

# REFLECTOR

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February 4, 1998

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## Change needed to reach secular world: Hunter



By Lonnie Wilkey  
Baptist and Reflector

**BRENTWOOD** — Churches need to be willing to adapt its approaches in order to

reach a more secular world, says church growth expert George Hunter.

Hunter, a dean and professor at Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Ky., addressed staff of the Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board ministries during a retreat here last week.

Secular people are defined as those "not substantially influenced by the Christian religion," Hunter said. While secular people have been around for years, they were not as prevalent as they are today, he noted.

"Today secular people are everywhere, in every community across America, in increasing numbers," said Hunter, author of *How To Reach Secular People and Church for the Unchurched*.

He cited Gallup Poll data from last October that shows 117 million Americans, or 41 percent of people in America age 14 or older, indicate they have no religious affiliation.

In addition, he said, there are 86 million, or 30 percent, "nominal Christians" — Christians in name only who indicate a religious preference.

"That adds up to a substantial mission

field," Hunter observed.

The Kentucky theologian noted there are some 360,000 churches of various denominations across America.

Of those, he said, 81 percent have stagnant or declining membership trends. Of the other 19 percent, 18 percent of their growth is primarily biological or transplanted growth.

Less than 1 percent of churches are growing by conversion growth, Hunter said.

A problem, Hunter observed, is fewer and fewer churches in ratio to the population. In 1900 there were 27 churches for every 10,000 people, Hunter said. By 1996, the number of churches for every 10,000 people had dropped to 11. Adding to the problem is most churches are where "the people used to live." Hunter noted that in 1870 the country was 10 percent urban and 90 percent rural. Predictions are that by the year 2005 through 2010, those figures will be reversed, he said.

Hunter observed "the way we do church doesn't relate to the kind of world pre-Christian (secular) people live in."

He cautioned against churches becoming "culturally irrelevant." "If the culture keeps changing and churches do not, sometime in the 21st century, churches in

America will be considered the Amish of the 21st century," Hunter said.

He noted the majority of churches today are "still doing church" the way it was done in the 1950s.

Churches must become relevant not only to reach secular people, but to keep their own kids as well, Hunter contended.

Hunter listed five attributes of an apostolic or growing church:

- ▶ Church is deeply convinced Christianity is a revealed faith.
- ▶ The church deeply roots its people in Scripture.
- ▶ The church is disciplined and expectant in prayer.
- ▶ The church likes, understands, and has a compassion for lost people.
- ▶ Obedience to the Great Commission is the church's primary business.

Hunter stressed he is not advocating an abandonment of traditional services for the contemporary style. There are still "satisfied customers" of this approach, he noted.

He predicted the wave of the future will be churches that include a traditional service and one or more contemporary services. "I'm convinced of the strategy of change through addition rather than substitution," Hunter said.

Hunter observed the concept of a "contemporary, user-friendly service is not a new, radical idea. It has been done for 150 or more years on Sunday evenings," he reminded Executive Board staff. ■



HUNTER

### Giving to TBC CP sets record pace

For Baptist and Reflector

**BRENTWOOD** — Tennessee Baptists gave \$3,384,074 to the Cooperative Program in January.

During the first three months of the fiscal year which began last November, Tennessee Baptists gave a record \$8,262,211 through the Cooperative Program, according to James Porch, executive director of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

The three-months total is an increase of \$167,438 over the same period of the previous fiscal year.

"Once again, Tennessee Baptists have demonstrated their commitment to missions, evangelism, Christian education, and Christian benevolent care through the Cooperative Program," Porch observed. ■

## Baptist Hospital emphasizes prayer

By Wm. Fletcher Allen  
Baptist and Reflector

**NASHVILLE** — Most Christians believe that prayer is essential in healing the body — along with skills of physicians, proper medicine, and general health care.

Baptist Hospital here goes one step further — prayer is vital in the lives of many of its employees. This is true in the corporate sense, and relationships, says David Stringfield, hospital president.

More than 300 hospital employees and a few hospital friends celebrated with a prayer luncheon Jan. 29.

Roger Staubach, former Dallas Cowboys star quarterback, was the inspirational speaker. The Hall of Fame player gave a personal testimony of his Christian life.

Staubach stressed the importance of balance in life. "Balance comes from faith in Christ," he said. "We have a little bit of the apostles in us,"

he added. Staubach said we all have a gathering side to our lives — feelings and desires. That is balanced with the sharing side which puts self in the situations of others.

Three employees told of their Christian involvement at the hospital. It was just a year ago when about 100 gathered

to embark on a prayer plan at the hospital. It took root among employees, Stringfield said last week.

There are numerous prayer and Bible study groups now, with a defined plan to increase them dramatically. All employees will have opportunity to be involved. *B&R*



**PASTOR DEAN HAUN** of Hermitage Hills Church, Hermitage, and his wife, Pam, visit with former Dallas Cowboy great Roger Staubach, center, and Baptist Hospital President David Stringfield during a prayer luncheon held last week at the Nashville facility. — Photo by Lonnie Wilkey

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## Growth in Nigeria highlights IMB report

Baptist Press

RICHMOND — Growth of Baptist church work in Nigeria highlights 1997 gains overseas, according to International Mission Board reports.

Last year the Nigerian Baptist Convention recorded 627 new church starts — the largest ever reported in a year by any Baptist convention with whom the IMB works, said Avery Willis, the board's senior vice president for overseas operations.

The IMB's annual statistics worldwide for 1997 show continuing growth, as missionaries focus on joining God on mission. They are working especially hard in responsive areas called "harvest fields," and with unreached people groups

in the Last Frontier that have been shut off from access to the Gospel by such forces as religion, culture, and hostile governments.

Last year the board had 4,249 missionaries working among 336 people groups in 127 countries. Worldwide, IMB partner groups reported 2,451 new churches last year. The total number was up about 3.5 percent from the 2,367 new churches reported in 1996.

Spurred by new growth, the total number of churches worldwide with which IMB missionaries cooperate rose by 4.1 percent, to 41,521, for the first time in history surpassing the number of stateside Southern Baptist churches. The number of churches has doubled since 1987.

Other significant indicators of growth on the field are a continuing upsurge in people enrolled in Discipleship Training and a sharp rise in church contributions.

Participants in discipleship programs more than tripled from 1996 to 1997, to 657,988. Total financial contributions to churches increased from \$287 million to \$478 million, a 66 percent jump.

Baptisms and church membership stayed high last year. Membership totals reached 4,112, 181 in 1997, less than a 1 percent increase from the year before.

Baptisms, at an average 6.8 per church and one per 14.5 members, totaled 283,100, a decrease of about .2 percent from 1996. ■

## College panel adopts recommendations

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — Five overarching recommendations were adopted Jan. 21 by a congressional commission created to examine rising college costs.

The 11-member National Commission on the Cost of Higher Education — chaired by **William Troutt, president of Belmont University, Nashville** — voted unanimously to recommend:

(1) "that academic institutions intensify their efforts to control costs and increase institutional productivity;

(2) "that the academic community provide the leadership required to develop better consumer information about costs and prices and to improve accountability to the general public;

(3) "that governments develop new approaches to academic regulation, approaches that emphasize performance instead of compliance, and differentiation in place of standardization;

(4) "that the academic community develop well-coordinated, efficient accrediting processes that relate institutional productivity to effectiveness in improving student learning; and

(5) "that Congress continue the existing student aid programs and simplify and improve the financial aid delivery system."

Included in the five overarching recommendations were 42 specific recommendations.

Troutt, in a statement issued to Baptist Press Jan. 21, said, "This commission has been hard at work the last five months to get a clear picture of what is happening with college costs. We have researched and analyzed a serious complex issue at a level of detail that has never been done before.

"We understand the public concern about rising education costs," Troutt continued, "and our report speaks clearly to American families about the changes that are necessary — both institutionally and governmentally — to keep higher education affordable."

The commission was created last summer in response to congressional concerns about soaring college tuition. Troutt was elected chairman of the commission in August.

From 1987-96 the average published tuition price increased 132 percent at public universities and 99 percent at private universities, according to recent data released by the U.S. Department of Education. ■



TROUTT

## Pro-life leaders condemn fatal clinic bombing

Baptist Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Numerous groups on both sides of the abortion issue decried the deadly bombing of an abortion clinic Jan. 29 here.

Killed was Robert Sanderson, a policeman who worked off-duty hours at the clinic. Emily Lyons, a nurse employed at the clinic, remains in critical condition.

Although doctors and workers have been shot to death in other instances of abortion-related violence, it was the nation's first fatal bombing of an abortion clinic.

"The National Right to Life Committee unequivocally con-

demns any such acts of violence used by individuals regardless of their motivation," said David O'Steen, executive director of the nation's largest pro-life group, after the 7:30 a.m. bombing at the New Woman All Women Health Care Clinic.

"No person who is truly pro-life could commit such an act of violence in the name of protecting unborn children," he said. "The pro-life movement works to protect the right to life and to restore respect for human life. Violence opposes that goal," he said.

David Lackey, Alabama director of the Operation Rescue anti-abortion group, also con-

demned the bombing and denied any connection to it, according to *The Birmingham News*.

"I was very angry somebody did this," Lackey was quoted as saying. "This definitely puts us in a negative light."

Alabama Gov. Fob James called the bombing "a heinous and horrible act ... an act of cold-blooded murder, and the murderers need to be tracked down and indicted and convicted and executed."

President Bill Clinton called it "an unforgivable act that strikes at the heart of the constitutional freedoms and liberties all Americans hold dear." ■

## Relief work continues in N.E. Tennessee

For Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — Last week's snowstorm which dumped from 12 to 48 inches of snow over portions of northeast Tennessee has "created havoc" for Tennessee Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers and others in Carter County and surrounding areas, according to Tim Bearden, state Disaster Relief director.

Workers from five states in addition to Tennessee were helping to clean up following severe flooding in January.

What's more, reports predict additional snowfall and potential flooding in the same area later this week, Bearden added.

Tennessee Baptist relief efforts are being coordinated by Curtis Fowler of Knoxville and Gene Williams of TBC Executive Board Ministries staff, Bearden said.

He called on Tennessee Baptists to pray for people in northeast Tennessee affected by the weather extremes and for the volunteers, especially those from the American Red Cross and Tennessee Emergency Management Agency, some of whom have been on the job there for about four weeks.

TBC Disaster Relief personnel are assessing the situation to determine if more volunteers are needed, Bearden said.

He said donations, designated for disaster relief, can be sent to: Tennessee Baptist Convention, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, Tenn., 37024. ■

## S.C. Baptists act against video poker

Baptist Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Nearly 60 South Carolina clergy, counselors, lawmakers, and others met in mid-January to birth a grassroots campaign to abolish video poker in the state.

A 10-member committee comprised of individuals representing various groups was formed to organize the campaign.

"There is no question that video poker is a cancer in our state," said B. Carlisle Driggers, S.C. Baptist Convention executive director.

"We are willing and eager to bring our resources to bear to bring video poker to a close in South Carolina," he said. ■

# Springfield dentist writes book about mission trips

By Tom Beesley  
Special to Baptist and Reflector

SPRINGFIELD — If you ask Ken Mattox about the motivation to write his latest book, the response will be about his favorite subject — his Christian faith.

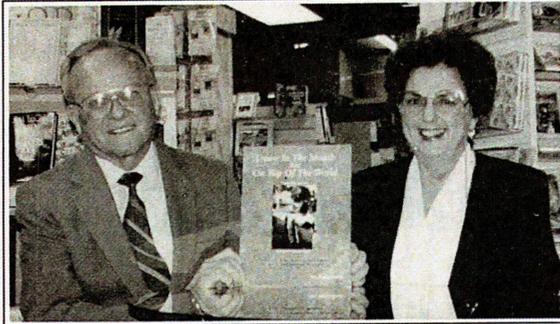
Mattox, who has been a dentist here for 42 years, and his wife, Bettye, have been on 19 volunteer dental mission trips over the past nine years. They are active members of Springfield Church.

Their travels have led them to Africa, Venezuela, Poland, Chile, Russia, the Philippines, and other countries. In each of the 19 stops, Mattox has had the expressed purpose of relieving suffering, meeting the needs of patients, and spreading the Good News to those who have little or no hope.

Mattox's book, *Down in the Mouth, But On Top of the World*, is an opportunity for others to learn about people who are much less fortunate in remote parts of the world that many would never have any other way of knowing.

"After each trip I wrote an account for family and friends. Some asked me to compile those accounts into a book," Mattox said. They have three children and five grandchildren.

"I wanted to tell about those people who have inspired us down through the years, those who went with us and those we met. I wanted to tell of our bravest and finest and most dedicated servants — the missionaries. Most of all, I wanted the book to be about Jesus," he said.



**KEN AND BETTYE MATTOX** display a copy of his book, *Down in the Mouth, But On Top of the World*, at CrossRoads Christian Bookstore in Springfield. The book details mission trips they have taken over the past 10 years. — Photo by Lonnie Wilkey

Mattox observed he and his wife have seen some sad sights across the world — hunger, poverty, misery, and squalor. "The saddest, however, is spiritual. The most underprivileged people on earth are those without Jesus," Mattox said.

"A lost world is drowning in hopelessness and despair, hungering and thirsting for some true revelation of God."

Anyone who has met Mattox realizes that although he is passionate about these endeavors, he has an irresistible sense of humor that comes through in the stories he relates about these missions of mercy.

All the incidents in the book are true, but Mattox confesses that he may have embellished the humor a bit, at the expense of his wife. "I pray God will forgive me if I've overdone the humor in this book," Mattox said. "If we didn't laugh a little, I'm afraid we would cry a lot."

Now at age 70, Mattox is often asked why, when most professionals would begin looking at retirement, he and his wife embarked on such a demanding lifestyle in the mission field 10 years ago.

"Getting us to go on that first mission trip was not easy. Friends had tried to get us to go for years. We thought we needed to finish educating the children, get out of debt, provide for our retirement, and retire," Mattox said. "Those things didn't happen, but something else did."

"Four of my dentist friends died in one year. Three were younger than I. Another newly-retired friend was relating his extensive travel plans. His last words to me were 'I've got too much time left to sit around.' Forty-eight hours later he died of a massive heart attack," Mattox recalled.

He noted that experience made him pause and think

about the future.

"I couldn't help but think about the Bible's warning not to boast about tomorrow. The urgency to do something for Jesus took on a new meaning."

Shortly after that the Mattoxes took their first mission trip to Venezuela with a 173-member medical team. "It was a wonderful experience."

Mattox also tries to recruit medical professionals to go on similar trips.

"I remember trying to recruit a doctor for another mission trip. He told me about the money he would miss if his office was closed for one week.

"It was a fantastic amount. I can honestly say that all the wealth in the world could not buy some of the experiences we have had. Just one miracle or answered prayer makes it all worthwhile."

Asked if it's really worthwhile to spend the money to go long distances for such short periods of time, Mattox says that is not a concern.

"I guess God will have to answer that. Hundreds of infections have been treated. Hundreds of teeth extracted," he noted. "Hundreds have also said they want Jesus to be their Lord and Savior. The true record will be kept in Heaven."

Mattox's book is available at CrossRoads Christian Bookstore in Springfield and Baptist Book Store in Nashville, as well as other local Christian bookstores in the Nashville area. ■ — Beesley is editor of the *Robertson County Times*. The story is used with permission.



## Pastor buys videos for city

Baptist and Reflector

BLUFF CITY — After learning about "Tennessee Reach," a plan to tell all Tennesseans about God by the year 2000, Frank Blevins, pastor of First Church here, decided on his way home from a meeting on the plan at the Baptist Center to do something about it.

Blevins changed his upcoming Sunday services. That Sunday he explained the evangelistic plan and presented the video of the "Jesus" film which had been distributed at the meeting. He said he wasn't going back to Europe for his annual missions effort until "I've seen every person here learn about God," he said as he shared his experiences at the State Evangelism Conference in Nashville Jan. 19-20.

Then Blevins told those attending that Sunday that he would order 700 of the videos for families in Bluff City. He explained he would buy the videos, which cost \$5 a piece, and they could help pay for the videos if they wished. And he invited people to help him distribute the videos to residences.

Two weeks later about 40 members of First Church gathered with Blevins and spread out across the town. They visited about 500 homes, sometimes giving the gift to residents and sometimes hanging the video and an accompanying pamphlet in a bag on door handles.

The response has been amazing, Blevins reported.

People called to ask why the church would give such a gift. A church member called and asked if she could have four videos for family members. As a result three people made professions of faith.

Another member of the congregation distributed videos to employees.

As he told those attending the State Evangelism Conference, the video was worth a lot more than a "whopper, large fries, and a drink" which can be purchased for about the same amount from a fast food restaurant.

The church followed up with an evangelistic block party, which drew about 400 people. As a result of these Tennessee Reach activities, "we've never had the public react better," said Blevins.

And Blevins has been reimbursed his \$3,500 investment in the videos. — C. Davis B&R

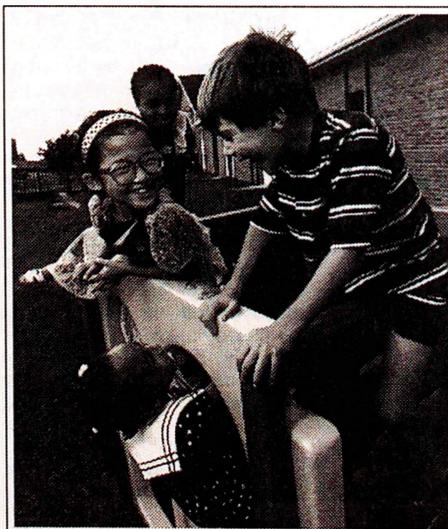
## Partnership Prayer Requests

February

- 4 — Pray for the Baptist State Convention of Michigan's Mentor Training Conference to be held Feb. 9-10.
- 5 — Pray for IMB missionary Sis Tufts in Costa Rica who is offering English classes in the form of Bible study.
- 6 — Pray for the members of West Memorial Church in Saulsbury, Tenn., who are trying to build a playground behind the church. The church, a part of the Mississippi River Ministry, needs money and laborers.
- 7 — Praise God that all pastors and families of Quebec Association in Canada fared well during the recent ice storm.
- 8 — Pray for Tennessee volunteers Kathy Sharp and Kim Huff who return today after working in children's evangelism and leading family conferences for a week in Rio de Janeiro.
- 9 — Praise God for Mikayla Suzanne O'Brien who was born Jan. 11 to Pastor Craig and Ellen O'Brien in Vancouver, Canada.
- 10 — Pray for the mission work in Tucurrique, Costa Rica. Ask God to establish a Baptist church there if it is his will.

## Feb. 8 is Race Relations Sunday

For Baptist and Reflector



"Made in the image of God"  
Genesis 1:27

Many Tennessee Baptist churches will observe Race Relations Sunday on Feb. 8.

Jack Kwok, executive director of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, reminds everyone:

"The uniqueness and unity of humanity originate from the fact that all people are made in the image of God. These truths should govern how people relate to each other.

"We should treat people with respect and dignity because they are unique in God's creation.

"For the Christian, above all others, 'made in the image of God' requires that we relate to all people with respect and dignity because it is right and we have a new nature." ■

# Nashvillian uses magic to share God

By Connie Davis  
Baptist and Reflector

NASHVILLE — When Stephen Bargatze is in front of a crowd, his hands aren't just a flurry of appearing and disappearing coins and balls under cups and hats producing rabbits. He's also often grasping the shoulder of a gawking youth who has been snared to help with a trick.

Bargatze calls the child or teen by name as he asks their age or grade in school. Depending on whether he is speaking in a parochial or secular setting, he may explain an illusion is like God in that just like a person can't understand an illusion, one can't understand God, so he or she must have faith in him. Before the child sits down, Bargatze thanks his assistant.

The performer takes this personal approach because he remembers the child he was — awed by sleight of hand and needing someone's attention, he explained.

## Trade is entree to schools, churches

A member of Tulip Grove Church, Old Hickory, Bargatze has been a magician for most of his professional life.

Currently Bargatze leads a student services program for the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association based here. The program,

sponsored by Nashville's Baptist Hospital and the governor's office, basically promotes good health among students by advising them to avoid such things as drugs.

But Bargatze has adapted the program to include his personal story and some spiritual messages. He has been encouraged in his approach by the program's directors and school officials.

In just five months, Bargatze has spoken to 27,000 students, including some in Georgia.

He also has expanded his outreach to church groups.

## The acts of his life

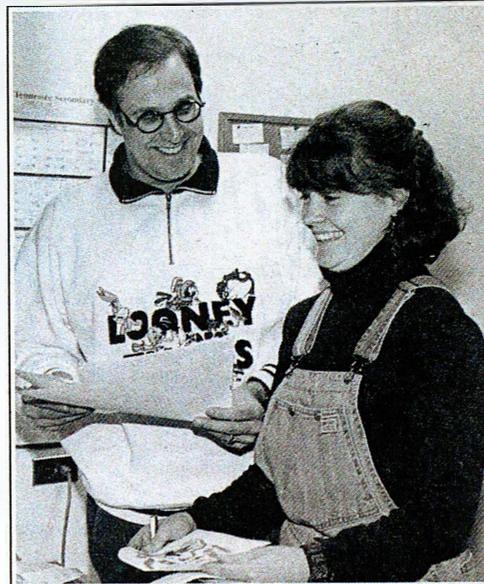
When Bargatze performs for youngsters, he slices his life story into comedy, sleight of hand, and illusion.

"Magic is just a way to earn the right to speak to them," he explained.

Magic caught the attention of one troubled child.

At the age of two, Bargatze suffered a dog bite which had to be treated with surgery several times and which left him with a speech impediment. His father was an alcoholic and he never really got to know his mother, who seemed to work all the time.

As a teen, he played football to please his father, who had been a successful athlete until he was injured. But his father never attended any of Bargatze's games.



DISCUSSING letters he has received from students to whom he has spoken through his work with the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association is Stephen Bargatze and his assistant, Courtney Poole.

So young Bargatze, at age 13, began taking drugs. His grades began falling and he was placed in remedial classes. His goal became to rebel against authority figures.

After graduation from high school, Bargatze got a job in a meat packing plant, where he worked with eight other guys. Six of them were alcoholics, said Bargatze.

Then his first cousin, Ron Bargatze of Nashville, invited him to visit and then to live with his family. Ron Bargatze, who is with Baptist Hospital's sports medicine facility and a sports radio personality, became important to the young man. For one thing, he introduced his young cousin to church.

As he tells his story, Bargatze said, he tells young people, whether he's in a public or private school or church, that it's important to go to church.

The people he met at church "were so nice to me that I wanted to make them happy," said Bargatze. He joined the church his cousins were attending and enrolled at a Christian college where he was told he was smart enough to learn. He also was told to quit his hobby of magic.

Bargatze had been introduced to magic by an uncle while a child. He became intrigued by the art after seeing a Ronald McDonald perform at a party in Nashville when he was a young adult.

Magic interested him, he

explained, because it was a way to gain the acceptance that seemed to elude him. And he wondered if it could be a way to mask his speech impediment.

He got to know the man who portrayed the popular figure of the fast food restaurant. He was Tom Hart, a local high school teacher, who became a mentor to the young man.

## Trade opens doors

Although Bargatze gave up magic for several years on the advice of well-meaning Christians, he explained, he was drawn back to it again and again.

He served as a missionary in Texas, where he worked with Spanish-speaking children. "It worked out because they talked funny and they spit too," he described in his deprecating way.

The experience led him to a commitment to God and helped him determine he was to minister to youth. He also discovered that the best way to communicate with the children was through magic, he said.

When he returned to Nashville, he began teaching school to help support his family. But his schedule included more and more performance gigs.

Bargatze always has been a popular speaker in churches, but he was hired by companies for trade shows and employee gatherings. Being in Nashville has helped, he said. He has worked with popular comedian Ray Stevens and is pictured on the album cover of "Get the Best of Ray Stevens," as Yo Yo the Clown, one of his charac-



PERFORMING his strait jacket stunt is Stephan Bargatze.

ters. He has done the first act for some live Bill Cosby shows. And just last week he was on "Talk of the Town," a locally produced TV show.

## Insights

Bargatze tells young people, even in public schools, God taught him that God wasn't like Bargatze's father, whom he thought he had to make happy.

"I tell them God respects you just the way you are," he said. And he tells them when he started going to church, his life turned around, so they should go to a church.

He noted a recent USA Today story confirmed this fact. It reported that 59 percent of youth involved in church avoid drugs and breaking the law.

Bargatze is pleased at the response from youth to his presentations. They often come to him in tears. Many write him, to which he always responds. Bargatze keeps some of the letters posted over his desk so he can pray for the writers regularly.

He tells youth "the reason they're doing drugs and they're not buckling down at school is because they don't care for themselves.

"I say it wouldn't have mattered at several points in my life if I had died, but now that it does, I take care of myself," he said.

"If it wasn't for my relationship with Christ, nothing would have happened to me that has happened. It's a shame I can't say that in every school, but in the private Christian schools and in churches and other settings, we say that. The Christian testimony is always shared."

And in Christian settings, Bargatze also explains to children that there's nothing magic about God or Jesus or the Holy Spirit. "He's real," he says. B&R



VISITING WITH his new assistant at a block party held by Eastland Church, Nashville, is Stephen Bargatze, who is a member of Tulip Grove Church, Old Hickory. — Photos by Connie Davis

# Made in the image of God, but all different

When people discuss race relations, images from the past often jump to the forefront. We may indulge in finger-pointing and delving into sordid history of slavery and other crimes against humanity.

It seems more reasonable to talk about the present and the future. Race Relations Day is being celebrated in thousands of Southern Baptist churches on Sunday, February 8. What about your church?

When we discuss race relations, we have to remember those relations in more than black and white terms. All races are well represented in the United States of America.

And we admit that our history in those relationships is tawdry, with some exceptions.

The United States, and Tennessee specifically, has all races represented. But there are multitudes of cultures and languages.

It's difficult to separate these from relationships that affect our daily lives.

So, what to do? Determine to live by Biblical concepts. Hone the Christian lifestyle. Adopt a mirror image of Jesus. Think about his actions with people of all cultures, and different races and backgrounds.

Tennessee Baptists can look around and see cultures from every continent.

God has brought the mission field to our shores. Many people to whom we relate in all walks of life come from other cultures and different races. This is now their home. We can choose to be Christlike, or we can copy a lifestyle that promotes self.

Tennessee is not yet a melting pot, but

we certainly can try to become the best of salads.

Good relationships do not require that a person give up pride of race or culture. It does mean that we believe in the worth of every person and respect them. We all are made in the image of God. — WFA



## Ethics needed in government, news media

It's interesting that the two news stories with higher media interest most recently involved personal relationships.

Not even the death of Mother Teresa nor Pope John Paul's visit to communist Cuba carried the weight of Princess Diana's death and the recent whirlwind surrounding President Clinton.

The news media is still feeding on Diana's death — and the President's situation apparently won't go away. There is a difference too — Diana's faults are forgiven, Clinton continues to be under the gun.

Add another twist to the drama. Apparently American people want to hear about private lives — but the polls show high approval of the President's leadership.

Perhaps we need to think seriously about our love for news, gossip, tales, rumors, fantasy — about the situation.

The media has taken on an entirely new role in American life. Apparently "news" is what the secular media says it

is. Many times, media does not wait for, or depend on, facts. Getting to the public first seems to be the standard.

Imagine what the world thinks about supposedly free media which should operate on reliability and order — but instead often makes the news.

If we pay close attention to the frenzied actions and careless pursuit of "news," in these two events — we can hear words which are not reliable or orderly. For example: *reportedly, supposed to have, was said to have, unnamed sources said, reputed, may have been, could have been.*

Whatever happened to news reporting? And most of all, what happened to the concept of "innocent until proven guilty?"

We are right to insist on the highest moral standards for our leaders, including the president. And we insist that the media have those same high standards. Praying for national leaders isn't an option. — Wm. Fletcher Allen

## just for today

by Fred Wood, pastor emeritus, Eudora Church, Memphis



### Start with a smile

Employment Officer (checking an applicant's reference): "How long did he work for you?"

Applicant's Reference: "About two hours."

E.O.: "Why, he told us he'd been with you a long time."

A.R.: "That's right. He's been with our company about two years."

### Take this truth

The number of people who are unemployed is not as great as the number who are not working. Those who want pay by the yard but are only willing to work by the inch, should be dealt with by the foot.

### Memorize this Scripture

"The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few" (Matthew 9:37).

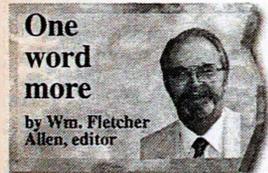
### Pray this prayer

Lord, help me see the fields already white for harvest. Make me a dedicated worker. ■

### Who said that?

Christ may call us to a specific task through some need in the world. He may call us to a job too great for one person to tackle alone. But with that call, he will bring others to participate with us. If we could only believe that he is running the show and trust him, we could move mountains with him. — *Beyond This God Cannot Go*, by Creath Davis, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1971

## Seconds, ounces, inches — weighty measures



### One word more

by Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor

Living on the edge, the cutting edge, requires that we observe the value of each second.

Usually, one second is not regarded as important. After all, what can one second affect, what can one second produce?

One second is a minuscule portion of a minute — and an even smaller portion of an hour.

We've all used the expression "split second," or said, "Just one second and I'll be there."

Atomic clocks supposedly calculate the most accurate

time. I've tuned in to a radio frequency in Colorado that does nothing but broadcast the ticking of a precise time piece.

It is so accurate, you can adjust your own time-piece down to the second.

One second. Think about it. A game can be won or lost on the whim of a single tick of the official clock. Timers are so sophisticated now that even spectators can watch the clock wind down by the tenths of seconds.

And take a look at another measurement. Inches, often relegated to obscurity, are as important as feet and yards.

The youngster who wants to be tall, eagerly accepts each inch in height.

Requirements for serving as officers in the armed forces have to be within a certain range — not lower, not higher.

It's also true that in many sports, an inch can make a big difference. In football, a crucial first down can be missed because the team was an inch short on the previous play.

If the archer's arrow misses the bulls-eye by an inch, he's a loser.

And weight in ounces and pounds can make the difference in perfection or rejection.

I remember my first encounter with weighing scales.

In school, they brought the scales to each classroom once during every six-months period. We were all weighed. I soon learned that I was skinny. (Can you believe that?)

How I longed to weigh 50 pounds, and I thought I would never reach 100. What about the millions of ounces that have been dieted away — to reach a "perfect" body weight?

Lessons in the Bible reveal to us that inches, ounces, and seconds are important.

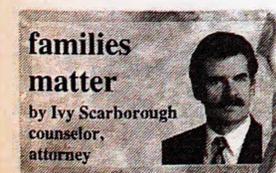
While the Pharisees in Jesus' time were so meticulous about obeying the "nit-picking" aspects of religious law — they overlooked their own prejudices and corner-cutting.

The very legal leaders did not find fault in the mirror — but they were easy to see the tiny speck in another person's eye. Of course Jesus accused them of operating with a huge beam jutting out from their own eye.

If inches, ounces, and seconds are so important in this present life — so the little things measure up in our spiritual lives.

We fail Christ when we classify our sins — some tiny, some large. They all offend him. Let's grow. ■■■

## National trend may often overlook deception, lying



### families matter

by Ivy Scarborough, counselor, attorney

court, in a deposition, or in an affidavit. Perjury is, unfortunately, common, in part, I believe because it is so infrequently punished. The legal system has a tendency to expect and ignore much perjury. Only when an issue is made of it, is there any chance it will be punished.

Our culture is pervaded with pretense, unreality,

"I thought perjury only occurred in court. Is that correct. Is it common?"

Perjury is the willful making of any false statement under oath, including testimony in

court, and ourselves: Most lies, for example, have some grain of truth in them, or the liar has rationalized his actions. This makes it easier for him to state his falsehood with conviction and believability (I Samuel 15:13-14).

Second, lying often takes the form of responses that are carefully worded. A witness who answers a clear question with an involved, qualified, or

rephrased answer, is cause for suspicion.

Third, someone who is bent on deceit or manipulation will be reluctant to put agreements or statements in writing. I always caution clients: If the party you are making a contract or reaching an agreement with is reluctant to put it — all of it — in writing, look out.

Fourth, lying is most effective when the hearer wants to believe what is being said (Judges 16:15, II Timothy 3:6-7).

Fifth, the history of a person whose credibility is at stake is critical. People who have practiced deceit almost certainly will continue to practice it, unless, and this is the only exception I have seen, they have had a genuine confrontation with God and are truly repentant. ■

# Summer workers needed at camps

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tween June 1 and Aug. 15.

For these positions, contact the Human Resources Office, TBC, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, Tenn., or call 1 (800) 558-2090, ext. 2013 for an application. All candidates must submit an application to be considered.

Summer positions also are open on the 1998 Tennessee Royal Ambassador Camp (TRAC) staff to serve as summer missionaries. Positions are primarily for college and old-

er high school age students, but some are accepted at age 16 to be a counselor-in-training. TRAC staff will work nine weeks, beginning June 1. For information on TRAC staff, contact Bob Davison, Tennessee Baptist Men's Ministries staff, at (615) 371-2025. The deadline for TRAC staff applications is Feb. 15. ■

## Classified

**POSITION OPEN:** First Baptist Church, McKenzie, is searching for a full-time Minister of Music and Children. If interested, send resume to Search Committee, 619 N. Stonewall St., McKenzie, TN 38201.

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#### TENNESSEE:

First Baptist Church, Millington  
8077 Wilkinsville Rd., Millington, TN 38053  
Pastor/Contact: Dr. Ray Newcomb, (901) 872-2264  
Date/Time: Monday, February 23, 1998 at 2:00 p.m.

#### ALABAMA:

First Baptist Church, Trussville  
128 Church Street (P.O. Box 27) Trussville, AL 35173  
Pastor/Contact: Dr. Gary Hollingsworth, (205) 655-2403  
Date/Time: Thursday, May 28, 1998 at 1:00 p.m.

#### GEORGIA:

Rehoboth Baptist Church  
2997 Lawrenceville Highway, Tucker, GA 30084  
Pastor/Contact: Dr. Richard Lee, (770) 939-3182  
Date/Time: Tuesday, February 24, 1998 at 10:00 a.m.

#### KENTUCKY:

Highview Baptist Church  
7711 Fegenbush Lane, Louisville, KY 40228  
Pastor/Contact: Dr. Kevin Ezell, (502) 239-7711  
Date/Time: Thursday, April 23, 1998, 1:00 p.m.

For additional locations, times, and information on **FAITH**, please call the Pastor/Staff Leadership Department of The Sunday School Board: 615-251-2055

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## Romantic love

By Ron Blankenship

**Focal Passage** — *Song of Solomon 2:3-17; 4:1-7; 5:10-16; 7:11-13*

Some of the greatest novels and movies of all time are based on romantic love stories: "Gone With The Wind," "Love Story," and "Romeo and Juliet" to name a few. I believe the greatest piece of romantic literature ever written is the "Song of Solomon" in the Bible. It is a poem that celebrates romantic love between King Solomon and a Shulamite woman. In contrast to the world's filthy and pornographic view of love, the Song of Solomon's message is that healthy, romantic love in the context of marriage is a positive gift from God. Other famous biblical couples are: Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel, Boaz and Ruth, Elkanah and Hannah, David and Michal, Hosea and Gomer. A type of love is implicit between Christ and the Church.

Commitment is the primary ingredient in a recipe for romantic love, along with other additives. A committed couple is honest with one another; they need to trust their vows made to each other.

Commitment requires planning quality time to spend together. Wanting to enjoy her company at springtime, her husband asks his beloved to "Rise up, my love ... and come away." This request was spontaneous. We read in chapter 7:11-13 that she planned for the two of them to get away to a village, walk in the fields and vineyards, and enjoy each other's love and togetherness.

One's marriage should be placed next only to God in a couple's priorities: "Set me as a seal upon your heart ... for love is as strong as death."

Commitment requires intentionality in marriage. A couple decides to be intentional in waiting for sex until commitment in marriage is established. Misuse of sex can lead to AIDS, venereal disease, and other sexually transmitted diseases as well as teen pregnancies and divorce due to a growing lack of commitment before and after a wedding.

Commitment also consists of building a creative love life. Notice all the fragrances of love mentioned: spikenard, myrrh, henna, cedar, frankincense, saffron, calamus, cinnamon, aloes, apples, and mandrakes. The royal couple enjoyed each other's company in various places: Lebanon, peaks of Amana and Hermon and Senir, Mt. Carmel, Shunem, Jerusalem, Damascus, and other locations.

These two love birds were committed to open and loving communication, "... let me hear your voice." Listening as well as talking is essential in a relationship. Angry outbursts may happen in any marriage, but such flaming words should not be the regular diet of marital speech. Notice the gentle and caring language each models. Critical and disrespectful judgments will tear a marriage apart when that is all a couple lingers on (in other words, don't criticize me for my darkened skin as compared with your dazzling "white" skin, as in 5:10). Annoying behavior, like that exhibited by the "women of Jerusalem" is out of place in building a healthy relationship. Communicate words of praise and affirmation to compliment your partner, because true romantic love dwells on a spouse's true beauty rather than lingering on his or her shortcomings. Communicate intimacy through physical touch; encourage each other; and develop an intimate spiritual life together. Open communication is more likely to prevent harmful conflict from short-circuiting the process of healthy growth in the relationship.

Some helpful books are: Willard F. Harley Jr.'s *Love Busters: Overcoming Habits That Destroy Romantic Love*; and Gary Chapman's *Five Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate*. — Blankenship is pastor, Haywood Hills Church, Nashville.

## Rejecting false teachings

By Hal Poe

**Focal Passage** — *II Peter 2*

This lesson focuses on the warning to beware of false teachers. But how does a person decide what is a false teaching and what is not? This issue takes on added significance in the present cultural crisis in which people increasingly consider all views and teachings to be of equal worth and value. To this contemporary American view, Peter would utter a resounding "No!" In chapter one he recited the fundamental articles of Christian faith as a basis for attacking the false teachers. Throughout the New Testament, false teachers are identified by the degree to which they depart from the apostolic teaching about who Jesus Christ is and what he has done for people to make salvation possible.

### Family Bible Lesson

Peter defines heresy in terms of denying Jesus Christ as savior. The apostles were of one mind on this matter. Peter, John, Paul, and Jude all dealt with false teachers who in one way or another denied who Jesus himself claimed to be. In the first chapter of II Peter, Peter describes Christ as the son of God, whose coming was foretold by the prophets, whose death cleanses from sin, who bestows eternal life through his Holy Spirit, who reigns as sovereign Lord. Peter does not include everything that he may say in describing who Jesus is, for he has not mentioned the resurrection. But he has certainly discussed the implications of a number of key teachings so that he may now talk about false teachers and show why they are false.

First, they deny their sovereign Lord who bought them. Purchase or redemption is one dimension of the death of Christ. Cleansing is another dimension. Christ's death accomplished both of these and much more. The false teach-

ers seemed to have denied that the death of Christ accomplished anything. This view has been a recurring heresy in the church for 2,000 years.

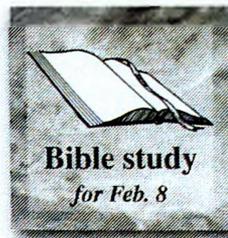
Those who hold to this view would say that it is a shame that people killed Jesus, but that his death has nothing to do with one's relationship to God.

Second, the false teachers seem to exalt human freedom in decision making to the extent that the authority of Scripture and especially the teachings of Christ have no moral obligation for people. In chapter one Peter went into detail about the implications of participating in the divine nature. Participation in Christ results in fruitfulness which is seen in human character; such as goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, kindness, and love. Relationship with God through Jesus Christ results in a purity of heart and a dissatisfaction with the left over remainders of corruption that clutter up a life after salvation.

Third, the false teachers devise elaborate stories to explain "what the Bible really means." He speaks of them making up stories to give a foundation for their belief and practice. In contrast to this approach, Peter had insisted that the Gospel was not a matter of "cleverly invented stories."

Faith in Christ was based upon multiple witnesses including people like Peter who saw and heard and touched the Savior, witnesses from heaven as God bore witness to his Son on the Mount of Transfiguration, and witnesses from the past as the prophecies of old found their fulfillment in Christ.

One can think of contemporary religious groups who use the Bible but do not affirm Christ as the only Savior, who place the primary role of salvation with the human, and who have elaborate explanations for what the Bible "really" means. Among these could be counted Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, Baha'i, The Unification Church, and The Way. — Poe is dean, Academic Resources and Information Services, Union University, Jackson.



## Gifted and faithful man

By Rocky Churchwell

**Focal Passage** — *Genesis 41:14-16, 28-30, 37-40, 55-57*

If there is one thing that has given me heartache over the years as a Christian and a pastor, it is that there are an awful lot of lonely and unfulfilled Christians in our churches. Instead of finding the Christian life rewarding, they seem to feel that in some way, God has abandoned them and they are useless to everyone including themselves. I have also noticed that when these same folks find some ministry in the church (God gives the ministry, I just coax them to do it), and they find their spiritual gifts for service, their attitudes and spirits are changed dramatically. They are able to say, "It's really good to serve God, no matter what the circumstance, or the calling."

Joseph found that to be true. Sold into slavery by his own brothers for simply telling about his dreams, and then thrown into jail for over two years and forgotten, it is amazing that Joseph didn't get bitter with God and just give up. When the call came for him to use his gifts to help others, Joseph was willing to use what he had to God's glory.

As the story progresses, Joseph while in prison helped interpret the dreams of the king's head cupbearer and baker. The cupbearer fared well

### Explore the Bible Lesson

with Joseph's interpretation and in three days was restored, but the chief baker didn't do so well, and was hanged. The chief cupbearer was restored but forgot all about Joseph's gift until Pharaoh had a dream. It was then that the chief cupbearer remembered Joseph, who with God's help was able to interpret Pharaoh's dream, and save Egypt from the upcoming famine. Joseph was once more placed in charge, and God blessed him for being faithful and using his gifts for good.

You and I should learn something from Joseph's example. First, we learn that God knows who we are even if we think we are alone. We are never really abandoned even if the situation seems tough. We may feel that no one loves us, or even knows we exist, but that is simply not so. The situation we are in may simply be a proving ground for better things.

Second, the best way to find fulfillment and blessing is to be willing to use the gifts God has given. We are all part of the body of Christ and this makes us all important to each

other. Your gifts are different from mine, but your calling is too. The thing that we have in common is that we have been called to serve. What joy to find that someday you will be rewarded as much for faithfully sweeping the floors of

the church, as the greatest evangelists is for preaching great sermons. God can, and will show you how to serve right where you are, with the gifts that you have. All you need to do is be faithful when called.

— Churchwell is pastor, First Church, Jamestown.

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## churches

■ **Edgemoor Church**, Clinton, will hold revival March 1-4. David Price will speak and Steve Brown will lead the music.

■ **Two Rivers Church**, Nashville, will hold revival Feb. 22-25. Jay Strack will speak.

■ **Dalewood Church**, Nashville, will hold revival Feb. 15-18. Harold Hunter, evangelist of Hermitage, will speak.

■ **Calvary Church**, Knoxville, has expanded its facilities by buying a Unitarian church building which adjoins its present site.

■ **Indian Ridge Church**, Blaine, moved into its new sanctuary Dec. 21. It was dedicated Jan. 18, an event which drew 171 to the church.

■ **The People's Church or First Church, Franklin**, will hold a Global Impact Conference March 4-8 and a Global Focus Leadership Seminar for pastors and church leaders March 4-6. Larry Reesor of Global Focus and Johnny Hunt of First Church, Woodstock, Ga., will speak along with more than 50 International Mission Board missionaries. For more information, call Heather Zimmerman of the church's missions office at (615) 794-2812, ext. 219 or Linda Osborne, Global Focus, at (770) 592-7011 or at [GloblFocus@aol.com](mailto:GloblFocus@aol.com).

## schools

■ **Harrison Chilhowee Baptist Academy**, Seymour, has received a second gift from the Charles and Martha Sprankle Foundation, based in Knoxville, in the past three years. Both gifts have been in the amount of \$20,000. Walter



**SPEAKING** to students of King's Academy, Harrison Chilhowee Baptist Academy, Seymour, is Don Miller, director, Bible Based Ministries, Fort Worth, Texas. Miller led the school's annual Fall Spiritual Emphasis week Dec. 1-4 on prayer. Miller, a graduate of Baylor University, Waco, Texas, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, shared his experiences, including several near death occurrences, which led him to develop his ministry.

Grubb, president, said the gift will allow the school to continue student aid and renovation programs at "an unprecedented pace."

■ **Carson-Newman College**, Jefferson City, will hold three seminars on mental health Feb. 21, March 21, and April 18. They will be held from 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. and will lead community members to explore a variety of mental health issues with the goal of enhancing the quality of individual and family life. For more information, call Edra Cureton at (423) 471-3311.

## associations

■ **Nashville Association** will hold a True Love Waits Rally Feb. 6 at Tusculum Hills Church from 7-9 p.m. Kevin Shrum, pastor, Inglewood Church, will speak. For more information, call (615) 259-3034.

## people

■ **New Blackwell Church**, Rutledge, honored **Allene Kidwell**, who served as church clerk for 35 years, Nov. 30, following her resignation. Activities included the designation of the day as Allene Kidwell Day.

■ **David K. Elliott** graduated in December from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif., after earning a master of divinity degree. His home church is First Church, Donelson.

■ **Dora Love**, church pianist, Sharon Church, Knoxville, was honored Feb. 1 on her retirement after serving about 38 years.

■ **First Church**, Jackson, ordained **Dwight Armour**, **Brian Ford**, **Mike Parker**, and **Mike Primeaux** as



**BREAKING GROUND** for a 750-seat worship center Dec. 14 are leaders of First Church, Troy, from left, Greg Whaley, minister of music; Gwen Armour; O'Neil Baker; Judy Smith; James and Lori Fulbright; Carolyn Grady; Vera Terry; Charlie Nolan; Ken Jones; Vann Kissell, pastor; Alan Pittman, minister of youth; Harold Petty; Jerry Guy; Diane Bell; and Bud Stoner, businessman. Terry is the oldest active member of the church. The project will cost about \$1.3 million and include 75 more parking spaces and remodeling of the present sanctuary into a fellowship hall.

deacons Feb. 1.

■ **First Church**, Dyersburg, ordained **Neil McKee**, **David Guthrie**, **Jere Gifford**, and **Dayton Keller** as deacons Jan. 18.

■ **Rock Springs Church**, Pulaski, has ordained **Ed Manning**, **Dan Rose**, and **Tommy Pugh** as deacons.

■ **Mount Vernon Church**, Halls, ordained **Stan Welch** as a deacon Jan. 18.

■ **Williston Church**, Williston, has ordained **Steve Reeves**, **Richard Jenkins**, and **Charlie Jones** as deacons.

■ **Inskip Church**, Knoxville, ordained **Charles Estes** and installed **Tom Kesterson** as deacons Jan. 18.

## leaders

■ **Milburn Gibson** has been called to his first role as pastor. He began serving Panther Park Church, Morristown, Dec. 17.

■ **First Church**, Jefferson City, has called **Jim Dampier** as senior adult minister.

■ **Guaranda Drive Church**, Johnson City, has called **Brett Allen Maragni** as pastor. He is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

■ **Bob Williams**, pastor, Kirk Church, Collierville, has been called as pastor, Poplar Corner Church, Brownsville. He served the Collierville church for eight years.

■ **Gene Schmid**, pastor, Bear Creek Church, Cookeville, and his wife celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary Dec. 7.

■ **Mark Myers** of Tyler, Texas, has been called as minister of youth and church

recreation, Trinity Church, Cordova. He is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, and of Southwest Texas University, San Marcos. He has served churches in Texas and Illinois.

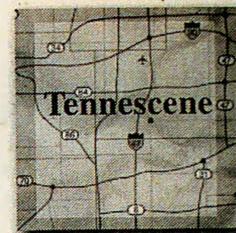
■ **Eastland Church**, Nashville, has called **James Austin** as interim pastor. Former pastor **Rick Baggett** has been called to serve a Texas church.

■ **Miston Church**, Bogota, will ordain **Allen Stewart** as a minister Feb. 8. Stewart has been called as pastor, Evansville Church, Dyersburg, effective Jan. 11.

■ **Stevens Street Church**, Cookeville, has called **Robert Ward** as minister of music and outreach.

■ **Greg Brewer**, pastor, North Fork Church, Puryear has been called as pastor of Springhill Church, Paris, effective Dec. 28. **Jimmy Allison** has been called as interim pastor of North Fork.

■ **Charles Harkleroad**, pastor, French Broad Valley Church, Kodak, recently celebrated his 12th anniversary of service there.



■ **Darrell Hodge**, minister of music, Calvary Church, Knoxville, has resigned. He served the church for 18 years.

■ **Lakeside Chapel**, Ten Mile, has called **Ray Fowler** as interim pastor.

■ **Bill Sneed** has been called as pastor of Hiwassee Church, Calhoun.

■ **Clinton E. Riddle**, pastor emeritus, Cedar Valley Church, Sweetwater, and interim pastor, Lakeside Church, Vonore, completed 40 years of perfect Sunday School attendance Feb. 1. Riddle has attended Sunday School while traveling in Mexico, Canada, Jerusalem, England, and Scotland.

■ **Bethel Church**, Henderson, has called **Brian Howell** as interim music director effective Feb. 1. He is a student at Union University, Jackson.

■ **James Nash**, minister of music, Rock Springs Church, Greenbrier, has resigned.

■ **Oakland Church**, Springfield, called **Tim Tolosa** as minister of music, effective Dec. 21.

■ **Billy Moorefield**, associate pastor of adult ministries, Hermitage Hills Church, Hermitage, celebrated his 10th anniversary of service there Jan. 18.

■ **Sam Marshall**, minister of adults/administration, Ridgedale Church, Chattanooga, recently celebrated his 20th anniversary of service there.

■ **First Church**, Jasper, has called **Michael Ake** as minister of music and **Ryan Carter** as intern youth minister.



**GATHERED** during the recent dedication of the addition to First Church, Fairfield Glade, are members of the building committee, from left, Chuck Naylor, John Olson, Mary Ann Mercer, Charlie Miller, Jean Curley, Bob Williams, and Doug Turner, pastor. The church added 8,000 square feet to the educational building for classrooms and a nursery, added a fellowship hall, and installed 70 more seats in the sanctuary.