

Bro. Jessie answers call to be missionary in Niger

By MARK MAYNARD
KENTUCKY TODAY

Many prayers are answered in unexpected ways. About five years ago, Greensburg Baptist Church senior pastor Blake Jessie and associate pastor Todd Young began praying that the Lord raise up someone out of the congregation to go to the mission field. After two years of praying, Jessie and his wife Emily came into Young's office and closed the door behind them. The Lord had answered the prayer: It was them. "Sometimes you don't know exactly what you're praying for," Young said. "Many prayers we prayed for the Lord to raise up someone from the congregation, neither of us thought it would be them. It would be somebody else." Jessie said God had been raising up men from the church to become preachers, but they had not seen any missionaries. "We started praying that God would move hearts within the congregation. I had no idea it would be me and my family. I had no idea what the Lord was doing." Jessie ends his time as senior pastor at Greensburg Baptist on Sunday morning after 15 years that followed three years as the church's youth minister. His leaving is "bittersweet," Jessie said. "It's people that we love, a church that we love. Our kids' grandparents are 10 to 15 minutes up the road. It has been a special place." The Jessies have

a mission assignment in Niger, Africa through the Reaching and Teaching organization. They will serve for two years and then came back to the States for a few months and then return or another two years in the cycle. The plan is for Jessie to begin a pastoral internship program and to make disciples. Jessie is passionate about evangelism and Niger is only 2% Christian out of 26 million people. "That's a lot of people not hearing the gospel, not seeing the gospel," he said. "Some people will say we have a lot of that here, but the difference is access. We have believers and churches here that there's not there." Jessie is leaving a beloved church family and his four children's close relationship with grandparents. But the call from the Lord is strong and this is what is being asked of him in this season of life. "For the sake of the name! That's the reason we go with joy to make His name known throughout the nations," he said, referencing Matthew 19:29 and Romans 1:5. Jessie has only been to Niger once, in January, but he and his wife went to Kenya in 2021 and he was in Zimbabwe in 2017. His first mission trip was in 2005 to Costa Rica in the Rain Forest. "It was extreme, taking the gospel to people who had never heard," he said. "That was where it (the passion) began. I wasn't even married at that point." Ed Pavy, his father-in-law, has been an inspiration to him. Pavy was a longtime campus minister at



Bro. Blake Jessie

Campbellsville. "I think he's been on every continent," he said. "His life shaped my wife's life and our love for the nations. That's where it really began. We had some connections in Honduras with a lot of medical folks in church. It was great avenues for those folks to serve. We took teams five or six times. "Later we got connected with the KBC (Kentucky Baptist Convention), the IMB partnership there got us to Zimbabwe where we met Nick and Kendra Moore. Doug Williams of the KBC was leading that. We spent a week in country and all of us split up and went to different pastors. We preached to other preachers in the area. When I think about missions, that's what I want to do." The Moores were inspirations since, like them, they are missionaries with big families. The Moores have seven children while the Jessies have three sons and one daughter: River, Josiah, Judah and Pavy. Jessie said they will be able to do some short-term trainings with pastors. "We will be doing training, some theological and also how



Photo by Karla Deaton

Blake and Emily Jessie with children. The family will be going to Niger, Africa as missionaries in July after serving 18 years at Greensburg Baptist Church.

do you preach," he said. "It's an opportunity to be involved in the local church there learning, counseling and involved with my family and other families. How do you be a faithful husband, a godly father? There's a lot to it." Jessie said Greensburg Baptist will always be home to them. "The church is our family," he said. "We love them, it's a precious flock. They've loved us, loved our family well. They are wanting to take the gospel to this community and ultimately to the nations. It has been a great journey

and we were indebted. Our lives are different because of them. Wherever we go, we're taking them with us. They have impacted our souls and the souls of our children. "We're not leaving because things

are hard or bad. We could stay here the rest of our lives. God has been sharpening our desires." The church will honor the family Sunday evening. They will be leaving for Niger in July.

George Dody Bell, 59

George Dody Bell of Green County, son of the late George Albert "Dody" Bell and Minnie Frances Bulley Carman, was born on Wednesday, June 12, 1963 in Taylor County, and departed this life on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 at his home. He was 59 years, 11 months, and 4 days of age. He was a truck driver for Nall's Specialized Hauling

Company in Elizabethtown. Survivors include two sisters: Patricia Kay Walker and fiancé, Tommy Ballard of Bardstown, and Lisa Rodgers and husband, Mark of Campbellsville; two nephews and two nieces: Grant Bennett of New Haven, Marcus Rodgers of Campbellsville, Kendrea Ward of Bardstown, and Kayla Clark of

Columbia; and a host of other relatives and friends. Besides his parents, Mr. Bell was also preceded in death by his dad: Howard Carman; and a brother: Stephen "Pete" Bell. The funeral services were held Sunday, May 21, 2023 at the Cowherd and Parrott Funeral Home with burial in the Bell Cemetery. Bro. Dale Warren officiated.

Pallbearers: Mark Rodgers, Marcus Rodgers, Tommy Ballard, Todd Elmore, Brandon Munn, The family has asked that expressions of sympathy take the form of donations to the Bell Cemetery Fund, which can be made at the funeral home. For online condolences: www.cowherdandparrott.com or Facebook.



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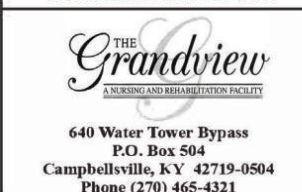
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Blind Spots

We all have our blind spots—literal or figurative things that we can't see or realize about ourselves—and we can't see them, because they are, by definition, hidden from us. Therefore we need people who will tell us our faults and point out the things that we just can't see or accept. Societies and cultures have blind spots too. Think of how long many Americans, and most of "civilization," defended slavery as an institution. What our current societal blind spots are is something that only history will bear out, but what our personal blind spots are is something which we can have some control over. Instead of reacting defensively to criticism—as most of us do—we should be quick to accept it, or at least to reflect on it honestly, and try to ferret out the kernel of truth that is usually there in even the harshest criticism. It's not always wise to be the one delivering the criticism; most people don't accept it without some hard feelings. Unless we're perfect, we're going to be on the receiving end of criticism, and it is sometimes the job of people to deliver it, such as teachers, coaches, and managers. So instead of reacting defensively, thank the person, and consider how you might amend your life. —Christopher Simon



"Whoever heeds life-giving correction will be at home among the wise. Those who disregard discipline despise themselves, but the one who heeds correction gains understanding." Proverbs 15:31-32 NIV

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