



The Voice of Appalachia

Southern Baptists on Mission in the Appalachian Region

KBC Seeks to Strengthen Work in Poverty-Stricken Areas



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Communications

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LOUISVILLE – Every night in Eastern Kentucky, one out of every five children goes to bed hungry. In this same region nearly 800,000 people have no relationship with Christ.

It's numbers like these that motivate thousands of volunteers each year for ministry in Eastern Kentucky. It's also what has motivated Teresa Parrett, missions mobilization coordinator for the

KBC, to develop a vision to extend that same kind of volunteerism across other poor areas in Kentucky.

Poverty in Eastern Kentucky is extreme, she said, but "you can find it in other parts of the state as well." Parrett is hoping to connect volunteers to ministry opportunities in those unreached areas.

Currently, Eastern Kentucky receives nearly 25,000 volunteers annually. Parrett, who had served as KBC missions coordinator for Eastern Kentucky since 1999 before being promoted to her new role in April, said her job is to match volunteers and resources to the needs of people in the region.

"I get calls weekly...of people just wanting to do missions work," said Parrett. Her desire is for the same type of work that has been taking place in Eastern Kentucky to be carried into the central and western parts of the state.

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In The Spotlight

Freedom Baptist Church, church plant in Kanawha City (Charleston), WV August, 17th Sunday morning worship service at Freedom Baptist Church was incredible. During the sermon invitation four people responded publicly to make decisions. Among those four people, there were two decisions to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, one decision to be baptized, and three decisions to join Freedom Baptist Church. Amen!

The summer of 2008 has been full of hustle and bustle, we (Freedom Baptist Church) have had mission teams come as far as South Carolina and Florida to help with "Mission Freedom." God continues to move in an extraordinary way. During the summer months, Freedom Baptist Church has witnessed 60 salvations! So far, that is a total of 62 salvations for the year of 2008.

Though she is working to expand volunteerism across other regions, Parrett said Eastern Kentucky has long been and will continue to be a focus for the KBC.

Since 1999, the KBC has worked closely with Appalachian Regional Ministries and its director, Bill Barker, a North American Mission Board missionary.

ARM serves Eastern Kentucky counties, working to meet the area's many needs by creating jobs and spreading hope. Barker said 29 of the 100 most poverty-stricken counties in America are in Eastern Kentucky, while 21 of these counties are considered severe poverty.

The KBC also works in coordination with the Mississippi River Ministry, which addresses poverty needs along the Mississippi River area.

"We are seeing that as we address the physical needs of the people that there is an openness to the message of Jesus Christ," said Barker.

This summer, many volunteers have ministered to children through camps, backyard Bible clubs and block parties, along with the usual assistance with food. In some areas, ARM volunteers provided hot lunches to children who do not have food at home, said Barker.

Across the country, individuals and church groups contact ARM looking for opportunities to serve, often after hearing about the ministry from one of Barker's presentations or reading about the ministry in various publications.

Parrett said most volunteers work three to five days at a time, but these same people often return to the same area several times, which often produces greater effectiveness.

"They work through the local church or community center and join in on the work already being done," said Parrett.

ARM's primary outreach ministries include assisting families with home repairs and churches with building repairs, as well as helping churches develop or carry out vacation Bible schools.

To read the rest of the story go to www.kybaptist.org/kbc/welcome.nsf/pages/parrett2008.

For more information on available projects in Appalachia or in Eastern Kentucky go to www.arministry.org.

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Appalachian Regional Ministry (A.R.M.) is a partnership ministry of the NAMB, the WMU and eleven SBC state conventions within the ten state area served by A.R.M. The Director, Bill Barker, is a National NAMB Missionary.

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