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Baptist & Reflector

wide Edition

Telling the Story of Tennessee Baptists

Vol. 170/No. 46; Dec. 8, 2004

P gifts begin head of last ear; short of udget needs

ptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — After first month of the 2004-fiscal year, gifts from Tenssee Baptist Convention rches through the Cooptive Program are ahead of t year.

In November, TBC rches gave $2,912,549 ough the Cooperative Proam. The amount was 51,993 or 29.41 percent r the total given last Noember.

The gifts, however, were),355 or 1.7 percent below ds needed for the first nth of the new fiscal year.

In November, TBC messgers at their annual eting approved the same lar budget as last year for 04-05 — $35,554,851.

"We are grateful gifts are ead of last year's pace," d James Porch, TBC execve director-treasurer.

"As we enter the Christs season, we pray that rches will continue to e sacrificially to meet nistry and mission needs only in Tennessee, but und the world," Porch d. ❑

Youth group gives unusual gift to Appalachian Outreach

By Connie Davis
Baptist and Reflector

JEFFERSON CITY — Jean-Ann Washam, director of Appalachian Outreach, is asked a lot of questions about the ministry for needy people based here.

But perhaps none was more odd than, "How is your wood splitter feeling today?" This question was posed recently by John Boyett of Holts Corner Baptist Church, Chapel Hill.

Washam had talked to Boyett a couple of weeks earlier. He is a youth worker who was investigating the ministry's needs.

Boyett and his wife, Melissa, work with about 18 youth at the church. He also is a fireman and he works at Home Depot.

He learned about Appalachian Outreach, which was started by Carson-Newman College, from Larry Chatman, pastor of Holts Corner Church. The couple just returned to the church a couple of months ago after living in Florida for about seven years. They cared for ailing family members in Florida. The Boyetts were members of Holts Corner and youth workers during the 1990s.

The church's association, New Duck River Baptist Association, based in Shelbyville, has helped Appalachian Outreach for about four years. Nov. 12-13 a group of 25 youth and adults from First Baptist Church, Bell Buckle, delivered the association's annual collection of food to the ministry.

The group delivered a mid-sized truck nearly full of food to the ministry. They also unpacked it, stocked the ministry's pantry, and split wood, reported Tommy Dye, pastor, First Church, Bell Buckle. The group had such a good time they plan to return next year, said Dye.

When John Boyett first called the ministry, he learned about the need for volunteers to help split wood. Many people in the area depend on wood from the Baptist ministry to heat their homes, said Washam.

The ministry receives wood from local tree trimming companies but it is too big to be used in homes. The ministry's wood splitter "was not in good working order," Washam told Boyett, so if the youth group came, they should bring axes to use to split logs. Appalachian Outreach also could use the gift of axes, she added, since all of the axes they had were broken.

Boyett said after the phone conversation he received some promised information about Appalachian Outreach by mail.

The Boyetts showed their youth group a video about Appalachian Outreach.

That night, said John Boyett, the youth group decided to help Appalachian Outreach by giving it a new wood splitter. The group bought it from their church fund. The church provided the youth group $4,000 through its budget for the year. The wood splitter cost $1,200.

***RANDY MELLON**, home repair coordinator of Appalachian Outreach of Jefferson City, uses the ministry's new log splitter given recently by the youth group of Holts Corner Baptist Church, Chapel Hill.*

The group has plans for the funds, including a mission trip to Florida next year, explained Boyett. But they can replenish the fund by holding fundraisers. The ministry needed the wood splitter now, he noted.

Boyett arranged for the ministry to pick up a new wood splitter at a local Home Depot.

Washam said the ministry's wood splitter had been in disrepair for several years so the gift was a real answer to prayer.

"I am grateful for a youth minister that is willing to challenge his youth to see beyond a humble request of axes to such a wonderful gift," said Washam.

Boyett explained he and the youth group saw a need they could meet and responded. "That's what we're supposed to do. That's what the Bible says."

The youth group plans to visit Appalachian Outreach next year, added Boyett. ❑

this week's news

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Dan Pratt, Staff Minister of he Year, discusses minstry. — Page 7

Surviving the holidays even when you think you can't

By Mary Ann Bradberry
Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Planning and shopping for the holidays can be stressful enough, but coping with holiday festivities after a loss or traumatic event can be overwhelming. Sights, sounds, and smells of the holidays can trigger memories of a person who died, a past job, or past family gatherings. Keeping family traditions may seem impossible, but getting through the holidays is part of the process of recovery.

How can you survive the holiday season when you do not feel like celebrating?

How can you help children through the grieving process when you're not sure of the journey yourself?

Harold Ivan Smith, in his book, "Decembered Grief," gives tips to surviving the holidays when you do not feel like celebrating:

(1) Anticipate the holidays. Approach the holidays with determination to treasure the memory of a loved one. Writing a letter to the deceased loved one allows you to express your feelings about the person's absence. Making a scrapbook helps you focus on important memories and also helps preserve photographs, newspaper clippings, and other valuable items.

(2) Maintain routines. Children have great expectations at Christmas, and they need to know that life continues even after a major loss. Maintaining routines and giving lots of hugs and reassurance will bring feelings of security for children.

(3) Involve children in making plans. Allow them to express their needs and wishes. In situations of divorce, children will be anxious about where they will spend Christmas, how and when presents will be opened, and whether they will be visiting grandparents as they have done in the past.

(4) Alter traditions. You may be tempted to forget past family traditions altogether. Consider altering them instead. Give yourself permission to create new traditions. Involve and take suggestions from your children, but realize that you may experience anger that your traditions and celebrations have been altered.

(5) Appreciate your grief. Recognize that grief will be a reality and give yourself permission to cry, even at unexpected times. Schedule time alone if necessary. Ecclesiastes 3:4 assures us that there is a time for weeping and mourning. And remember it is OK to let your children see you cry.

(6) Acknowledge God. Grief was not unknown to Jesus Christ. He grieved the death of John the Baptist (Matthew 14:13) and wept at the death of Lazarus (John 11:35).

Even in sorrow, hope is alive for Christians. First Thessalonians 4:13 reminds us that Christians are not "to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope." Through hope in Jesus Christ, sorrow will not go on forever.

Even though Christians are not protected from sorrow, God will show compassion. (Lamentations 3:32-33). Prayer also provides a place to acknowledge your fears, sadness, and loneliness to God. God will comfort you as a mother comforts her child (Isaiah 66:13).

So this Christmas, as you search for hope in your sorrow, find a nativity scene and ponder Mary's expression as she cradles her newborn son. Then rejoice that God is cradling and comforting you in the same loving way. That's something to celebrate! ❑ — Adapted from the article, "Surviving the Holidays?" in the December 2003 issue of *ParentLife*, a magazine published by LifeWay Christian Resources of the SBC.

about your newsjournal

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Ga. Baptists decline to fund BWA

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — Georgia Baptists meeting in annual session welcomed 72 new churches and missions, rejected a motion to fund the Baptist World Alliance, and accepted the departure of one of its ministries from its affiliation with the state convention.

Messengers also heard a challenge to pray for a "tsunami" wave of revivals next year as the "What Now, Georgia" evangelistic emphasis is launched in the spring. The state has set a goal of 50,000 baptisms, start at least 100 new churches, and see the creation of 3,500 new units in Sunday School.

Messengers also elected Columbus pastor Tony Dickerson to a second-year term without opposition and approved a budget of $48,750,000, a 4.8 percent increase from the 2004 budget of $46,500,000.

Michael Ruffin, pastor of The Hill Baptist Church in Augusta, made a motion that the Cooperative Program add a line item in the amount of $30,000 for the BWA. After discussion on the floor, the motion was overwhelmingly defeated. In June, messengers to the annual Southern Baptist Convention meeting voted to withdraw their national membership and to cease all funding to the alliance.

In other business, GBC Executive Director J. Robert White informed messengers that the convention's Developmental Disabilities Ministries had effectively severed ties to the state convention by amending its bylaws to remove the right of the convention to elect its trustees. ❐

Ala. Baptists defeat move to fund BWA

Baptist Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Messengers to the Alabama Baptist State Convention annual meeting rejected a proposal to reduce Cooperative Program giving by $30,000 and direct the funds instead to the Baptist World Alliance, an organization the Southern Baptist Convention voted to withdraw from in June.

A 2005 base budget of $41,500,000 was approved, reflecting a 2.65 percent increase over the current year.

Allan Murphy, pastor of North Shelby Baptist Church in Birmingham, objected to the budget proposal and introduced a motion to reduce the amount forwarded through the Cooperative Program for national and international missions and ministries by $30,000 each year and proposed the money be sent to the BWA. His motion failed.

Messengers elected Henry Cox, pastor of First Baptist Church in Bay Minette, as president without opposition.

Among the resolutions adopted by messengers was a cal marriage protection am ments to both the U.S. Cons tion and to Alabama's cons tion. ❐

In Mt. Juliet schools

Teen athlete shares faitl

For *Baptist and Reflector*

MT. JULIET — Tori Allen, X Games gold medalist and rock climber, recently spoke to more than 2,800 students and faculty at area schools.

Allen spoke to middle and high school students about never giving up, setting goals, and standing up for what's right, according to Paul Gunn, youth minister at First Baptist Church here, which sponsored the week-long event.

In several schools, Allen was asked about her Christian faith and life in Africa as a missionary child.

At age 14, Allen climbed 60 feet in 13.4 seconds, making her the fastest vertical climber in the 2002 X games.

Now at age 16 and a high school senior in Indianapolis, Allen holds several world records in the sport of climbing and has been featured in several magazines including Sports Illustrated. She also holds several records in pole vaulting, her latest passion, which hopefully will put her in the 2008 Olympics.

CLIMBER *Tori Allen demo strates her skills by climbi a wall at Mt. Juliet Hi School.*

"I couldn't have been m pleased with the respo from students and teachers the schools, both public a private," Gunn said.

"Tori gave good, clear m sages while respecting t school's sensitivity regard religious matters," he said.

Networks turn down UCC ad; Mohler speaks out

Compiled from BP, ABP reports

WASHINGTON — Some progressive groups are protesting a decision by two major TV networks to reject advertisements that stress a major Protestant denomination's inclusiveness.

The United Church of Christ announced Nov. 30 that negotiations with NBC and CBS officials over the TV spots had broken down. NBC executives told church leaders the ad was "too controversial," and CBS officials cited the White House's support for a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage in rejecting the ad.

The ad — which can be viewed on the UCC communications office's web site at www.stillspeaking.com — features two muscular male "bouncers" standing guard at the door of a picturesque church building. A male couple, holding hands, approach the bouncers, who deny them entrance. The bouncers then let a young white family through while rejecting a young African-American woman and a man who appears to be Latino.

The scene is interrupted by text that reads, "Jesus didn't turn people away. Neither do we." Then, as a multiethnic and age-diverse group of people pose, smiling, inside what appears to be a church sanctuary, a narrator says, "The United Church of Christ: No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here."

According to a document that UCC officials provided to Associated Baptist Press, CBS' program practices division initially withheld approval for the ad Feb. 19, saying, "Because this commercial touches on the exclusion of gay couples and other minority groups by other individuals and organizations, and the fact that the executive branch has recently proposed a constitutional amendment to define marriage as a union between a man and a woman, this spot is unacceptable for broadcast on the networks."

A UCC spokesperson said that, despite the early rejection of the ad, the church understood itself to be in continuing negotiations over the ads until their final rejection by both networks Nov. 30.

Officials at ABC also rejected the ad, but UCC leaders did not protest because that network cited a policy of declining any advertising from any religious group.

CBS and NBC officials also reportedly said the ads were rejected because they appeared to set up a contrast between the progressive UCC — the nation's only major Protestant denomination to support same-sex marriages and the ordination of openly gay clergy — and other denominations.

"If the church wants to say they are inclusive and open, that's a very positive statement that we are very happy to have on the air," said Alan Wurtzel, NBC's head of broadcast standards, according to the *Washington Post*. However, he continued, the UCC ad "throws down the gauntlet at a variety of unnamed other churches."

But that was not the ad's intention, said UCC spokesperson Barb Powell. "I'll first say how surprised we were that they deemed the ads controversial, because we just thought they were ads about Jesus' extravagant welcome," she said. "To us the ads are clearly allegorical — there's no church with bouncers in front in real life."

She also said the ads were not aimed exclusively at changing public attitudes about homosexuality but rather at drawin "unchurched people" who have felt excl by organized religion "for whatever rea

Meanwhile, on ABC's "Good Mor America," Al Mohler said the ad misre sents biblical Christianity.

"It is a piece of masterful propag but it is a diabolical misrepresentati Christianity," said Mohler, presider Southern Baptist Theological Seminar the national telecast Dec. 2.

"Jesus Christ did indeed come to and to save the lost but as He said t woman caught in adultery, 'Go and si more,' " Mohler said. Jesus "did not i persons to stay in sinful lifestyles. Ra He came to save us from our sins an make us what we otherwise could not and that is victorious over all the sins entrap us. Homosexuality is one of thos

The 30-second spot began runnin several cable channels, including T TBS, FOX, Hallmark, Discovery, TVL AMC, BET, Travel Channel, Nick at and the History Channel, on Dec. 1 a part of the United Church of Christ's year campaign toward an inclusion tha firms "all persons who feel rejected" b church, said Robert Chase, UCC direct communications, who appeared Mohler on Good Morning America.

Host Diane Sawyer asked Mohler i criticism of the commercial meant tha does not want gays to attend his chu Mohler pointed out that every true chur composed of sinners who have, by G grace, repented of and turned from their

Biblical churches would by no m turn aside homosexuals but would proc to them, as to all sinners, the Good Ne the gospel of Jesus Christ, he said. ❐

Union trustees approve direction of school through 2010

Tim Ellsworth
ion University news service

JACKSON — New graduate grams, increased enrollment ils, and continued improve- nts to the Jackson campus the focal points of a long- ge plan approved by Union versity trustees at their 3 meeting.

The proposal, "Union 2010: A ion for Excellence," outlines ls and provides direction for university for the next five rs.

"I believe Union University n the verge a major r e a k - r o u g h ," ion presi- nt David ckery said. his plan for 10 will keep focused on future, and l keep before us a vision of at we expect Union to be."

DOCKERY

Dockery said the Union 10 plan includes eight priori- s for the university over the xt five years. Among those orities are keeping Union fo- sed on future opportunities d challenges consistent with institution's mission and rpose, cultivating a climate excellence and innovation, panding the university's fi- ncial resource base, and bal- cing affordability and acces- ility with Union's commit- nt to Christ-centered excel- ce.

As part of the plan, the ristian Studies department ll launch three new degree programs — a master of arts in biblical studies, a master of arts in ethics, and a master of Christian studies. These programs are in addition to the Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist program and the new doctor's of education degree in higher education administration.

The CRNA program will begin in the 2005-2006 academic year and will include a 30-month curriculum designed for those who already hold a nursing degree. West Tennessee Healthcare recently committed a $2.5 million gift to support the proposed program.

While the master's degrees in biblical studies and Christian ethics are specifically designed for full-time students on Union's campus, the master of Christian studies degree is geared more to staff and church members in West Tennessee churches.

"It gives us a presence in broader Baptist life in terms of graduate education in Christian studies," George Guthrie, chair of Union's Christian Studies department, said about the new degree programs. "It takes the quality of what we've been doing at the undergraduate level and moves it up a notch."

Union's Christian Studies department has grown considerably over the past decade. During that time, students with Christian Studies majors have increased from 70 to 230. The number of faculty members in the department has risen from six to 13.

This growth has allowed the Christian Studies faculty to offer a more diverse and rigorous program, focused on language, research and writing. Because of the department's growth in both size and quality, Guthrie said the graduate programs will be beneficial to students who seek challenging postgraduate work.

"With the rising levels of our undergraduate programs, we've had students who wanted to be pushed to the next level here, and that's where the master of arts degrees come from," Guthrie said.

Another part of the Union 2010 plan calls for the continuation of the campus master plan project, contingent upon funding. At the forefront of this plan is the completion of the science building.

White Hall will be a $12 million, 60,000 square foot facility that will house the departments of biology, chemistry, and nursing. Originally scheduled for completion by 2005, the building project has been delayed due to tornados in 2002 and 2003, as well as funding and space issues. Revised estimates are for the three-story facility to open no later than spring 2007.

Among the other possibilities being considered are an events center, an addition to Jennings Hall, a second building on the university's Germantown campus, improvements or additions to residential housing, or a library building.

"All of these proposed buildings are needed on our campus right now, but we will address the needs as funding is provided," Dockery said.

Other components of the Union 2010 plan include:

(1) beginning a department of interdisciplinary studies on the Jackson campus.

(2) starting a university debate team.

(3) building a soccer complex, art village, and lighted intramural fields.

(4)starting a women's soccer team.

(5) exploring a possible move from NAIA membership to NCAA membership.

In addition, the Union 2010 plan calls for the university to do a feasibility study on at least two other new academic programs. Among those being considered for the study are pharmacy, physical therapy, medical technology, and graduate degrees in areas such as music, liberal arts, accountancy, management, social work, and others.

The new plan projects a fall enrollment of 3,500 by 2010, up from the current 2,919. Union enrollment has increased from 1,975 to 2,919 since 1996.

"We are incredibly excited about the potential of this plan, which is extremely thorough and comprehensive," Dockery said.

"The plan has been processed across the University over the past 12 months. Strong support for the plan can be seen across all sectors of the campus. We believe it will propel Union to new heights and will enhance the quality of our work in everything we do."

With the approval of "Union 2010," the university officially closed the book on its previous plan, "Vision and Values 2005."

Originally adopted in 2000, the 2005 plan outlined a series of goals toward which university personnel have been working. Union met all of the goals from "Vision and Values 2005" except two.

"The results of the 2005 plan are an incredible testimony to the dedicated work of the Union faculty and staff and the wonderful leadership of the Union board," Dockery said. "Almost 95 percent of all the major objectives and goals were achieved during this time period."

The 2005 plan called for the start of several new majors and degree programs at Union, including engineering, digital media studies, a doctor of education degree, an educational specialist degree, a master of science in nursing, and a master of arts in intercultural studies.

Union now offers all of these programs.

In addition, the 2005 plan outlined an aggressive campus construction program. Since the planning stages of the 2005 plan, Union has built two single student dormitories that house 80 students; Hammons Hall, which houses the campus bookstore, conference rooms, and advancement offices; Jennings Hall, a 45,000 square-foot facility that houses the academic departments of communication arts, music, and Christian Studies; a 100-foot clock/bell tower, and other campus improvements

The two goals the university did not meet were a freshman enrollment of 500 for the fall of 2004 and construction of a new science building. Both of these goals are high on the priority list for Union's 2010 plan. ❑

noxville church ranks fifth in LMCO gifts

ist Press

KNOXVILLE — As Southern ptist churches set their hts on a record $150 million l for their Lottie Moon ristmas Offering for Internanal Missions, two groups of rches have been recognized the sacrificial passion reted in their gifts to the 2003 ering.

In addition to the 100 toplar givers, the International ssion Board has for the first ne also recognized the rches that gave the most per mber.

IMB President Jerry Rankin d last year's impressive reonse to the offering shows t missions is a high priority Southern Baptist churches of sizes. "We are grateful for e impressive offerings of ny of our larger churches," nkin said. "But it was an otional experience to receive timonies from many smaller gregations that went above d beyond what they had ever en before or would envision ng a possibility."

Southern Baptists responded t year by giving a record 36,204,648. That total was an increase of almost $21.2 million — 18.4 percent — over the year before when churches fell $10 million short of their goal.

The 189 churches that made up the two top 100 lists — 11 of them were on both lists — contributed more than $15.3 million, 12.2 percent of the offering's total amount. (At press time the entire list was not available to state papers.)

Calvary Baptist Church in Winston Salem, N.C., sits at the top of that list after collecting $763,403.27. With about 5,000 members, the church also earned a spot on the top 100 per capita list. Their gift breaks down to an average of $153.08 per member.

The four other churches that made the top five were First Baptist Church Rogers in Rogers, Ark., $515,328.77; First Baptist Church in Fort Smith, Ark., $474,084.89; Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas, $377,600; and **Concord First Baptist Church Knoxville, $344,170.23.**

Though the total amount wasn't collected until after the Dec. 31 deadline, First Baptist Church of Dallas was the first church to give more than $1.16 million to the offering. It was the largest sum given by a church to Southern Baptist overseas missions. Their end-of-year results rounded out the top 10 with $290,312.24.

First Baptist Church in St. Joseph, Mo., topped the per capita list by collecting $341,368.35. With 374 members, that amount averages out to $912.75 per member. They were the only church to crack the top 10 on both lists.

Bettendorf Mission Baptist Church in Bettendorf, Iowa, made the top five list with only three members, collecting a total of $1,180. That amount averages out to $393.33 per member. Other churches included in the top five were Peninsula Baptist Church in Grove, Calif., $6,000, with 16 members; Peace Haven Baptist Church in Wikesboro, N.C., $3,020.77, with nine members; West Kemper Baptist Church in Kemper, Miss., $12,000, with 36 members.

Through Southern Baptists' continued support, more missionaries will be able to reach a lost world, and those already on the field will be able to continue sharing the gospel, Rankin observed. ❑

TBC's Blackwell to step down as state Disaster Relief coordinator

Baptist and Reflector

COOKEVILLE — Lloyd Blackwell, TBC volunteer missions specialist, and state Disaster Relief coordinator, has resigned effective Dec. 31 to begin a new equestrian ministry, according to Tim Bearden, Missions Mobilization Group leader.

BLACKWELL

The new equestrian ministry will work with at-risk children. Blackwell co-leads the equestrian ministry with his wife Jodi Blackwell, who are beginning their ministry out of their Franklin farm.

"Lloyd will be missed," said Bearden, who will serve as the interim Disaster Relief coordinator. "We have seen a strong increase in the interest in Disaster Relief since Lloyd became the coordinator."

"Jodi and I are going to pursue a ministry dream," said Blackwell. "We are working on establishing a ranch in this area to work with at-risk children."

The new ministry will be known as Crosstrail Ranch. Their mission is to use horses in working with disadvantaged children who need healing in their broken lives. They are in process of seeking property, funding, and permits for the new ministry.

"God has pulled together an incredible team of people with the same dream within the last month. We are literally starting this ministry from the ground up including finding the ground, but the leadership of God is very evident in the direction and timing," he noted.

In addition to the equestrian ministry, Blackwell begins a new position in January as associate pastor for a new church start in Nolensville.

Blackwell formerly served as the manager of LindenValley Conference Center and as associate pastor of Belmont Heights Baptist Church, Nashville. The Blackwells are the parents of two daughters, Brook and Autumn. ❑ — Marcia Knox

Is long-term care insurance the right decision for you?

guest columnist

By C. Stephen Smith, CLU

The Family Long-Term Care Decision

Despite the recent economic downturn, more and more people of all ages are buying long-term care insurance policies. You, too, may be wondering if long-term care insurance is the smartest decision for you and your family. In this article, a long-term care industry specialist explains the key factors in making the long-term care insurance decision.

Despite the economic downturn in the U.S. over the past few years, public interest in long-term care insurance is quietly and steadily growing. In fact, more than four million people held individual long-term care insurance policies at the end of December 2003 (2003 LTC Insurance and Medicare Supplement Sales and In Force Survey, LIMRA International).

The recent interest in long-term care insurance is likely due to three factors: the evolution of these insurance products, limited alternatives for financing care, and growing consumer awareness of the benefits of long-term care insurance.

Product evolution

Long-term care (LTC) insurance policies have evolved over time to be far more flexible than they were in the early days, when they were known as nursing home policies. Today, most policies allow the insured to receive care in the setting of their choice, whether this is at home, in an assisted living facility, adult day care center, or nursing home.

Industry standards have developed as well. Most policies offer benefits when a person can no longer perform two out of six "activities of daily living" (such as bathing, dressing, toileting, or eating), or when they need substantial assistance due to a cognitive impairment. New benefits have come on the scene, such as additional cash allowances on top of basic coverage which pay for extras, like home modifications and home safety checks. Benefits like this make it easier for people to receive assistance at home.

Limited alternatives

Almost every day we read that the public safety net is slowly disappearing and the Social Security system may be in jeopardy 20 years from now. Even today, publicly-available options for managing long-term care expenses are severely limited.

For example, Medicare typically covers only certain types of care for a limited period of time, leaving many long-term care costs uncovered. Medicaid also is an imperfect solution because it requires people to spend down their assets to state required levels to qualify. In addition, Medicaid primarily pays for care received in a nursing facility, not at home. Perhaps this explains why even the Government recently decided to offer its employees the option to buy long-term care insurance through a special Federal Long-Term Care Insurance Program.

Consumer awareness

In part, LTC insurance sales have been driven by a growing consumer awareness of the benefits of long-term care insurance coverage. With more than 25 million adult caregivers in the U.S. today, many people are experiencing long-term care within their own families ("The Economic Value of Informal Caregiving," Arno, P.S., Levine, C., and Memmott, M. M. Health Affairs, Vol. 18, No. 2, 1999). Some have witnessed the positive effects of long-term care insurance, which may have allowed their loved ones to remain in their own homes by paying for in-home care.

But many families without long-term care insurance coverage in place have seen the opposite effect — that is, limited choices and the impact of the high costs of long-term care on their family's financial foundation and security.

What advisors recommend

For the majority of the population who cannot afford to self-insure this risk, some financial planners are beginning to recommend LTC insurance as a core element of a family's financial plan. The advantages of planning ahead and purchasing the insurance at younger ages (under age 55) include:

(1) The younger you buy, the cheaper the premiums.

(2) Younger buyers are more likely to be in a healthy condition to qualify for coverage.

(3) If long-term care is needed at an earlier age, the family's finances will be protected as the policy will help to cover the costs of care.

(4) The coverage can pay for caregivers to come into the home, where most people prefer to receive care.

This may explain why the average age of a long-term care insurance buyer has dropped from 72 years old in 1990 to almost 58 years old today (Long Term Care Insurance in 1998-1999, Health Insurance Association of America (HIAA), 2002).

Is it worth it?

Few people regret purchasing car insurance or home insurance policies when an accident takes place. The coverage earned is far greater than the annual premiums paid, especially when you consider the alternative: paying for a new car or a new home out-of-pocket. The same is true of long-term care insurance. The benefits paid out under a long-term care insurance policy for one year alone often can exceed the cumulative premiums a client pays into a policy over many years.

For example, if a 55-year-old man purchases a policy that costs $2,000 per year and pays premiums for 20 years until he needs long-term care at age 75, he will pay a total of $40,000 in premiums over those 20 years. Compare this to the cost of care at a skilled nursing facility, which can reach $58,000 per year and is expected to grow five percent per year (Metlife Mature Market Study, 2003). In 20 years, the average annual cost of long-term care may be well in excess of $100,000.

In addition, new policy options available on the market today allow partners and family members to share the benefits of a single policy. This gives policies even greater value by making it more likely that the ben fits will be used by one fami member or another at son point in time.

Tips for a positive buying experience

(1) Engage in a family discu sion and plan ahead

If you are helping your pa ents, make sure you understa their future wants and desir If you are a couple planning f your own long-term care nee think through your own prio ties and those of your childre Long-term care is a family issu

(2) Seek assistance

Long-term care insurance best understood with the help an insurance agent or financi planner who can assess a fam ly's situation and specific nee Experienced LTC insurance a visors will help you through t buying process by explaini the various features of a poli and how they will benefit you claim time.

(3) Investigate your LTC i surance carrier

When you look at the vario LTC insurance carriers, consid their relative financial strengt and stability, in addition to th years of experience in the lor term care insurance market. S (Standard and Poor's), Moody Fitch IBCA, and A.M. Best ra most long-term care insuran carriers. ❐ — Long-Term Care surance is underwritten by Jo Hancock Life Insurance Compa Boston, MA 02117. C. Steph Smith, CLU, registered represen tive, Signator Insurance Agen Inc., an affiliate of John Hanco Life Insurance Company, Bost MA 02117. (LTC-2960 5/04) Sm also is minister of music at W Franklin Baptist Church, Frankl

Discipleship includes helping people learn to share their faitl

serving churches

By Jerry Essary

Editor's Note: This is the last of seven columns based on the "Evangelism Tackle Box: Building Intentional Strategies for Evangelism," written by Jerry Essary.

Over the past years of ministry I have learned that one of the greatest times of discipleship comes when we train people to share their faith. I have also learned the best time to do this is shortly after a person's conversion experience. Everything is new to them and they still have friends and acquaintances that do not know Christ. As a result of training them immediately to share their faith many of their friends will come to Christ.

We should not only teach new converts to share their faith but we should have an ongoing training process in our churches that will keep all Christians trained and challenged to share their faith. There are many good tools available to do this. Here are just a few: FAITH, The NET, GROW, Sharing Jesus Without Fear, People Sharing Jesus, Evangelism Explosion, and Leader G.E.A.R. (gotlife.org material). Some of these will fit your church and some will not. For help with determining what might work best for you, go to your associational office or have someone from the Evangelism Strategies staff come out and show you the different witness training programs that are available.

After traveling the state for almost one and a half years and working with churches to help train their people in sharing their faith I have learned some interesting things. I have noticed in particular that many people in our churches have been trained in one to three different types of witness training programs. Knowing this to be true, why do they not share their faith? I can think of three reasons very quickly. First, some people do not share their faith because they genuinely do not know how. After they have been trained they actively share with others. Second, some people do not share their faith simply because they just do not do it. They know how but never get around to it because of many different excuses. Third, some people do not share their faith because they have blown their testimony and rendered themselves useless before their lost friends.

The North American Mission Board and others have told us for years that a very low percentage of Christians actually share their faith. With all the Bible studies, small groups, discipleship classes, and outreach programs that have gone on in our churches for years why have witnessing disciples not been produced? Several years ago Dawson Trotman started and built the Navigators Ministry around the biblical truth that Christians were reborn to reproduce. It is a part of our DNA as Christians to do so. He also believed our witness for Jesus flowed out of a personal, intimate relationship with Him. Where are we missing the mark when it comes to producing witnessing disciples?

I believe one of the areas for the great mishap of not producing witnessing disciples in our churches is in misdirection of following the Great Commission found in Matthew 28. If we are not careful we will understand Matthew 28:20 to say, "teaching all things that I have commanded you ..." The verse actually says, "teaching them to observe (obey) all things that I have commanded you ... ."

Many well meaning teachers or instructors have fallen into the pattern of just teaching all things — just filling heads with knowledge. Do not get me wrong, it is very important to know the Bible. But if we never help people obey all things, by making application of what they have learned in their lives, we are failing them. So, if we teach people all things about sharing their faith and never help them actually do it they will more than likely never share their faith.

Before you plan your next program for witness traini ask the hard question:

"Will we just use this p gram to impart some mo knowledge about witnessing will we train people to sha their faith and help them pr tice what they have learned?"

After one of my earlier a cles about prayer and evan lism was printed I received e-mail from a pastor that h read the article. The point was making was that we w never win the lost to Christ our world, nation, state, co ties, or communities unless experience a heart change could not agree more. Go back to Dawson Trotma statement that I stated earli our witness really does flow of a personal, intimate relati ship with Christ. If we are ing to reach the lost it will be done through heads fill with knowledge about the Bi but through people wh hearts have been changed. I lieve this is called personal vival and spiritual awakeni ❐ — Essary is evangelism s cialist for the TBC Evangeli Strategies Group.

Gifts through LMCO help spread gospel around the world

reflections

By Lonnie Wilkey, editor

The Christmas season is upon us. And with the Christmas season comes a variety of "good causes" looking for donations from people — Christians and non-Christians alike — who get caught up in the spirit of giving at this time of year.

While many of these causes are excellent and worthwhile, be cautious. Unfortunately there are those who would "con" people out of their money in the name of "charity."

Tennessee Baptists who want to help the needy and spread the gospel of Jesus around the world have an advantage over their non-Tennessee Baptist friends and colleagues.

Tennessee Baptists can channel their gifts on a regular basis through the Cooperative Program which helps fund missions and ministry causes here in Tennessee. And because Tennessee Baptists are a part of the larger Southern Baptist Convention, those gifts also meet ministry needs worldwide. As Southern Baptists, we also have an opportunity at Christmas to give to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

This offering, promoted by WMU and channeled through the SBC's International Missions Board, goes completely to fund missionaries overseas as they share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Christmas is a time we can give to others as a way of thanking God for giving us the greatest gift ever — His Son, Jesus Christ.

Though we can never repay God for the greatest gift of all, we can help spread His love every time we give to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. ❐

Don't ever lose the 'I' in missions, leader challenges

By Wanda Lee

When our son, Matthew, was a preschooler, he loved to go to Mission Friends on Wednesday evening at our church. Following prayer meeting one week, he came to his pastor's office (who happened to be his father), proudly carrying a puzzle he had created.

As he assembled it on Larry's desk, he became quite upset. Trying to finish the puzzle without much success, Matthew finally told Larry the puzzle was not complete. Somewhere along the way, he had dropped the "i" out of missions.

Out of the mouths of our children often come significant truths.

If we lose the "I" out of missions, we just have another program that people can opt in and out of at will. Missions is not a program; it has been a part of God's heart from the beginning of the ages, as He sought to restore fellowship with His people. From the call of Abraham in the Old Testament to Jesus' parting words to all of His followers to go and tell the good news, missions is living a Christlike life.

What does the "I" in missions mean to you? For me, the "I" dictates that I grow in my knowledge and understanding of the world and its people. I am personally responsible for developing my view of the world in a way that reflects the heart of God.

The "I" in missions also means I am responsible for those I pray for and how I pray. If my prayers are always focused on my needs, the needs of my family, or the concerns of my church, then I have left the "I" out of missions. God desires that out of my relationship with Him, my knowledge of the needs of the world, and my personal experiences in serving Him, I lift up those around the world, who are lost and those who have committed themselves to serve sacrificially.

The "I" in missions also means I am personally responsible for giving of my financial resources so God's message can go forward in the world. Stewardship of all that we have and are is a biblical principle that all followers of Christ must commit to each day. To learn about the needs of others and pray about them — but do nothing towards providing the resources needed to accomplish God's work — allows the "I" in missions to be lost.

So I will ask the question once again. What does the "I" in missions mean to you?

As we enter this focused season of prayer and giving for a world desperately in need of a personal relationship with Christ, what will you do to educate yourself about the needs of the people around the world?

How will you pray?

What will you give to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering?

Matthew understood at an early age that if we lose the "I" out of missions, we have missed the reason we celebrate Christmas in the first place. Missions is personal, and the mission call is from God's heart to each of ours. ❐ — Lee is executive director of Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union.

Holcomb, Childs give tips for managing resources at Christmas

frugal or wierd?

By Connie Davis

Janice Holcomb of Franklin is a motivational and humorous speaker on a variety of issues. The member of Brentwood Baptist Church, Brentwood, and wife of Tim Holcomb of the Tennessee Baptist Convention staff has several hints for managing money and time during the holidays.

Holcomb suggested determining an amount of money which will be spent on Christmas gifts. This should be available money over and above household expenses, not credit, she added. This exercise also can be applied to projects during the year, such as a decorating project.

Then a person should make a list of individuals he or she can give a present to, including color preferences and sizes needed. Another list which can be helpful is a list of the food items needed for Christmas events and dates needed, said Holcomb.

These lists help control both the "mind-numbing" aspect of Christmas gift giving and the fact that "there's never enough money," noted Holcomb.

On the list of gifts for Christmas also should be a gift or several gifts for people who are needy. This helps a person avoid being "guilted" into a response you can't afford. It also protects a person from walking around feeling "like a crumb" because of all the needs presented at Christmas, described Holcomb.

If money is not available for Christmas gifts, avoid "a January of throwing up," she described. She is speaking from personal experience, she added. Write cards to people. She suggested a card might include ways a person has been significant to the gift-giver.

"We over-give and people don't appreciate it," she explained.

Shopping is key to finding the best prices, Holcomb said. When people tell her they aren't shoppers, her response is they must have more money than she does.

Beware that the discount stores might not have the lowest prices, she said. Sometimes a store in a shopping mall or one located near a mall or even a speciality store will have a better deal. Use coupons. The quality of an item being purchased is another factor, she concluded.

Elizabeth Childs of Brentwood is a conference leader for Woman's Missionary Union who speaks on hospitality and planning. She is a member of Judson Baptist Church, Nashville, along with her husband, William "Bo" Childs, president, Tennessee Baptist Foundation, based in Brentwood.

Like Holcomb, she agrees that shopping and planning are keys.

She buys gifts, often several small items for an individual, throughout the year especially at sales. Then she collects them in boxes. That helps the family budget because it doesn't have a lot of big payments going out at one time, she noted.

Childs wraps the gifts and sends them in the box or places them in a basket which is given to the person for Christmas.

She often embellishes gifts. For instance, she bought her elderly aunt a cardigan which she added to by changing out the buttons and adding others for decoration on the pockets. Her aunt likes buttons, she explained. Childs used red buttons for Christmas.

She didn't worry about using all of the same size of buttons down the front closure, explained Childs. That would have been much more expensive with the cost of buttons these days, said Childs. She has saved buttons and bought them on sale over the years, she added. She's a "saver," she admitted.

Childs sews so she makes gifts, including tote bags or purses. They can be as simple or elaborate as you wish, she described. She has added buttons to close them and even fur for a more dressy purse.

To prepare for the visit of 12 people at Christmas including three children and four grandchildren, Childs prepared extra dressing when she was making dressing at Thanksgiving and froze it.

Of her frugal lifestyle, Childs said, "It's just a fun thing to do." ❑

Parents may also want to develop their own Christmas 'wish list'

a parent speaks

By Carolyn R. Tomlin

During the holiday season children flip through gift catalogs and write a list of "things I want for Christmas." Christmas is not only for children, it's for adults, also. As a parent, what's on your personal wish list? If you could make a list for your family, what would it contain?

I wish for my children...

(1) To accept Christ and to tell others about His wonderful love.

(2) A childhood filled with unconditional love. We may not approve of the action, but we will always love our child. The love of a parent for his child is a glimpse of the love Jesus has for His children. Parents who role-model this behavior show children the love of Jesus.

(3) An unhurried childhood. Responsibilities of the adult world come too soon.

(4) Good health. Habits that begin early in life, such as sound nutrition and exercise, contribute to soundness of body and mind throughout life.

(5) A peaceful home. A home where each person is appreciated as an individual, where love is shown and demonstrated between husband and wife, parents and children.

(6) To understand that everyone in life will not always agree with them or love them. May a strong faith in Jesus and the ability to love themselves carry them through the valleys of life.

(7) To learn to forgive by practicing forgiveness.

(8) To know that people can disagree or see things differently, yet still be friends.

(9) To realize that for some people expressing or speaking about love is difficult, yet they still love deeply.

(10) To know that money does not buy happiness. Often the person who seems richest has the least.

(11) To realize that words hurt greater than the sword. It only takes seconds to produce wounds that may never be forgotten.

(12) To realize that education opens doors that otherwise may remain closed.

(13) To find a partner in marriage they will love and receive love in return. And to realize that the family is God's plan for men and women.

(14) To find true friends in life and to realize that friends are a gift from God.

(15) To find joy in work. How fortunate are the people whose choice of career is as exciting after 10 or 20 years of work as it is the day they started.

As the Christmas season approaches, think of these great gifts you could wish for your family. ❐ — Tomlin writes from Jackson where her husband, Matt, is pastor of Ward's Grove Baptist Church.

Red Bank Baptist celebrates 50 years of music ministry

By Cindy Wooten Pare
For *Baptist and Reflector*

CHATTANOOGA — Close to 200 current and former choir and orchestra members joined in a special worship service on Nov. 7 as Red Bank Baptist Church celebrated 50 years of ministry through music.

Four former ministers of music and two instrumental associates joined in the two-day celebration. Participants included four former ministers of music and two former instrumental associates.

Bill Leach of Nashville, retired from LifeWay Christian Resources, participated. He was Red Bank's first full-time minister of music who served from 1954 to 1959. Jerry Ratcliff of Swannanoa, N.C., who is retired minister of music, First Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, La., attended. Ratcliff served from 1960 to 1963. Loyd Pelham of Attalla, Ala., was in attendance. He served from 1971 to 1974. Finally, Billy Appling of Chattanooga, who is interim minister of music, Ridgedale Baptist Church, Chattanooga, participated. He served from 1976 to 2003.

Instrumental associates who came back for the weekend were Marty Hamby of the music staff of Brainerd Baptist Church, Chattanooga, and Jeff Cranfill of the staff of First Baptist Church, Snellville, Ga.

The celebration was led by Joe Ziegler, Red Bank's associate pastor/music and worship. Ziegler joined Red Bank's staff in March 2004 from First Baptist Church of Athens, Ala. Don Dameron, Red Bank's current instrumental associate, coordinated orchestra selections.

Ziegler developed the idea for the 50th anniversary celebration after a congratulatory e-mail from Leach. Welcoming Ziegler to his new position, Leach shared that he was called to the church in August 1954.

"I thought what a nice celebration it would be to have some of these folks who had previously served come back and enjoy celebrating 50 years of music ministry," Ziegler said. "Red Bank Baptist enjoys such a wonderful heritage of music. We wanted to celebrate what God has done in and through this ministry."

***MINISTERS OF MUSIC** of the Red Bank Baptist Church, Hixson, Chattanooga, participating in the celebration were, from left, Joe Ziegler, current minister of music; and former ministers Billy Appling, interim minister of music, Ridgedale Baptist Church, Chattanooga; Loyd Pelham of Attalla, Ala.; Jerry Ratcliff of Swannanoa, N.C.; and Bill Leach of Nashville.*

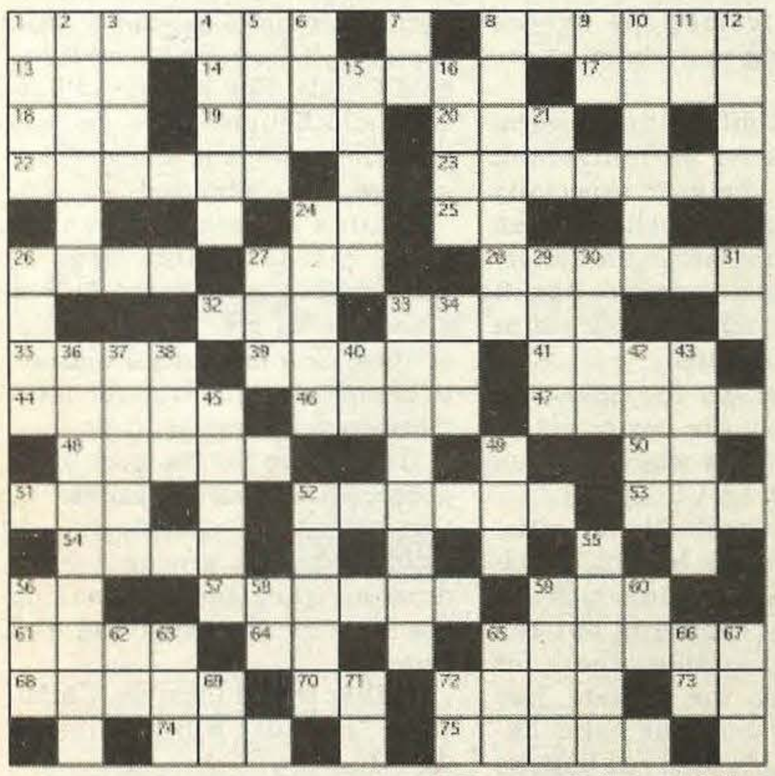
***JOE ZIEGLER,** associate pastor/music and worship, leads the congregation and choir in a hymn during the 50th anniversary celebration of Red Bank Baptist's music ministry.*

A steering committee of choir officers began planning the event in early summer. Old choir rolls and programs from past performances were searched to compile a list of former choir and orchestra members, who all received invitations to attend the celebration. Former members came from cities throughout Tennessee and Georgia and as far away as West Virginia to join the events.

Each visiting minister led the choir and orchestra in a selection of their choice at a two-hour concert Sunday evening. They shared memories of their years at Red Bank and how God had called them to the church.

The audience was especially moved by the words of Appling, who brought many innovations to Red Bank's music ministry in his 27-year tenure. Describing his call to Red Bank and the struggle to leave his church in Memphis, Appling said, "As soon as I stood behind the pulpit at Red Bank, I knew I was home."

Ziegler praised the hard work and effort of the many volunteers and staff members who assisted with the event. The celebration was "full of sweet fellowship, music, and praise," he said. "We are looking at a bright future because of the great past we have enjoyed." ❐



Barbour Publishing

See answers on page 11

ACROSS

1. Father of the Chosen People (Gen. 12:1–3)
8. Prophet who tore his cloak into twelve pieces (I Kings 11:30)
13. Sheep's noise
14. Old Testament prophet, between Amos and Jonah
17. Brief letter
18. Samuel's mentor
19. The rock city of Idumaea (Isa. 16:1)
20. No-good fellow
22. Lions failed to harm him
23. Third longest book of prophecy in the Old Testament
24. Northern central state, abbr.
25. Drill instructor, abbr.
26. King of Israel (I Kings 16:16)
27. Jacob's son (Gen. 30:10–11)
28. Belonging to a son of Aaron (I Chron. 24:1)
32. This animal alive is better than a dead lion (Eccles. 9:4)
33. Belonging to the man who shot Jehoram through the heart (II Kings 9:24)
35. Nehemiah's priest and scribe
39. Eliasaph was the son of this man (Num. 7:42)
41. A servant in the house of Saul (II Sam. 9:2)
44.. "All they that hate me love ____" (Prov. 8:36)
46. Asian woman's garment
47. Abraham's son
48. "Cursed is the ____ who ... sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord" (Mal. 1:14 NIV)
50. This place in Moab was ruined in the night (Isa. 15:1)
51. "____! The gate to the nations is broken" (Ezek. 26:2 NIV)
52. The judge and prophet who established the kingship in Israel (I Sam. 8:21–22)
53. His wife became a pillar of salt
54. The Lord showed him a plumb line
56. Chemical symbol for argon
57. "Prophet of the Temple" and a colleague of Zechariah (Ezra 5:1)
59. "The name of the wicked shall____" (Prov. 10:7)
61. Needed for a photograph
64. Unit of dry measurement, abbr.
65. Moses successor (Num. 27:18–23)
68. One of the twelve spies, the only one left alive in the desert with Joshua (Num. 26:65)
70. Exist
72. Cast a ballot
73. Sleuth, abbr.
74. "I will spread my ____ upon them" (Hos. 7:12)
75. David's father

DOWN

1. In bed
2. The mercenary prophet (Num. 22:5–7)
3. "I will ____ bread from heaven" (Exod. 16:4)
4. Prophet who married Gomer
5. Killed by his brother
6. Last book of the Old Testament, abbr.
7. Joshua sent men there from Jericho (Josh. 7:2)
8. King of Judah at 22 years old who reigned for only a year (II Kings 8:26)
9. Opposite of out
10. He was 8 years old when he became king and he reigned for 31 years (II Kings 22:1)
11. Preposition
12. State of everlasting separation from God
15. Israel's poet king
16. Did perfectly on a test
21. Eastern seaboard state
24. "The ____ of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23)
26. Son of Boaz (Ruth 4:21)
27. Appeared to Abraham when he was 99 years old (Gen. 17:1)
29. Ezekiel's father (Ezek. 1:3)
30. Egyptian goddess
31. Juan's yes
33. The weeping prophet
34. Word said by Christ on the cross (Matt. 27:46)
36. Second from the last book of the Old Testament
37. The son of Shema and the father of Jorkoam (I Chron. 2:43)
38. Consumed
40. United Airlines, abbr.
42. Ahab served this god (I Kings 16:31)
43. Supported Moses' hands in battle (Exod. 17:8–13)
45. "A ____ word stirs up anger" (Prov. 15:1 NIV)
49. King Darius threw Daniel here (Dan. 6:16)
52. The youngest son of Hiel of Bethel, who lost his life when the gates of Jericho were set up (1 Kings 16:34)
55. The man to whom God gave the Ten Commandments
56. American Football Conference, abbr.
58. Fifth month of the Jewish year
59. Decays
60. Chemical symbol for thorium
62. Lending library, abbr.
63. "I will make you fishers of ____" (Matt. 4:19)
65. Joseph for short
66. The opposite of down
67. To trouble, afflict
69. Chemical symbol for beryllium
71. Estimated position, abbr.
72. Video jockey, abbr.

Belmont taps Todd Lake for vp position

Belmont news office

NASHVILLE — Todd L. Lake, dean for university life at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, will become the new vice president for spiritual development at Belmont University here in January.

Lake holds degrees from Harvard University, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Boston College. Prior to joining the Baylor staff, he served at Wingate (N.C.) College and is a former pastor in Massachusetts.

LAKE

Lake's wife, Joy Jordan-Lake, hails from Tennessee and is a former staff member of the *Baptist and Reflector*.

The couple has two children — Julia and Justin, and are currently in China adopting a daughter, Jasmine Lee, who will turn 1 on Dec. 15. ❐

Passion for students fuels Staff Minister of the Year

By Connie Davis
Baptist and Reflector

SEVIERVILLE — Dan Pratt, minister of students, First Baptist Church, Elizabethton, was named Tennessee Baptist Staff Minister of the Year during the TBC annual meeting Nov. 9-10 held here.

The honor was "very humbling," said Pratt. "I'm just a man in need of a Savior. That's my only redeeming quality. That's what the Lord has done in my life."

Pratt, who has served as minister of students of the Elizabethton church for nearly seven years, said his background uniquely prepared him for his role.

He wasn't raised in the Christian faith, explained Pratt. In fact, as a teenager, "I was as far from the Lord as you could get," he recalled. He grew up in Texas, where he was from a broken home. His father left the family when he was 14 years old. By 18, "I had tried everything the world had to offer and found it wanting."

Then he "followed a girl," he described, to church. Although he had heard the name of Jesus at a Vacation Bible School when he was a child, it was the first time he had been to church.

At that church Pratt met a youth pastor "who found me and loved me" and completely changed my life, he said.

Pratt also came to serve in the ministry by an unusual path. Although he received a call to ministry from God shortly after his salvation at the age of 18, he didn't follow through. "I ran from my call. I saw it as giving up so much."

Later in life, he was serving as a volunteer youth worker at First Baptist while working as a computer systems administrator for Sullivan County. First Baptist's student minister left. Pratt then served as interim director of the church's student ministry.

When he was asked by the church if he would consider accepting the student minister position, he told the church he was unqualified to serve.

Pastor Brent Seals said calling Pratt to the ministry was one of the best decisions the church has ever made.

"Dan loves people and Dan has an appetite to learn and grow," Seals said. "He is exceptional!"

Ministry

Without guile, Pratt said, "I cry for children that are not my own. I have such a passion for students."

He described some of the many problems of broken teenagers he has worked with.

"They are just looking for love like the rest of us," said Pratt.

He said one of the biggest obstacles for teenagers today is "their perception of the church itself. So many youth have an image of the church as a house of judgmental hypocrites. I try to show them that we are all sinners who need saving."

His biggest challenge is helping students see the difference between religion "which comes with so many things attached to it" and faith in Jesus. He added that it's also difficult to lead "church kids" to make their faith their own.

"I just tell them the truth. I tell them I have tried to make my own way without Him and that's all futile." For instance, he found success in the business world, but chose to follow God's call to his ministry position instead. "Success without God is empty," added Pratt.

Busy man

Pratt said he stays busy, especially during the summer. The summer is filled with Vacation Bible School, youth and children's camps, and mission projects.

Last summer's VBS, which is held in the evening for a week, resulted in eight students making professions of faith.

Currently Pratt serves about 130 students, from elementary school age to college students. Pratt also serves as chaplain for the Elizabethton High School basketball team.

His ministry is a challenge, but fun. "Being a 40-year-old in a field of twenty-something ministers has it's challenges," explained Pratt. He's known for his sense of humor.

DAN PRATT, *student minister, First Baptist Church, Elizabethton, who is the 2004 Staff Minister of the Year, stands with his wife, Pam, after receiving the award at the TBC annual meeting.*

"I'm one of them," he said, admitting his love of play. "I just love them."

Besides God and the church, he credits his wife of 15 years, Pam, for his ministry. She is very involved in the ministry and stays connected to students through her work as a Spanish teacher at Elizabethton High School.

"She gets the kids at work and after work. I'm not sure I could do it without her," he said.

Hurting people

During his tenure at the church, Pratt said he has had to help many students from divorced families and several students who have lost parents.

"God has an amazing way of using my past heartbreaks to minister to grieving teenagers."

He said that visiting folks in hospitals and ministering to "hurting people," especially teenagers, comes very easy to him.

He knows from personal experience that "God buys ugly lives."

"I've cried more in the past seven years than in my whole life," explained Pratt.

"I just cannot get my mind around the fact that He allows me to do this. I can never thank God enough," said Pratt. ❑

Union students say 'thanks' to community during day of service

By Alaina Kraus
Union University News Service

JACKSON — Union University student Sarah Orr didn't think there would be enough food for the Thanksgiving baskets being filled at the Regional Inter-Faith Association's food warehouse.

When almost 600 pounds of it arrived shortly thereafter, she was thrilled.

"We were getting ready to make Thanksgiving baskets and there wasn't enough food. Then these guys showed up and I think we're going to be able to use it all," said Orr, a senior at Union University. "God has answered a lot of prayers today."

Orr was the team leader for one of more than 60 teams sent out from Union University as a part of the second-annual Day of Remembrance in early November. Just minutes before, another team had arrived with 594 pounds of donated food, the results of a food drive by the Union psychology department that was done in conjunction with the Day of Remembrance.

The workers at the Regional Inter-Faith Association (RIFA) were thankful for more than just the food.

"If they weren't here, I or a couple others of us would have to do it and it would take a lot of time and take us away from the weekly things we do," Sarah Coker, a RIFA employee, said of the team's work. "So it's a big help. They're organizing and putting things where they need to go."

All across Jackson similar stories were unfolding. Over 1,000 students, faculty, and staff took advantage of the opportunities set up by campus ministries, student life, and a group of dedicated team leaders.

"We have amazing team leaders that have been great at motivating their groups and getting people involved," said Kimberly Thornbury, dean of students. "It truly shows how leadership is being a servant."

Day of Remembrance is Union's way of giving back to the community for its assistance after a tornado hit the campus Nov. 10, 2002, causing more than $2 million in damage. Short of a few science classes, classes were suspended for the day to allow students and faculty to become wholly involved in service projects.

"The Day of Remembrance is a significant event for the Union University community," said Suzanne Mosley, Union's director of student outreach. "On Nov. 10, 2002, the community of Jackson reached out and assisted us amidst the crisis of the tornado that hit our campus. The Day of Remembrance is a time for us to say thank you to the community of Jackson for all that they have done for us in the days, weeks, and months following the tornado."

When the day began with a special chapel service at 8:30 a.m., more than 300 students were already hard at work. Some had already entered community schools to tutor students and aid teachers. Others were on the road heading to destinations like Shiloh National Military Park, where Phi Alpha Theta members worked in the cemetery.

"What you do today will matter deeply to someone — even if you are working on campus," said Union provost Carla Sanderson as she addressed the chapel crowd.

At 9 a.m. the service closed with a prayer and teams dispersed to classrooms where they filled out release forms and gathered lunches. Most groups arrived on their sites at 9:30 a.m. and worked there until the early afternoon.

"What they are doing today would take my husband and I at least a week or two and they're doing it in a day," Cathy Quinn of the Salvation Army said. "They're working faster than I know where to put stuff."

"We're here to serve," said senior Gary Snuffin, team leader at the Salvation Army project. "We're going to have [the shed] emptied and put where it needs to go."

At noon, the shed was already empty, its contents spread across the immediate area of the Salvation Army's parking lot to be sorted and taken into the newly renovated building.

A few miles away another team was at work doing simple outdoor maintenance at BirthChoice, clearing up leaves and washing windows and walls.

"We are doing the dirty work so BirthChoice doesn't have to," senior Adam Winters said. "As far as I'm concerned, they're the real heroes. If we can come out and do some simple things for them I feel good."

Another team member at the site agreed with Winters.

"My wife and I have supported this ministry on and off over the years," math professor Brian Dawson said. "It was a natural choice. Saving lives, helping people, it's a good ministry to help with."

Of course, the university's hope is that ministry through service will not wait until the next Day of Remembrance, but continue all year long.

"We're very thankful to the agencies and school systems that allow us to serve," Thornbury said. "We hope that exposure to these agencies will spur students to get involved long-term. They say they love our one day of service, but they're always talking about how they need help long-term." ❑

SBC CP gifts dip in November, ahead for year

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Year-to-date contributions through the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program are up nearly 1 percent compared to the same time frame in 2003, according to a news release from SBC Executive Committee President Morris H. Chapman.

As of Nov. 30, the year-to-date total of $31,990,255.02 for Cooperative Program (CP) Missions is .96 percent, or $305,705, ahead of the $31,684,550.02 received at this same point in 2003. For the month, receipts of $14,727,082.50 were 7.62 percent, or $1,214,557.01, below the $15,941,639.51 received in November 2003.

Designated giving of $6,250,572.25 for the same year-to-date period is 22.83 percent, or $1,849,027.13, below gifts of $8,099,599.38 received at this point in 2003. The $3,049,134.58 in designated gifts received last month is $1,674,278.76 below the $4,723,413.34 of November 2003, a decrease of 35.45 percent.

For the SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget, the year-to-date total of $31,990,255.02 is 104.77 percent of the $30,533,615.68 budgeted, or $1,456,639.34 above budget to support Southern Baptist ministries globally and across North America. ❐

Declaration of Independence censured in Calif.

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — A California school district prohibited a teacher from providing handouts about American history to his students because the historical documents contain references to God and religion, and now the Alliance Defense Fund has filed suit.

"Throwing aside all common sense, the district has chosen to censor men such as George Washington and documents like the Declaration of Independence," Gary McCaleb, ADF's senior counsel, said in a news release. "The district's actions conflict with American beliefs and are completely unconstitutional. In addition, they have wrongfully applied their policy to only one teacher, who is a professed Christian."

The school principal ordered the teacher, Stephen Williams, to submit all lesson plans and supplemental handouts for her review but did not require the same of other teachers. Documents that were rejected include excerpts from the Declaration of Independence, the diaries of George Washington and John Adams, the writings of William Penn, and various state constitutions, ADF said.

"Less than 5 percent of all of Mr. Williams' supplemental handouts distributed throughout the school year contain references to God and Christianity," McCaleb said. "The district is simply attempting to cleanse all references to the Christian religion from our nation's history." ❐

N.C. church leaves convention over woman 'preacher'

Associated Baptist Press

MARION, N.C. — Parker's Chapel Missionary Baptist Church here voted Nov. 7 to withdraw from the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and the Blue Ridge Baptist Association after learning that a woman had been slated to preach the annual sermon at the state convention.

Author and speaker Anne Graham Lotz, daughter of evangelist Billy Graham, delivered the "convention message" during the Nov. 15-17 meeting in Winston-Salem.

In a letter addressed to the Blue Ridge Association, pastor Larry Brown referred to the convention as the "Southern Baptist State Convention."

"We find that it is impossible for us, as Bible-believing Christians, to support the SBSC in this outright affront to the Word of God," he wrote. "Our congregation held an emergency meeting during Sunday morning worship and we determined, by a vote of 47 to 0, that we cannot and will not be part of an organization that blatantly ignores one of the most basic guidelines for church leadership, as stated in I Timothy 3:1-13."

The passage in I Timothy 3:1-3 discusses qualifications for pastors and deacons.

In the letter, Brown said Lotz is "a fine Christian woman," and "a good teacher and speaker."

He added, however, "she cannot fulfill the role of preacher, whether this refers to the pulpit of a church or the podium of a convention."

Parker's Chapel Baptist Church, with about 75 members, traditionally has contributed small amounts to the association and the state convention, but stated in the withdrawal letter that it "will no longer support financially any endeavors of these groups." ❐

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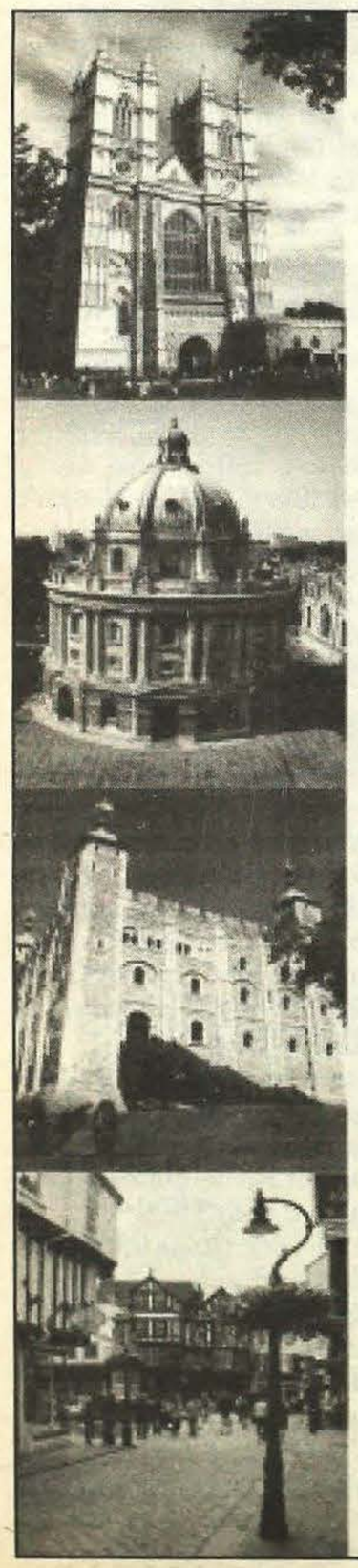

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- Oxford and St. Margaret's Church, the Bodleian Library and Regent's Park College, home to Baptists at Oxford.
- Bedford and sites associated with John Bunyan including the John Bunyan Museum and his birthplace in Elstow.
- Olney, where John Newton, the author of *Amazing Grace*, lived and worked.
- Kettering and Fuller Baptist Church where the Baptist Missionary Society was formed.
- Moulton, where William Carey had his first pastorate and his vision that showed him he must take the gospel to the whole world.
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Billy Graham, Founder, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association

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STANDARD

According to Census Bureau data

Couples waiting longer to marry; result may be healthier marriages

y Greg Warner
ssociated Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — New data om the U.S. Census Bureau nfirms young adults are wait- longer to get married. The ult, however, may be healthi- marriages.

Since 1970, the average age which men marry for the first me rose from 25.3 years to 7.1, according to the bureau's urrent Population Survey. The verage marrying age for women se from 20.8 to 23.2.

Also, the percentage of men e 30-34 who have never mar- ed has quadrupled since 1970, w accounting for about a third men in the age group. About a irth of women age 30-34 have ver married, which also is a urfold increase from the 6 per- nt of 1970.

Sociologists who viewed the report said young adults are focusing more on their education and jobs than marriage. An increase in cohabitation also is contributing to the postponement of marriage, they said.

Two researchers who direct the National Marriage Project at Rutgers University see some encouraging signs in the trends, however. "There is a common belief that, although a smaller percentage of Americans are now marrying than was the case a few decades ago, those who marry have marriages of higher quality," said David Popenoe and Barbara Dafoe Whitehead.

"It seems reasonable that if divorce removes poor marriages from the pool of married couples and cohabitation 'trial marriages' deter some bad marriages from forming, the remaining marriages on average should be happier," the pair wrote in the 2004 study "The State of Our Unions."

Popenoe and Whitehead, who studied attitudes about marriage among young men age 25-34, found that 80 percent of men view marriage favorably and are good candidates for matrimony. "The men who are the best 'marriage beta' are those who are more traditional in their family and religious background characteristics and in their attitudes toward marriage," the researchers said.

Their research showed that the prime time for men to search for and marry their "soul mate" occurs roughly during the years between ages 25 and 30, and that the meaning of marriage has changed for those men.

"Compared to earlier generations of men, young men today are less likely to equate marriage with becoming an adult," the researchers said. Neither do they view marriage primarily as a means to have children. Instead, the researchers said, young men tend to marry in order to build a life with their "soul mates."

Other recent studies have shown that Christian men and women are more likely to marry and tend to marry younger than the general population, perhaps because cohabitation is still frowned upon in many Christian circles.

But Christians also divorce at a higher rate than the general population. According to a 2001 study by the Barna Research Group, 27 percent of born-again Christians have been divorced, compared with 24 percent of adults who are not born-again.

But Popenoe and Whitehead, in an earlier study, said the higher divorce rate among Christians has more to do with education than faith. "Born-again Christians have a somewhat lower level of education than the population as a whole, and this educational level is very highly associated with divorce — the higher the education level, the lower the divorce rate," Popenoe said.

"One reason is that people with a higher education level don't marry as young," he said. "And the age at marriage is extremely sensitive to the question of divorce — the younger you are when you marry, the higher the divorce rate." ❐

Modesty can be fashionable

Baptist Press

ANNISTON, Ala. — On the heels of ABC's decision not to renew its annual television contract with the Miss America pageant, the issue of modesty has emerged as a center-stage issue with Christians.

This year, contestants were featured in revealing swimsuits in the on-stage competition, and were placed in hot tubs during their pre-recorded introductions.

The reduction in modesty did not yield the pageant the extra exposure it had hoped to achieve. Instead, Miss America received its lowest television ratings in its 50-year history.

The issue of modesty is not a new controversy in pageant swimsuits, but as fashion trends like short skirts, tank tops, and belly shirts make their way from the local mall to worship services, church members are looking for guidance.

Modesty is one of the topics — along with dating, eating disorders, depression, and self esteem — addressed in Beyond the Eye conferences.

The conference founder, Leslie Gary, cautions parents to be aware of contents in their daughters' wardrobe and to not only discuss why some things are not appropriate to wear but explore the roots of immodest clothing.

"I feel there are many issues that young girls face today, but I believe these issues stem from their desire to feel needed, be wanted and accepted, and to fit in," she said.

Many girls dress inappropriately because they have never been taught that their beauty is far beyond what people see on the outside, Gary said.

"It is a heart issue," she said. "I truly believe that confusion about modesty and clothing that is appropriate will begin to subside once God's Word is planted daily into the hearts of these girls. We desire to judge no one. Our desire is to give girls the key that opens the truth about who they are through God's Word."

Mary Mohler, director of the Seminary Wives Institute at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, sees an opportunity for Christian parents to teach daughters that modesty matters.

"A daughter must be taught from an early age that her body is precious and should never be flaunted," Mohler said. ❐

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — OTHER

Middle Tennessee church seeks part-time receptionist (20 hours per week). Send resume to Personnel Committee, Tulip Grove Baptist Church, 563 Shute Lane, Old Hickory, TN 37138.

MINISTRY — PASTOR

First Baptist Church in Wartburg, Tenn., is seeking a full-time pastor. First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 241, Wartburg, TN 37887, phone (423) 346-3550.

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Shellsford Baptist Church in McMinnville, Tenn., is seeking a full-time pastor. Please send resume to Search Committee, Shellsford Baptist Church, 121 Bottoms Rd., McMinnville, TN 37110.

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Memorial Baptist Church, Crossville, Tenn., is seeking a full-time pastor. Please send resume to Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 39, Crossville, TN 38557.

MINISTRY — MUSIC

Middle Creek Baptist Church is seeking a part-time music director. He must love the Lord and love to lead people in worship. He will plan for and lead weekly services as well as occasional special services. He should be outgoing and friendly, able to bridge the traditional/contemporary gap. If this is you, please send your information to 6455 Knoxville Hwy., Oliver Springs, TN 37840 or e-mail to mike@middlecreekbc.org.

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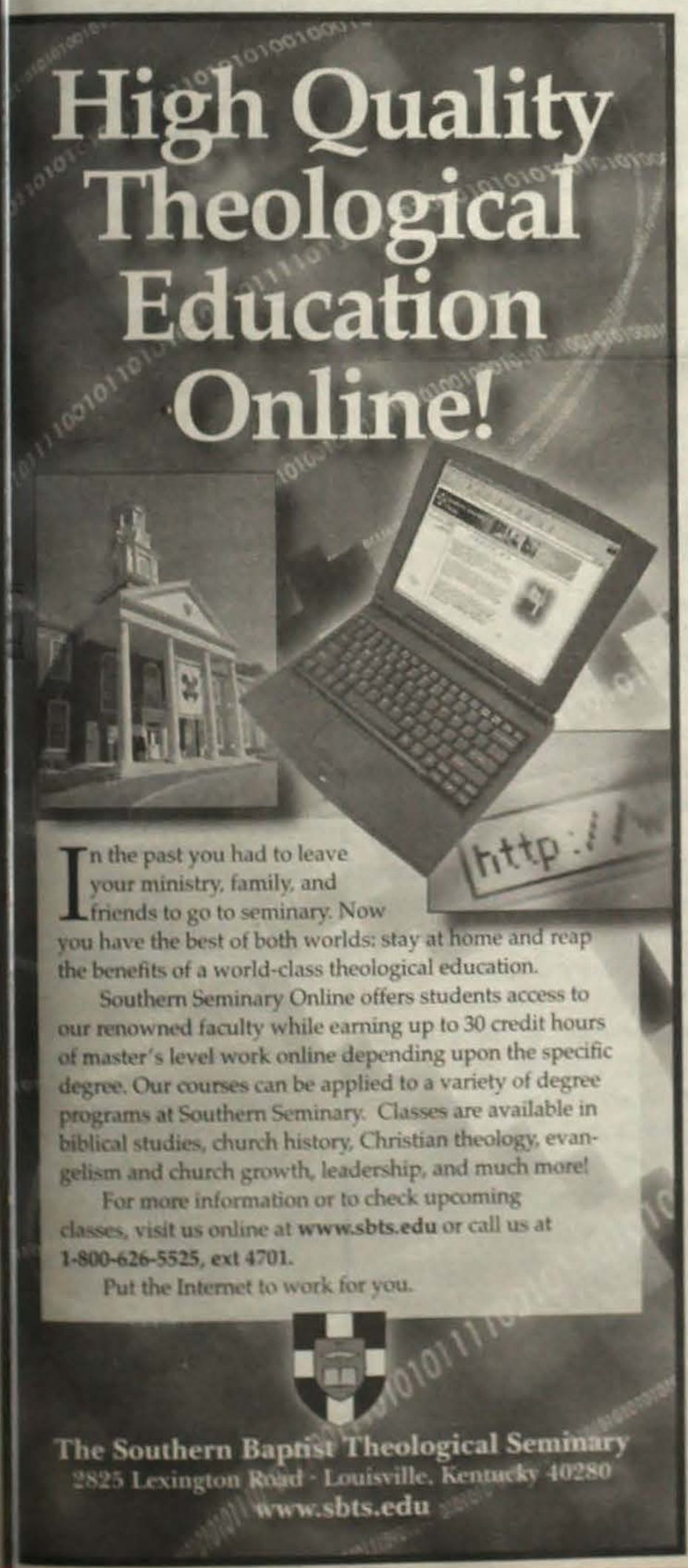
Seeking full-time minister of music/worship leader for a Southern Baptist congregation that engages in a blended style of worship. The church's television ministry covers a 5-state area. Seminary degree preferred. Submit resume to Music Search Committee, Attn. Music Office, 2890 Broadway, Paducah, KY 42001.



FamilyNet now seen in Memphis

FamilyNet news office

FORT WORTH, Texas — FamilyNet Television joined the Time Warner Cable Digital lineup out of Memphis on Nov. 1 as a part of the Digital Variety package.

FamilyNet is seen on channel 256 which serves customers in the Tennessee communities of:

Fayette, Hardeman, Haywood, Shelby, Tipton, Arlington, Bartlett, Braden, Collierville, Fayette County (unincorporated areas), Gallaway, Germantown, Grand Junction, Hardeman County (unincorporated areas), Haywood County (unincorporated areas), La Grange, Lakeland, Mason, Memphis, Middleton, Moscow, Oakland, Piperton, Rossville, Saulsbury, Shelby County (unincorporated areas), Somerville, Stanton, Tipton County (southeastern portion), Whiteville, and Williston

"We are pleased that FamilyNet is now available in these communities," said R. Chip Turner, FamilyNet's vice president for marketing and distribution. "We anticipate an enthusiastic, loyal viewing audience as we provide values-based, family-friendly programming to area subscribers."

FamilyNet is a cable network with traditional, values-added entertainment for all ages. The network carries programs that appeal to the whole family, including music specials, comedy, live talk shows, headline news, classic movies, and TV series, along with original kids' shows, moving dramas, and faith-based programs. ❐

U.S. Supreme Court refuses Mass. case

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court refused Nov. 29 to review the decision by the Massachusetts high court that legalized same-sex "marriage" in that state.

Without comment the high court turned down an appeal from 11 Massachusetts state legislators and Catholic Action League Vice President Robert Largess, a Boston citizen. The group had argued that the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court violated the U.S. Constitution when it forced the state to legalize same-sex "marriage."

The decision by the court was not a surprise — the court had refused in May to get involved in the Massachusetts case. Legal experts say the Supreme Court often is reluctant to overturn a decision by a state high court.

But the decision does not mean that the Supreme Court won't hear a same-sex "marriage" case in the near future.

The case before the court dealt with the decision by the Massachusetts court; it did not deal with the federal Defense of Marriage Act, which is being challenged by homosexual activists in seven separate cases in lower courts. DOMA gives states the option of not recognizing another state's same-sex "marriage." ❐

Louisiana Baptists welcome new exec

Baptist Press

ALEXANDRIA, La. — Messengers to the Louisiana Baptist Convention welcomed a new executive director (David Hankins who will begin serving in February 2005) and re-elected convention president Philip Robertson for a second term despite a challenge from fellow pastor Gil Arthur of Leesville. Robertson received 54.5 percent of the vote.

Hankins is no stranger to the state, having served as pastor there before joining the SBC ecutive Committee staff in 19

Convention messeng adopted the same budget as year, $22 million, but did crease the SBC portion fr 35.25 to 35.5 percent. ❐

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Clymersville Baptist Churc seeking a part-time youth di tor. Please send resume to mersville Baptist Church, Box 312, Rockwood, TN 37 For more information, call 354-9392.

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book review

y Dawn Ferguson

Believing God
by Beth Moore
Broadman & Holman, 2004

On March 5, 2003, I sat reading a book that caused to make a profound change in my life. I remember day well because it was the day before my husnd died following his two plus year battle with canr. The book was *Experiencing God* by Henry Blacka-y and Claude King. The change resulted from my relization that my relationship with God wasn't where wanted it to be or where it needed to be to experience im in my life and that for me to get it there, I was oing to have to spend time with Him. As a result, I egan spending the first hour of every morning with im in prayer, devotion, and study. That one hour has elped me grow and mature in my faith and in my eart, in my love for Him, and even more in my day-yday living and handling of circumstances. That was red-letter day, and I am convinced that God began ealing me that day through that book.

Reading Beth Moore's new book *Believing God* has ad an equally profound influence on me.

Moore's basic premise is that too many Christians lieve in God, but stop short of believing God. "God as made us promises. Real ones. Numerous ones. romises of things like all-surpassing power, producvity, peace, and joy while still occupying these jars of ay. Few of us will argue the theory, but why aren't ore of us living the reality?"

Moore neatly develops a five-sentence pledge of ith that she believes encompasses virtually everyiing we're challenged to believe daily. The stateents are:

1. God is who He says He is.
2. God can do what He says He can do.
3. I am who God says I am.
4. I can do all things through Christ.
5. God's Word is alive and active in me.

During the course of reading this book, I memozed and began quoting these Scripture-based princiles frequently. Like Moore, I struggle daily with atement 3 especially. Like Moses, I want to tell God hy I can't do it. To help me in this struggle, I have llowed Moore's suggestion to memorize the following sed on Ephesians 1:3-8 — which I also repeat freiently — I am blessed, chosen, adopted, favored, reemed, and forgiven. What an indication of God's e for me and His grace and mercy! Whenever I let d's words define who I am, I am humbled and overhelmed.

Believing God is not just something you have, but s also something you do. Faith is active. Moore beves that our toughest battles will concern matters of ith. Like the first words from the serpent's mouth to ve, "Did God really say ...?" (Genesis 3:1). The sernt couldn't keep Eve from believing in God, so he ade Eve doubt God.

If you stop short of believing God and His promises r abundant life, read this book. If you are on the lge of beginning a new ministry or making a change your life for the glory of God, but lack confidence in ur ability, read this book. If you are in the middle of crisis or difficult circumstances, read this book. Botm line: READ THIS BOOK! It will help you define ore clearly who you are as well as give you the asrance that God can do through you what He says He n! ❑ — Ferguson is a freelance writer from Gallatin.

Follow Jesus, the Messiah

By Jerry Massey

Focal Passage: John 1:35-50

A very timid and sensitive little innkeeper became so caught up in the character he was playing in the Christmas play, that after he told Joseph there was no room for Mary and Joseph in his inn, he broke down, and changed the whole story line. Almost in tears he blurted out, "Joseph, you and Mary can have my room tonight!" The teacher was frantic. The play had been ruined! Or had it? It just may be as the people left laughing that evening they realized a needful lesson had been delivered. This Christmas will we make room for Jesus in our daily lives?

In our passage this week the Apostle John teaches us that to follow Jesus, the Messiah, disciples need to first, learn more about Jesus (vv. 35-39). It is a note worth pondering that when John the Baptist testified about Jesus, it prompted others to want to meet and follow Jesus. The church's message should have the same impact. One day while John was with two of his disciples, Jesus came nearby and John immediately pointed them to Jesus. They inquiringly rushed to Jesus and wanted to know more about Him. Jesus simply said, "come," and they did. We should not take lightly this action on their part. Well-intentioned believers find it difficult to just turn everything over to Jesus and follow Him. We like to take the lead. We like to be in control; we are afraid when we are not. The wise men of long ago followed the star and it changed their lives forever. When disciples follow Jesus, they also see the wisdom and blessings in letting Jesus control their lives.

Secondly, our passage reveals that actively following Jesus means to tell others about Jesus ... what we have learned about Him (vv. 40-42). Andrew made haste to find his brother Simon. The Greek language indicates that Andrew was intense about it. *I must tell Simon about the Messiah!* When Jesus saw the reluctant Simon coming His way, the Scripture says Jesus gazed upon him as if to see right through him. He saw Simon's past, his future, and all the potential instilled in this robust fisherman. The Lord saw a man with a big heart, yet impulsive nature, and a "disciple to be" that would be prone to make mistakes ... mistakes of the head, but not of the heart. Jesus challenged Simon by giving him a new name, one he would equate the more he learned about Jesus and faithfully followed Him. He changed his name to "Peter" which meant "a little rock, or stone." Jesus was "the Rock" and Peter would be a little stone from that Rock. What people need to see from us, and not just hear from our carols, is that following Jesus really works. It is our message of hope to the world.

Sunday School Lesson
Family Bible Series
Dec. 12

Thirdly, to follow Jesus we must experience His plan for our lives (vv. 43-50). These verses share with us that Jesus passionately searched after Philip. And Jesus still searches for disciples with that same passion. Once Philip met Jesus, he had to tell his brother. Nathanael found it hard to believe that the Messiah could come from such a backwoods place as Nazareth. The village was a mixture of Gentile ways and lacked any kind of sophistication. With Andrew-like persuasion, Philip convinced his brother also, to *come and see for yourself.* When Nathanael met Jesus, He told him things that only God could know. Nathanael professed Jesus and believed He was the "Son of God" and "King of Israel."

MASSEY

This Advent season let's sing the Christmas invitation "come and see." God's saved children are living testimonies of Christmas grace. Without apology may we exclaim, "Jesus, come back; You can have my room (life) tonight!" ❑ — Massey is pastor, First Baptist Church, Paris.

Dealing with disappointment

By Lee Porter

Focal Passage: Luke 15:1-32

Perhaps no chapter in all of the Bible is more well-known and more loved than Luke 15. In this chapter Jesus tells three parables which dramatically declare God's love for lost people, His earnest seeking for them, His joy when they turn from sin, and the blessing they receive when they are restored as redeemed children of God.

According to Luke 15:1-3, the occasion for Jesus telling the parables was prompted by the harsh criticism and condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees against Jesus and His ministry. The publicans and sinners came to Jesus to hear His message. They knew that Jesus would accept them while the scribes and Pharisees despised them. The publicans were tax collectors for the Romans and thus were hated; the prostitutes and others were considered sinners and law-breakers because they neglected or refused to follow all of the sacred religious traditions of the scribes and Pharisees. Consequently, the scribes and Pharisees condemned Him for associating with sinners. They even accused Him of being a friend of sinners. This intended criticism is really a compliment.

In response to their attitudes and actions Jesus tells the scribes and Pharisees, and us, three parables. The first parable was about a lost sheep (vv. 4-7). The owner or shepherd has 100 sheep. The good shepherd leaves the 99 in the open field and goes after the one sheep that is lost. The shepherd rejoices over finding the one lost sheep. Jesus thus reminds us about the joy in heaven when one lost sheep is found.

Let me urge you to find a copy of Ira Sankey's song "The Ninety and Nine." If possible, have someone sing it in your Sunday School class or just read the words to the class. Such an experience will make this lesson come alive in your class. The song can be found in the Broadman Hymnal, page 36 or in Voice of Praise by B.B. McKinney, page 74.

In the second parable, Jesus tells about a poor widow woman who loses a coin (vv. 8-15). She diligently searches until she finally finds the coin. She calls her friends and neighbors together so they can rejoice with her. Jesus reminds the scribes and Pharisees that the angels in heaven rejoice when a sinner is saved.

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The third parable is about a lost son and a suffering father. The Parable of the Prodigal Son is probably one of the best known short stories in literature. The younger son requests his inheritance which under Mosaic Law (Deuteronomy 21:7) would be one-third of the father's wealth. Usually this inheritance is claimed after the father's death but the father can give this while he is still alive.

Obviously, the younger son wants to get away from his father's authority, so he leaves home and travels to a far country where he soon squandered all of his money in foolish living. He sinks so low that he takes a job feeding pigs. He becomes so hungry he eats the food of the pigs. His condition is so bad that he decides to return home where he hopes he can work for his father as a hired hand.

Sunday School Lesson
Explore the Bible
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When he is still a long way from home his father rushes to him. I know his father worried about his son every day since he left. I wonder how many days the father must have looked down the road hoping and praying that the son would return home. When the father saw the son coming, he ran to the son, hugged, and kissed him, and of course, forgave him. The son tried to confess his rebellion and foolishness but the father wanted to forgive and wanted to celebrate the son's homecoming. What a celebration there is in heaven when a sinner comes home to God.

As we study this lesson, we as Christians need to evaluate how we are going to react to others when they disappoint us by their words or their actions.

I believe God wants us to show compassion, forgiveness, mercy, love, and grace. ❑ — Porter is a retired employee of LifeWay Christian Resources and former SBC registration secretary. He now lives in Greenback.

Churches

◆ **Bethel Springs Baptist Church, Calhoun,** will host "The Parsons Corner," a Bible conference, Dec. 9-11 at 6:30 p.m. Speakers include Chris Taylor, pastor, Five Point Baptist Church, Decatur; Danny Moore, evangelist of Etowah; J.T. Kersonbrock, evangelist of Bethel Springs Church; Ralph Johnson, evangelist of Liberty Baptist Church, Calhoun; Timothy Davis Sr., pastor, Bethel Springs Church; and Dillard Hagan, former pastor and evangelist of Athens.

◆ **Central Baptist Church, Selmer,** recently retired its debt with a note-burning service. The congregation saw **Andy Roberson,** associate pastor, and his family leave where he will serve as a church planter/church health consultant for the Utah/Idaho State Convention. Also Scott, Marilyn, and Nathan Stout of the church moved to Salt Lake City, Utah, to start a new church. Finally, the Central Church is working with several other churches in Shiloh Baptist Association to start Bruton Baptist Mission.

◆ **First Baptist Church, Donelson,** will offer "I'll Be Home for Christmas," Dec. 9-10, 12. The drama/musical is about family and hope in the golden days of radio. For more information, call the church at (615) 883-2339.

◆ **First Baptist Church, Bethel Springs,** held revival recently which resulted in 15 people making professions of faith and many others making other spiritual decisions. Floyd "Lammie" Lammersfeld, evangelist of McKenzie, spoke.

RUBY LEE MCMILLIN, *accompanist, Prospect Baptist Church, Hollow Rock, was honored recently for serving for 42 years.*

CHILDREN FROM A *Hispanic neighborhood located near Southside Baptist Church, Johnson City, wait at the church to participate in a fall activity. The church has seen about 50 Hispanic adults and children begin attending Sunday School and worship since it started reaching out to them and ministering to them this this summer.*

Associations

◆ **Stone Baptist Association,** based in Cookeville, has relocated to 41 W. Stevens Street. It's mailing address is P.O. Box 455, Cookeville, TN 38503.

◆ A team of 52 from **Bradley Baptist Association,** based in Cleveland, will serve in Manhattan, New York, Dec. 17-23. They will work with The 411 ministry wrapping presents and doing other servant evangelism.

Schools

◆ The East Tennessee Extension Center of **Southern Baptist Theological Seminary** based at **Broadway Baptist Church, Maryville,** will begin its spring semester Jan. 24. It will offer Introduction to Church History, Part II, Romans, and Greek Syntax and Exegesis. The classes are held on Mondays. For more information, contact Tom Hodges at (865) 380-9561 or tnhodges-@esper.com.

BREAKING GROUND *Nov. 21 are leaders of Cedar Hill Bapt Church, Cedar Hill. They are breaking ground for a 16,00 square-foot Family Life Center. The leaders are, from left, Lin Lawhon; Kathy Finley; Bob Bibb; Chris Cooksey; George Brow Billy Joe Jackson; and Brad Shockley, pastor.*

Leaders

◆ **Don Malone**, pastor, Thompson Creek Baptist Church, Como, will be honored Dec. 12 on his retirement after serving the church for 35 years. A special worship service will be held from 10 a.m. to noon. A luncheon will follow. During the afternoon, a reception will be held for Malone and his wife, Izabel, from 2-4 p.m.

◆ **Philip Dougan** was called as interim pastor, West Main Baptist Church, Alexandria, effective Nov. 7. He formerly served a church in the area. He was pastor of First Baptist Church, Alexandria, from 1967-71.

◆ Holiday Heights Baptist Church, Hendersonville, has called **Glenn Conner** as pastor, effective Dec. 12. He formerly has served as pastor of churches in Bledsoe Baptist Association, based in Gallatin.

◆ **John David Jicka** h been called as pastor of Orli da Baptist Church, Orlinda.

◆ **Jay Galyon,** past Northwest Baptist Churc Knoxville, was named Bivo tional Pastor of the Year Knox County Baptist Assoc tion recently.

◆ **Ray Van Neste,** direct of the R.C. Ryan Center f Biblical Studies and instruct of Christian Studies, Uni University, Jackson, has wr ten a book entitled *Pastor Epistles* that was published cently. The book is a techni study of I and II Timothy a Titus.

◆ **Larry Shorter** has be called as pastor, Rivervi Baptist Church, Elizabethto

◆ **Steve Strickland** h been called as pastor, Sh Creek Baptist Church, Eng wood.

◆ **Greg Burton** has be called as senior pastor, Co nial Heights Baptist Chur Kingsport. He formerly h served as pastor of fo churches in Kentucky.

WOM of FBC, Dickson, respond to member's Christmas experience

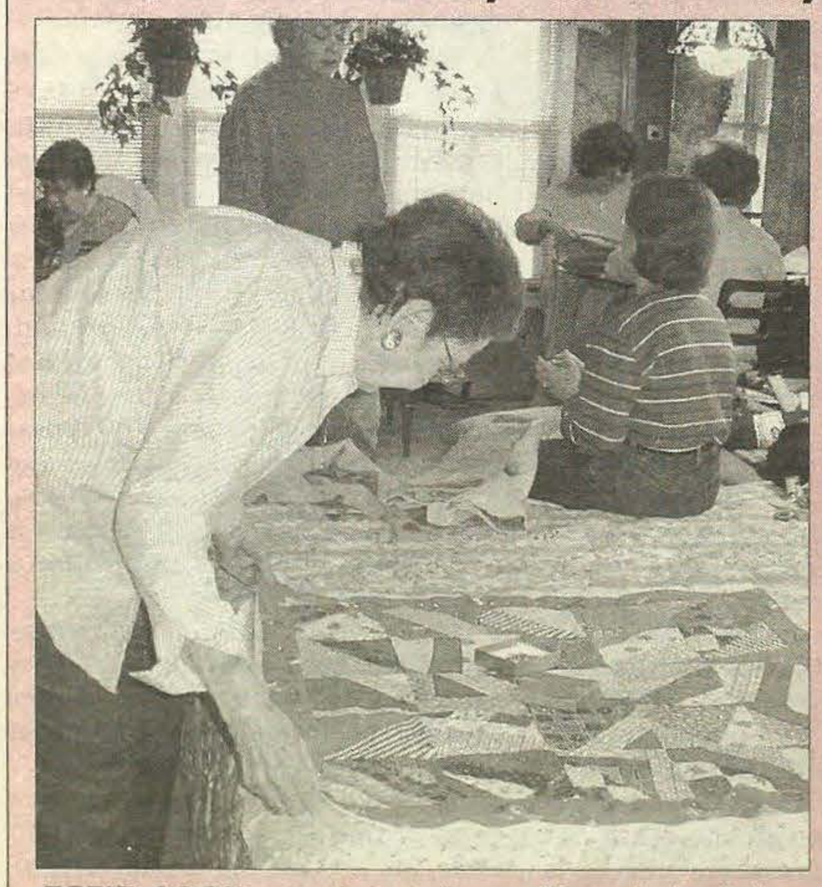
Baptist and Reflector

DICKSON — Last Christmas, Delma Smith was in the nursing home of Dickson recovering from an illness. While there, she received a lap quilt which meant a lot to her.

This year Smith, 90, a member of Women on Mission of First Baptist Church, Dickson, opened her home for three days so the WOM could make lap quilts for residents of the nursing home. Smith also provided lunch for everyone.

Women came and went, reported Bette Hawkins, Woman's Missionary Union director of the church. Work was done there and at home. It wa amazing how materials complemente each other and the quilts came togetl er, said Hawkins.

About 15 women worked on th quilts. They completed 15 quilt wrapped them in Christmas pape and delivered them recently. ❑



EFFIE COOK *examines a lap quilt made by fellow Women on Mission members of First Baptist Church, Dickson.*

LORI HOPKINS*, left, and Nancy Gerald of the church work on lap quilts.*

SOMEONE STITCHES *a part of a la quilt made of many pieces of differen materials.*