

Baptist & Reflector

Statewide Edition

Telling the Story of Tennessee Baptists

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Tennessee Baptists prepare for debut of 'The Passion'

Lonnie Wilkey & Connie Davis
Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — One of the most talked about movies, at least in the Christian arena, debuts Feb. 25 in Tennessee and nationwide.

Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" will not only accurately portray crucifixion and suffering of Jesus Christ on Calvary, but could be used as a powerful evangelism tool, say Tennessee Southern Baptist leaders.

There are occasional seasons where secular news media pick up a story that glorifies the people of God and more clearly present the Good News of the Gospel of our Lord," said Gary Gilmore, leader of the Tennessee Baptist Convention's Evangelism Strategies Group.



GILMORE

The attention of masses of people is briefly captured and interest and inquiry provides the Christian community the opportunity to again give testimony that Jesus is just an attachment to life, He is," Gilmore continued.

The showing of Mel Gibson's The Passion of the Christ is a 'door of opportunity' for evangelism that we must immediately seize," the state evangelism leader stressed.

A screening of the movie was held in early December at First Baptist Church in Hendersonville. The event was hosted by country music star Ricky Skaggs, a member at First Baptist. Gibson himself attended the screening and shared his testimony afterwards.

Gibson explained that he was convinced God wanted him to bring the gospel to the big screen in such a way that the average person would have an opportunity to see what Jesus had done for him.

The film is the culmination of 12 years of dreaming and working toward its completion, he noted.

James T. Draper Jr., president of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, said it is obvious that the film is Gibson's passion, and he does a remarkable job with it.

"For viewers of The Passion of the Christ, it is a journey into inexpressible reality," Draper said. "Few Christians today have any real sense of what took place when Jesus Christ was crucified. The brutality, anger, hatred, and arrogance of His enemies and the genuineness of His mission, His passion, grip the viewer in a visceral way.

"No one can help but be affected by the sacrifice He made. It is precise, vividly honest and graphic in portraying the sufferings of our Lord," Draper continued. "This is a movie that Christians need to see to be reminded of the price

paid for our salvation, and it is a movie that Christians need to use to introduce these truths to those who have not yet met Jesus Christ."

Skaggs told the Baptist and Reflector he hosted the event to bring the movie to the attention of media and other persons of influence so they could help "get the word out" about the movie.

Skaggs is passionate about the impact the movie could potentially have on viewers.

The country music singer cited the sinful condition of the world. "God has a time for everything and it is a perfect time for this movie," he said.

Skaggs is convinced that the "hardest hearted" person will be changed by viewing the movie. "You will be changed after seeing the movie. You won't be the same person who went in," Skaggs predicted.

The Passion depicts the crucifixion of Christ in a powerful way, say those who have seen the movie. They warn that the movie which is rated "R" is graphic.

"I have been unable to erase from my mind the scene of the beating given Jesus by Roman guards," Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, said in a statement to Baptist Press after the screening.

"It was gruesome. It jarred my sensibilities. The sight of Jesus' back after the cat of nine tails had torn bit by bit into His flesh was almost unbearable. It was

so real I was almost certain the audience around me had given a collective gasp, sinking into their seats, shrinking from the horror of such excruciating pain."

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said The Passion of the Christ was the most powerful and moving experience he has ever had as a moviegoer.

"The graphic portrayal of the brutal death of our Lord and Savior is an unforgettable and indelible reminder of the horrendously high cost Jesus paid to deliver us from sin's terrible penalty," he said. "The Passion is not only a work of artistic brilliance but also the product of deep devotion of a man whose life has been profoundly changed and influenced by Jesus."

Bob Landham, executive pastor of First Baptist Church, Hendersonville, also attested to reality of the last hours of Christ before His death on the cross.

"We talk so much of how Jesus died," Landham observed. "This movie reminded me of how He suffered."

Landham and Skaggs both observed how the suffering of Jesus has been downplayed through the years. "When I've seen pictures of Jesus and the crucifixion, it looks like He had been in a briar patch," Landham said. The movie highlights how horrible the scourging was."

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Entities provide resources to go with movie

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — As the premiere of "The Passion of The Christ" approaches, news of its importance to the evangelical community is spreading and churches are taking advantage of the high-profile film.

The New York Times published a Feb. 5 article titled, "Some Christians See 'Passion' as Evangelism Tool," about how many Christians are expecting the Mel Gibson film to be as effective an instrument at reaching unbelievers as large-scale crusades have been in the past.

"I don't know of anything since the Billy Graham crusades that has had the potential of touching so many lives," Morris H. Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, said in The Times. "It's like the Lord somehow laid in our lap something that could be a great catalyst for spiritual awakening in this nation."

While The Passion promises to pique the interest of many

who have otherwise given little thought to Christianity, evangelicals are jumping on the chance to provide answers in various formats.

Among the evangelistic resources using The Passion theme:

◆ LifeWay Christian Resources has launched a new web site at lifeway.com to help people and churches communicate the salvation message of the movie. Free content from LifeWay resources such as T.W. Hunt's "The Mind of Christ," Beth Moore's "Jesus the One and Only" and Daniel Akin's new book, "Discovering the Biblical Jesus," emphasize the power of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. Also available: movie ticket vouchers as well as free fan kits that include posters and other promotional materials churches may distribute in their communities.

A link titled "Know Him" walks readers through the steps

to becoming a Christian, and a video clip of Beth Moore's "How to Become a Christian" is available for download.

◆ The North American Mission Board is mailing Southern Baptist churches suggestions for preparation, prayer, and personal witnessing — as well as tools to help follow up with individuals who respond. The same information also is available through www.PassionChrist.org, a new NAMB web site.

The site deals openly with the issues many churches will have in hoping to see people reached with the gospel by the movie while at the same time not wishing to offer unequivocal endorsement to an R-rated (for violence) movie.

NAMB also suggests churches bathe the film in prayer, including mentioning the potential of the film to church members at a regular prayer meeting, holding special prayer events, and

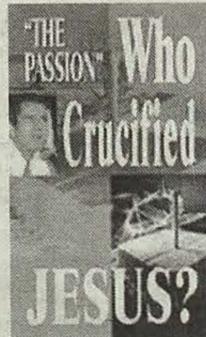
planning prayerwalks at theaters. Members also could be equipped to share their faith through a variety of outreach tools and apologetics resources available for download.

◆ The new book by Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, seeks to help readers answer key questions about who Jesus really is. The LifeWay book, part of a yearly doctrine series, is titled, "Discovering the Biblical Jesus."

"When we planned this doctrine study, we had no idea that the movie was being conceived or that its release would coincide with the book," said David Haney, an editor at LifeWay. "That's something God did."

◆ Outreach, Inc. has partnered with Icon Productions to produce a four-minute trailer on DVD featuring Gibson talking about his film. The trailer is being sent free of charge to thousands of churches across the country to generate interest in the film and its potential as an evangelistic tool.

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Tax guide for ministers available

Baptist Press

DALLAS — The Annuity Board's annual Ministers Tax Guide for 2003 Returns is now available in print and online at www.absbc.org. Free printed copies are available by calling 1-800-262-0511.

The guide, which supplements IRS materials, focuses on tax issues most likely to affect active and retired Southern Baptist ministers. It provides a thorough, easy-to-follow guide for preparing ministers' tax returns, including sample tax returns.

A tax highlights section, meanwhile, gives a review of tax changes during 2003.

The guide also includes a special section about important federal requirements for churches as a resource for church treasurers and other church leaders.

"Many ministers and church leaders don't understand the special tax rules that apply to clergy, and the guide explains how those rules work," said Curt Sharp of the Annuity Board executive staff.

The guide also "details how churches can structure ministers' pay to help them keep more of their income," Sharp noted. □

No amendment: Mass. lawmakers adjourn until March

Baptist Press

BOSTON — Massachusetts' Constitutional Convention adjourned Feb. 12 without passing a marriage amendment, dealing a blow to conservatives and traditionalists trying to prevent same-sex "marriage" legalization within the state.

The convention will meet again March 11.

Lawmakers met until midnight Eastern time — three hours past the allotted time — but voted on only one amendment the entire day. That amendment was the most conservative of the proposals and would have banned same-sex "marriage" without legalizing civil unions.

Needing 101 votes, the amendment, sponsored by Rep. Philip Travis, lost 103-98. It was backed by social conservatives in the days leading up to the convention.

Legislators then went back to the drawing board, hoping to come up with something that could pass. One proposal would have banned same-sex "marriage" but legalized civil unions. It was debated but did not reach a vote.

At 9 p.m. legislators suspended the rule on time limits and voted to debate until midnight, at which time a unanimous vote was required to continue debate. But, like the entire day, there was no unanimity and the convention adjourned. □

Dockery tells SEBTS students:

Congregations need sound doctrine, ethics

By Kyle Smith
Baptist Press

WAKE FOREST, N.C. — Sound doctrine that produces sound ethics for the spread of the gospel is the foundation on which churches must stand, David Dockery said Feb. 11 at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary here.

Dockery, president of Union University in Jackson, said his message from Titus 2:1-10 is an important one for Christians because it goes against the notions of individualism and self-sufficiency so popular in American life.

"We have become lost in our own self-preoccupation," Dockery said, referring to the trend toward isolation of life in America today. "Titus 2 takes us in a very different direction than our culture."

The church today needs to stand united on sound biblical doctrine that will inform its actions, Dockery said, and it should do so with the motivation of bringing honor to Christ.



UNION UNIVERSITY President David Dockery addresses students at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary during a recent chapel service.

Dockery noted that the instructions conveyed in the Titus 2 text are applicable for the church today, including the injunctions for older women to encourage younger women and for men to conduct themselves in a manner that is beyond reproach.

"Older women are to practice the presence of God and allow God's presence to permeate their lives," he said. "Christian men are to be committed to the standard of chastity before marriage and fidelity after-

ward. This standard is in need today."

Dockery also championed the importance of the church adopting a worldview based on sound biblical doctrine rather than on society's standards.

"Sound doctrine is a Christian way of seeing the world, understanding of the church totally different than what we see around us," Dockery said. "Without this framework, the church will become more secularized in all its doings." But Christian living based on Christian doctrine will reflect positively on the church's message of the gospel, Dockery, one of the preeminent theologians in Southern Baptist life and author of more than 20 books.

"Christian marriages beautify Christian homes beautifully, commend the gospel," he said.

"Those who don't [have a biblical worldview] bring it into disrepute. Our lives, our teaching, and our churches can either bring attractive add-on to the gospel or they detract from the luster of it."

LifeWay revenues decrease slightly

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — LifeWay's ministry strategy should come from a higher power, not from worldly opportunities and needs, President James T. Draper Jr. told trustees of LifeWay Christian Resources during their Feb. 9-10 meeting here.

The spiritual needs of the world today are constant, Draper said. "Pick up tomorrow's paper and you'll see five needs we could address by developing a biblical resource, but those may not be resources God wants us to develop right now."

Asking God for His plan for LifeWay must be the default setting of employees and trustees, Draper said. "Following that plan is our responsibility and for what we will be held accountable. The lost in this country don't have the luxury of us dabbling in the irrelevant."

Ted Warren, executive vice president and chief operating officer, brought trustees up to date on the company's financial performance. In 2003, LifeWay reported revenues of \$414.3 million, down 0.7 percent from the previous year.

First-quarter 2004 revenues were \$104.4 million, up 2.9 percent from the same quarter last year but 2.1 percent below budget. Warren projected 2004 year-end revenues to be \$440.3 million, 6 percent ahead of last year but 1.8 percent below budget.

Gene Mims, vice president of the church resources division, reported a 10 percent growth in women's events in 2003, with

22,000 women attending a single Beth Moore "Living Proof Live" event in Atlanta, and a 5.3 percent growth in LifeWay-sponsored student events, with more than 80,000 students attending and 8,000 registering spiritually.

The FAITH/Sunday School evangelism strategy continues to grow, Mims said. In the five years LifeWay has sponsored FAITH, 7,000 churches have trained 200,000 people to share their faith.

Ken Stephens, vice president of Broadman & Holman, told trustees several Holman Christian Standard Bible products will be released in the spring. Holman CSB products releasing in April and May include a red-letter edition, an illustrated study Bible for children, pew and drill Bibles, and several pocket-sized Bibles. B&H also is releasing specialty Bibles for sportsmen, firemen, policemen, brides, and the military.

More information about the Bible is available at www.broadmanholman.com.

Trustee actions included:

- ♦ approval of a recommendation that LifeWay draft a resolution designating 2005 as "The Year of the Bible." The resolution asking Southern Baptists to read the Holman Christian Standard Bible through in 2005 would come before the 2004 Southern Baptist Convention in Indianapolis June 15-16.

- ♦ approval of an increase of up to 3.5 percent for all dated and undated Sunday School curriculum. The actual price and percentage increase, if any, will be determined in the summer of 2004 for the spring of 2005. □

Floridian protests anticipated

Associated Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Delegates from their Baptist brethren worldwide, Southern Baptist Convention leaders show no sign of abandoning their plan to withdraw from Baptist World Alliance. But isn't stopping Florida reeve Bob Casey from trying to change their minds at the last minute?

During its meeting this Monday and Tuesday in Nashville, the SBC Executive Committee was to have heard a study committee's recommendation to end the 99-year-old relationship with the BWA, Southern Baptists helped fund and continue to fund. The committee accused the BWA of being too liberal — allegations strongly denied by BWA leaders and many of the 211 affiliated Baptist unions worldwide.

Casey arrived late last week in Nashville, where he began a week-long fast and daily prayer walk around the SBC headquarters building in a Joshua attempt to prevent the denomination from leaving the BWA.

"I based it on the biblical story of Joshua and the city of Jericho, where people marched around [the city] once a day for six days," so that the city walls would fall and the Canaanites could conquer it, Casey said.

"I'm not calling for destruction of the Southern Baptist Convention, but I'm calling for the destruction of a bad idea, and that is to separate from the BWA," Casey added. □

Chapman, rabbi debate movie on 'CNN Live Today'

in Curry
tivist Press

NASHVILLE — Morris H. Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, defended the Passion of The Christ on Feb. 6, saying the film is anti-Semitic because people do not love Christ love the Jewish nation.

Chapman was a guest of CNN anchor Daryn Kagan along with Rabbi Marvin Hier of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles on "CNN Live Today."

Kagan first asked Chapman why some Christians see the Mel Gibson film as an opportunity to read the Word of God.

"After seeing the preview, I was stirred to the very depths of my soul," said Chapman, who is part of a preview of the film at the First Baptist Church in Hensonville in December. "It is the most graphic, dramatic portrayal of what our Lord Jesus Christ went through than anything I have ever seen."

"To watch Jesus' back beaten bit by bit by the cat-o'-nine-tails is just almost unbearable. And

you just can't go to the film and remain unaffected. I believe that people who see the film will begin to question, 'Who is Jesus?' And many of them will find the answer."

Hier said he had seen the film twice and came away with a very different impression than Chapman.

"I have never seen a more negative portrayal of Jews than in this film," Hier said. "I'm not talking about the high priests only — all Jews. They never have an intelligent thing to say in a two-hour film. The Romans are made to look good."

"The audience will have only one conclusion: If the Romans look good, with the exception of the four whippers, and the Jews look so bad, who is responsible for this terrible inhumanity inflicted on Jesus? And they will only conclude that it was the Jews collectively, which will stir anti-Semitic feelings, even if it's not immediate, all over the world."

Kagan then asked Chapman if it's possible that the film is a moving depiction of the crucifixion of Christ but also in-

cludes anti-Semitism.

"Well, I think that thought is in the hearing of the one who listens," Chapman replied.

The CNN anchor asked if Chapman was calling Hier anti-Semitic.

Chapman said he was absolutely not calling anyone anti-Semitic. He said people can either focus on a negative aspect of what took place in history or on the real message of the film, which is that "Jesus Christ died for our sins."

Kagan then asked Chapman if he was talking about history as it is depicted in the film, that all Jews at that time were bad and the Romans were good.

"Absolutely not," Chapman said. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to the world. He came to die for us. And in fact [God] sent His Son through the Israelites. Jesus Himself was a Jew. People who love Christ love the Jewish nation."

Kagan asked Hier if it is possible in the broad scope of the movie world that there is room for some people to be touched spiritually by The Passion but

not others.

"There have been many films made about Jesus," Hier said.

"None will have the reaction from Jews that this film will have because the graphic brutality; the violence in the film is unprecedented. And it's directed only on one people. There

can be no misjudgment about this. All the Jews in this film are deemed guilty."

Hier added, "There's a very negative portrayal of Jews and very unfair."

Chapman said he disagreed with the rabbi at that point.

"The fact of the matter is that Christ died for all our sins," the SBC leader said. "We are all responsible for putting Christ on the cross. In Isaiah 53 the Bible says that 'the Lord hath laid



DARYN KAGAN of CNN, left, asked questions Feb. 6 of Rabbi Marvin Hier, center, of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, and Morris Chapman of the SBC Executive Committee about "The Passion" on "CNN Live Today."

upon Him the iniquity of us all.' The New Testament says 'for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.' And so the Jewish people didn't put Him to death, the Romans didn't put Him to death. We all put Him to death."

Chapman added that, as he saw it, the Romans were beating Jesus in the film. The fact that some Jews were calling for the crucifixion is just a fact of history, Chapman said. □

Tennessee Baptists prepare for debut ...

Continued from page 1

Skaggs too observed that photos of Jesus on the cross show very little blood. "Scriptures give a different picture of the crucifixion," he said.

"The movie brings the real crucifixion to the eyes of people in the 21st century," singer continued.

As the Lord used John the Baptist to prepare hearts for the first coming of Jesus, God will use this movie to prepare hearts for the return of the real Jesus," Skaggs predicted.

Churches use movie as a tool

Several Tennessee Baptist churches across the state are making plans to use the movie as an outreach/evangelism tool. Among them include:

► Ken Clayton, pastor of **Tulip Grove Baptist Church, Old Hickory**, encouraged his congregation to see the movie when it is first released and to invite a non-Christian friend and pay his way.

"There always is a lot of publicity about how much money a movie makes during its first week," Clayton said. "A far better message could be sent to a non-believing world than to one we are willing to pay for movies with this type of message."

Following the premier of the movie, Clayton is encouraging people to come to church and "Meet the Characters" during a five-week sermon series which will include dramatic monologues with some of the central movie figures.

► **Midland Heights Baptist Church in Shelbyville** plans to rent one of the town's two movie theaters one day in March after the theaters acquire the movie.

Pastor Steve Murphree explained the movie is being shown in larger cities with multiple theaters first.

Murphree said the church is renting a theater with 340 seats. Tickets will be given to church members and then the leftover tickets will be distributed to members to bring non-Christian friends.

Those people will be given a packet that includes the plan of salvation and

an invitation to church, Murphree said.

Some local business leaders in the church are underwriting the cost of the tickets, the pastor said.

"If we get just one person there who comes to know the Lord, it will be worth every penny we spend," he said.

► **First Baptist Church, Lenoir City**, is renting a theatre in Farragut Wednesday, March 10, to show the Passion, said Jay Thompson, associate pastor of student ministry. The theatre is not renting the space on the weekends and the church wanted to avoid Tuesday and Thursday sports activities.

Church members including students are encouraged to bring non-Christians to see the film and then take them out to eat. Guests will be provided free tickets. If people can't attend on March 10, they are encouraged to attend another time, explained Thompson.

To prepare members for witnessing opportunities arising from the film, Thompson and church members will see the movie. Then they will list questions it raises and the answers. These discussion points will be distributed to members, said Thompson, who previewed the film in Chicago and learned that the film will raise questions.

The church also will show the movie's trailer or shortened version for promotion Feb. 15 during the Sunday morning service and on TVs distributed throughout its facility. Students will be distributing invitations to the movie and information on how to get free tickets in their schools.

To follow up on the film, events leading to the crucifixion will be the subject of Sunday morning sermons and a student study for four weeks prior to Easter at the church.

► Danny Spurlock, minister of missions/administration, **Ellendale Baptist Church, Bartlett**, near Memphis, said The Passion "may be the greatest evangelistic opportunity in the past 2,000 years."

To respond, the church will rent a theatre in the area for one showing on Mon-

day, March 1. The church wanted to provide several showings but thought the cost was prohibitive. Since then the cost of the effort, about \$6,300, has been provided by church members and even non-members, he reported.

A laity team is working on filling the 445-seat theatre. Church members will invite people to the movie and give them free tickets in a packet. It will include information about the church, the movie, and how to become a Christian, said Spurlock, who also saw the movie in Chicago.

The church will provide childcare during the event. Following the showing, church staff will offer an invitation in the theatre where people can record decisions on cards. Counseling will be offered at the theatre and church because the congregation is only allowed to use the theatre for 15 minutes following the film.

To follow up, the church's GROW workers will contact those who made spiritual decisions, said Spurlock. Also the church will offer a sermon series featuring the movie which will build up to Easter.

► Two hundred students including college students will attend a showing of The Passion at a Sevierville theatre, reported Scott Carter, student minister, **First Baptist Church, Sevierville**.

Thankfully the theatre is owned by church member Todd Holt, who was glad to make arrangements for the group.

The event will replace the church's regular Monday night student worship, said Carter, so it will draw most of the students who attend that.

Carter, who hasn't seen the movie, said when he first learned about it, he was concerned Jesus would be presented as "a Hollywood Jesus." But then he read the endorsements of the movie by Billy Graham and Adrian Rogers, pastor, Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova. He also read an interview of Mel Gibson in the *Knoxville News Sentinel* who told why he invested \$25 million in the movie — his personal faith in Jesus. □ — Erin Curry of Baptist Press contributed to this article.

Entities provide ...

— Continued from page 1

The California-based Outreach, Inc. also has set up a web site with resources for churches, including 13 ideas on how they can use the film, sermon outlines, and suggestions for establishing discussion groups. Churches also can order Passion-themed invitation cards, evangelistic booklets, bulletin inserts, and door-knob hangers, according to *Religion & Ethics Newsweekly*.

To learn more about resources from Outreach, Inc., visit www.thepassion-outreach.org.

► The American Tract Society has produced two tracts answering the controversial question of who killed Jesus. Noting the importance of an individual's last words, the tract called "The Passion of The Christ" by evangelist Greg Laurie traces Jesus' last words as He hung on the cross and relates how all sinners are responsible for His death.

The second tract, titled "The Passion — Who Crucified Jesus?" by Hollywood-based cultural analyst David Bruce, says the Bible names God as the one responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. Both tracts end with a gospel presentation and a sample prayer for salvation. They may be ordered at www.atstracts.org.

► Larry Poland, chairman of Mastermedia International in California, has written a booklet titled "Is the Passion of Jesus Anti-Semitic?"

"The purpose of this booklet is to help the reader understand both the evangelical Christian and Jewish perspectives, not just of Mel Gibson's film, but of the broader issue of Jesus and the telling of His story," Poland writes. "It is my passionate hope that the resulting dialogue will help build a bridge of trust and understanding between the Jewish and evangelical Christian communities. I'll even offer some steps to 'build the abutments' for this bridge."

To receive a complimentary copy of the booklet or to bulk order it, send an e-mail to info@mastermediantl.org. □

Part One — How market-driven should a church be

from both
sides of
the pulpit



By Johnnie Godwin

It's About God

Question: How market-driven should a church be?

Answer: Totally! Provided that God is the driver. And provided He is the market.

What first got me to thinking about this subject wasn't very high and lofty. It was a garage sale I had last year to sell surplus religious books to pastors, church staffs, and others. When I looked in the phone directory yellow pages to prepare mail-outs, I saw how churches were identifying themselves and — to use a commercial term — marketing themselves.

That experience caused me to begin thinking about churches and marketing somewhat along the lines of Yogi Berra's thought, "You can observe a lot by watching." As I've watched churches changing and people changing churches over the years, I've observed a lot that I thought might be helpful today. And that's what motivated me to consider writing about the question of how market-driven churches should be.

What I've got to say is experiential and biblical, not argumentative; loving, not abrasive; and helpful for saints in overalls as well as suits. Jesus, Paul, and others took the gospel to the agora — the marketplace; and that's where I believe the church wants to take the uncompromised gospel.

It's Not About You

But before I collected my thoughts, I began to notice writers and speakers frequently using the indefinite pronoun "it" to say, "It's not about you." That comment is the way Pastor Rick Warren began a chapter in his excellent book on *The Purpose Driven Life*, which has sold over six million copies. Rick also wrote *The Purpose*

Driven Church. Christian researcher George Barna has written a lot about marketing the church. Recently, he said one of his most significant points on cultivating a worldview is "that life is not about you." Another pastor wrote, "... worship has become all about us, and not at all about Jesus." These folks are experts, so I guess they know what they're talking about.

But I was so naive I didn't even know there was a debate going on between those out to market the church and those who attacked them. The attackers — accurate or not — accused the church marketers of departing from these God-centered starting points: Creator, creation, sin, judgment, atonement, repentance, faith, transformation, and so on. The attackers claimed the marketers had departed from the pure gospel. The crux of the criticism seemed to focus on marketing to man's felt needs rather than starting with God's givens and God's demands upon man. The marketers seem to have sharpened up their statements and focused on God's purposes as good answers to the critics.

Anyway, I read the literature on both sides and felt the heat of differences, which revealed a theological mine field for anyone like me to be brazen enough to write on the subject of a market-driven church. So I could shrink in fear from saying anything about a market-driven church. And I will leave the professional details to the experts. But since I'm just testifying and not arguing, I think I'll go ahead and say what I've got to say.

It Is About You

The context of what "it" refers to is all-important. If "it" refers to worship, it's all about God as our object of worship. If "it" refers to the church, that's another matter. It's true that Christ is the cornerstone and foundation of the church and from beginning to end that the church exists to glorify Him. No question about that.

But imagine saying that a marriage is all about the groom and not about the bride. Imagine saying that shepherding is all about the shepherd and not about the sheep. Ephesians explicitly says that the love of the Groom is so great for the bride that he would die for her — and He did (Acts 28:20). John 10 shows that the Shepherd's love and care for the sheep is so great He would lay down his life for them. And He did. The church is both about God in Christ and also about the saved ones who make it up.

The Bible doesn't say, "For God loved God so much ..." Rather, it says, *For God so loved the world ...* (John 3:16). Not about you? Not about me? Not about us? Someone hasn't been reading the Bible if they conclude the church is not also about you — and the rest of the world.

When people were hungry, Jesus didn't say His preaching and teaching had to go on; rather, He stopped, got them food, and fed them. When people were blind, He gave them sight. When they were lame He healed them. When they were out of their minds and demon-possessed, He restored their minds and cast out their demons. When people are lost and come to Christ, He saves them. The church is first, foremost, and ultimately about God in Christ; but it is also about you and your needs — whether they're felt needs or unmet needs.

Jesus said He came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). He spent His life and ministry worshiping the Father, being obedient to the Father, and ministering to mankind. He came to minister rather than to be ministered to. So it's not all about you, but it is also about you. The churches I've attended focus on God in Christ and this same message.

Now, About Garage Sales and Churches

Back to what got me started thinking about the church and marketing. I noticed under "garage sales" in the newspaper

that many of the ads stated, "No early birds." Since I was new to garage sales, it took me a minute to realize that those who had something to sell didn't want people showing up at their garage earlier than the time announced for the sale. That didn't sound very customer friendly to me, and I was the one who had something to sell. So I put in my ad, "Early birds welcome."

The night before the garage sale, I was marking prices on books when I heard a knock on the garage door. I opened the door to a couple who laughingly asked if they were too early and that they couldn't come the next day. I welcomed them and told them they weren't too early, so they began to come in and buy what I had for sale. By fitting my readiness to the customer's time frame, I sold items I might not otherwise have sold. The sale went well. In fact, some folks saw the early birds and joined them in buying.

Many churches have begun to have services at nontraditional hours to meet the time slots when people can come to church. Some are having church services on Saturday or other days, Sunday School on Sunday night, and at all different times on Sunday itself. The churches I know about haven't distorted the gospel, softened sin, or watered down repentance and what is essential to receive God's saving grace and be transformed. But the churches are looking to God and to the people Christ died for to put together the best way to reach out and to minister. Personally, I applaud that kind of market-driven church.

About a Church's "Worldview" and Uncompromising Gospel

Those who know the word "worldview" might wonder how on earth being a market-driven church fits into God's call. Recently George Barna was chastised after doing one of his many seminars on "biblical worldview development" when pastors came to him and want-

ed to know which truths he was talking about. Well, I may in Greek, speak in English, own over 40 dictionaries; I had to look up "worldview" to know what he meant. (The word wasn't in most of the dictionaries.)

"Worldview" translates German term "weltanschauung." Basically, "worldview" just refers to the worldview — what a person believes about everything in the world of anything: religion, business, etc. Marketing the church to the masses really calls for using the language the people (as the New Testament did). I don't know why we don't just use plain old English "people talk" to say what we the church mean. Billy Sunday said, "I put the jam on the best shelf so everybody can get it." Some of the pastors in seminar didn't get the jam.

Well, if anyone asks what your worldview is, you're like me, I suggest answer this way: "My worldview matches the biblical worldview exactly." That means you believe God's Word and what it says about reaching lost and discipling them as church markets on in the 21st century. I belong to a New Testament church that holds a worldview and lovingly but uncompromisingly shares the gospel of good news both Sundays and in the marketplace throughout the week.

In Part Two of the matter a market-driven church, I'll focus on both sides of the pulpit about churches doing God-given marketing and about people as market recipients of God's love and expressions of His church. Either way, I'm with the apostle Paul: *I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some* (1 Corinthians 9:22, NRSV).

In the meantime, let's look to God, who is the church's driver and ultimate market. Let's faithfully carry out His Commission to reach the world for Him — Copyright 2004 by Johnnie Godwin, who welcomes visits johnniegodwin@comcast.net.

Parents need to model development of a 'healthy heart'

a parent
speaks



By Carolyn R. Tomlin

February is National Heart Month across our country. As we think about ways to keep our family's heart healthy, let us not forget about developing our children's spiritual heart.

During this month we focus on a lifestyle that protects our heart from disease and illness, but keeping families healthy is an important daily requirement. Families can protect their health

by learning self-care skills and making lifestyle changes.

A healthy heart begins with your attitude to wellness. Parents, who provide a good example to wellness, will usually have children who follow their role. Wellness can be described as a life-long journey to improve your mental, physical, and social well-being.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, physical wellness includes being physically fit, eating a healthy diet, and being safe. Mind and body wellness includes your attitudes, self-esteem, and reactions to the stressors in your life. Social wellness addresses your relationships with others.

Build a support system with those in your church and community. Reach out and help others in need. Teach children to develop friendships.

Never underestimate the benefit of exercise in developing a healthy heart. Involve children in daily exercise. Research on fitness recommends 30 minutes daily, five or more days a week. This should include stretching, aerobic, and strength-building exercises.

Practice teaching children to be "good communicators." Use "I" statements. Listen, don't judge. Use eye contact when speaking to others.

Data shows that one in three American children have a weight problem. And approxi-

mately one-third obese preschoolers will remain obese as adults. This places children at risk for diabetes, a serious illness that can cause blindness and many other conditions, even death if left untreated.

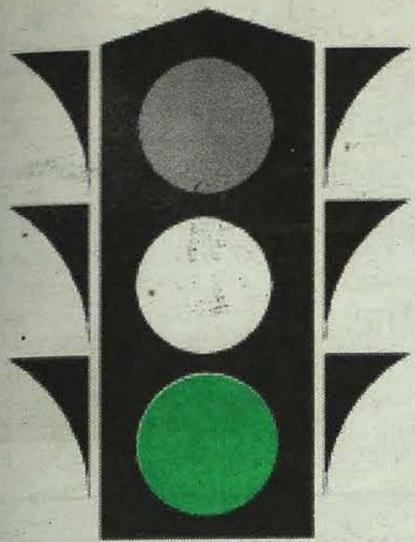
How can parents make changes in a child's diet? Watch portion sizes, choose low-fat foods, eat the Food Guide Pyramid way and limit high-calorie foods.

In addition to maintaining a healthy heart, teach children to control stress. Keep a sense of humor. Get adequate rest and make time for relaxation.

However, there is more. In addition to keeping our body healthy, parents must help chil-

dren develop a heart for Jesus. Teach them to honor His Word. Guide them in accepting Christ as Savior and Lord of their lives. Show, by example, what means to love all people. Attend church and other related programs as a family.

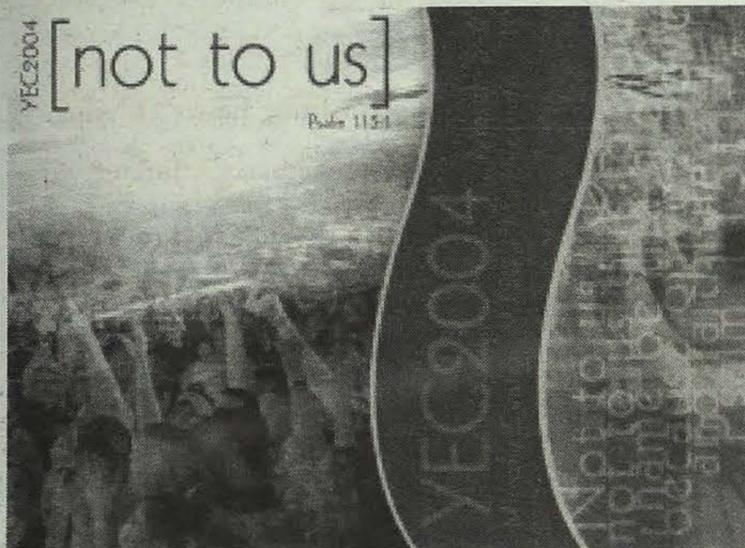
There are dozens of references to the term "heart" in the Bible. Perhaps Luke 10:27 describes the significance of the word best, *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and love your neighbor as yourself.* ☐ — Tomlin writes from Jackson, where her husband, Matt, pastor of Ward's Grove Baptist Church.



Green Light

March 2004

Your source for information and promotion of upcoming events sponsored by the Tennessee Baptist Convention



YOUTH EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

March 5-6 Murphy Center, MTSU

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Sound, Biblical-based preaching by Thomas Young
- A clear presentation of the gospel message
- Chris Tomlin and his band leading powerful worship in music
- Corporate worship with 12,000 other students, a definite "give God the glory experience"
- A great conference at an incredible price (parents will love you!)
- CPR comedy. Skit guys collide with "Who's line is it anyway?"
- Manna Skateboard team...your students will love these guys!

PROGRAM PERSONALITIES:

Thomas Young speaks to thousands of students each year, speaking to their hearts with love and passion. His story proves Jesus changes lives.

Chris Tomlin is one of the premier songwriters today. His ultimate goal is in the end to be able to say that he has run the race to the finish, fought the good fight, and kept the faith.

CPR (Carl, Pete, and Ringo) perform Christian Improv. They know that nothing they do is of themselves, but of God's work. Therefore, it is done to the glory of God and they will share their joy with anyone who will listen.

SESSIONS:

Friday, early session begins at 4:30 p.m. and the late session, at 8:30 p.m.

Saturday's breakout sessions begin at 9:30 a.m. in local churches, followed by another group session at 1 p.m. at Murphy Center. Dismissal is at 3:10 p.m.

YEC promotional videos are available. Call or email to have one sent to you free of charge. For more information and to receive registration materials, contact Rachel Watson, *Evangelism Strategies Group*, 800.558.2090, or e-mail Watson at rwatson@tnbaptist.org. Information is available on the Web site: www.yectennessee.org.

YEC REGISTRATION INFORMATION:

Early Registration	\$15.00
on or before February 13	
Site Registration	\$20.00
February 14- February 23	

After February 23
You must register at the door.

All participants should pre-register by mail. Telephone reservations cannot be accepted.

Credit cards will be accepted this year via mail or fax. NO REFUNDS will be issued for YEC. All seats are general admission.

DRAMATIC ARTS FESTIVAL

March 12-13 First Baptist Church Cookeville

Festival Personalities:

Peculiar People – Charlie and Ruth Jones are one of the most unique drama teams in the country. They provide whimsical entertainment intertwined with deep, spiritual insight.

Wesley Brainard – A mime who has ministered through the arts since 1989 and has been seen on television in a variety of interview and performance situations.

Festival Highlights:

- Early Bird Conference for youth and leaders
- Creative Worship
- Performance Opportunities
- Conferences available in five different tracks:

- Clowning
- Drama
- Interpretive Movement
- Mime
- Puppetry

Registration and Fees:

Before February 20, \$35 per person (\$40 if attending early-bird events)

After February 20, \$40 per person (\$45 if attending early-bird events)

After March 10, \$45 per person (\$50 if attending early-bird events)

To register online, go to www.tnworshipandmusic.org. Click on Events. Go to calendar and select 2004 March. Detailed information and the online registration form are there. Mail form with festival payment to Charlotte Hanson, Leadership Development Group, TBC, P. O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024-0728. For more information, call Hanson at 800.558.2090, extension 7908, or e-mail her at chanson@tnbaptist.org.

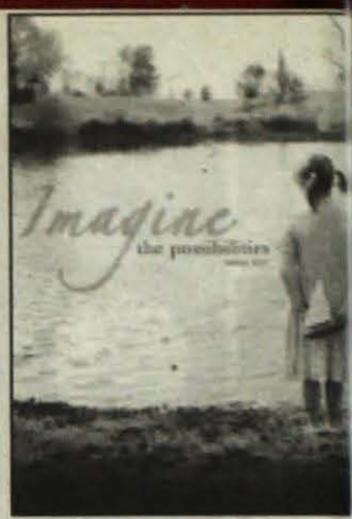


WMU Get Together
 March 19-21 Gatlinburg Convention Center
Imagine the Possibilities, Matthew 19:26
 Keynote Speaker: Debbie Cannada, NAMB Missionary

Conference topics include:

- Growing on the Go
- Make Every Dollar Count
- Passing on a Legacy of Prayer
- Tennessee Partnership Missions
- Retirement: Life's Best Chapter
- Understanding and Overcoming Grief
- Women of Wal-Mart: Ministering to invisible people around you
- God's Work in Nebraska - Meet Alpha Goombi, NAMB missionary
- Working Yourself Out of a Job - Mentoring upcoming leaders to take your place
- Building a Ministry of Comfort & Compassion - Ideas for starting a widows ministry
- Making Missions Fun - New ideas that everyone can use to spark up missions in the church
- Tennessee Missions - Learn how God is working here at home and how you can be a part

Special conferences will be offered on Saturday for men, minister's wives, and Hispanic and Korean women. To receive additional information, contact Denise Bronaugh, Tennessee WMU, at 800.558.2090, ext. 7920.



Collegiate Spring Leadership Conference

April 2 - 4
 LindenValley Baptist Conference Center

FEATURED SPEAKERS:
 Peculiar People



MEGA-SEMINAR LEADERS:

- Mike Glenn.....Brentwood Baptist Church, Brentwood
- Matthew Harding.....Belle Aire Baptist Church, Murfreesboro
- Betsy Ingle.....Campus Minister, UT Knoxville
- Morgan Owen.....Campus Minister, UT Martin

COST:

\$55 covers conference fees, lodging, & meals

For a Saturday afternoon option, you can try out the low ropes course. The cost is \$5 per person.

For more information, contact Collegiate Ministries at 800.558.2090, ext. 1993

UPCOMING TENNESSEE WMU EVENTS

- March 7-14 Week of Prayer for North American Missions and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering
- March 19-21 Women's Get Together, Gatlinburg
- March 20 WMU Annual Meeting, Gatlinburg
- March 20 Legacy Luncheon, Gatlinburg
- April 23-24 Acteen Activator Training, Brentwood

COMPENSATION STUDY ASSISTANCE

Attention: Pastors, Church Secretaries, Church Treasurers

During January, all TBC churches received a packet of survey forms to be completed by the church treasurer. When the form for each staff position is completed, forms should be returned, by April 15, to TBC in an envelope provided in the packet. *Specific data for any individual church WILL NOT be shared with anyone.*

Every church is encouraged to participate in the survey so that accurate information will be readily available for use as a budget-planning tool. The full report on the combined data should be available online in June 2004. The 2004 Compensation Study includes 35 participating churches in cooperation with the Annuity Board, SBC.

If you have questions or comments, contact Rich Skidmore or Lana Rose, Leadership Development Group at 800.558.2090, extension 2053.

COMPENSATION Study

2004 Camp Schedule

Camp Carson

- July 5-9 Journey for Girls
- July 9-11 Journey for Families
- July 12-16 Journey for Boys
- July 16-18 Journey for Moms/Daughters
- July 19-23 Mission IMPACT
- July 23-25 Journey for Dads/Daughters
- July 26-30 Journey for Kids

Camp Linden

- June 7-11 Journey for Kids
- June 11-13 Journey Dad/Son Adventure
- June 14-18 Journey for Girls
- June 18-20 Journey for Moms/Daughters
- June 21-25 Journey for Boys
- June 25-27 Journey for Dads/Daughters
- June 28-July 2 Journey for Kids
- July 5-9 Youth Impact Camp
- August 2-6 All Nations Camp



Roy & Stacey Broughman
camp directors



Jonathan Elder
worship leader

- MARCH
- 5 Language Pastor Orientation, Baptist Center, Brentwood
 - 5 - 6 Youth Evangelism Conference, Murphy Center, MTSU, Murfreesboro
 - 7 - 14 Week of Prayer for North American Missions and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering
 - 9 Regional Secretaries Computer Training, Clingan Ridge Baptist Church, Cleveland
 - 10 Regional Secretaries Computer Training, Manley Baptist Church, Morristown
 - 11 Regional Secretaries Computer Training, Central Baptist Church, Crossville
 - 12 - 13 Literacy Training for Mentally Handicapped, Jackson
 - 12 - 13 Dramatic Arts Festival, First Baptist Church, Cookeville
 - 12 - 13 Family Values Money Management Retreat, Fall Creek Falls State Park
 - 12 - 14 Conversational English Workshop, Baptist Center, Brentwood
 - 13 Bible Fun Field Day, LindenValley Baptist Conference Center, Linden
 - 16 Regional Secretaries Computer Training, Baptist Center, Brentwood
 - 17 Regional Secretaries Computer Training, First Baptist Church, Milan
 - 18 Regional Secretaries Computer Training, Faith Baptist Church, Bartlett
 - Tennessee WMU Executive Board, Gatlinburg Convention Center, Gatlinburg
 - 19 - 20 Literacy Training for Mentally Handicapped, West Region
 - 19 - 21 WMU Missions Get-Together, Gatlinburg Convention Center, Gatlinburg
 - Tennessee WMU Annual Session, Gatlinburg Convention Center, Gatlinburg
 - 20 WMU Foundation Legacy Luncheon, Gatlinburg Convention Center, Gatlinburg
 - 23 Youth Ministry Update, Martin
 - 25 Youth Ministry Update, Columbia
 - 26 - 27 Volunteer Missions Cross Cultural Training, Knox County Association, Knoxville
 - Bible Fun Field Day, CarsonSprings Baptist Conference Center, Newport
 - Healthy Family Relationships Conference
 - 27 State BCM Leadership Nominating Committee

MARCH

**FAMILY VALUES
MONEY MANAGEMENT
RETREAT**

March 12-13

Fall Creek Falls State Park, Pikeville

Attention! Paid Church Staff/Spouses

Register Now! Space allows for only eighteen couples. A \$50 deposit is necessary to hold your place for the retreat. The \$50 will be refunded in full after attendance at the retreat. Attendees will pay their own travel expenses and the TBC, via gifts through the Cooperative Program, will provide motel accommodations and meals at the State Park Inn and Restaurant.

Conference Leaders: Gary Coltharp, financial planning specialist and executive vice president, Tennessee Baptist Foundation; Richard Skidmore, ministry specialist, Church Ministers Financial Support, TBC Leadership Development Group, and Archer Thorpe, TBC Leadership Development, and Stewardship Development, and also a frequent leader of Christian Money Management workshops.

Questions/Information: Call Archer Thorpe or Marjorie Waddey, Leadership Development Group, 800.558.2090, extension 2017. Or, e-mail Thorpe at athorpe@tnbaptist.org or Waddey at mwaddey@tnbaptist.org.

Bible Fun Field Day

For Leaders and Children in Grades 1-6

March 13 LindenValley Baptist
Conference Center
March 27 CarsonSprings Baptist
Conference Center



Event choices for children include: *TeamKid*, *FUNDamentals*, *Bible Buddies*, *Children's Bible Drill*, and *Recreation*. For adults, event choices include: *TeamKid*, *FUNDamentals*, *Bible Buddies*, *Children's Bible Drill*, and *Understanding Children*.

Early bird registration fee is \$15 if postmarked by March 1. After March 1, the cost is \$20 per person. No refunds after March 5. Registration fee includes, T-shirt, activities, snacks, supplies, leadership, lunch, and facility use. Check in time is 9:00 a.m. with the opening ceremonies beginning at 9:30 a.m. The day's activities conclude at 3:30 p.m.

To receive more information and registration materials, contact Barbara Owens, *Church Strategies Group*, 800.558.2090, extension 7905.

CROSS-CULTURAL TRAINING

Don't miss this opportunity to participate in volunteer training designed to equip volunteers for cross-cultural ministry in strategic locations throughout the world.

March 26-27	Knox County Association Office, Knoxville
April 16-17	Youth, Baptist Center, Brentwood
April 23-24	Cherry Road Baptist Church, Memphis
October 8-9	Stevens Street Baptist Church, Cookeville

Highlights include: *International travel tips; The Biblical Basis of Missions; Cultural Shock Survival guides; Prayer, Praise, Music and Testimonies; Feast on the Sights, Sounds and Foods of Other Countries; and Language Tips for Volunteers.*

Registration fee of \$15 includes meals and training materials. Participants must register at least two weeks prior to the training date by calling Heather Wilson, *Missions Mobilization Group*, at 800.558.2090, ext. 2061, or e-mail Wilson at hwilson@tnbaptist.org

This event is co-sponsored by the *TBC Missions Mobilization Group* and the SBC International Mission Board.

For more information, contact Heather Wilson or Kim Huff at 800.558.2090, ext. 2061.

HEALTHY FAMILY
relationships

March 27	Carson Newman College, Jefferson City	May 1	Union University, Jackson
April 17	First Baptist Church, Chattanooga		

Ministers, counselors, deacons, laypersons, parents, couples, college students preparing for ministry, and chaplains are urged to attend one of the Healthy Family Relationships Conferences.

Seminars include: *How to Conduct Premarital Counseling and What to Include; Blended Family Issues; Ministering to Families in Crisis; Church as a Healing Community (How to Conduct Support Groups); and Covenant Marriages.*

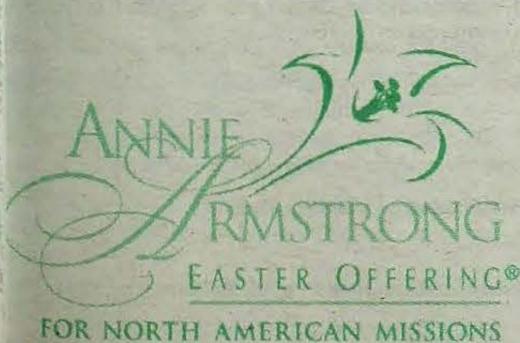
The Conference begins at 8:15 a.m. with registration and continental breakfast. Registration fee of \$10 (\$5 for students) includes notebook, materials, and breakfast.

For more information, or to receive registration materials, contact Tony Rankin, *Church Growth Strategies Group*, at 800.558.2090, ext. 7906. Registration is also available online at www.tnbaptist.org/cgs/familyministries.htm. When registering online, the fee is payable at the conference.

**WEEK OF PRAYER FOR NORTH AMERICAN MISSIONS
and ANNIE ARMSTRONG EASTER OFFERING**

March 7-24 • Offering Goal: \$54 million

Free prayer guides, offering envelopes, and posters are available from Tennessee WMU for promoting the offering in your local congregation. Call Rebekah Wales, 800.558.2090, extension 2038 to order materials; or e-mail Wales at rwales@tnbaptist.org. Materials are also available in Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, and Chinese.



EAST TENNESSEE

March 9
Clingan Ridge Baptist Church
2412 Georgetown Road, Cleveland
423.472.3511

March 10

Manley Baptist Church
3603 West Andrew Johnson Hwy, Morristown
423.586.8665

MIDDLE TENNESSEE

March 11
Central Baptist Church
1346 South Main Street, Crossville
931.484.8426

March 16

Baptist Center
5001 Maryland Way, Brentwood
800.558.2090

WEST TENNESSEE

March 17
First Baptist Church
2000 Second Street, Milan
731.686.3385

March 18

Faith Baptist Church
3755 N. Germantown Road, Bartlett
901.386.4785

Six regional computer-training events for support staff using Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Designing a Website from Scratch. Cost of each 3-hour session is \$25, if registering before February 25. After February 25, the cost is \$35. Lunch will be provided. The morning session is 8:30-11:30; afternoon session, 1:00-4:00. Listed below are the dates and locations:

Word: If you have questions this is the place to get the answers. Bring your questions and those will be dealt with first. Will also discuss with basic tabs, tables, mail merges, and form development. Conference leader: Bette Hawkins, Bon Aqua

Excel: Tips and shortcuts, entering and editing data, selecting, moving, copying data, inserting columns and rows, changing column widths and row heights, formatting cells, creating and using formulas to calculate data, creating charts, creating and using databases, sorting data, filtering data, restricting entries in database. Conference leader: Dana James, Bolivar

PowerPoint: Create a presentation based on a design template, insert drawings, insert an organization chart, add a chart to a presentation, insert and edit graphics and pictures, slide design guidelines, setting transition effects for a slide show, ways to print a presentation, how to change the background of a slide, animation in a slide show, manual and times presentation, keeping pictures and artwork in proportion, hidden slides, adding action buttons to a slide, drag and drop slides from one presentation to another, and creating a watermark as a background. Conference leader: Lana Rose, TBC, Brentwood.

Designing a Website from Scratch: Websites are quickly becoming the first place a person will go to find information about your organization; therefore, so a well-designed site will keep them coming back again and again. This seminar gives information as to what makes a good website and the steps necessary to design or redesign a site to make it inviting, interesting, and productive. Included will be discussions on hierarchy, flow, continuity, and ease of use. The focus of this workshop will be on the proper preparation to building a site not on learning how to utilize a web design program. Conference leader: Laura Sencabaugh, Chattanooga (March 9-11)

For more information and to register contact Lana Rose, Leadership Development Group, TBC, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, 37024. Call Rose, 800.558.2090, ext. 2008; or e-mail lrose@tnbaptist.org

TENNESSEE BAPTIST CONVENTION SECRETARIES CONFERENCE

April 19-21 – Baptist Center – Brentwood

Theme: *Doorways of Life, Proverbs 8:34*

Conferences are divided into five categories:

Doorway to Spiritual Growth

Prayer—Personal prayer life (journaling)
Balancing Home and Work—How do you prioritize to get a balance of home and work.
How to Handle Conflict in the Church

Doorway to Missions Involvement

How to Plan a Mission Trip
Mission Ideas—for local missions—what can groups do on an ongoing basis
Disaster Relief—what a person can do who is not trained in DR—and how to be prepared before a disaster hits.

Doorway to Personal Growth

Retirement updates and planning
How to reduce Stress
Office Ergonomics

Doorway to fun

Craft Class—Hands on craft class (Extra \$5.00 to take this class)

Doorway to Professional Growth

Resource for Ministry Assistants
Finances—Handling Money in the Church
Safety—How to be safe in the church office—coming and going, greeting people, etc.
Using Volunteers in the Church Office
Using Microsoft Publisher to create newsletters, bulletins, fliers.
Help! I'm Using Membership Plus
It Was A Total Loss! Information about protecting your church's assets through 15 passenger van safety, background screening for volunteers, and general liability issues.

Professional Certification – last three modules (Administration, Communication, Ministry) taught by Sandra Sartor (Extra cost of \$60 for all three modules)

FEES – Required fee is the registration fee and association dues. Meals are optional.

Registration fee	\$25.00
Association dues	\$15.00—new members and renewals; \$10 for retirees
Monday Lunch	\$7.50
Tuesday Lunch	\$7.50
Professional Certification	\$60.00 (\$20 per module)

For more information, contact: Lana Rose or Joy Clay-Corby, Leadership Development Group, TBC, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024. Local or toll free: 800.558.2090, ext. 2008. E-mail Rose at lrose@tnbaptist.org or Corby at jclaycorby@tnbaptist.org; or check out the Web site: www.tnbaptist.org.

September Statewide Prayer Saturation Month

30 Days of Prayer

30 Days of Prayer

A call to pray for the lost, the unchurched, and for spiritual revival across Tennessee.

Month of Prayer Saturation September 2004

- Pray for the 4 out of 5 Tennesseans that are lost or unchurched.
- Pray for spiritual awakening across Tennessee.

September Statewide Prayer Saturation Month is a call to prayer for Tennessee Baptists to saturate their communities with prayer for the lost, the unchurched and for spiritual revival across Tennessee. After 125 Tennesseans converged on Iowa for a weeklong prayer blitz in April 2003, God burdened their hearts to pray for the lost in their own state. From that burden came the call for Tennessee Baptist churches to saturate every community across the state.

As Tennessee Baptists unite in prayer for revival and spiritual awakening, God will direct each church and association uniquely. Though there are many ways (prayerwalking, prayer and fasting, prayer revival, cottage prayer meetings) that we can saturate our state in prayer, one thing is clear: God is calling us to pray for revival. Join Tennessee Baptists during September in saturating our state with prayer.

'Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.' Romans 10:1

For more information on the **September Statewide Prayer Saturation**, contact the Prayer Strategies office, Tennessee Baptist Convention at 800.558.2090, ext. 7909.

In the Philippines

Tennessee mission team sees 8,788 professions of faith

For Baptist and Reflector

KENTON — A team of 14 mission volunteers serving on the Cross Partners Ministry team from Kenton have just returned from serving with 34 churches in three Baptist associations on Luzon Island in the Philippines.

The team witnessed 8,788 professions of faith in Christ and more than 400 other church decisions.

The team was led by Charles Pratt, pastor of First Baptist Church here and president of

Cross Partners Ministry Inc.

The Republic of the Philippines is a "Third World" country that consists of 7,100 islands filled with more than 75 million people.

The partnership mission work was developed about 15 years ago by the Tennessee Baptist Convention and has been continued through the efforts of CPM, which was founded by Pratt.

"This experience was something like a modern day Pentecost where more than 8,700 souls were swept into the kingdom of God in just a matter of days," Pratt said.

"We were there and saw the mighty hand of God, but we cannot take any credit for such a powerful happening," he said.

Pratt has been leading teams

to the Philippines for the past 15 years and has established solid relationships with the Filipino Baptists.

The three Baptist associations are located in the most populated province in the central part of Luzon Island which is inhabited mostly by peasant farmers and fishermen.

Most of the team members raised their own support for the trip including money for New Testaments and Bibles. The team gave away more than 9,000 New Testaments, hundreds of Bibles, and more than 24,000 gospel tracts.

A mass baptism service was conducted in the South China Sea, led by Filipino pastors with assistance from the Tennessee volunteers. Two hundred candidates, who were be-

ing disciples, were baptized.

John Hayes of Allen Baptist Church in Brownsville delivered a message on the meaning of baptism and 34 other people came forward to be baptized.

In the last event of the trip, Filipino Baptists hosted a joint worship service for the volunteers. Cathy Shoffner, a member of RoEllen Baptist Church, Dyersburg, was on her first overseas mission trip. She was moved during the hour-long worship service when a crippled man came down the aisle to make a commitment to become a church worker.

Her husband, David, also was moved during the trip during a dawn prayer meeting which "brought me to my knees and broken before God."

Other volunteers had similar experiences.

"It was a wonderful privilege just to get to share the gospel

with the people of the Philippines," said Tommy Griggs of Bethpage Baptist Church, Kenton.

Michael Crandall, pastor of Calvary Hill Baptist Church, Dyersburg, noted "the most wonderful blessing of my life was to walk out into the South China Sea and assist a pastor in baptizing." Crandall, who was on his first overseas mission trip, received a senior pastor scholarship through the SBC International Mission Board.

Other team members included: Tony Michael, pastor of Bethpage Church; Johnny Michael, pastor of RoEllen Church; Donald Williams, Beech Grove Baptist Church, Halls; Carl White, Zion Baptist Church, Brownsville; Linda Hayes, Allen Church; Clyde Hollis of Jackson; and Jason Pratt, IMB missionary in southeast Asia. □

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRIES — EDUCATION

Hixson First Baptist Church is currently accepting resumes for highly motivated and experienced minister of education/administration with emphasis on owning a church through the Sunday School. HFBC is a church of 1,600 members located in a suburb of Chattanooga. Please send resume to Search Committee, Hixson First Baptist Church, 5800 Grubb Rd., Hixson, TN 37343.

MINISTRY — STUDENTS

Vocational youth leader position at Valley View Baptist Church, Nashville. Person will lead youth in Bible study Sunday morning and evening and on Wednesday evening. Person will plan and direct youth retreats and missions. Send resume to Search Committee, 2442 East 8th Ave., Nashville, TN 37206.

Charleston Baptist Church near Livingston, Tenn., is prayerfully seeking a part-time youth director. Persons interested in this position may contact the pastor, Paul Moore at (901) 476-8479 or mail to Charleston Baptist Church, 8642 Hwy. 179, Stanton, TN 38069-5065.

Union Grove Baptist Church, located near Jackson, Tenn., is seeking a part-time youth minister. Please send resume to Union Grove Baptist Church, 755 Tech Bluff Rd., Beech Bluff, TN 313.

Calvary Baptist Church in Jackson, Tenn., is receiving resumes for the youth ministries position. Requirements are a heart for youth, willingness to participate in Evangelism Explosion, and have a college degree. Please send resume to Calvary Baptist Church, 119 Oil Well Rd., Jackson, TN 38305, Attn. Rick Milam.

MINISTRIES — POSITIONS

First Baptist Church of Lenoir County, Tenn., a dynamic and growing fellowship in suburban Knoxville, is seeking a full-time discipleship pastor, a full-time evangelism pastor, and a part-time single's pastor. Interested individuals may send inquiries to searchteam@firstbaptistlc.org.

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Conversational English Workshop

There will be a 16-hour Conversational English Workshop March 12-14, 2004 at the Tennessee Baptist Convention building in Brentwood. The times for this workshop will be Friday, 6-9 p.m., Saturday, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., and Sunday, 1:30-5:30 p.m. In order to receive certification for the workshop attendees must attend all sessions. The workshop will be led by Anne Townes, Literacy Mission Consultant, Nashville. There is a \$20 registration fee. To register or request additional information, please contact Tim Hill or Ilka Marks at the Tennessee Baptist Convention, 1-800-558-2090 ext. 7916 or go to www.tnbaptist.org, news and events, or e-mail your request to imarks@tnbaptist.org. The deadline is March 5, 2004.

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Mission Teams Needed

Coastal Empire Ministries of the Savannah Baptist Association needs MISSION TEAMS WHO ARE ON FIRE FOR THE LORD TO DO ministry from Jan.-Aug. 2004. Opportunities include ministry to homeless, incarcerated, multi-housing, resort, sports, inner city BBC. Look at our web site www.sbassociation.org or call Martha at (912) 354-5831.

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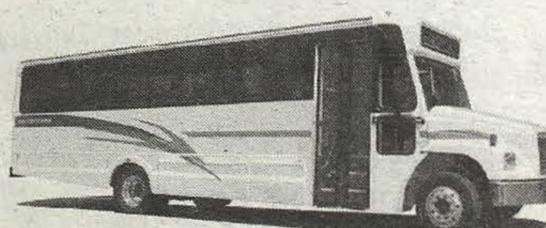
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As dollar falls, so does missionaries' buying power

Baptist Press

RICHMOND — The steep decline of the U.S. dollar's value abroad may be helping American exports and trade deficits, but it's also increasing the cost of doing international missions.

The once-mighty dollar long dominated global currency and financial markets. But it has dropped in value against most major foreign currencies from Western Europe to East Asia because of low U.S. interest rates on foreign investments, among other factors. The fall is particularly drastic in Europe, where the dollar has lost 35 percent of its value against the euro since early 2002.

More than 20 percent of the decline has come in the past year — and the dollar is expected to lose another 10 to 20 percent in

value against the euro in 2004.

How does that affect missions? The lower the dollar goes, the more it costs missionaries to live, work, and fund ministries in nations where the exchange values of local currencies go up.

"It definitely decreases the buying power of our missionaries overseas and their ability to do their work," said David Steverson, vice president for finance at the Southern Baptist International Mission Board.

Cost-of-living adjustments from the mission board help missionaries pay basic family bills as exchange rates rise and fall. That "somewhat protects" IMB missionaries from the impact of steep dollar declines, Steverson

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said. "But mission operating budgets don't have that protection."

Operating budgets provide the funds missionaries use to carry out their ministries day to day. Last year saw slight operating budget increases, but an overall per-missionary decrease resulted from the influx of new personnel. This year, work fund

decreases are a given, due to a tight overall IMB budget.

"When you throw in the loss of value of the dollar, it really hurts," Steverson said.

"It's caused us to ask whether something is a strategic need or whether it's an essential strategic need," reported Ed Cox, IMB regional leader

for Western Europe. □

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRIES — OTHER

Tulip Grove Baptist Church seeking full-time secretary. Send resume and references to Personnel Committee, c/o Steve or Col. 563 Shute Lane, Old Hickory, TN 37138. For additional information, call Jack Lewis at (615) 883-1856.

MISCELLANEOUS

Chairs for sale: slate blue cushioned seats, dark walnut wood. \$10.00 per chair. If interested, contact Raleigh Baptist Church at (901) 386-9763.

MINISTRIES — MUSIC

New Union Baptist Church, Medon, Tenn., is seeking a part-time minister of music. Please submit your resume to Nominating Committee Chairman C. W. King, 1125 Ebenezer Road, Toone, TN 38381.

Bivocational worship leader position at Valley View Baptist Church, Nashville. Person will lead music in Sunday morning and evening services and Wednesday service. Choir practice follows Wednesday service. Send resume to Search Committee, 2442 Eastland Avenue, Nashville, TN 37206.

Growing church seeking a part-time or bivocational minister of music with experience in leading worship and choirs. Send resume to Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 114 West Main St., Newbern, TN 38059.

First Baptist Church, Monterey, Tenn., is currently accepting resumes for the position of part-time minister of music. Background in music is required. Please fax or mail resume to Minister of Music Search Committee, 106 N. Chestnut Street, Monterey, TN 38574, fax (931) 839-8147. Deadline is March 1, 2004.

MINISTRIES — PASTOR

Lynn Garden Baptist Church, Kingsport, Tenn., is accepting resumes for a full-time pastor. Please submit resume to J. May, Pulpit Committee, 204 E. 5th Ave., Kingsport, TN 37663.

First Baptist Church of Wal Ridge, Ark., is accepting resumes for pastor. Masters degree preferred, 5 years pastorate experience required. Send resume by Mar. 1, 2004 to Pastoral Search, P.O. Box 3476, Wal Ridge, AR 72476.

MINISTRIES — COMBINATIONS

Minister of children/recreation provide leadership for children through 5th grade ministry and recreational ministries for all ages. Growing SBC church with 500 in worship. New preschool suite and family life center under construction. Send resume to FBC Mt. Olive, 3200 Mt. Olive Rd., Mt. Olive, AL 35117, A Search Committee.

Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes Positions

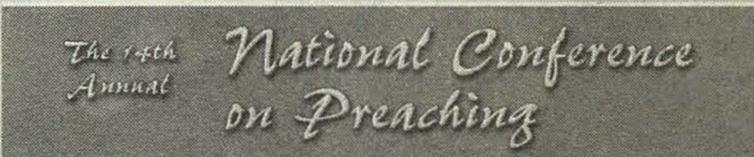
The Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes — West Region have the following open positions:

The Double B Boys Ranch in Millington is seeking a social worker whose primary work assignment is to serve as a counselor/liason among the resident, resident's family, and professionals regarding children's present and future plans. Requires a Bachelors Degree.

The Bartlett Campus and the Double B Boys Ranch are seeking Houseparents, a married couple whose primary work assignment is to maintain the day-to-day ministry of a Campus Home and its residents.

Please contact Ray Moss at (901) 872-0839 or Rmoss@tbch4kids.org.

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Rev. 2/04

minister's corner

By Mike Young

It is a common experience to see a child you have not seen for months and to say "My how you have grown!" Will anyone be able to say the same thing about each of us one year from now? We each need to make a commitment to grow in the coming year as Jesus grew according to Luke 2:52. Jesus grew mentally, physically, socially, and spiritually. Each of us needs to resolve to grow in each of these areas this year.

We will grow mentally by seeking to learn more. Everyone should be a lifelong learner. We will grow mentally by remembering more. Jesus quoted scripture when He was tempted. Do we know enough scripture to keep us out of trouble? We will grow mentally by seeking to understand more. It will do little good to learn and remember if we do not understand what we have learned and remembered.

We will grow physically by being healthier. All of us need to be healthier. After all, we are God's temple. We need to get proper rest. We need to get proper exercise. I have always quoted Paul who told Timothy that exercise profits little, but it does profit. We also need to be temperate in all things. In all of nature there is a balance.

We will grow spiritually by valuing our friendships. Friendship should never be taken lightly. Abraham was called "the friend of God," and Jesus called His disciples friends. Friendship can be a bridge for bringing others to Christ. We also need to learn how to treat our enemies. Jesus not only told us how to treat our

friends, He showed us how to treat our enemies.

We will grow spiritually by praying more, reading the Bible more, giving more, and resisting temptation more. Faith must find its expression in character. Character demands knowledge. Peter tells us this and then adds self control. Notice that faith is in the heart, character in the life, and knowledge is in the head.

Children do not grow steadily and eventually they stop growing, but we must grow steadily and never stop growing. At the end of 2004 will God and others be able to say to us, "My how you have grown?" That is my desire for each of us in the Tennessee Valley Baptist Association. □ — Young is director of missions, Tennessee Valley Baptist Association, Dayton.

just for today

by Fred Wood, retired pastor, Memphis

Start With a Smile: Man on phone to woman recovering from surgery: "I am calling to ask if you would serve as a volunteer collector for our annual charity drive." Woman: "I would love to, but I am incapacitated." Man: "This would require just a few ours and would help the community greatly." Woman: "Don't you know what incapacitated means?" Man: "Does that mean you've had your head cut off?"

Take this Thought: "Never, never, never give up." — Winston Churchill

Remember this Scripture: *Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord* (I Corinthians 15:58).

Pray this Prayer: Lord, help me to keep plodding in my work when I know I am doing what you want me to do.

The Cooperative Program — caring people partnering together to touch the world

Disciplined giving

By Bill Sims

Focal Passage: Malachi 3:6-12; I Corinthians 16:1-4

A mountain preacher walked into the newspaper editor's office in Rocky Mount, North Carolina, and said, "Mr. Editor, there are 47 in my church who subscribe to your paper. May we have a notice in Sunday's issue?" The editor said, "Yes," and the pastor wrote out this announcement, "Mount Moriah Baptist Church, the pastor John Obadiah, preaching morning and evening; three books are necessary: the Holy Book, the hymn book and the pocketbook. Come tomorrow and bring all three."

How we manage our stewardship is directly linked to our discipleship. In fact, there are more verses in the Bible regarding our resources than about heaven and hell combined. Of the 38 parables Jesus told, 16 of those deal with money. The Bible has fewer than 300 verses on prayer, less than 500 on faith and over 2,000 verses deal with wealth and possessions. The unavoidable conclusion is that stewardship matters to God.

The book of Malachi is one of the most unique books in Holy Scripture. There are a series of indictments, six in all, pointed at the people of God for failing to live as the Lord commanded. Malachi begins with the indictment that the people have robbed God. They have robbed God, by not tithing.

The word "tithe" means a tenth part. The tenth was the standard of giving for God's people. Starting with Abraham and continuing to this day, God has commanded His people to tithe.

View finances wisely

By Sam Creed

Focal Passage: Proverbs 22:4; 23:20; 16:16, 23:3-4; 30:7-9; 3:9-10; 11:28; 16:8; 28:6; 13:11; 15:27; 20:17; 21:6; 28:24; 22:16; 28:8

Personal finances can be a sensitive topic for churchgoers. Personal income and financial resources are not a commonly discussed aspect of the churchgoer's life, and, in fact, are often off limits. Some churches even muzzle their pastor when it comes to money. This is a biblical anomaly, because the Bible does not have any hang-ups about money. A careful check of a concordance reveals that money is referenced more than prayer and even the commands to love other people. In fact, the Bible has more than 2,000 references regarding how the people of God should use their money. So, Christians need to be wise about their money, and part of being wise is to talk openly and wisely about finances.

The founder of Methodism, John Wesley, summed up the teaching of Proverbs very well when he expressed this opinion, "earn all you can, save all you can, and give all you can."

Practice a balanced life

Don't wear yourself out to get rich; stop giving your attention to it. As soon as your eyes fly to it, it disappears ... (23:4-5).

The word picture drawn by this proverb is of a person whose primary goal in life is to get as much money as possible. Ask a potential high school or college graduate what their goal in life is and the answer will likely be, "to make a lot of money!" Christians shouldn't wear them-

Return to God (Malachi 3:6-9)

The word *LORD* in verse six literally means, "He who is" and refers to His immutability, or unchangeableness. The phrase *not change* in verse six means that God is faithful, He will not falter. Our only hope in life is this: God never changes. Nothing that God has ever said about Himself will ever be modified. With that promise in mind, you can trust God with everything. You can trust God with your talent, treasure, and your testimony. God is faithful. Read Romans 14:21; Isaiah 14:24; Hebrews 6:18.

The word *rob* in verse eight means to take forcibly. How could they be stealing from God? The reason God says they are robbing Him is that they took what belonged to Him, and kept it for themselves. They had forgotten that God owns everything. When we complain about giving and withhold what is His, we are robbing God.

Remember the goal (vv. 10-12)

The word *storehouse* in verse 10 was the chamber in the temple where the tithes and offerings were kept. The Bible clearly teaches storehouse tithing. What is storehouse tithing? Bottom line, God's house, the church. Tithing is God's way to finance His work. When we do not tithe we rob the church of what it requires to carry on Her mission and ministry.

Malachi 3:10 is the only place in the Bible where God tells us to *test* Him. To "test" means to investigate or prove something as true. God invites us to test Him because the real issue is not money, but trust. When we tithe we have the delightful privilege to trust His faithfulness to meet all

Sunday School Lesson
Family Bible Series
Feb. 22

our needs. The word *pour* in verse 10 means to make empty. When we fully trust God with our giving, He will empty His bucket of blessings on us and there will be showers of blessings. Blessings will certainly come when we tithe. Place yourself in position to trust God to meet all your needs. If we as God's people would tithe can you imagine what would happen to your church, the cause of missions. Unexplainable, unthinkable, unimaginable miracles would happen. Praise God, tithe for the glory of the Kingdom. Souls are waiting! Corrie Ten Boom put it this way: "The measure of a life is not its duration, but its donation."

Regular giving (I Corinthians 16:1-4)

The Apostle Paul admonished the Corinthians to give *upon the first day of the week*. (v. 2) The timing of our giving is clearly when we come together for the purpose of worshiping our risen Savior. Giving should therefore be a regular part of the weekly worship of a believer. The phrase, *each one of you*, clearly indicates that no one is exempt from his or her weekly responsibility. The appeal is for everyone to give. We are ALL to participate in this ministry called STEWARDSHIP. As Calvin Coolidge said, "No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave." — Sims is pastor of First Baptist Church, Union City.

Sunday School Lesson
Explore the Bible
Feb. 22

selves to the tune of billions of dollars, a great portion of which may be unnecessary. The Bible stops short of prohibiting the borrowing of money, however most of what the Bible says about borrowing is negative as in 22:7. The Bible does say debt must be completely paid (Psalm 37:21; Romans 13:7). Wisdom says don't overextend in your finances. In general, if more than 10 percent of our income is going to pay off credit card debt, we are too deep in debt. Wisdom says rearrange priorities and don't buy on credit. We are wise when we avoid incurring debt.

Practice generous giving (11:24-25)

It is wisdom to be a giver. The principle of giving, not just offerings and tithes, but just giving as an intentional act, is a biblical principle found from cover to cover in the Bible. Proverbs 11:24-25 is an observation that God blesses givers. Even our culture enjoys the maxim, "it is better to give than to receive." Sometimes God blesses our giving with a financial boost. Otherwise, His blessing comes in many other forms. That isn't saying if you give your money away you'll get more. Instead, God enjoys blessing those who are willing to generously give of themselves. In contrast, stinginess tends to bring loss.

"Earn all you can, save all you can, and give all you can." □ — Creed is pastor of First Baptist Church, Ashland City.

Statewide Events

◆ The **Family Values Workshop** for ministers and spouses planned for March 12-13 by the Tennessee Baptist Convention staff has been canceled although it is promoted in the "Green Light" in this issue, page 3. For more information, contact Archer Thorpe of the Tennessee Baptist Convention staff at athorpe@tnbaptist.org or (615) 371-2017 or 1-800-558-2090, ext. 2017.

Leaders

◆ **Steve Nelson**, former director of hunger concerns for the Southern Baptist Convention working at the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, Nashville, announced Feb. 15 he will run for the state legislature. Nelson also is a former pastor. He is a member of First Baptist Church, Hendersonville.



NELSON

◆ Rosemark Baptist Church, Rosemark, has called

Jason Shawn as pastor.

◆ **John Gilbert**, interim pastor, Colonial Baptist Church, Memphis, will celebrate 50 years of ministry Feb. 22. The church will honor him during a service and at a reception. He has served as pastor of churches in Tennessee and Missouri and is a past president of the Missouri Baptist Convention.



GILBERT

◆ Lifeway Church, Arlington, has called **Chuck Haskins** as pastor.

◆ **Robbie Isom** has been called to South Harriman Baptist Church, Harriman as minister of youth and education. He served a church in Mendenhall, Miss., in a similar position.

◆ **Brandon Tilley** was called as minister of music and worship at Union Baptist Church, Knoxville, effective Feb. 8

◆ **Glenn Grubb** of Maryville served as interim pastor, City View Baptist Church, Knoxville, for two and a half years. The church called



DURING THE STATE EVANGELISM Conference several associations were recognized for baptisms conducted in their associations. Larry Gilmore, center, leader of the TBC Evangelism Strategies Group presents an award to Dan Clevenger, director of missions, New Duck River Baptist Association. Also recognized were William Gray, left, director of missions, Stewart Baptist Association; and Wayne Perkins, DOM, Weakley County Baptist Association. Also pictured is Wayne Terry, right of center, church starter strategist.

Grant Bishop as pastor, effective Feb. 15.

◆ **Bill Rice**, pastor, Antioch Baptist Church, Humboldt, for seven years will retire April 25. Rice has served many churches in Gibson and Madison counties as pastor and interim pastor. He also managed drug stores in Memphis and Humboldt for 48 years so he served in a bivocational ministry. Rice plans to



RICE

continue to supply and serve as interim pastor. He can be reached at 1820 Osborne St., Humboldt, TN 38343-2932.

Churches

◆ **North Knoxville Baptist Church, Knoxville**, will host Rebecca Ingram Powell, Christian author and speaker, March 12-13. She wrote *Baby Boot Camp* and *At the King's Table*. Powell is a wife and mother who was a preacher's kid. For more information, contact the church at (865) 525-8677 or Vicki Hicks at rhinestonz@msn.com.

◆ **Russwood Baptist Church, Springville**, near Paris, will hold revival Feb. 29 - March 5. Floyd "Lammer" Lammersfeld, evangelist of McKenzie, will speak.

Associations

◆ **Fayette and Haywood Baptist Associations**, based in Somerville and Brownslee respectively, held a joint evangelism conference at First Baptist Church, Somerville, Feb. 2. Ronnie Coleman, pastor, First Baptist Church, Trenton, spoke.



DOT REED, front row, left, pauses recently during a recognition of her by Barton's Creek Baptist Church, Lebanon. Reed has taught Sunday School at the church for 50 continuous years. She stands with Pat Aikens, front row, a member of her class; Tony Shelton, left, Sunday School director; and Terry Cathey, pastor. The church gave Reed a piece of jewelry for her service. She has three children, including Danny Reed, pastor, Scenic View Baptist Church, Nashville.



WOMAN'S MISSIONARY Union leaders and teachers of Kimball Baptist Church, Kimball, pause after being honored recently as part of Focus on WMU Week. They received gifts, including WorldCraft items, for their service. Those honored were, from left, Judy Cartwright, Anne Heiskell, Roger Payne, Dot Reynolds, Ann McEwen, Minerva Ilklich, Lorraine Massengale, Paula Payne, Teri Church, Ruth Gudger, Emily Hoschar, and Nell Carmichael. Not pictured are James Church and Debbie Matthews.

FBC, Lobelville, outgrows building, site

For Baptist and Reflector

LOBELVILLE — During the past six years, First Baptist Church here has added 160 members. Over 100 of those new members also made professions of faith.

"God has done a miraculous work over the past several years here, and the result has been transforming," said Ronnie Brewer, pastor.

"It is an awesome thing to be where God is working, and our prayer is that he would continue to change lives and be glorified as we serve Him together," said Brewer. He began serving the church in 1997 as a bivocational pastor. Now he is full-time.

When the congregation be-

gan growing, it bought some adjoining property with facilities. But before long the church outgrew them as well.

Members decided to pray for God's direction.

"God opened up an ideal piece of property on Main Street," reported Brewer. Some people thought the family wouldn't sell the 3.5 acre lot, because it had been in the family for over 100 years.

"But God had a plan, and within weeks, the congregation purchased the property," explained Brewer.

The congregation bought the land "with the hope that someday it would be needed for a new sanctuary. Well, that someday is now," said Brewer.

The church recently broke ground at the new site for new facility, which will consist of two buildings with 17,000 feet of space.

The church is currently erecting two metal buildings and members plan to complete them with help from Carpenters for Christ and volunteers. This plan will save the congregation thousands of dollars, said Brewer.

In addition to the "outpouring of volunteers, God also continues to change lives as the church continues to see people coming to Christ," added Brewer.

God "deserves all the praise and glory for what has happened here at First Baptist Church," said Brewer.



PART OF THE CONGREGATION of First Baptist Church, Lobelville, gathers recently to break ground for the church's new sanctuary to be built at a new site on Main Street of the town.