friends. It may also include "people" who are represented through worthy ministries, educational institutions and charities.

Property. Property is all your assets — money, savings, retirement accounts, real estate and other tangible property such as cars, trucks, heirlooms, antiques and collectibles.

Planning. A basic estate plan includes a will. Do you also need a trust?

How will your estate be distributed?

Who will serve as your personal representative or trustee? These are the people you trust to manage your property following

your death in the ways you have designed with deliberation and prayer.

Who will serve as guardians of minor or special-needs children? These are the people you have asked to serve as loving caretakers of your most treasured gifts from God.

If you have estate plans, have they been reviewed to account for changes? Families change through birth and death, marriage and divorce. Assets change through growth and decline.

Does your plan achieve tax minimization goals? If not, you may include another heir to your plan — the Internal Revenue Service.

Professionals. It is necessary to involve professionals who bring expertise to the estate stewardship planning process. These professionals may include attorneys, accountants, insurance agents and/or other qualified estate-planning representatives.

Are you ready? Being prepared with proper estate planning and maintenance through the years can help you "sleep when the wind blows."

Nick Davis serves as Missouri Baptist Foundation eastern regional vice president.

Finance



Nick Davis

Continued from page 10

dstevens@mbfn.org.

15 — Fall Spartan Preview Day, Missouri Baptist University

9 a.m.-1 p.m.

(Also Oct. 5.)

Experience a hands-on morning that is sure to yield answers and incite enthusiasm about life at a premiere Christian university, academically and spiritually.

Information and registration: 877-434-1115.

15 — HLGU Booster Banquet, Hannibal-LaGrange University

Speaker to be announced.

Information: hlg.edu.



13 — Churchnet Board of Directors Meeting, First Baptist Church, Jefferson City

301 E. Captiol Ave.

10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

Information: 888-420-2426 or help@thechurchnet.org.

13 — Commencement, Southwest Baptist University

7 p.m.

Information: 800-526-5859 or SBUniv.edu/visit.



Jan. 20 — Monday @ Southwest, Southwest Baptist University



THE BAPTIST HOME

The Baptist Home offers activities for residents and the public on its three campuses — Arcadia Valley, Chillicothe and Ozark. All campuses celebrate Homecoming, and this year, each will have special events to mark The Baptist Home's 100th year of providing care and community for older adults.

Visit day with academic fair.
Information: 800-526-5859 or SBUniv.edu/visit.

Feb. 8 — Scholars Day, Southwest Baptist University

Students compete for the J.R. Maupin Founders Award scholarship and admission to the Gordon & Judy Dutille Honors Program.

Information: 800-526-5859 or SBUniv.edu/visit.

Feb. 17 — Monday @ Southwest, Southwest Baptist University

Visit day with academic fair.
Information: 800-526-5859 or SBUniv.edu/visit.

March 6-8 — 50th Anniversary Celebration of the North American Baptist Fellowship, Philadelphia, Penn.

Information: nabf.info, 888-420-

2426 or help@thechurchnet.org.

April 21 — Fast Forward, Southwest Baptist University

Visit day for juniors.

Information: 800-526-5859 or sbuniv.edu/visit.

April 11-12 — Bearcat Days, Southwest Baptist University

Visit Days for admitted seniors and transfer students.

Information: 800-526-5859 or sbuniv.edu/visit.

May 24 — Southwest Baptist University Commencement (10 a.m.) — Bolivar Campus

Information: 800-526-5859 or sbuniv.edu.

SBU profs Brown and Bass publish new manuscripts

BOLIVAR, Mo. — Two professors at Southwest Baptist University have published books.



Kathy Brown

Professor of music Kathy Brown has written *Lotte Lehmann in America*, published by The College Music Society as a part of the series, *Monographs and Bibliographies in American Music*.

Lehmann, a German-born soprano, added the role of teacher to her accomplishments in the opera house and on the recital stage in post-World War II America. She gave aspiring singers insights

into interpretation.

Brown also provides an overview of Lehmann's career, an account of her work with the Music Academy of the West, an assortment of the singer's own translations and reproductions of her paintings based on the lieder of Schubert and Schumann.

Clint Bass, assistant professor of church history in SBU's Redford College of Theology and Ministry, published his first book, *Thomas Grantham (1633-1692) and General Baptist Theology*.

Bass looks at the life and thought of Grantham, considered one of the most important General Baptist theologians of the later 17th century.

The book tells about Grantham's life in its first chapter, with an account of his eccle-

siology in its second chapter. Chapter three deals with his view of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Chapter four explains the controversy over laying on of hands, a divisive practice of the period. Chapter five covers Grantham's understanding of salvation.

Lastly, chapter six focuses on Grantham's role in opposition to the Christological deficiency adopted by a small party of his churchmen.

In addition, the professor addresses some misconceptions about General Baptists and considers early Baptist views of ordinances.

Though the book focuses on Grantham's life, Bass also explains how General Baptists are to be understood in relation to the religious milieu of Restoration England.

Will your church or group be on mission this summer at home, nationally or internationally? Let the region know about it! Send information and photos to Vicki Brown at vbrown@wordandway.org.



SOUTHWEST BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

Southwest Baptist University administrators break ground May 3 for the new football turf and track surface to be installed at SBU's Plaster Stadium. Byrne and Jones Construction of St. Louis and EnviroTurf crews will install the track and turf in time for the fall 2013 football season. Pictured are, from left, Craig Schuler, head football coach; C. Pat Taylor, SBU president; Mike Pitts, athletic director; Brad Johnson, vice president for university relations; and Rob Harris, vice president for student development.

SBU prof heads to Ethiopia on Fulbright Scholarship

BOLIVAR, Mo. — Delta Cavner's life has been filled with long-term and short-term international mission projects. Now she looks forward to a new adventure — a Fulbright Scholarship to teach, consult and conduct research in Ethiopia during the 2013-14 academic term.

"I feel stretched," Cavner said. "I feel like God is putting me in places where he's stretching and preparing me to better serve his purposes in my life."

The Southwest Baptist University associate professor of education will teach education classes at Addis Ababa University and conduct research from September 2013 through June 2014.

"For the research component, I am going to visit three K-12 schools in three different sized communities, do surveys, interview teachers and observe them in the classroom," she said.

She also will serve at two Bible schools — one each in Kenya and Ethiopia — to teach a graduate-level research and writing class for area pastors.

This summer, Cavner will lead an SBU faculty



SOUTHWEST BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

Southwest Baptist University Associate Professor of Education Delta Cavner gets ready to lead two short-term mission experiences this summer before heading to Ethiopia as a Fulbright Scholar. She will teach, consult and conduct research in Ethiopia during the 2013-2014 academic year.

team to China for two weeks in May, and then will take student Haley Wech to Thailand for a six-week internship. In Thailand, Cavner will work on program development at several universities and conduct professional development seminars for teachers. The pair also will assist with mission projects.

The Fulbright Program was established in 1946 under legislation introduced by then-Sen. J. William Fulbright of Arkansas, and is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

the American Baptist Churches-USA Central Region. He serves as pastor of the Ada-Minneapolis Parish in Kansas, which includes Antioch Baptist Church in Ada and First Baptist Church of Minneapolis. His

wife's name is Cosette.

Antioch Southern Baptist Church in Harrisonville, Mo., recently ordained **CLIFF BENNETT** as a deacon.

Trust must be built with the disoriented

In order to have a meaningful conversation with the confused person, it is essential to build trust in the relationship.

Even though it is important *not* to directly correct the delusion, it is also important *not* to patronize, ridicule, lie or play along with a mistaken reality.

On one level, the confused person may realize you are toying with him and, consequently, feel you cannot be trusted with his intimate thoughts and feelings.

Building trust takes time and may require repeated visits. Trust is built as the confused person turns towards you and her face becomes more animated and expressive. She will seem more interested in the conversation and less hostile or evasive.

Unless the confused person asks directly, most do not want insight into their feelings or behavior. Hence, the caregiver needs to avoid asking questions that directly confront feelings or behavior.

While a lucid person may be able to openly express his or her needs, a confused person finds it difficult or threatening and will prefer symbolic ways to communicate through storytelling, body language and fantasy.

One way to build trust is to understand the value of reminiscing by asking questions that begin with who, what, when, where and how. However, it is important to avoid the use of why. Why may put a person on the defensive.

Mrs. Bee, a resident in a local nursing home, began a search for her late husband. Mr. Bee had passed away several years ago. "Have you seen my husband?" she asked a nurse.

The nurse responded, "What does he look like?"

"Oh, he's tall, dark and handsome," Mrs. Bee said with a glimmer in her eye.

"You must have loved him very much," continued the nurse.

Suddenly, Mrs. Bee began to open up and reminisce, telling favorite stories from their 50 years of marriage.

You can only imagine what would have happened if the nurse had responded, "Why are you looking for him?" Or worse, "You know, Mrs. Bee, your husband died 10 years ago."

While the nurse did not go along with the delusion, she did not confront it, either. Instead, Mrs. Bee was given an opportunity to express grief and hope

through the process of storytelling.

Another way to build trust is to offer the confused person choices. Rather than telling a person what to wear or what to eat, try offering two or three choices. The goal is to develop an adult-to-adult style of conversation as opposed to a parent-child relationship.

The caregiver will also want to be on the same level physically with a confused person. The care setting often lends itself to an imbalance of power that favors the caregiver.

Many times the person receiving care feels he or she is being scolded or is inferior. However, our basic nature senses this inequality and rebels against it.

Ignoring this will cause a meaningful relationship and the quality of life of the confused adult to be stymied.

Frank Fain is director of senior adult ministries and educational services at The Baptist Home.

55+ Adults



Frank Fain

CHURCH CHANGES

JOHN VERNON has resigned as associate pastor for children and family ministries at Miner Baptist Church in Sikeston, Mo., to become director of missions for Cape Girardeau Baptist Association in Cape Girardeau, Mo. He and wife Janet have three daughters, Jessica, Brittany and Amanda.

First Baptist Church of Columbia, Mo., has called **MICHAEL MCENTYRE** as its new associate pastor of youth, college and missions. His wife, Carol, serves as senior pastor.

TIM REHMER has resigned as pastor of Broadway Baptist Church in Sedalia, Mo.

Katy Park Baptist Church in Sedalia, Mo., has called **RYAN STONE** as youth director.

LICENSED & ORDAINED

NATHAN MARSH has been ordained to the gospel ministry by

Share Annual Gathering Memories Post Stories and Photos on Facebook

Did you attend the Churchnet Annual Gathering earlier this month at Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church? Then we would love to hear your thoughts! Share your favorite moment on Churchnet's Facebook page. You can find the page at www.facebook.com/theChurchnet or get there by clicking on the Facebook link on the top of Churchnet's website (www.thechurchnet.org). What was your favorite comment by a speaker? What was the most inspirational or challenging moment? Did you meet someone new that you hope to keep in contact with? Was there a breakout session that you especially appreciated? What do you hope we make sure to do again next year? Do you have a photo you took that you would like to share? Please feel free to post your responses and photos to the Churchnet Facebook page.

The 2013 Annual Gathering was our 11th Annual Gathering. **Dr. Molly Marshall**, president of Central Baptist Theological Seminary in Shawnee, Kan., was our speaker on Friday evening. **Doyle Sager**, president of Churchnet and senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Jefferson City, Mo., was our speaker on Saturday morning. **Dr. Wallace Hartsfield II**, senior pastor of Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church in Kansas City, Mo., led a Bible study in each of our worship services. *Churchnet is a Baptist Network Serving Churches.* Churchnet is a ministry of the Baptist General Convention of Missouri. But we exist only together as a cooperative endeavor. So join in the discussion, celebration and reflection on the recent Annual Gathering. We look forward to hearing from you as we dialogue together. We hope the discussion will help us plan for even better Annual Gatherings in the future. Together we can continue to *share hope!*

Below: Newly elected Churchnet Vice President Forestal Lawton, Newly elected Churchnet President Donna Potts, and Churchnet Executive Director Jim Hill.

Below right: A fellowship time during Annual Gathering.



*Above: Wallace Hartsfield II preaching.
Below: Eva Schulte, executive director of Missouri Faith Voices, leading a breakout session.*



Need Ministry Assistance?

Are you looking for help? *Churchnet is a Baptist Network Serving Churches.* Our staff have gifts and experience, and they are ready to assist you. However, our goal is to provide a setting which will allow churches to serve each other. We believe a great deal of expertise exists within the leadership of our member congregations. The "Consultant Source" section of our website (www.thechurchnet.org) is a place where church leaders find help. The "Consultant Source" focuses on providing personal assistance to churches and church leaders. You may browse the list of available subjects to identify a consultant who may be available to assist you.

If you have ministry expertise and experience which would be helpful to other church leaders, we invite you to volunteer to serve as a consultant. Click the "Volunteer" link on the right side of the "Consultant Source" section of our website. There you can tell us how you would like to help. We will add your information to our Consultant Source database.

Cannot find what you need? Our *first priority* is serving churches! Tell us how we can help you or your church. Click the "Request help" link on the right side of the "Consultant Source" section of our website and let us know what type of assistance you need, when you need it and information about your preferred delivery systems. We will help identify resources and consultants available to assist you. We look forward to responding to your request.

LOGOS Software

In an effort to provide local churches with organizational software that will help them manage membership, financial contributions and accounting practices, Churchnet has partnered with LOGOS Management Software Inc., a leading church management software company based out of Ann Arbor, Mich.

The partnership was formed in response to the need to provide streamlined, affordable church management for the back-office operations of the church. LOGOS' robust reporting capabilities offer direct, tangible benefits to ministry, which are attractive to convention and church leaders. Churches associated with Churchnet can find more information about LOGOS by clicking on the "LOGOS - Database Software" tab on Churchnet's website (www.thechurchnet.org). Special pricing is available to churches as a result of this partnership.

"We seek to provide valuable resources to the local churches," said Jim Hill, Churchnet's executive director. "We needed a top-notch solution from a leading management software provider we knew would help our local church staff to lead well with easily accessible information."

LOGOS exists to streamline the processes of the church by providing an intuitive system to store the congregation's information. That information becomes useful through reports, searches, a customizable quick access toolbar providing shortcuts for commonly used routines, and more.

LOGOS Management Software LLC began in 1980 and has proven its commitment to meet the changing needs of churches with great service, reliable and easy-to-use products, and regular enhancements that empower ministries with current technology. Logos presently serves over 12,000 churches with products that track membership, attendance, volunteers, scheduling, pledges, online giving, small groups, child check-in, fund accounting and more.



Lynn takes Graham to task over IRS complaint

BY BOB ALLEN

Associated Baptist Press

An advocate for church/state separation says evangelist Franklin Graham has no right to complain about an IRS audit because of rules against partisan politics by nonprofit organizations that are exempt from paying taxes.

Graham wrote a letter May 14 to President Obama complaining that both the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and Samaritan's Purse were targeted in the same way that organizations applying for nonprofit status with "Tea Party" and "Patriot" in their names were subjected to greater scrutiny than non-conservative groups.

In a May 16 op-ed in the *Washington Post*, however, Barry Lynn of Americans United for Separation of Church and State said Graham is a victim not of IRS overreach but of his own "lust for the media spotlight" and dislike for President Obama.

Graham's organizations applied for and received IRS

501(c)3 exemptions that apply to religious, educational, charitable, scientific, arts, child- or animal-cruelty prevention organizations, community groups and others often referred to as "friend-of" groups. Among other things, the designation allows donors to deduct charitable contributions from their federal taxes.

Groups holding 501(c)(3) status are restricted in how much political and legislative lobbying they may conduct. According to the IRS code, they "are absolutely prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office."

Lynn said Graham did precisely that by advising followers to support only "candidates who base their decisions on biblical principles and support the nation of Israel" and arranging for his father to meet with and endorse Republican presiden-

tial candidate Mitt Romney.

Soon afterward, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association bought full-page newspaper ads featuring the famed evangelist stating: "I believe it is vitally important that we cast our ballots for candidates who base their decisions on biblical principles and support the nation of Israel. I urge you to vote for those who protect the biblical definition of marriage between a man and a woman."

Lynn said it was common knowledge at the time that Obama supported same-sex marriage while Romney opposed it.

"In light of that, you'd have to be pretty dense to read these ads as anything but a command to vote for Romney," Lynn wrote.

Lynn said the IRS knows about such violations, because Americans United has for years been urging them to crack down on tax-exempt religious organizations that violate the

ban on partisan electioneering.

It's so common in houses of worship, Lynn said, that one Religious Right group called the Alliance Defending Freedom sets aside a Sunday each year to encourage churches to ignore the law as a matter of civil disobedience.

"This activity was clearly an effort by one of the Graham families' tax-exempt groups to directly affect the outcome of the election," Lynn contended. "If this brazen action led to IRS scrutiny, I'm fine with that. My only regret is that the agency didn't yank the BGEA's tax-exempt status for doing so."

"The problem isn't that the IRS is being too aggressive in this area," said Lynn, an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. "It's that its enforcement efforts have been sporadic, unfocused and tepid. Instead of putting applications from Tea Party groups under a microscope, the IRS would do better to crack down on Graham and the religious leaders like him who openly flout federal tax law."

A Fox News story about the Graham organizations being targeted also claimed the *Biblical Recorder*, a North Carolina Baptist newspaper that last summer ran a controversial story about Chick-fil-A President Dan Cathy's views on gay marriage, was being audited for the first time since its founding in 1803.

Recorder Editor Alan Blume later circulated an email saying he misspoke with reporter Todd Starnes and learned later that the IRS performed an audit on the newspaper about 10 or 15 years ago for reasons similar to the recent audit.

A statement on the *Biblical Recorder* website said Blume remained cautious about making any assumptions, but is "curious" about the audit.

"Last year the *Biblical Recorder* took a clear stand for family values throughout North Carolina's marriage amendment vote," Blume said. "We would like to know if the *Biblical Recorder* showed up on the IRS' radar...because of our stand on biblical values."



Franklin Graham

Church-planting network faces new allegations of abuse

BY BOB ALLEN

Associated Baptist Press

A Calvinist church-planting network with ties to Southern Baptist leaders faces new allegations of covering up sexual abuse of children in a 46-page amended lawsuit filed May 14 in Maryland.

The new court document includes graphic descriptions of molestation of boys and girls at churches affiliated with Sovereign Grace Ministries and accuses pastors of conspiring to cover up the alleged abuse.

One of the alleged perpetrators, former SGM board chairman John Loftness, denied ever abusing a child or shielding a known pedophile from arrest. The ministry website said an internal review of the allegations "has not produced any evidence of any cover-up or conspiracy."

Sovereign Grace Ministries is best known in Baptist life for ties between founder C.J. Mahaney and leaders in a movement sometimes called "young, restless and Reformed," a resurgent interest in Calvinism gaining ground at Southern Baptist Convention seminaries.

Mahaney, who recently

resigned as SGM president, planted a church in Louisville, Ky., last year when the ministry headquarters moved there from Gaithersburg, Md., in part to strengthen ties to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Seminary President Albert Mohler has worked with Mahaney on projects including Together for the Gospel, a conference for young pastors, and the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, which has offices on the Southern Seminary campus. Podcasts by Mohler are offered in the Sovereign Grace Ministries Store.

The Sovereign Grace website includes Mahaney's 2009 interview with Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. In January, Akin brought Mahaney to the seminary campus in Wake Forest, N.C., to speak at this year's 20/20 Collegiate Conference, an annual event for college students from the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area known as North Carolina's Research Triangle.

Mahaney spoke recently at a conference in South Africa

called ReZolution that he headlined with Calvinist leaders Kevin DeYoung, Ligon Duncan, Bob Kauflin and Mark Dever, pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington and president of 9Marks Ministries.

Mahaney penned the foreword to the 2009 book *Adopted for Life: The Priority of Adoption for Christian Families and Churches*, authored by Russell Moore, a Southern Seminary administrator and professor recently named president-elect of the SBC Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission.

In February, a former SGM leader turned whistleblower accused Baptist and other evangelical leaders of enabling sin by continuing to promote Mahaney while questions about his fitness for ministry remain unanswered.

The second amended lawsuit adds three new plaintiffs, making a total of 11. Five plaintiffs are now using their real names, and the rest are pseudonyms. It accuses church leaders of conspiracy, negligence, misrepresentation and intentional infliction of emotional distress. It requests a jury trial.

Houston doctor may be the next Gosnell

BY TOM STRODE

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — Evidence provided by former workers at a Texas abortion clinic may support what pro-life advocates have been asserting — Kermit Gosnell is not alone.

Douglas Karpen, a Houston abortion doctor, has regularly killed babies after their late-term deliveries at his clinic, according to eyewitness testimony from three of his former employees.

Their descriptions on video of some of those killings outside the womb are at least as gruesome as those of the slayings by Gosnell, the Philadelphia abortion doctor who was convicted May 13 of first-degree murder in the post-delivery deaths of three infants.

In the video released May 14, the former workers describe deaths of born-alive babies that involved the doctor twisting babies' heads off their necks, stabbing instruments into their stomachs or the soft spots of their heads, inserting his finger through babies' throats and severing their spinal cords.

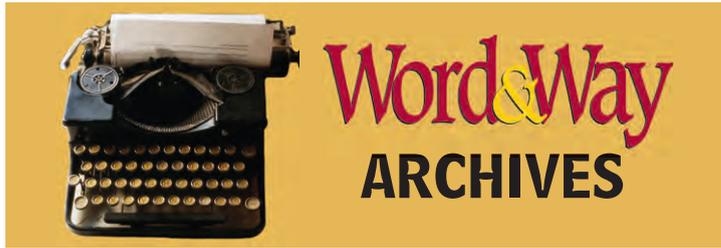
Gosnell, who has been sentenced to three life sentences

without parole, killed hundreds of children at least six months into gestation after induced delivery by a technique he called "snipping," according to a grand jury report. "Snipping" involved jabbing scissors into the back of a living baby's neck and cutting the spinal cord.

The new report on Karpen helps buttress the contention by pro-lifers that Gosnell is not an aberration. While abortion-rights advocates have asserted Gosnell is an anomaly, pro-life leaders have said he is among an uncertain number of abortion doctors in the United States who are killing born-alive infants or allowing them to die without medical care.

In addition, they also have asserted Gosnell is one of an unknown number of doctors who are performing illegal, late-term abortions of healthy, unborn babies for healthy mothers, sometimes under unsanitary, unsafe conditions for the women.

"It's just corroboration of what pro-lifers, activists in particular, have always maintained; we've known," popular pro-life blogger Jill Stanek told Baptist Press May 17.



10 YEARS AGO — MAY 2003

• Members of Third Baptist Church of St. Louis celebrated Paul E. Powell's 60th anniversary as an ordained minister recently. Harlan Spurgeon was guest preacher for the event. Members hosted a reception for Powell and his wife Connie. While a student at Southwest Baptist College (now University), Powell was ordained at Bethpage Baptist Church in Shoal Creek Baptist Association. He was pastor of churches in Texas and Missouri, including Kingshighway Baptist Church, St. Louis.

25 YEARS AGO — MAY 1988

• Among Missouri's contributions to the centennial of national Woman's Missionary Union was the music for the centennial hymn, "God Our Author and Creator," written by Missourian A.L. "Pete" Butler, associate professor of church music education at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The composition, with words by Carl P. Daw Jr., won a hymn-writing composition sponsored by WMU and the Baptist

Sunday School Board.

• On their way hom from the WMU centennial celebration in Richmond, Va., Missouri members on Bus 5 decided to collect an offering to be added to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions. Word about the paper-bag collection of \$230 got around to the riders on the other four buses in the entourage, prompting them to do the same. As word circulated about the amounts, paper bags were passed through each bus again in friendly competition. When it was all over, the five-bus offering total had reached nearly \$6,000.

50 YEARS AGO — MAY 1963

• The new wing at the Home for Aged Baptists at Ironton — completed and occupied — was dedicated on May 21. An open house on May 25 showed off the facility, which Superintendent John H. Burney described as 250-feet in length and constructed at a cost of \$400,000. The building houses 30 residents and includes a kitchen, dining room, four sun parlors and space for staff.

Longtime editor R.G. Puckett dies

BY BOB ALLEN

Associated Baptist Press

Career journalist and champion for a free Baptist press R.G. "Gene" Puckett died May 12, months after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

Puckett, 80, worked as a Baptist journalist longer than any person in the 20th century. He was a founding director of



R.G. Puckett

Associated Baptist Press and chairman of the board.

A Kentucky native, Puckett was a graduate of Western Kentucky University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

After pastorates in Kentucky and in Ohio, at age 25 he became editor of the *Ohio Baptist Messenger* and director of Baptist student work for Southern Baptists in Ohio in 1958. He left in 1961 to become pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dunedin, Fla.

In 1963, Puckett began work with Kentucky's *Western Recorder*, first as assistant editor and later promoted to associate edi-

tor. In 1966, he was named editor of the *Maryland Baptist*, which also published the *New England Baptist* and the *Penn-Jersey Baptist*.

Between 1979 and 1982, he was executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, a nonprofit group founded in 1947 to defend, protect and preserve religious liberty and its corollary, the separation of church and state.

Puckett returned to journalism in North Carolina as editor of the *Biblical Recorder* in 1982. In 1990, he and other Baptist state paper editors formed Associated Baptist Press as a free and unfettered news service hours after the firing of the two top editors of Baptist Press by the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee. Puckett called that date, July 17, "a day to live in Baptist infamy" and editorialized about it each year on its anniversary until his retirement in 1998.

ABP recognized Puckett in 2011 with the Greg Warner Lifetime Achievement Award in Religious Journalism. Puckett credited his mentor C.R. Daley, who hired him at the *Western Recorder*, and contemporaries of Daley's like Texas *Baptist Standard* Editor E.S. James; John Jeter Hurt, who

edited both the *Baptist Standard* and Georgia's *Christian Index*; and Reuben Alley of Virginia's *Religious Herald* with teaching him about the integrity it took to be a Baptist editor.

"The effectiveness of any democracy depends on an informed constituency, and if Baptists don't know, they can't do," Puckett said.

An endowment fund established in 2006 with a \$125,000 lead gift from Puckett's longtime friend, the late Ed Vick of Raleigh, bears Puckett's name. Earnings from the fund support the ABPnews student internship program.

"Gene Puckett stood tall as a biblical and theological scholar; devoted churchman; exemplary husband, father and grandfather; and a professional journalist of the highest caliber," said David Wilkinson, ABP executive director. Survivors include Puckett's wife of 57 years, the former Robbie Lake of Mackville, Ky., two daughters and four grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorial gifts to the Thomas Meredith Scholarship Fund at Wake Forest University Divinity School, 1834 Wake Forest Drive, Winston-Salem, NC 27106 or Associated Baptist Press, P.O. Box 23769, Jacksonville, FL 32241-3769.

BIBLE CROSSWORD

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Across

- "The children of Israel murmured ___ Moses" (Exodus 16:2)
- "Now ___ kept the flock of Jethro" (Exodus 3:1)
- "Thy ___ and thy she goats" (Genesis 31:38)
- "Hamath is confounded, and ___" (Jeremiah 49:23)
- "In one house shall it be ___" (Exodus 12:46)
- Cedar Ridge state (abbr.)
- "And he made ___ his chariot" (Exodus 12:46)
- "For the barley was in the ___" (Exodus 9:31)
- "Your little ___, which ye said should be a prey" (Deuteronomy 1:39)
- Assist
- "If thy father ___ all miss ___" (1 Samuel 20:6)
- "For a wave offering before the Lord; and it shall be thy ___" (Exodus

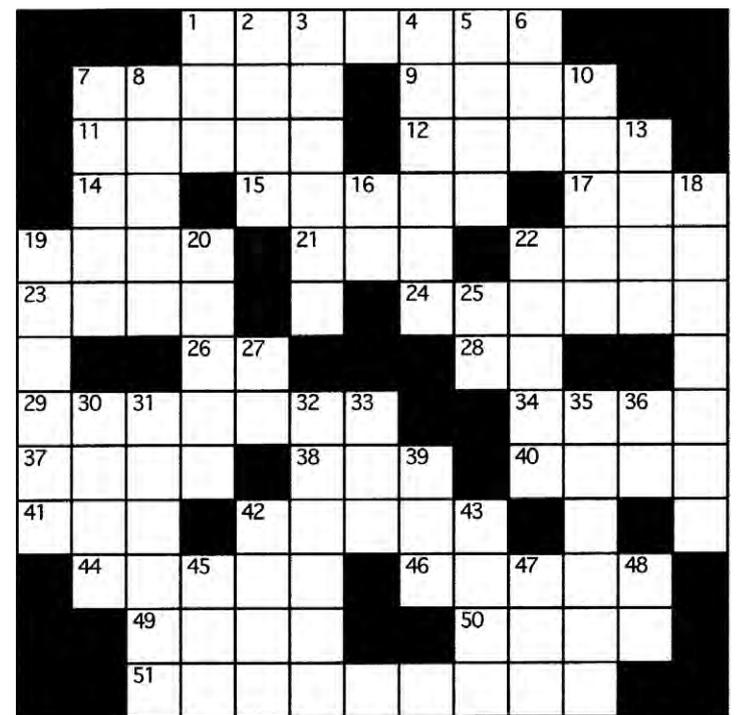
29:26)

- "And thou shalt make ___ of gold" (Exodus 28:13)
- Nuclear (abbr.)
- Acidity measurement
- Lunch stop
- "Kish the son of ___" (Judges 9:31)
- "Behold, Gaal the son of ___" (Judges 9:31)
- Scull
- Orderly
- "So Daniel was taken up out of the ___" (Daniel 6:23)
- "God smote him there for his ___" (2 Samuel 6:7)
- "And Moses was fourscore ___ old" (Exodus 7:7)
- "Bigvai, ___, Baanah" (Nehemiah 7:7)
- "We came to ___, a city of Lycia" (Acts 27:5)
- "Let the wicked fall into their own ___" (Psalm 141:10)
- "In making brick both ___ and to day" (Exodus 5:14)

Down

- "Shall play on the hole of the ___" (Isaiah 11:8)

- Tackle
- "Let her not be ___ one ___" (Numbers 12:12)
- "And ___ so require, let him ___ what he will" (1 Corinthians 7:36)
- Swing
- Vietnam War offensive
- "Called the name thereof ___; and it was like coriander seed" (Exodus 16:31)
- "Aaron and his sons shall ___ it" (Exodus 27:21)
- "When he ___ thee, he will be glad" (Exodus 4:14)
- "Yet thou hast said, I know thee by ___" (Exodus 33:12)
- "And the king of ___ they took alive" (Joshua 8:23)
- "But when Pharoah saw that there was ___" (Exodus 8:15)
- "Therefore they took a key, and ___ them" (Judges 3:25)
- "And thou shalt ___ by the river's brink" (Exodus 7:15)
- "And Joshua said unto ___" (Joshua 7:19)
- "And Moses went ___ unto God" (Exodus 19:3)



- Titanium
- "If ye will ___ my voice indeed" (Exodus 19:5)
- "Hast thou found me, ___ mine ___?" (1 Kings 21:20)
- "___ rejoiced; I ___ alone" (Jeremiah 15:17)
- Snook
- "For glory and for ___" (Exodus 28:2)
- Government legal counsel

- (abbr.)
- Reagan nickname
- Makes a mistake
- "Neither ___ your clothes" (Leviticus 10:6)
- Yes
- "That ___ was ___ goodly child" (Exodus 2:2)
- Codex (abbr.)

For answers, see page 18.

The New Jerusalem will be better than imagined

BY MICHAEL K. OLMSTED

Let's go beyond the words of some of the old church songs — words like: "I've got a mansion just over the hilltop" and "Will there be any stars in my crown."



M.K. OLMSTED

After the writer of Hebrews has shown us that Jesus' name is greater than any other, that Jesus is a leader beyond compare, a better priest and sacrifice,

he concludes that Jesus leads us to "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (12:22). The images in Hebrews are varied and complex, but they always urge us on to the hope of God in Christ.

We must study how Jesus lived and follow his example daily because he is "the pioneer and perfecter of our faith" (12:2). We must accept Jesus' gift of life through the cross because he died "for the sake of the joy that was set before him, (he) endured the cross, disregarding its shame" (12:2).

We must celebrate our ultimate hope in Christ who "has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God" (12:2).

Most of us struggle with the mystical,

those ideas that cannot be reduced to the physical senses or something that stands on the sidewalk in front of us. But consider how many times we will act foolishly, even though we know the probable consequences.

Read all the narratives of Israel and list how many times God worked miracles on their behalf, called out special leaders and granted them victory against impossible odds. If that were not enough, God sent his only begotten Son into our flesh-and-blood world as the ultimate hope! The writer beautifully expresses God's gift of life: "You have not come to something that can be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that not another word be spoken" (12:18-19).

In Jesus, we have seen the very face of God, but we must still work by faith because we cannot fully grasp or understand what we have seen. God is more! The God who is mystical, mysterious and magnificent tells us that when the pil-

grimage of life is concluded in this world, we will come to him in that celestial city, where angels will celebrate in unbridled joy and we will see the transfigured Christ, the mediator of a new covenant (12:22-24).

Before that incomparable day, we celebrate, discover hope and learn the true meaning of grace by telling others about

Jesus. Hebrews 13:9 offers a clue to the writer's focus on grace rather than observing rules as a way to know God. Mention is made of being "carried away by all kinds of strange teachings ...regulations about

food, which have not benefited." The writer follows with a different idea — that we live in gratitude to Christ.

First, we should "continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God." Second, this praise is "the fruit of lips that confess his name." Third, we should "not neglect to do good and share what we have."

Within our "church" world, we rehash the ideas of living righteously to win God's approval and of living generously because that is the result of experiencing God's grace. This conflict appears in

song lyrics, in church programming, even in political rhetoric! We cannot seem to let go of the idea that the "good life" — prosperity and peace of mind — can be earned, won or deserved. Yet everything Jesus did and said slams into our selfish and prideful thinking.

This heavenly city, where the victorious Christ sits enthroned, where angels sing, where the redeemed of God sing with majesty beyond anything ever known in the world, is not where we hit the jackpot or live in luxury. We may marvel at golden streets, but how valuable is gold when it is a substitute for asphalt? We may dream of "pearly gates," but they cannot compare to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

All those florid grandiose metaphors about heaven simply tell us it will be better than we can imagine. No cancer, no heartbreak, no loneliness, no suffering, no evil will be in that new city. There will be total healing, unlimited grace, a never-ending new day, love at its purest, and God gathering up his children as though he will never let them out of his sight.

Welcome to the heavenly Jerusalem.

Retired after 45 years in pastoral ministry, Michael Olmsted enjoys family, supply preaching and interim work, literature, history, the arts and antiques.

Formations

June 2

Scripture:

Hebrews 12:1-2, 18-24,
13:10-16

Grace and love must be given away

BY MICHAEL K. OLMSTED

Hebrews 4:12 reminds us of the power of God's word: "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (New American Standard). Carry these first-century-AD words back 2,500 years to the return of the exiles from Babylon to Jerusalem and witness how God's word can impact human lives.

When Cyrus of Persia defeated the Babylonians in 539 BC he decreed the Jewish exiles could return home, but many chose to remain where they had put down roots, raised their children and prospered. Those who returned found their temple reduced to a pile of rubble and the walls of Jerusalem destroyed. Nehemiah 1-7 describes the tensions and rebuilding of Jerusalem. Chapter 8 records a spiritual turning and renewal of faith celebration.

It is important to note they gathered on the first day of the seventh month (New Year's Day or Rosh Hashanah), according to Leviticus 23:23-25, reflecting their desire to return to their spiritual roots. They gathered at the Water Gate,

one of 12 they had rebuilt. This "holy convocation" was called for by the people, not religious leaders, and included people from every level of society who could understand the reading of the law (Nehemiah 8:3).

Ezra the Scribe read the "book of the law of Moses which the Lord had given Israel" (Torah or the first five books of the Old Testament) (v. 1). This reading took about six hours "from early morning until midday" (v. 3) and the people "stood up" (v. 5). Thirteen stood with Ezra as he read (a leader and twelve others representing the 12 tribes) and a second set of 13, probably Levites, circulated through the crowd interpreting. Many of the returned exiles no longer understood Hebrew and required an Aramaic translation.

At first there was an appropriate religious response, "Amen, Amen!" Hands were lifted in praise, and then people prostrated themselves on the ground in worship (v. 6). Then in recognition of their sin and faithlessness, the people

began weeping (v. 9).

This dramatic scene is similar to Hilkiah's rediscovery and reading of the law to the sinful people when Josiah became king (2 Chronicles 34:14-32).

What a spectacular New Year's Day — better than the Super Bowl, ham and black-eyed peas! Their blessed city and temple were being restored, and families were coming home. But even more outstanding, God's arms were open in welcome! Confession and repentance were in order, but Ezra declares this is a day to celebrate. The scene is much like Jesus' story of the prodigal son's return in Luke 15:11-24.

People read the Bible for various reasons — to support their preconceived ideas, to establish a right-and-wrong list of behavior, to win an argument, to find errors, to find an answer to their questions or problems, or to seek a new life in God's grace. Why do you read the Bible?

Keep in mind most of these people had never seen Jerusalem, and others were not sure they would ever see Jeru-

salem again. They were aware that exile was punishment for sin, and this reading of the law heightened their sense of guilt and separation from God. But the leaders all said this "day is holy to the Lord your God...no mourning...it's time to celebrate...for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (vv. 9-10).

Reading God's Word should result in forgiveness, a new beginning, the joy that God loves you. Christ has reinforced all the Old Testament stories of forgiveness, new beginnings and the possibilities that come through faith rather than works. Nehemiah tells the people to have a feast and share what they have with those who have little. Those who know the "joy of the Lord" should always share their material and spiritual gifts.

Worship should involve more than our satisfaction and include those who need an experience of God's presence and love. Grace is not grace until it is shared. Love only finds full meaning when it is given without expecting repayment. All this and more Israel learned that day when they read the law in Jerusalem.

Formations

June 9

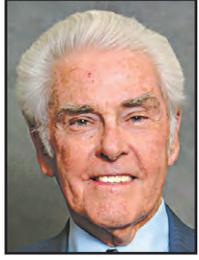
Scripture:

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 6-7, 9-12

God unfolded his story from the beginning

BY JOHN HOWELL

The lessons in this quarter unfold the majestic story of God's creation, his purposes for human life, man's failures that



JOHN HOWELL

violated God's purposes, establishment of God's kingdom in Old Testament terms, the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ to redeem fallen man and woman, and the birth of the church in its ministry to the world. God's story is the central emphasis in each lesson.

These lessons provide a marvelous opportunity to put together major themes of biblical revelation. If you have friends or acquaintances who may not be attending a Sunday School class, this would be a good time to invite them.

The beginning of the story (1:2, 26-27). In exciting Genesis 1, the biblical writer establishes clearly the foundation of human personhood in God's creative activity.

God is the source of all that exists. We live in a time when science and various religions seek to describe how the worlds and all life began. Since any story of human existence must have a beginning, these accounts seek to explain how it happened. The biblical story begins with the concise declaration: "In the begin-

ning God created the heavens and the earth" (1:1). This is a faith statement that bases its truth on the conviction that the Bible is a trustworthy interpretation of God and his creative activity even if the details are not derived from this foundation. This is a faith affirmation since the biblical description of creation is a pre-historical statement that cannot be proven by physical presence at the time.

Man is created in the image of God (1:26-27, 31). The symbolism captures the highest acclaim given to human life when it declares that "God created man in his own image.... And God saw every-

thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (1:26).

Later, the Bible affirms this creation: "God created man, he make him in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created (5:1-2). The word translated "man" in these passages is the generic Hebrew term for all human beings, both male and female. All mankind bears the image of God, even though that image has been affected by sin.

Man and woman bear equal responsibility for sin (2:15-17, 3:6-7). In the biblical record, every person, male or female, bears an equal responsibility for rebelling against their Creator's instruction. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," said the Apostle Paul to the Romans (3:23) "since we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, following the

desire of body and mind, and so were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind" (Ephesians 2:3). There is no distinction in these passages between male and female, all are sinners.

When the newly created male was placed in the Garden of Eden to maintain

it, he was instructed in what he could eat and what was forbidden to him. God recognized his need for companionship and created a woman. In response, Adam said, "This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman' for she was taken out of man."

However, the woman became the object of the evil one's attack. He challenged her faith in God's word and caused her to take some of the forbidden fruit. Then she "also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate

it" (3:6). Adam, to whom the commandment had first been given, joined his wife quite easily in eating the forbidden fruit and, thus, became responsible for his own rebellion against God.

The lasting effects of their sin against God (3:14-19, 22-24). It is often assumed that rebellion against God's will has no long-term consequences. The consequences of the original sin in the Garden illustrate that this is not true. By sinning, we turn from God's story. Sin, therefore, is the fundamental reason we live in a world that doesn't act as God designed it.

In the midst of this tragic result of sin, Genesis 3:15 hints at God's intent to redeem his fallen subjects and recover his story. Most evangelical scholars believe that this verse is the first promise of the coming Redeemer. "The curse upon the serpent includes its final destruction by the descendant of the woman. This animosity is at the instigation of God. The serpent was instrumental in the undoing of the woman, and in turn the woman will ultimately bring down the servant through her offspring" (K. A. Matthews, *Genesis 1-11:26, The New American Commentary*, 1A, p. 245).

God's story has been damaged by the initial couple's sin, but it will not be overcome. God will move to recover his story.

John Howell is academic dean emeritus at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City.

Bible Studies for Life

June 2
Scripture:

Genesis 1:2, 26-27;
2:15-17; 3:6-7, 14-19, 22-24

God chooses a people through Abraham

BY JOHN HOWELL

Genesis 1-11 is usually interpreted as the story of God's relationship to the people whom he created. The story includes experiences of family dysfunction (4:1-16), family development (5:2-32) and the explosiveness of sin in the human family (5:2-32).

"Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and full of violence.... So God said to Noah, 'I'm going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them'" (6:11-12). God commissioned Noah as a righteous man to build an ark in which a sample of earth's human beings and animals would be saved from the flood to begin a new family descent.

God promised never again to curse the ground because of man's sin. He made a covenant with Noah for which the rainbow would be the sign of the covenant and God's promise.

Unfortunately, new humanity still had trouble with faith. They had one language and a unity of life. They decided to build the largest tower ever constructed to make a name for themselves. Their pride led God to scatter them and confuse their language, so they had to stop building the tower and the city they were developing. The tower was called "Babel" because "the Lord confused the language of the whole world" (11:8-10). The story introduces the family of Terah whose

members begin Terah and Abram's history (11:27-22).

The call of Abraham (12:1-7). God's story makes a significant advance in 12:1-3. In his commentary on Genesis, G. Henton Davies declares that these "three verses are the most important in Genesis and indeed in the whole Bible.... The selection of Abram is the beginning of the divine remedy against the dispersal and abandonment.... We follow the narrow pass from Shem to Abram and suddenly the universal expanse of mankind opens before us again" (*Broadman Bible Commentary*, pp. 167, 168).

Terah had planned to take his family to Canaan by following the Fertile Crescent stretching from the tip of the Persian Gulf to the southeastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea. Travelers followed this route for food and water for themselves and for their animals. However, when Terah came to Haran at the north end of the route, he settled there with his family.

It was at Haran that Abram received God's call to leave his father's household

and travel to the land that God would reveal to him. He was told to leave familiar surroundings and make a step-by-step venture to follow God's will, wherever that might lead him.

Abram's obedience to God's call (12:4-7). The command to move also included a blessing for himself, his family and the world to which he would take the message of God's plan.

This year we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Adoniram Judson's ministry in Burma (Myanmar). Laboring for years with no visible converts, Judson worked to translate the Bible into the Burmese language. He also wrote a Burmese dictionary that is still in common use in that country today. His consecration to God kept him in that new and strange country, but his dedicated work has been a blessing to the world.

A relationship of faith (15:3-8, 13-21). As the years passed and Abram had no child with Sarai, he began to doubt God's promise. When he brought his complaint to God, he was again promised that "a son coming from your body will be your heir" (15:4).

God's proof statement was an amazing one for this aging patriarch who wanted so desperately to have children. Abram was taken out into a night filled with stars. Then God said, "So shall your offspring be."

Verse 6 became the anchor pin of the new covenant that God would establish with Abram. In a worship experience, Abram heard God's intent for his family once again, and Abram "believed the Lord and he credited to him as righteousness." New Testament writers picked up this verse as a manifesto that Abram was chosen because of his faith and not because of his works or goodness.

Paul's use of the verse is instructive. He had declared earlier that the "righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe" (Romans 3:22). "What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter?... What does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness" (Romans 4:1, 3). Other references to Genesis 15:6 are in Galatians 3:6 and James 2:23.

The covenant in 15:13 was not a mutual agreement. It called for obedience to God's covenant conditions that guaranteed God's blessing upon the nation when the people devoted themselves to him.

Bible Studies for Life

June 9
Scripture:

Genesis 12:1-7;
15:2-8, 13-17

June WMU PrayerWays

- John Dryden** (Indiana), **Rhonda Simon** (Missouri) and **Carol Barbour** (retired, Southern Africa).
- Lesotho: Summer missionaries **Cara, Debbie, Matt, Jodie and Julie**.
- Betty Sams** (retired, Ohio) and **Ida Claiborne** (retired, Kansas).
- DeNiel Gillen** (American Peoples) and **Bruce Muskrat** (retired, American Peoples).
- Stephen Hagen** (Southeast Asian Peoples).
- That Missouri Baptist churches will partner with the Puebla Baptist Convention in Mexico.
- That **Jeff Christopherson** (Canada) will have an opportunity to work with **Pat and Nadine Armstrong** in Northern Ontario.
- Brenda Lee** (Nebraska), **Lorna Sims** (retired, California), **Donna Willcoxon** (retired, Utah) and **Connie Craig** (Adult Specialist, Missouri WMU).
- Ken McCune** (Missouri), **Joyce Payton** (retired, Montana), **Phillip Brewster** (retired, Pacific Rim, and current director of missions [DOM], St. Francois Association) and **Peggy Smith** (retired, Indiana).
- Richard Carter** (retired, American Peoples). Lesotho: For land for the **Flora family** to build a mission house.
- Lynelle M.** (North Africa Middle East), **Deborah Avery** (Ohio) and **Bill Victor** (Missouri).
- Partnership of Missouri Baptists and Hudson Valley Association, New York.
- Galen Jones** (Georgia) and team from First Baptist Church, Perryton, Texas, as they arrive in Lesotho.
- Tammie Emerson** (Illinois), **Margaret Logan** (retired, Missouri) and **Kathy Scott** (past Missouri WMU director).
- Rachel Weigand** (Sub Saharan African Peoples).
- Betty Jo Hall** (American Peoples), **Bob Warren** (retired, Arizona) and **Joyce Baxter** a (South Central Regional Consultant, Missouri WMU Board).
- Lesotho: Glenstone Baptist Church, Springfield, Mo., team doing pastoral training and village evangelism/discipleship.
- Children and families under the care of Missouri Baptist Children's Home being helped through birthday offerings and the Missouri Missions Offering.
- Loy Reed** (Florida).
- Missionary Kid (MK) **Kennedy Wilbanks** (12, European Peoples), **MK Matthew Hamline** (13, East Asian Peoples) and **Norma Altis** (past Missouri WMU President and current nominating committee chairperson).
- MK Samuel Robertson** (11, Sub Saharan African Peoples).
- Partnership needs of the Western Gateway Cluster of West Africa.
- MK Blake Brandt** (4, Sub Saharan African Peoples) and **Paul Weiblen** (American Peoples).
- For association and state mission offerings that will support missions in Missouri.
- Children who attend Vacation Bible Schools and church and associational camps.
- Jeanne Wright** (retired, East Asia).
- David Stow** (American Peoples), **Daniel Cookson** (California), **Darwin Payton** (Montana), **Loren Turnage** (retired, European Peoples) and **Russell Adams** (DOM, Dallas County Association).
- C.C.** (Journeyman, Southeast Asia).
- Linda Hess** (Missouri), **Glen Johnson** (retired, American Peoples), **Wayne Willcoxon** (retired, Utah), **Joe Coppedge** (DOM, Mid Lakes Association) and **MK Michael Frealy** (2, American Peoples).
- MK Grace Bredbenner** (8, American Peoples), **Ken Harmon** (Oregon), **Kyle Hoover** (Virginia) and **Pauline Seat** (retired, Western Pacific).

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Florida editor to seminary post

Florida Baptist Witness editor James A. "Jim" Smith Sr. is stepping down July 31 to become chief spokesman for

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., the Florida Baptist Convention newspaper reported May 15.

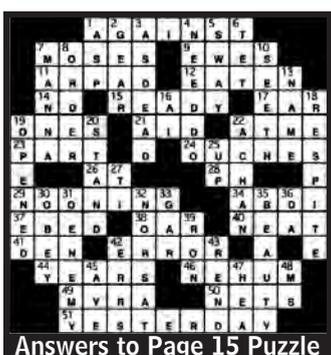
Smith, 48, worked previously at Southern Seminary as news director and director of public relations before succeeding Michael Chute as executive editor of the Jacksonville-based newspaper in 2001.

Smith also worked as information director at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and for six years and was director of government relations at the Southern Baptist Convention Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. He was

the director of communications for the Republican Study Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1987-1989.

In his new position, Smith will oversee the editorial content of seminary publications, supervise the news operation and lead public and media relations. He is expected to start no later than Aug. 1.

In 2011-2012, Smith served as president of the Association of State Baptist Publications, the fellowship of state Baptist newspaper editors. (ABP)



Answers to Page 15 Puzzle

Right or Wrong?

CONFLICT DIVIDES OUR CHURCH. MEMBERS HAVE FORMED FACTIONS SIMILAR TO THOSE THE APOSTLE PAUL IDENTIFIED AMONG THE GALATIANS. HOW CAN WE RESTORE A CHRIST-LIKE ATMOSPHERE IN OUR CONGREGATION?

Regrettably, conflict has existed in the church since the church began. All the New Testament writers address this problem at some point, with Paul addressing it multiple times. Each author writes in quite direct language and tone, commanding the church not to act in such a manner. The writers believed the people needed to be reminded of a few essential truths.

They emphasized division is the result of sin and not a characteristic of God's kingdom. James 4 urges the church to realize members' quarrels and fights were the result of sin, particularly selfishness. Such selfishness leads to division. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 1 to remind the church that Christ is not divided. Some people were choosing to set themselves up as followers of one individual or another, but Paul insists they were all to be followers singularly devoted to Christ. All the people involved, including leaders, were merely servants to one master. The point is unity reflects the body of Christ; division reflects the way of the world.

Paul then reminds the church they have been called to be more than that. In 1 Corinthians 3, he calls them to be more than "mere men," the worldly who know no better than to act in such a divisive way. He commands them instead, in Ephesians 4, to live lives worthy of the calling they have received in Christ. The church is to be humble, patient and loving, making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Paul super-emphasizes unity — one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. Unity is the common denominator of the church.

This unity is achieved by the transforming work of Christ in the hearts of people. Those who have been transformed are to be patient and forgiving, bearing one another's burdens, working together in harmony, effectively putting on the new self in Christ. Paul, Peter and John all insist these are not optional characteristics, but foundational proof of the gospel and its effects.

Based on such confidence, the New Testament writers did not hesitate to confront such conflict for what it is — an evil opposed to the very nature and work of God's church. They made personal confrontations and urged their readers to do likewise. Paul told Titus rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers must be silenced, and divisive people must be warned to change their ways.

Someone in your church — you, your pastor, the deacons, somebody — must have the courage to confront the division and the dividers. It must be done in love, though. The process of mediating the conflict and working toward healing the divisions can take time, and must be done with patience.

Van Christian, pastor
First Baptist Church
Comanche, Texas

Church leaders tackle stigma of mental illness, need resources

By **BOB SMIETANA**

USA Today

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (RNS) — Frank Page, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, was getting ready to work in the yard in the fall of 2009 when the phone rang. His daughter was on the line.

"Daddy, I love you," she said. "Tell Mama and the girls I love them, too." Then she was gone.

Melissa Page Strange, 32, took her own life just after hanging up the phone with her dad.

"I do not want you to imagine what that is like," he said.

For years, Page did not share the painful details of Melissa's death, fearing that some Christians might speak ill of her if they knew. Mental illness and suicide were taboo topics for many churches, seen as a kind of spiritual failure.

But that may be starting to change.

Page and several other Baptist leaders plan to meet in Dallas this spring to address mental illness. The meeting was prompted by the Newtown, Conn., school shooting and has gained more urgency since the suicide of Matthew Warren, 27-year-old son of California megachurch pastor Rick Warren.

Matthew Warren's suicide last month has prompted a number of evangelical leaders to talk about how churches can better help those dealing with mental illness in their congregations.

Page, now president and chief executive officer of the convention's Nashville-based executive committee, is telling his daughter's story in a forthcoming book titled *Melissa*.

He hopes the book will help other families who are grieving from suicide. He also hopes to take away some of the stigma and shame that surrounds mental illness.

"There is a sense that everything you have tried has failed," he said.

Bill Ritter, author of *Take the Dimness of My Soul Away: Healing After a Loved One's Suicide*, said people affected by mental illness often steer clear of church. Some feel ashamed and others are just overwhelmed.

"For as much as we talk about the church as the place you turn when life is falling apart — the reality is that people often stay away from church when life is falling apart," he said.

Ritter was pastor of First United Methodist Church in Birmingham, Mich., in the early 1990s when his 27-year-old son, Bill, took his own life. A few weeks after the funeral, Ritter talked about his son's struggles in a

sermon.

Sharing his story made it easier for other people in the church to talk about how mental illness had affected their own families, he said. "You can't heal what you can't name," he said.

Ed Stetzer, president of Nashville-based LifeWay Research, wants to see more churches discuss mental illness openly. A longtime friend of Warren and Page, Stetzer knew of Matthew Warren's struggles with depression, which resisted treatment.

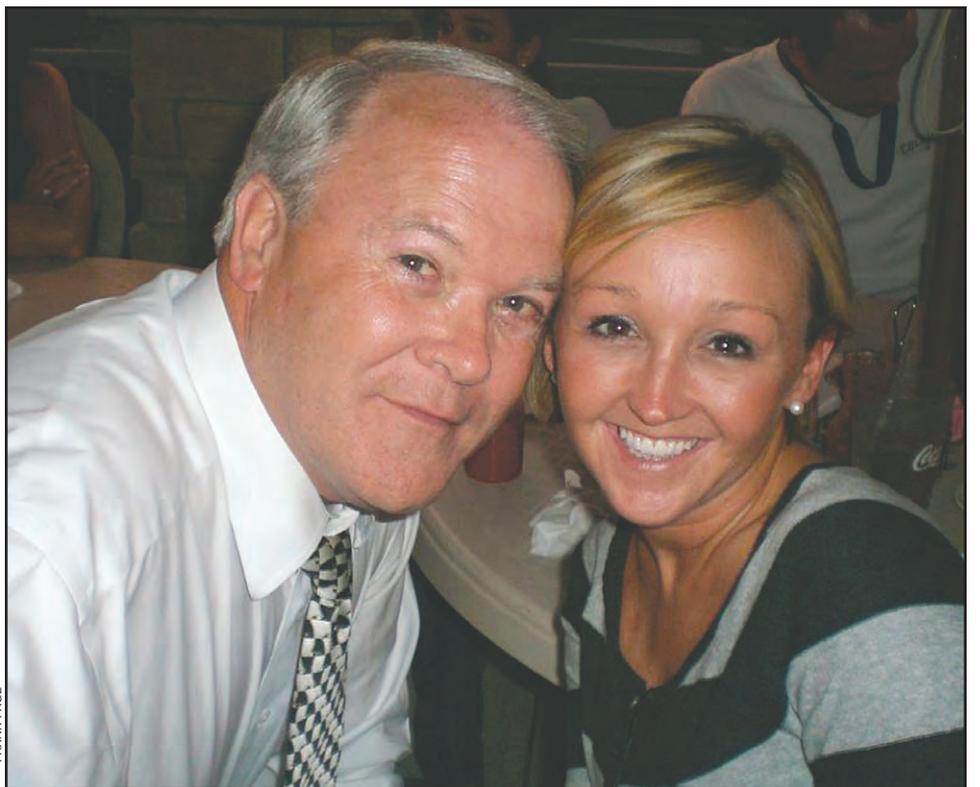
In a blog post after learning of Matthew's suicide, Stetzer wrote about how mental illness has affected his own family. Several of his relatives have taken their lives, as did a

are dealing with addiction, while others have depression or other mental illness. Some had been told that faith could solve their problems, said McKnight — but it's not that easy.

"We would never tell someone who is nearsighted that it's because they don't have enough faith," he said. "We do that with people who deal with depression."

McKnight helped start Celebrate Recovery at his church because of a personal meltdown about 10 years ago. At first he was resistant, thinking his troubles weren't as bad as those of people dealing with drug addiction or other issues.

Then the light bulb came on, he



The Rev. Frank Page, president and chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, with his daughter Melissa Page Strange, 32, who took her own life in 2009.

parishioner in a church that he served as a young pastor.

"We need to stop hiding mental illness," he said.

Stetzer said some evangelical Christians think that if they pray enough or become more spiritual, then their mental illness will go away. But they don't look at other health issues the same way.

"People who become a Christian and have a broken leg will still have a broken leg," he said. "We tend to think that Jesus fixes what is in our heads, and medicine fixes what is in our body. Sometimes what is in our heads needs medicine."

David McKnight agrees.

A physician by trade, McKnight leads the Celebrate Recovery support group at Belle Aire Baptist Church in Murfreesboro, Tenn. The group, which is about 10 years old, draws between 35 and 60 people to the church on Tuesday nights.

The program is part of a national movement, first started at Warren's Saddleback Church. Some members

said, and he realized that he, too, had struggles and it was OK to admit to them. McKnight said that growing up in church, he'd learned to keep up appearances, even when life was difficult.

"Too often in churches there is this belief that you have to be perfect — that you have to keep a smile on your face when your world is falling apart," he said.

David Thomas, director of men's and boys' counseling for Daystar Counseling Ministries in Nashville, hopes churches will discuss the issue in church services as well as support groups. He said many churches have started talking about finances in recent years because of the economic downturn. Thomas thinks churches need to do the same for mental illness.

"We have very defined resources for families that are struggling financially," he said. "We don't have defined resources for families who are struggling emotionally — and we need them."

Right or Wrong? is co-sponsored by the Texas Baptist theological education office and Christian Life Commission. Send your questions about how to apply your faith to bill.tillman@texasbaptists.org.

Candida Moss debunks 'myth' of Christian persecution

BY LAUREN MARKOE

Religion News Service

Growing up Catholic in England, Candida Moss was told in church that Christians have been persecuted since the dawn of Christianity. Now, as a theologian, she wants to set the record straight.

Too many modern Christians invoke, to lamentable effect, an ancient history of persecution that didn't exist, Moss argues in her newly published book, *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented A Story of Martyrdom*.

Although anti-Christian prejudice was fairly widespread in the church's first 300 years, she writes, "the prosecution of Christians was rare, and the persecution of Christians was limited to no more than a handful of years."

Religion News Service asked Moss, professor of New Testament and early Christianity at the University of Notre Dame, to talk about the travails of early Christians, and how they are misappropriated in the public sphere today.

Q: You argue that modern myths of Christian persecution are rooted in an ancient myth, and you focus on Pliny, a first- and second-century Roman who governed what is now Turkey. Why should we know about him?

A: He's the first Roman official to actually talk about Christians. He writes to the Emperor Trajan and says, "What am I supposed to do about them? They're not doing anything wrong, but when they're in the courtroom they're very stubborn." Those charges could get you killed in the Roman world. And Pliny has other concerns: Christians were not purchasing the meat associated with the Roman temples. And he thinks of Christians not as a religious group, but prone to superstition, which the Romans considered a kind of madness that could spread like a disease.

Pliny and Trajan agree that there will be no seeking out of Christians, but if they do end up in courtrooms and are stubborn, he will give them three chances to curse Christ and make a sacrifice in the Roman temple. If they don't, they will be killed. I'm not saying what Pliny did was right, but it's very far from the story I grew up with, about Christians being hunted down.

Q: Isn't that persecution though? They're not being sought out, but if they do wind up in court, there's a decent chance they're going to die.

A: Is it persecution? I'd say it comes fairly close to the line. I'm not saying it's just. But it was illegal to be part of a secret club at the time. It was illegal to be stubborn toward a Roman judge. It's not that they're being persecuted for having a Trinity. They are being executed for breaking the law.

I want to understand what, from

the ancient Roman perspective, was the problem with Christians. The Romans tolerated lots of religious groups. They only really acted in situations where they thought the group was dangerous, and Christians talk about their new emperor Christ. They talk about how they cannot respect the Roman government. A lot of them say they won't join the military. They're very subversive. But this is a world where religious freedom isn't a right; it just doesn't exist as a concept yet.

Q: Critics of your book — even if they agree that there was no concerted, sustained campaign to root out and kill the early Christians — argue that this was nonetheless a dark and dangerous period for them.

A: The situation was terrible and



Candida Moss

we should be attentive to that, but distinctions need to be made. The Emperor Decius (who in the third century required everyone in the empire to make a sacrifice to his divine spirit) didn't really know what his edict would mean for Christians and he wasn't trying to attack them. He was basically trying to bolster the Roman Empire.

In a contemporary discussion, Catholics feel very strongly about the Obama administration's contraceptive mandate. President Obama is not trying to harm Catholics or Christians generally; he is trying to provide health care. Catholics can disagree with him very strongly, but unless he's trying to attack Catholics, as long as we believe he is interested in health care, we can continue to have a discussion with him.

There's been a lot of back and forth between the Catholic bishops and the Obama administration. That's a different situation than if we were in a country where legislation was passed that said "Christians can't own Bibles" or "you can't go to church."

Q: Who is capitalizing on the myth of Christian persecution?

A: When people talk about being persecuted in modern America, I think it's dangerous. I'm talking about everyone from Rick Santorum to Mitt Romney to Catholic bishops, and Bill O'Reilly talking about a war on Easter. The problem with this is that it destroys dialogue. Persecutors don't have legitimate complaints so you can't really have productive discussions.

But you can disagree with someone sharply on the basis of your religious beliefs without accusing them of persecution. When you say they're persecuting you, you're basically accusing them of acting with Satan.

Q: So how are you going to convince someone like Bill O'Reilly to quit claiming that American Christians are persecuted?

A: What I try to do in the book is to not talk about the issues but to talk about the rhetoric. So I give examples of people from the religious left who are doing it. I'm critical of them, too.

We've all got to take a look at our own causes and say, "I'm not going to use this language. I'm going to see that other people have good intentions." That's how you really have productive discussions with people.

Q: But you believe there is real persecution of Christians in the world today?

A: Yes, there is. It's a "boy-who-cried-wolf" situation. One of the reasons we are not hearing about them is because of all of the cries of persecution here — and local cries about persecution overshadow the global ones. We do need to hear those stories about Christians in other parts of the world, but we need to make sure that instead of talking about the global war on Christianity — which a lot of Christian and Catholic reporters have done — that we tell the story in a way that doesn't do violence to other persecuted groups.

Christians live in a very difficult situation in China, for example. But it's not so much part of a global war on Christianity as it is the Chinese government's treatment of the religious in general. If we make it just about the war on Christianity then we betray people like the Falun Gong, who are very persecuted in China.

Q: People use inflammatory rhetoric to score points all the time. Is there something worse about religiously inflammatory rhetoric than inflammatory rhetoric in general?

A: The problem with religious rhetoric, if we're talking about a battle between God and Satan, is that the stakes are much higher. If we're talking about "God is demanding you to do this," you can't have a conversation after that. Because religion is such a lightning rod, it means that whenever we use religious texts or religious language, we have to be especially sensitive to the power of those ideas.



VATICAN SIGNS FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY ACCORD WITH U.S. OFFICIALS.

In a bid to improve its checkered record on financial transparency, the Vatican May 7 signed a cooperation agreement with the U.S. agency that fights against financial crimes. The Vatican's Institute for the Works of Religion, known as the Vatican Bank, has a long history of secrecy and scandals, and has reportedly been involved in several shady operations during its history. For decades, the Vatican Bank operated outside of international oversight, thanks to the Holy See's status as an independent state. Facing increasing international scrutiny, the Vatican set up an independent financial watchdog, the Financial Intelligence Authority, in April 2011 as part of its effort to bring its financial practices in line with international standards. The move was partially a consequence of new rules set by the European Union that threatened to shut the Vatican out of financial markets if it didn't comply with international regulations against money laundering and the financing of terrorism. The Vatican Bank has assets estimated as high as \$9 billion. Last year, it contributed with a \$61 million gift to the Vatican budget.

BRITISH CHURCH ATTENDANCE STABILIZES AFTER YEARS OF DECLINE.

The number of people attending Sunday services at Britain's Anglican churches is continuing to drop, but church officials say there are signs that the decline is starting to stabilize. A spokesperson for the Church of England said May 7 that average weekly attendance at the nation's 16,247 Anglican parishes was 1.1 million in 2011, a drop of just 0.3 percent from 2010. The annual statistics reveal a substantial increase in some attendance: Christmas churchgoing rose by 14 percent, christenings were up 4.3 percent, and adult baptisms were up 5 percent. The 1.1 million Britons in church pales in comparison to the estimated 22 million who are considered official members of the Church of England. Overall Sunday attendance is down from 1.14 million in 2000, falling about 1 percent a year until 2011.

CATHOLIC POPULATION SURGES ACROSS THE GLOBAL SOUTH.

Gains in Asia and Africa are making up for losses in Europe among the world's 1.2 billion Catholics, according to Vatican statistics released May 13, signaling a shift of the church's center of gravity toward the Global South that was heralded by the election of the first Latin American pope. Data published in the 2013 *Statistical Yearbook of the Church* also show that while the number of priests in the Americas and in Europe is declining compared to the overall Catholic population, those losses were offset by increasing ranks of permanent deacons worldwide, a 40 percent increase over the past decade. According to Vatican data, the Catholic population worldwide surpassed 1.2 billion in 2011. But while growth in the Americas and Europe mirrored the growth of the general population, Catholic growth in Africa and Asia was almost double the regions' population growth. The world's 413,418 priests at the end of 2011 showed a slight increase from the previous year, continuing a trend of slow growth that began in 2000 after decades of decline. A rapid increase in vocations in Africa and Asia — more than 3,000 new priests in a year — balanced the shrinking ranks of the priesthood in Europe.