

this week's news

- ▶ International Mission Board appoints missionaries with state ties. — Page 2
- ▶ George Bullard to lead conference at Baptist Center in April. — Page 2
- ▶ Bill Troutt updates Tennessee Baptists about National Commission on the Cost of Higher Education. — Page 3
- ▶ Union president among Southern Baptists who signed a statement of conciliation developed by former President Jimmy Carter. — Page 3
- ▶ Find out which churches are among the state leaders in baptisms and Cooperative Program giving. — Page 4
- ▶ Southern Baptist hunger gifts increase. — Page 6

# Report shows baptisms, gifts up in state

By Connie Davis  
*Baptist and Reflector*

**BRENTWOOD** — Tennessee churches reported a significant increase in baptisms and giving last year, reported Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board ministries.

Tennessee churches reported a 10.6 percent increase in baptisms, from 26,456 last year to 29,265, according to the Annual Church Profile.

Offerings to the Cooperative Program were up 5.9 percent, increased 4.3 percent in designated gifts, and up 5.3 percent in total gifts, which were \$45,556,480.

Church programs remained stable except Men's Ministries, which showed a decrease in enrollment.

Ken Weathersby of TBC Executive Board ministries who consults with churches on evangelism, praised churches for the increase in baptisms, noting it indicates "that our churches are taking the Great Commission seriously." However, he added that his goal is to increase the 29,265 baptisms last year to 50,000 this year in order to reach the more than three million unchurched Tennesseans.

"God can do it through us," he said.

Tim Bearden of TBC Execu-

tive Board ministries who oversees consultants on Men's Ministries, said the decrease in enrollment in this area may be due to changes in the ministry.

Last year the Brotherhood Commission merged into the North American Mission Board. Because of this transition, churches may be waiting for changes. And even before the merger, churches were adapting their programs for men and boys, explained Bearden.

To respond, the convention's office has adopted Tennessee Baptist Men's Ministries to include new ministries. But the ACP form, which is coordinated by the Baptist Sunday School Board, requests Brotherhood enrollment. As a result, some involvement wasn't reported.

The adoption of Baptist Men's Ministries is "an attempt to help churches and associations continue to meet the spir-

## Average Tennessee Church in Four Categories

### With 0-200 resident members (1,742 or 59.2% of churches)

▶ Resident members	86
▶ Baptisms	4
▶ Sunday School enrollment	58
▶ Discipleship Training enrollment	15
▶ Music enrollment	16
▶ WMU enrollment	7
▶ Brotherhood enrollment	3

### With 201-500 resident members (818 or 27.8% of churches)

### With 501-999 resident members (263 or 8.9% of churches)

▶ Resident members	692
▶ Baptisms	21
▶ Sunday School enrollment	482
▶ Discipleship Training enrollment	147
▶ Music enrollment	117
▶ WMU enrollment	60
▶ Brotherhood enrollment	30

▶ Resident members	308
▶ Baptisms	11
▶ Sunday School enrollment	174
▶ Discipleship Training enrollment	59
▶ Music enrollment	48
▶ WMU enrollment	28
▶ Brotherhood enrollment	13

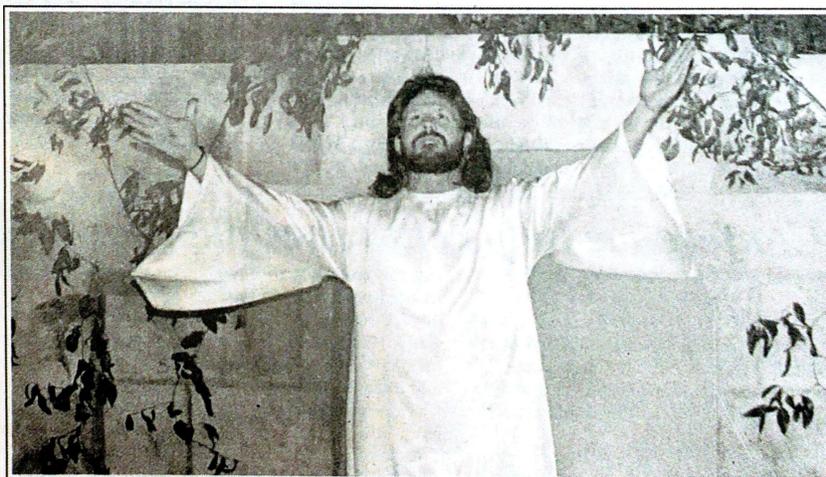
### With 1,000-plus resident members (121 or 4.1% of churches)

▶ Resident members	1,846
▶ Baptisms	61
▶ Sunday School enrollment	1,644
▶ Discipleship Training enrollment	399
▶ Music enrollment	342
▶ WMU enrollment	146
▶ Brotherhood enrollment	68

Prepared by Nina Palmer of TBC Executive Board ministries from Annual Church Profile data provided each year by Tennessee Baptist churches.

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### Passion Play in Clarksville

Jesus walks out of his tomb in the Passion Play presented by Hilldale Church, Clarksville, April 1-5. Jesus is portrayed by Thom Spigner. About 6,000 attended the presentation by about 175 choir members and actors. Thirty-five people made professions of faith and 152 made other spiritual decisions, reported Larry Martin, minister of music.

## TBC CP gifts show increase over last year

For *Baptist and Reflector*

**BRENTWOOD** — Tennessee Baptists' gifts to the Cooperative Program in March totaled \$1,919,925.

At the end of March, Cooperative Program gifts for the 1997-98 fiscal year totaled \$12,499,366, or \$203,050 over the same period for the previous year, according to James Porch, executive director/treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

"As the summer months approach, Tennessee Baptists are encouraged to be faithful and consistent in their tithes and offerings to their local churches," Porch said. ■

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# IMB trustees appoint missionaries with Tennessee ties

For Baptist and Reflector

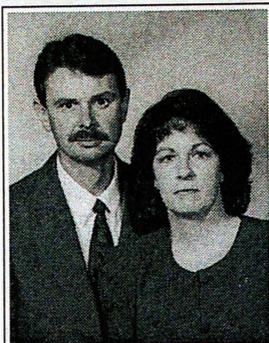
RICHMOND — Three couples with strong Tennessee ties were appointed missionaries by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board March 22 at First Southern Church, Del City, Okla.

They were among 52 new appointees who will join nearly 4,200 Southern Baptist IMB workers sharing Christ in 127 countries among 336 ethnic people groups.

Gerald E. "Chip" and Gail Clemente Faulkner were appointed missionary associates in the Caribbean Basin region. He will start and develop churches and she will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries.

The two lived in Chattanooga for awhile and Faulkner considers East Lake Church there his home church. Mrs. Faulkner considers the church as being influential in her Christian growth.

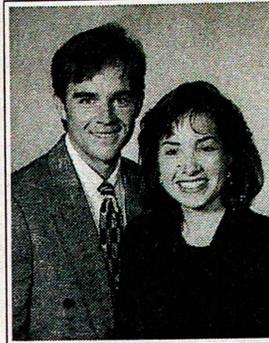
The Faulkners have three children.



**THE FAULKNERS**

Philip and Nancy McCoy Griggs were appointed to serve in the Philippines where he will start and develop churches and she will be involved in outreach ministries.

Born in Zimbabwe, Griggs is the son of John and Florence Griggs of Morristown, IMB emeritus missionaries who worked in Zimbabwe for 35 years. The elder Griggs is prayer coordinator at First Church, Morristown. The young Griggs considers First



**THE GRIGGSSES**

Church his home church.

Griggs holds degrees from Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Steven and Mary Enger Waechter were appointed as missionaries to Nicaragua where he will coordinate leadership training and she will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries.

A native of Kansas, Waechter earned the master of



**THE WAECHTERS**

divinity and doctor of philosophy degrees from Mid-America Seminary, Memphis. He considers Bellevue Church there his home church. Mrs. Waechter, a native of Wisconsin, also considers Bellevue her home church.

The couple has three children.

Each of the couples will travel to Rockvale, Va., for an eight-week orientation before leaving for their field of service later this year. ■

## Report shows baptisms, ...

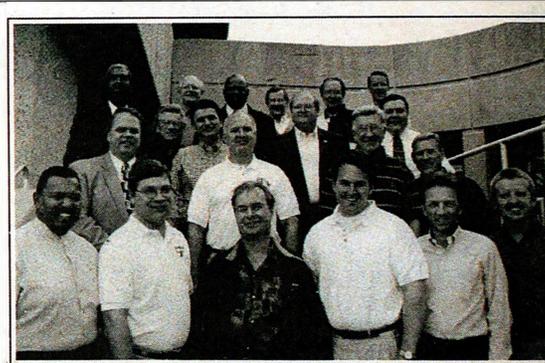
— Continued from page 1

TBC Training, Tim Holcomb of TBC Executive Board ministries who oversees consultants in those areas, said, "We must be more intentional in capturing the new Christians. The Christian Growth Development Group will be focusing on the heart of growth — creating new units," he said.

Carrol Kelly of Tennessee Woman's Missionary Union said she was disappointed by the lack of growth in WMU enrollment, but was encouraged by innovative ministries in which many WMU groups have become involved. And Julian Suggs of Music Ministries encouraged churches to continue reporting music ministry enrollment because the slight decrease in enrollment might be traced to a decline in the number of churches reporting music enrollment.

The report also revealed the number of church members it takes to result in one baptism (or ratio of members to baptisms) does not vary much among different-sized churches. In churches with 0-200 resident members, it takes 21.5 people to result in one baptism, in churches with 201-500 members, it takes 28 members, in churches with 501-999 resident members 33 members, and in churches with more than 1,000 members 30.3 members.

Another view of church efforts is the average Tennessee church in four categories (see chart on page 1) and overall. The average church last year had 275 resident members, reported 10 baptisms, 194 enrolled in Sunday School, 55 in Discipleship Training, 48 in Music Ministry, 23 in WMU, and 11 in Brotherhood. *B&R*



### Think Tank on evangelism

Participating in the Think Tank: *Evangelism in the 21st Century* March 26-27 at the Baptist Center, Brentwood, are, from left, front row, Ken Weathersby, Ken Duggan, Mike Owens, Brian Branam, Jerry Drace, Phil Mitchell; second row, Mike Duff, Robert Gamble, Verlon Moore, Doug Sager; third row, Bill George, Mark Hobafcovici, Floyd Paris, Steve Atwood; back row, Jimmy Terry, Gregg Spears, Willie Freeman, Larry Kirk, Richard Everett, and Phil Glisson. The group which totaled 29 participants brainstormed ideas to help churches meet the Tennessee Reach goal of baptizing 200,000 Tennesseans by the year 2000.

## Conference helps churches plan for third millennium

For Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — Well-known church growth strategist George Bullard of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, will help leaders "discover their church's future" April 20-21 at the Baptist Center here.

The conference is entitled "Looking Into the Third Millennium: Spiritually and Strategically Discovering Your Church's Future."

Bullard is widely recognized as a

church growth strategist, an authority in conflict management, an advisor to key church leaders, and an extensive writer. He has provided in-depth consultations to more than 250 congregations and denominational organizations.

The conference can also be referred to as a "chalk talk clinic," said Archer Thorpe of the TBC Church Staff Leadership Group.

He referred to the concept used by college basketball coaches when they bring together high school coaches in a

mentoring relationship.

"Church leaders are facing a new century with the challenge of helping people deal with their hurts and hopes. Our clinic is designed to put you in a mentoring relationship with one of Southern Baptists' most capable transformational leaders," Thorpe said.

The cost of the meeting is \$35 per person and includes a manual, dinner on Monday, and lunch on Tuesday.

For more information, call Thorpe at (615) 371-2018. ■

# Belmont president reports on national commission

By Ian Campbell  
For Baptist and Reflector

NASHVILLE — Tennessee Baptists have an insider's view on the cost of higher education.

Belmont University President William E. Troutt recently completed a whirlwind appointment as chairman of the bipartisan, 11-member National Commission on the Cost of Higher Education.

Since making their final report to Congress in late January, Troutt and the other commission members have continued working to share the results of their work and what those results mean to students, parents, colleges and universities, and to the government.

Troutt said the commission's report contains some hard realities for all parties.

"Tennessee Baptists have been blessed with three col-

leges that operate very efficiently," Troutt said. "All three schools have been sighted as good values in a variety of forms and publications. But maintaining affordability and academic excellence is not going to be easy.

"The challenge for us is going to be keeping costs down and keeping quality Christian education affordable to Tennessee Baptists."

The commission's action-agenda includes the recommendation, "that academic institutions intensify their efforts to control costs and increase institutional productivity."

Belmont, for example, is completing a decade of an ongoing continuous improvement initiative. Efforts have intensified to eliminate waste and improve efficiency as a result of Troutt's involvement

with the commission.

The Belmont president noted institutions with large endowments have an edge in keeping tuition prices under control. "Endowment is key to how tuition-driven an institution is. That's why the Tennessee Baptist Scholarship Endowment Campaign is such a tremendous show of support for our schools," Troutt said.



TROUTT

"The campaign allows all of our Baptist churches to participate and sets an example of the direction in which we need to be moving — having more Christians investing in Christian education."

Troutt, a member of Emmanuel Church, Nashville,

noted the commission, over a six-months period, came up with its final report by going across the country holding hearings, researching a variety of cost-related issues, and talking with those affected by higher education costs.

The report of the national commission, *Straight Talk About College Costs and Prices*, has just been published by the American Council on Education and The Oryx Press. It includes detailed information about the commission's findings.

"All of the recommendations in this document were developed with one goal in mind: to keep open the door of higher education by maintaining access at prices students and families can afford," Troutt said.

"But institutions, governments, and the philanthropic



and higher education communities can only do so much. Students and families have a responsibility to do their part as well.

"Decisions about selecting a college and paying for a college education present tough choices to Tennessee Baptist students and their families. The good news is that higher education continues to be a priority for Tennessee Baptists as well as for many of our fellow believers in Christ.

"With their help, we can continue to keep quality Christian education accessible and make those tough choices a little easier," Troutt concluded. ■

## Union's Dockery lauds Carter's effort of conciliation

By Michael Duduit  
For Baptist and Reflector

JACKSON — Union University President David S. Dockery — one of more than 20 Southern Baptist signers of a statement on conciliation developed by former President Jimmy Carter — praised Carter's efforts to unite Baptists of various viewpoints around some key issues, including racial reconciliation and religious persecution (see April 1 *Baptist and Reflector*).

The diverse group included leaders from the Southern Baptist Convention, American Baptist Churches, Baptist



DOCKERY

World Alliance, and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. The signatories met at the Carter Center in Atlanta in November of last year and again in February, Carter said in a news release March 30.

Dockery, who participated in the gathering, described Carter as a "man of deep faith and piety and I pray that his efforts will be used to forge mutual respect among Baptists."

The statement adopted by the group of Baptist leaders called for a mutual spirit of love and kindness, and pledged that "we will treat each other with mutual respect as brothers and sisters in Christ. We will demonstrate this commitment in our personal devotions and public acts."

The statement also calls for greater efforts in the area of racial conciliation, urg-

ing "every Baptist church to form a partnership with a church of a different culture or ethnic group." The document also pledged "our maximum efforts to end religious persecution in all nations and to encourage unfettered religious liberty for all peoples."

Dockery believes the document is a positive step toward greater Christian cooperation between groups which may hold differing theological viewpoints.

"I think Baptists everywhere will see the statement that has been put together as a hopeful sign for our common commitments to be salt and light in the world and to carry the Gospel message to all nations.

"I thank God for the privilege to participate in this most significant effort," he said. ■

## West Tennessee churches join together for missions effort

For Baptist and Reflector

COVINGTON — For a number of weeks men and women of Oak Grove Church here and Charleston Church, Charleston, built furniture and collected toys, medicines, candy, and

other supplies for their mission trip to Mexico.

After weeks of preparation a team comprised of Paul Moore, James and Beverly McIntyre, and Jason Fleming of Charleston Church joined with Oak Grove members Pat and Zoan

Landrum, M.B. and Cathryne Howard, Roger and Donna Ralph, Mike Howard, Ben Odum, Teresa Elam, Marjorie Goforth, Becky Bringle, and Margaret Wiseman.

They traveled first to Van Horn, Texas, and met with Lloyd Taylor and presented him with three plows, boxes of toys, and other items to be used in Mexico ministries.

They then traveled to Fort Hancock, Texas, where they met Roy and Betty Calloway, an unpaid missionary couple who have been ministering across the border for 20 years. They loaded church furniture to Calloway's large farm trailer to transport across the border into Mexico.

They went to the small village of San Isidro, Mexico, where they spent most of one day installing (14) 12-foot pews, two deacon benches, a pulpit, and a Lord's Supper

table in the Iglesia Bautista-Sinai, a Baptist church built and paid for by volunteers a number of years ago.

The pastor of the Mexican church receives no salary and works out of his home, building living room furniture in order to support his family.

The team later when to Jauerez and visited Calvary Baptist Church where they helped paint the church using funds that had been provided from different organizations in the churches to buy paint.

While in Mexico the group presented each church and the orphanage there toys and candy.

The medicines were given to Betty Calloway for use in the free clinics in Mexico which are operated by volunteer doctors, dentists, and nurses.

Team members returned to Tennessee pleased with what they had accomplished with the help of the Lord. ■



MISSION TEAM MEMBERS from Oak Grove and Charleston churches gather around furniture they made and delivered to a church in the small village of San Isidro, Mexico.

## Partnership Prayer Requests April

8 — Pray for 100 people that Allyson Wimberly, "Hootie the Clown," witnessed to and for those who received Christ during a carnival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

9 — Pray for Pastor Ken Tyler of Friendship Church in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, and his family, all of whom have been sick since January.

10 — Pray for IMB missionaries Keith and Pam Travis in Costa Rica.

11 — Pray for the Baptist State Convention of Michigan's Sunday School campaign to be held April 18-22.

12 — Pray for Baptist work in the Valley of the Saints in Costa Rica which is led by San Pedro Church.

13 — Pray for the Genesee Association director of missions search committee in Michigan.

14 — Pray for Tennessee volunteers Carolyn Outland and Ann Davenport who will lead a prayer retreat April 16-25 in Costa Rica.

## DR rally set

For Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — A Disaster Relief Rally will be held May 15-16 at Camp Linden.

Featured on the program will be Mickey Caison, NAMB International Disaster Relief director; TBC Executive Director James Porch; and Tim Bearden, TBC Disaster Relief director.

For more information on costs and specific times, call the TBC Baptist Men's Ministries Team at (615) 371-7926. *BER*

## Top Reported Baptisms for 1996-97

(for year ending Sept. 30, compiled from Annual Church Profile)

Church	Ratios	
	Resident Members	Resident Members/Baptisms
Westview Church, Kingston Springs	348	1.34
Grace Church, Doyle	121	1.57
Shiloh Church, Kingsport	16	1.60
First Church, Campaign	81	1.88
Leatherwood Church, New Tazewell	42	2.21
First Church, Elk Valley, Pioneer	27	2.45
House of Prayer, Columbia	27	2.45
Grace Mission, Nashville	33	2.75
Gateway Church, Atoka	118	2.88
Lakeview Church, Tiptonville	78	2.89
Sugar Loaf Church, Sevierville	30	3.00
Bluegrass Mission, Hendersonville	21	3.00
Tazewell Pike Church, Knoxville	42	3.23
Contemporary Church, Mount Juliet	52	3.25
Sugar Tree Chapel, Holladay	10	3.33
New Life Mission, Columbia	64	3.37
Greenville Church, Church Hill	27	3.38
Maplewood Church, Clarksville	135	3.38
Faith Mission, Vanleer	79	3.43
Johnson Grove Church, South Fulton	380	3.52
Belfast Church, Belfast	32	3.56
First Church, Walter Hill, Murfreesboro	100	3.70
Victory Church, Dunlap	128	3.76
Korean Church, Clarksville	61	3.81
Tellico Church, Madisonville	46	3.83
First Church, White Bluff	335	3.85
Living Springs Mission, Mount Juliet	62	3.88
Zoe Missionary Mission, Memphis	82	3.90
Temple Church, Savannah	48	4.00
Beech Grove Missionary Church, Eidson	25	4.17

The Resident Members/Baptisms column represents the number of resident members required to win one person represented in the baptism column. Statewide resident membership to baptism ratio is 27.62 to 1, down from 30.58 last year.

Church	Total Baptisms	
	Resident Members	Total Baptisms
Bellevue Church, Cordova	18,522	750
Westview Church, Kingston Springs	348	260
First Church, Hendersonville	4,659	220
Higher Ground Church, Kingsport	2,338	220
Central Church, Hixson	4,944	211
Germantown Church, Germantown	5,381	206
First Church, Concord, Knoxville	3,319	190
First Church, Clarksville	3,576	169
Two Rivers Church, Nashville	4,474	167
Hilldale Church, Clarksville	2,411	163
Lakeview Church, Selmer	654	154
First Church, Cleveland	3,034	132
First Church, Franklin	4,019	132
Greater Missionary Church, Clarksville	590	131
First Church, Columbia	1,361	122
Grace Church, Knoxville	2,171	113
Johnson Grove Church, South Fulton	380	108
Kirby Woods Church, Memphis	1,751	107
Sevier Heights Church, Knoxville	3,198	106
First Church, Smyrna	1,772	104
First Church, Millington	1,742	103
Bartlett Church, Bartlett	1,893	99
Round Lick Church, Watertown	566	91
First Church, Shelbyville	1,012	90
Immanuel Church, Lebanon	2,205	89
Priest Lake Community Church, Nashville	470	88
First Church, White Bluff	335	87
Bayside Church, Harrison	2,244	85
Leawood Church, Memphis	2,506	83
Hillcrest Church, Clarksville	634	82
Silverdale Church, Chattanooga	1,346	82
Belle Aire Church, Murfreesboro	1,340	81
West Jackson Church, Jackson	1,665	79
Tusculum Hills Church, Nashville	2,472	78
Grace Church, Doyle	121	77
Westwood Church, Cleveland	1,750	75
First Church, Lenoir City	1,823	75
Alpha Church, Morristown	1,184	75
Tennessee Avenue Church, Bristol	1,239	73
Second Church, Clinton	724	72
First Church, Collierville	2,166	70
College Heights Church, Gallatin	1,562	70
Park Lane Church, Knoxville	395	69
Pleasant Hill Church, Union City	331	67
Faith Church, Bartlett	1,153	66
Bible Union Church, Martin	331	65
New Vision Church, Murfreesboro	565	64
Hillcrest Church, Lebanon	853	64
First Church, Hunter, Elizabethton	1,261	64
Hermitage Hills Church, Hermitage	1,704	64

## Top Cooperative Program Giving for 1996-97

(for year ending Oct. 31, compiled from TBC Exec. Bd. records)

Rank	Per Capita Giving *	
	Church	Amount
1	Siam Church, Elizabethton	\$232
2	Meridian Church, Jackson	\$221
3	Birchwood Church, Birchwood	\$216
4	Eastanallee Church, Riceville	\$195
5	Bethel Church, Greenfield	\$182
6	French Broad Church, Dandridge	\$182
7	Oak Grove Church, Mount Carmel	\$179
8	Northbrook Church, Humboldt	\$169
9	Brunswick Church, Brunswick	\$154
10	First Church, Athens	\$149
11	First Church, Paris	\$146
12	First Church, Hixson	\$143
13	Bethel Church, Greenbrier	\$142
14	Keeling Church, Stanton	\$140
15	First Church, Brighton	\$138
16	First Church, Tullahoma	\$137
17	Tri Cities Church, Gray	\$137
18	Smyrna Church, Burlington	\$136
19	Indian Springs Church, Kingsport	\$135
20	Brentwood Church, Brentwood	\$130
21	First Church, Grand Junction	\$126
22	Blythe Avenue Church, Cleveland	\$126
23	First Church, Kenton	\$125
24	Allen Church, Brownsville	\$122
25	Colonial Heights Church, Kingsport	\$121
26	Sugar Tree Church, Holladay	\$121
27	First Church, Counce	\$119
28	First Church, Erwin	\$119
29	Guaranda Drive Church, Johnson City	\$118
30	Clearview Church, Franklin	\$118
31	Rhema Church, Jefferson City	\$116
32	Southwestern Church, Johnson City	\$113
33	First Church, Concord, Knoxville	\$112
34	North Cleveland Church, Cleveland	\$112
35	First Church, Lebanon	\$110
36	Ararat Church, Jackson	\$110
37	First Church, Bradford	\$109
38	First Church, Covington	\$109
39	New Middleton Church, Gordonsville	\$108
40	Fairview Church, Oak Ridge	\$107

\* Resident membership information from Annual Church Profile for year ending Sept. 30, 1997. CP information from TBC Treasurer's Report for year ending Oct. 31, 1997.

Rank	Amount of Giving	
	Church	Amount
1	First Church, Concord, Knoxville	\$371,806
2	Bellevue Church, Cordova	\$322,475
3	Brentwood Church, Brentwood	\$287,764
4	Germantown Church, Germantown	\$282,490
5	First Church, Clarksville	\$259,515
6	Central Church, Bearden, Knoxville	\$218,989
7	Red Bank Church, Chattanooga	\$218,733
8	First Church, Athens	\$207,752
9	Central Church, Hixson	\$198,304
10	First Church, Hendersonville	\$195,607
11	Westwood Church, Cleveland	\$173,806
12	Wallace Memorial Church, Knoxville	\$173,658
13	Tusculum Hills Church, Nashville	\$168,727
14	Oak Grove Church, Mount Carmel	\$161,751
15	First Church, Kingsport	\$156,102
16	Broadmoor Church, Memphis	\$155,057
17	Grace Church, Knoxville	\$150,946
18	First Church, Millington	\$150,749
19	First Church, Cookeville	\$149,882
20	First Church, Morristown	\$147,792
21	First Church, Paris	\$145,015
22	First Church, Franklin	\$141,074
23	First Church, Cleveland	\$140,887
24	Bartlett Church, Bartlett	\$138,460
25	First Church, Jackson	\$138,279
26	Brainerd Church, Chattanooga	\$137,324
27	Kirby Woods Church, Memphis	\$135,189
28	Colonial Heights Church, Kingsport	\$134,273
29	Ridgedale Church, Chattanooga	\$131,667
30	First Church, Mount Juliet	\$130,590
31	Judson Church, Nashville	\$130,303
32	First Church, Murfreesboro	\$125,403
33	Hermitage Hills Church, Hermitage	\$124,114
34	Two Rivers Church, Nashville	\$123,453
35	West Jackson Church, Jackson	\$120,158
36	First Church, Lebanon	\$120,104
37	First Church, Powell	\$119,902
38	First Church, Tullahoma	\$117,814
39	Belle Aire Church, Murfreesboro	\$117,513
40	First Church, Smyrna	\$116,781

# The tomb is empty — Christ has risen

By Lonnie Wilkey  
Interim Editor

What would your response be to the question, "What is the most important event of all time?"

Many answers come to mind — man walking on the moon, Columbus (supposedly) discovering America, the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and the list could go on and on.

But the true answer precedes any of those events.

Some might say the greatest event of all time is the birth of Jesus Christ. Very few Christians would argue that, but that is only part of the story.

The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ would be my choice.

The birth of Jesus Christ would have been a moot point if he had remained in that tomb in Jerusalem. History would have remembered him as an imposter who claimed he was the Son of God.

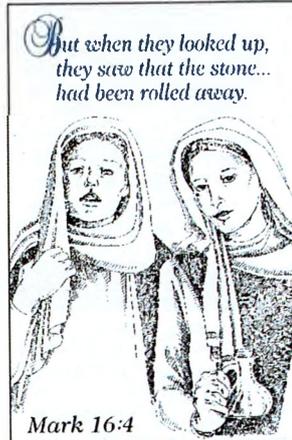
On that Easter Sunday nearly 2,000 years ago, Jesus proved he was not an imposter, but he was indeed the Messiah, the Son of God, who came to die in order that all who confess their sins and profess Jesus Christ as Savior, would have eternal life.

Jesus died. Jesus was buried. But Jesus arose. The grave could not hold him. Eyewitnesses saw and spoke to Jesus. These eyewitness accounts are recorded in the Gospels.

Easter is a time to not only remember those events, but continue to tell that

marvelous story that will never grow old. Hundreds of Tennessee churches either have or are in the process of telling that story through passion plays or Easter cantatas. That is great because many people will come to a play or musical who normally would not darken the door of a church. But that play or cantata is not enough.

Christians must commit to telling the greatest story of all time on a continual basis to a lost and dying world. A once a year witness simply won't suffice. God expects more and he deserves more. *B&R*



just for today

by Fred Wood,  
pastor emeritus,  
Eudora Church,  
Memphis



## Start with a smile

Mother: "Son, I've got bad news for you. I washed your white shirt, but you left a red crayon in the pocket and it melted all over your shirt."

"Son: "Aw, mom, that's all right. I've got another crayon."

## Take this truth

What's most important in your life? If you found a bag with diamonds in it, would you throw away the bag or the diamonds?

## Memorize this Scripture

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you." — Matthew 6:33

## Pray this prayer

Lord, teach me not only the difference between the bad and the good but also between the good and the best. ■

"AS LONG AS I'M RIGHT NINETY PERCENT OF THE TIME, WHO CARES ABOUT THE OTHER THIRTY PERCENT?"



# Family mission statements — not a bad concept

## FamilyFax

Edited by  
Susan Lanford

*Our family mission is to love each other, believe in each other, use wisely our time, talents, and resources to bless others, and worship together. Forever.*

You have read a family mission statement. Your reaction might be: "No family I know would take time to write such pie-in-the-sky verbiage." Or "Every group I'm in has a mission statement; do I need one at home, too?" or "I'd like to meet the family that thinks this way."

This statement commands our attention for three reasons:

(1) It states conclusions this

family has drawn about why it exists and where its members are going.

(2) This family takes responsibility for being and becoming the family they have described.

(3) It is a touchstone — a place to regain footing when crisis threatens the family's existence, when disagreements threaten peace, when limited time and money must cover the needs of all members.

Unspoken agendas abound in families. Each member has ideas what the family ought to be like and how its members should interact. Most relational problems in families are formed by the clash of unspoken need and expectations. Imagine the increased likelihood of a family being effective or happy when its members know and agree on what they are trying to do together.

Wedding vows are the traditional example of a relationship-based mission statement. Vows state the partners' intentions toward each other and their life together. Over time, with no reminder of precisely what was promised, married partners lose touch with those committed intentions.

Advocates for stepfamilies offer help with mission statements. One critical difference between a stepfamily and a biological family is intentionality. Stepfamilies must make deliberate choices to work for the survival and health of the stepfamily — nothing and no one can be taken for granted.

Forming a family mission statement is an exercise in being intentional about family.

Churches can encourage families to begin a family mission statement — around

church supper tables, or on a retreat. Mission statements are formed from lively discussions of practical questions, like, "To what kind of home do you want to invite your friends?" "How do we want to solve our problems?" "What can our family do together that we cannot do our own?"

An excellent resource for families is *The Path*, by Laurie Beth Jones. Written for individuals, it helps adults to determine their own mission statements in order to guide and inspire their families to do so. ■ —Lanford, a member of First Church, Nashville, edits *FamilyFax* for *Acacia Resources*, a division of the Nashville-based Baptist Center for Ethics. *FamilyFax* is available at no cost from the BCE. A dedicated FAX line is needed. For information, FAX request to (615) 383-0915.

# Tennessee ministers write on movie 'Titanic,' Oscar awards

## Tennessee Samplers

Compiled from church newsletters

## One view of 'Titanic'

By Billy Kemp, preteen/youth minister  
Central Church, Crossville

I enjoy going to the movies occasionally. However, there are very few times I will go, maybe twice in the last three years. Not many movies are worth seeing; they are filled with too much trash.

Well, I got caught up in all the hype about "Titanic" — the tragic love story, history, block buster film, and a movie I would probably want to see several times.

I saw "Titanic," and did it sink, the movie that is! I loved the story line, the drama, special effects, but no one told me this was rated as a PG 13 movie. It should be rated R.

Nor did anyone tell me the movie promoted fornication and sexual lust. Nor had anyone said anything about nudity. But what bothered me the most was the use of God's name in vain.

No one, not even any Christian, warned me that God's name would be defiled eight times in the film.

Jesus' name was used in vain a couple of times. And once the audience laughed when the character portraying the older Rose misused God's name. Have we become so desensitized that we do not recognize or respond when God's name is used in vain?

Throughout the world, the United States, despite all, is recognized as a Christian nation. Well, here comes probably our biggest export, the film "Titanic." Will we be viewed as a Chris-

tian nation much longer?

As you can tell, people using God's name in vain is a "pet peeve" of mine. Yet it's breaking a commandment: "Thou shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name," Exodus 20:7 NIV.

I will not be taking my niece to see "Titanic" nor will I be seeing it again.

Let's praise his name, not honor it's misuse. ■

## On the Oscars

By Tom Suiter, pastor,  
Indian Springs Church, Kingsport

Recently the "Oscars" were given out and Hollywood was out in style. The early morning programs on that Monday were giving time for interviews about what the participants were going to wear, the dresses, the jewels, and so forth. There was a lot of emphasis on "who" was going to be nominated and

speculation as to who would win an Oscar.

Then on that day the news was out. "Titanic" won 11 Oscars and on the list goes. Hollywood was abuzz with accolades. The "little golden men" were being held high and "thanks" were offered in profusion.

The money, glamour, and make believe world of Hollywood all reminds me of what the Apostle Paul said to the Corinthians about winning the coveted prize in the athletic arena. He said, "they compete to win a crown that will not last, but we (Christians) compete to win a crown that will last forever."

Oscars are so temporary. And they are given for "acting," not for real living. One day the Lord is going to give a "crown of life" to those who have not pretended to be someone else, but to those who have allowed Jesus Christ to live out his life through them. Keep the faith. The real "Golden Awards Day" has not yet come, but it is coming. ■

# Hunger gifts rise as Baptist increase emphasis on world hunger

By Steven S. Nelson  
For Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Strengthened commitment by Southern Baptists to combat world hunger is reflected in gifts to the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund, which increased by nearly \$1 million dollars in 1997, for a total of \$7,966,663, an increase of 14.8 percent over 1996.

While celebrating the increase, Southern Baptist workers plan to do more and hope others will want to participate in 1998 as they reach out to touch the world's hungry and hurting.

Because Southern Baptists

already have missionaries and volunteers in place, gifts to the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund are used 100 percent for hunger ministry, with nothing taken out for administration or promotion.

"We praise God for the generosity of Southern Baptists and many Christians of other denominations in their response to the world's hungry people," said Richard Land, president of Southern Baptists' Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, of the increase.

"I truly believe this is only the beginning of a great outpouring of the compassion of Christ through his disciples for millions of poor both in the

U.S. and around the world," he said, adding, "This year proved other Christians want to get involved, as 71 Christian bookstores placed change canisters next to their cash registers which generated thousands of dollars in gifts which will be used 100 percent to minister to those in need. While this aid is distributed by Southern Baptists, it is given to anyone in need, regardless of their re-

ligious preference."

Examples abound such as **Brinkley Heights Church, Memphis**, which used discounted foods and volunteer labor to stretch \$8,000 in hunger funds into 64,000 meals last year. This multi-ethnic church provides emergency food aid and counseling for families in need.

Southern Baptists recently

chartered the world's largest cargo plane to deliver massive food and medical aid to North Korea. Through the use of dehydrated soup mix, \$1.40 in hunger funds provides meals for a victim of the North Korean famine for one month. Food monitors are present to make certain the food gets where it is supposed to go. ■

## SBC CP gifts increase in March

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program receipts for March increased nearly 10 percent compared to the previous year's March, according to Morris H. Chapman, SBC Executive Committee president.

For the month of March, a total of \$12,731,017 was received, compared to the same month of 1997 of \$11,599,359, a 9.76 percent increase.

For the first six months of the SBC fiscal year, October through March, CP receipts total \$79,337,984, an increase of 3.68 percent over the same period last year.

At the halfway point of the fiscal year, total receipts exceed the budget requirement by \$5,245,445, or 7.08 percent.

Designated gifts for year also are up: \$95,286,159 compared to \$87,897,962 a year ago, an increase of \$7,388,197 or 8.41 percent. ■

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## Surprise visit

By Mike Rogers

**Focal Passage — Luke 24:13-21a, 27, 30-35**

Two men, saddened by circumstances, were walking together to a village called Emmaus. They were discussing the events of the last few days. Their hopes had been dashed. The man that many had hoped would be the Messiah, the one who would set them free from the oppressive Roman rule, was dead. The religious leaders and political rulers had him crucified. For them, Jesus of Nazareth was a "prophet, powerful in word and deed before God." They had heard that some women discovered earlier that day that Jesus' body was not in the tomb. The women had told everyone that "they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive." They appeared confused and doubtful about all that had occurred.

A stranger came up and walked with them on the road. He asked them about their discussion. They were amazed that the stranger had not heard about the events that just unfolded in Jerusalem, the crucifixion of a great man of God. This stranger seemed surprised that they did not understand the prophecies about Christ, the Messiah, spoken by the prophets of old. He began to explain to them what the Scriptures said the Messiah would be like and those things that would transpire in his time on earth. When they had reached their destination, the two men invited the stranger to dine with them, and he did. As the stranger reached down and broke bread in front of them, they recognized who he was. It was Jesus of Nazareth. Risen from the dead. As quickly as he had joined them, he vanished. Their hearts were set on fire and without delay, they walked seven miles back to Jerusalem to tell others who they had just seen. Their lives were changed forevermore. Jesus was alive.

### Circumstantial blindness

When our view of Christ is clouded by the circumstances of life, we have little sensitivity toward the presence of God. It is easy to have had vision when our relationship with God is blurred by daily neglect. Those unique characteristics that God alone demonstrates in our life are unrecognizable when we don't understand what the Bible reveals about who God is. Biblical ignorance is near epidemic in modern day Christianity. Worse still is our inability to recognize the God of the Scriptures. Like these two men on the road to Emmaus, we don't recognize Christ in our daily lives.

### Surprise visit

Jesus visited these two men in an unexpected way and at an unexpected time. We all know that the Spirit of God is like the wind, blowing where it wishes (John 3:8). Jesus warned us to be ready and watchful. I wonder how often the resurrected Lord has appeared in our midst, and we have not recognized his visit.

### Compelling moment

This divine encounter with the Resurrected Lord, ignited hope in the hearts of these two men. They would never be the same again. They would always walk in faith from this momentous day forward. They would never need to be artificially pumped up by human efforts or words. They would only have to walk down that road again in their memory to renew their hope for life. I pray that you too will find the road to Emmaus. I have and my life has never been the same since. — Rogers and his wife Debi are the authors of "The Kingdom Agenda: Experiencing God in Your Workplace" (LifeWay Press, 1997). Mike also serves as director of missions, Bradley Baptist Association.

## Jesus died and lives again

By Billy Murphy

**Focal Passage — Mark 15:33-39; 16:1-8**

Jesus had been arrested and brought before the Jewish Sanhedrin for a hearing. Witnesses, who appeared against him, offered "evidence" that they had heard him say he would destroy the Temple. His words had been twisted to mean that he was referring to the place of worship. The Sanhedrin realized they could never execute Jesus on such flimsy, contradictory evidence, so the high priest asked Jesus a question, which should have not been allowed. Jesus was asked if he was the Messiah, and he answered immediately that he was. Jesus' response signed his own death warrant. This response announced his determination to die for man rather than deny the Father's will.

### Family Bible Lesson

Mark's record of the crucifixion is contained in only a few verses. It is as if Mark did not wish to dwell on the horrors of the event. They took Jesus out to a lonely hill, nailed him to a cross, and there he died between two thieves, each on a cross. The soldiers, the crowd, the priests, and scribes heaped abuses on Jesus. None of them knew that (as he was being lifted up on that cross, not as a criminal but as a King) their Temple was being destroyed (not a physical destruction, that comes later at the hands of the Romans). The Temple veil was torn in two from the top to the bottom. In refusing to save himself, he was saving generations of others. The cross was supposed to be a symbol of shame. It became the eternal symbol of the love of God, even for his murderous enemies.

Jesus died at about three o'clock in the afternoon. As his body was being lowered from the cross, a man named Joseph of Arimathea "took courage" and went directly to Pilate. He asked for the body of Christ in order that he might bury it in his own garden. Joseph is a shadowy figure; he has been

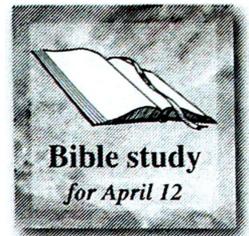
called the "secret disciple." He probably held a high office among the Jews as one of their council. He had nothing to do with the Jerusalem Sanhedrin's condemnation of Jesus — nor did he do anything to stop it. He prepared the body for burial, laid it on a stone shelf in his tomb, and "rolled a stone against the door of the tomb." Tombstones symbolized a terrible finality; they represented "the end." Joseph performed this last service for the one he could never quite follow while he was alive.

Early the next morning Mary Magdalene, Mary (the mother of Jesus), and Salome came to the tomb with spices to anoint the body. While approaching, they asked, "Who will roll away the stone for us?" Then they saw it. Someone had already rolled away the stone. A mysterious "young man" (an angel) sitting within the tomb gave them the great word: their Christ had risen from the dead. Jesus had broken the immovable door of death and had conquered the last terrifying enemy of mankind. God in Christ had conquered death.

God has rolled away many stones, and has brought a living Christ to the aid and comfort of many believers, weeping at the loss of their loved ones. The tomb, as Victor Hugo said, "... had become not a blind alley, but a thoroughfare."

The men who penned the four Gospels differ somewhat in their approach to the account of the resurrection: Matthew stresses the glory and majesty of the story; Luke values it as a spiritual necessity; John upholds it as the touchstone of character; but Mark states it as fact. It was fact to the women who came to the garden: to them, it was not something promised, but something accomplished — something not in the future, but in the present.

Today one should think of the resurrection not as something that happened in an obscure corner of the earth two thousand years ago, but as something happening in the lives of those who have been "resurrected" with him to a new life. The resurrection is the central fact of the Christian faith. — Murphy is Computer Consultant for West Carroll Special School District and a bivocational pastor, Howse Church, Atwood.



## Faith in Jesus as risen Lord

By James Growden

**Focal Passage — John 20:14-21, 24-29**

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Such a wonderful event. It's what makes Christianity different from all the other world's religions. Hallelujah. He arose.

We Christians know that we can live again because we can have un-failing faith in Jesus as the risen Lord.

Jesus' resurrection is a fact. He came out of the grave and now each year we celebrate Easter because of his resurrection. It has nothing to do with bunnies and colored eggs that our media "pushes" upon our society today. Praise the Lord, he lives.

The focal passage begins at John 20:14. Mary had seen the empty tomb and now she sees a second startling sight (v. 14). Mary sees Jesus, however she does not recognize him. Note four significant events: (1) Mary was speaking to the angels and she sensed Jesus' presence behind her. She turned and there he was. How would you have responded to this event? (2) He spoke to her. "Why weepst thou? Whom seekest thou?" (v. 15). Mary was seeking a dead Savior. Her entire being was focused upon a grave where her dead Savior had been entombed. But ... he was not dead. (3) Then there was the false identity. Mary thought she was

### Explore the Bible Lesson

speaking to the gardener. She did not recognize Jesus because her eyes were full of tears and her head was bowed low in the normal shyness of a woman and because she was facing the wrong direction. She had turned back around to face where the body had been lying. (4) There was the great recognition. This is one of those dramatic moments that exceeds the ability of words to express.

"Mary!"

"Rabboni!" (v. 16). Mary recognized Jesus by his voice when Jesus called her name. She was one of his sheep. He knows his sheep by name and the sheep know the sound of his voice. Mary called Jesus "Rabboni, my Master."

Now to the third startling sight — Mary's new commission. Mary was so full of joy and excitement that she wanted to embrace Jesus. Jesus commanded, "Touch me not" (v. 17). Jesus was saying "Stop clinging to me." Mary's great love was flawed. She was reaching out to clutch and to cling to his body (physically), thus she was missing the point: his resurrection had created a totally new relationship. He was now her Lord and God. She ran to tell the disciples of

her great discovery.

In verses 19-23, John reports on Jesus' appearance to his disciples. The disciples had almost been arrested with Jesus and they still feared death. Jesus passed through a locked door to stand among them.

This showed the power of his new resurrected body. However, his body had substantial form and continuity with his pre-cross body. His first words were, "Peace be with you." Seeing the wounds in his pierced hands and side, they were frightened, then they were overjoyed. Do you wonder how you would have responded if you had been there? I do. In verse 21 we see Jesus repeat, "Peace be with you," then identified himself with God. He told them by whose authority he did his work and was giving them orders. He breathed on them and told them to "Receive the Holy Spirit." What a wonderful gift.

We have included in this study a look at the Lord's appearances to the disciples, including Thomas. Thomas wanted Jesus' physical presence. But God's plan is wiser. He has not kept himself contained in a physical body; he wants to be present with all of us at all times. Even now he is with us in the form of the Holy Spirit. We can talk to him and find his words for us in the Bible. He can be as real to us as he was to Thomas. — Growden is a teacher and a bivocational pastor, Hillcrest Church, Nashville.

## leaders

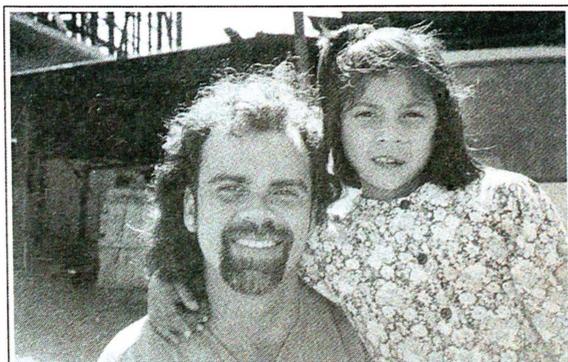
■ An Organ Transplant Fund for **Calvin Metcalf** of Knoxville has been founded. Metcalf was minister in residence, Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, and is pastor emeritus of Central Church, Fountain City, Knoxville; former president, Tennessee Baptist Convention; former member, TBC Executive Board; and an author. He underwent a heart transplant Jan. 18. Contributions, which are tax deductible, will offset the costs not covered by insurance. Gifts may be sent to the fund at P.O. Box 5800, Knoxville, TN 37928.

■ Three men from churches in Cumberland Gap Association served recently in Venezuela. **Walter Dunn, Paul Rains, and Robert Ziegler** did construction and repair work and evangelism while there. They worked with a congregation and helped a missionary. The Tennesseans visited seven congregations. As a result of their visits in homes, eight people made professions of faith.

■ **Bill Phipps**, pastor, Lenox Church, Lenox, resigned March 8. He had served the church for 12 years. **Robert Orr** has been called as interim pastor.

■ Woodland Church, Brownsville, called **Mike Moore** as pastor, effective March 22. He formerly was pastor, Bear Creek Church, Parsons.

■ **Kenneth Sparkman**, director of missions, Gibson Association, and **Kathleen Sparkman**, his wife who has served as secretary for the association, will be honored on their 25th anniversary of service May 31. A reception will be held from 2-4 p.m. at First Church, Trenton.



**POSING WITH** a new friend in Chile is Mark Thomas, minister of music and youth, First Church, Smithville. He and L.M. and Clara Brincefield Huff of Belle Aire Church, Murfreesboro, recently joined a team from Greensboro, S.C., to help build the Home for Girls in Temuco, Chile. The home was started by teams from Judson Church, Nashville, and First Church, Goodlettsville. Karen is a resident of the home. Brincefield Huff is emeritus missionary to Chile.

■ Forest Hills Church, Nashville, called **Todd Young** as minister of activities, effective April 1. He formerly was minister of activities and youth for a Mississippi church. Young is a graduate of Samford University, Birmingham, Ala., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. He also serves on the board of directors of Camp Ridgecrest for Boys, Ridgecrest, N.C.

■ First Church, Portland, called **Gregory L. McCoy** as pastor, effective March 23. He previously was pastor, Friendship Church, Culleoka. McCoy is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

■ **Gene Roberts** has been called as minister of music, First Church, LaFollette. He formerly was minister of music and youth, Oakwood Church, Chattanooga.

■ Choptack Church, Rogersville, has called **Keith Osborne** as pastor. Osborne formerly was minister of youth, East Rogersville Church, Rogersville, which ordained him March 22, the day he began serving as pastor. He also works in Morristown.

■ Wallace Memorial Church, Knoxville, will honor its minister of music, **Bruce Forlines**, for 25 years of service April 19. Activities include recognition during the morning worship service and a reception from 2-4 p.m.

■ **Ted Trent** was called as pastor, Cool Branch Church, Sneedville, effective March 15. He also is a public school teacher so he is bivocational. He formerly was pastor, Calvary Church, Bean Station.

■ First Church, Sneedville, called **Wade Holbrook** as full-time pastor, effective March 15. He formerly was bivocational pastor, Bishopville Church, Heiskell.



**WORSHIPING** for the first time in its 1,200-seat sanctuary is part of the congregation of Englewood Church, Jackson, on March 15. The \$4.1 million addition includes the worship corridor, choir rehearsal area, and six new Sunday School rooms. More than 1,500 attended the two inaugural morning services. The church plans to continue multiple services with two or more Sunday Schools.

■ **Julia McAninch** of Hermitage has been called as minister of youth, Woodbine Church, Nashville.



■ **Cross Roads Church, Greenbrier**, will hold revival April 19-22. Glenn Denton, pastor, Hillcrest Church, Lebanon, will speak and Homer Felts will lead the music.

■ The Acteens of **Poplar Creek Church, Clinton**, held a prayer retreat on missions for youth from area churches March 20. Roger Toler who has served in Russia, Timothy Huff, who has served in Africa, and Brianna Taylor who has served in Florida, spoke. Musician Justin Shipley of Mississippi performed. Youth from six churches participated and pledged to give \$540 to missions. Acteens Celina Diggs and Maria Combs, who are working toward their Queen Regent in Service, led the effort.

■ **First Church, Somerville**, will present "Who Do You Say I Am," an Easter musical and drama, April 11-12 at 7 p.m. For more information, call the church at (901) 465-3528.

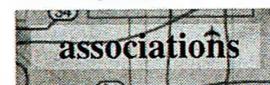
■ **Richland Church, Memphis**, will hold a revival April 19-22. Messianic Rabbi Gary Shansky and worship leaders from B'rit Hadasha will lead it. For more information, contact the church at (901) 683-2451.

■ **Fosterville Church, Bell Buckle**, will hold revival April 26-29. Mike Ruffin, pastor and associate professor of religion, Belmont University, Nashville, will speak. Phillip Barrett, music director, will lead the music.

■ **Page Heights Church, Goodlettsville**, will hold revival April 12-15. Luis Acevedo

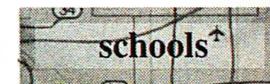
will speak.

■ **Broadmoor Church, Nashville**, will hold revival beginning April 12. Henry Linginfelter, evangelist of Alcoa, will speak and Carolyn Reed, recording artist of Nashville, will perform.



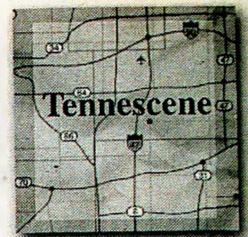
■ **Campbell County Association** recently hosted a conference on "A Kingdom Principle." Phil Taylor led the training.

■ **William Carey Association** will hold a prayer conference at First Church, Taft, May 8-9. Lew Reynolds, state prayer coordinator of Nashville, will help lead it.



■ A winner of the National Book Award, Charles Wright, will read his poetry April 16 at **Union University, Jackson**. For more information, call the school at (901) 661-5215.

■ **Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City**, has received a gift from Jimmy



Carter, former President of the United States, and Rosalyn Carter, his wife, for the Charles A. Trentham Endowed Scholarship fund. Trentham was pastor to the Carters while pastor, First Church, Washington, D.C. He also was pastor, First Church, Knoxville. The original gift which formed the fund was \$100,000 from Church of Redeemer in Knoxville.

■ An economic study of Jackson recently reported **Union University** has generated more than 900 jobs and added \$200 million to the economy over the past six years in Jackson-Madison County.

■ **Harrison-Chilhowee Baptist Academy, Seymour**, recently added two flags to its display of flags representing the international status of many of its students. Flags from Poland and Venezuela were added by First Church, Friendville. Students from 70 nations have attended the academy in its 118-year history.

■ Actor William A. Roy of Clifton Park, N.Y., recently portrayed President George Washington for the student body of **Harrison-Chilhowee Baptist Academy, Seymour**. He emphasized the religious heritage of the United States.



■ Rick McDade, a Baptist Trinity Hospice chaplain, will speak April 14 at 10 a.m. at the **Baptist Cancer Institute Life Center**, part of the Baptist Memorial Health Care in Memphis, on "When You are in Grief." Call the center at (901) 747-2007 for more information.



**BREAKING GROUND** on March 29 for a Family Life Center are leaders of Oak Grove Church, Covington, from left, Ron Cooke; Wayne Owen; Jerry Barker, pastor; Donna Ralph; Betty Lou Thompson; and Mike Howard. The new center will be multi-purpose, providing space for fellowship and sports activities. Classrooms will be added to its second floor in the future.