

Baptist & Reflector

Wide Edition

Telling the Story of Tennessee Baptists

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Jerusalem comes alive for children at West Jackson Baptist

Donnie Wilkey
Staff and Reflector

JACKSON — During March and April, the streets of Jerusalem came alive for children of West Jackson Baptist Church here.

The Jerusalem Marketplace was constructed as a replica of a period street in Jerusalem during the time of Christ's ministry on earth. The replica featured building fronts which depicted the homes and shops Jerusalem children might have seen.

It was an opportunity for 21st century children to see, feel, and taste a day in Jerusalem," according to Wayne Holmes, member and church photographer at Jackson.

The concept was the brainchild of Ken Hindman, children's minister at West Jackson Baptist Church.

Hindman wanted the children to have a hands-on experience with authentic teaching," Hindman said.

Hindman noted he believes children learn when they are able to use all their senses. "The Jerusalem Marketplace provided that for them every time they were there," Hindman observed. "It was very interactive," he added.

The street setting was constructed in an open common room area in West Jackson's children's wing. More than 150 volunteers worked to build the sets, costumes, and costumes. Hindman related the work was done in five days prior to the opening of the marketplace which was available to children (and adults) throughout all of March and April. The service in the marketplace was held weekly. It is being disassembled this



CHILDREN FROM West Jackson Baptist Church, Jackson, had the opportunity to visualize the period during which Jesus lived on the earth through the Jerusalem Marketplace. — Photos by Wayne Holmes

week, according to Hindman.

The children's minister said the marketplace was used on Sunday mornings, evenings, and for TeamKid on Wednesdays. Workers in period costumes conducted Bible lessons, Bible memory drills, and Easter-related skills. On Palm Sunday morning, a worker portraying Jesus entered the marketplace on a donkey.

Children also had the opportunity to walk through the marketplace and ask questions while enjoying bread, fresh and dried fruit, and even fish sticks at the "fish market."

"We wanted our children to have an experience that will help them better understand Bible stories," Hindman said,

adding that he "also wanted to allow children to see how Jesus impacted the various lives of biblical characters."

He estimated more than 800 children per week experienced the marketplace which also was available during the weekday programs of Mother's Day Out, daycare, and the homeschool tutorial students.

The marketplace wasn't just enjoyed by children. People of all ages toured the marketplace, Hindman said. "It was well received."

He feels the marketplace goals were accomplished. "It has made the Bible content of Sunday School and TeamKid come to life." □ — Wayne Holmes contributed to this story.



KEN HINDMAN, children's minister at West Jackson Baptist Church, Jackson, demonstrates a ram's horn. **BELOW**, a visitor samples the food from Jessica Holmes at the "fish market."



this week's news

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Nominations sought for ministers of the year

Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — Nominations are now being sought for pastors and staff ministers to be recognized during the annual meeting of the Tennessee Baptist Convention in November.

These annual recognitions are made to persons serving in the grand division of the state where the convention meets. The 2005 meeting is in Clarksville, so nominations should be made for persons serving in Middle Tennessee.

Two awards will be given for the third time this year. A Staff Minister of the Year and a Bivocational Staff Minister of the Year will be recognized.

These awards will be given to ministers other than the pastor. The awards will be given to celebrate and affirm the ministry of persons serving in music, worship, adult, youth, children, preschool or other similar ministry positions on a church staff. Criteria for the awards will include having served a minimum of three years in their present church, a high level of quality in specific ministry, a significant expression of Christian ministry to the church and/or community above and beyond specifically designated staff duties, persistence in the face of less than encouraging

circumstances, the endorsement of either the senior pastor, chairman of deacons, or director of missions of the association.

The awards for Small Church Pastor of the Year and Bivocational Pastor of the Year will continue.

These awards are also given to pastors serving in the grand division of the state where the annual convention is held. Nominations should be made for pastors serving in Middle Tennessee. Additional criteria for these awards include being a bivocational pastor (i.e. has full-time employment other than a local church) or being a small church pastor (i.e. full-time pastor of a church with an average Sunday School attendance of less than 125). The criteria also includes visionary leadership such as leading the congregation to grow and/or enlarge their influence in the community in which they are located, or leading the congregation to develop and implement creative ministry in their community.

Nomination forms can be secured by contacting your local associational office, Ray Gilder or Steve Holt at Tennessee Baptist Convention in Brentwood, or printing the form from the Internet web site, www.tnbaptist.org. Click on Church Leadership and Administration to find the form. □

TBC CP giving remains strong

Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — After six months of the current fiscal year, Tennessee Baptists have given \$18,474,272 through the Cooperative Program.

In April, churches gave \$3,257,226, the second highest total this year. Receipts are \$607,832 or 3.4 percent over the same period last year and are \$696,847 or 3.92 percent over budget requirements.

"We are extremely grateful to Tennessee Baptists for their support of missions and ministries in our state and around the world," said James Porch, executive director-treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

He noted Tennessee Baptists are on pace to meet the convention budget for the first time since 2000. □

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SBC may leave radio ministry, according to NAMB

Associated Baptist Press

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — The Southern Baptist Convention may end 64 years of radio ministry, according to its North American Mission Board.

The board has laid off the two remaining members of its radio production staff as of the end of April, rehiring them for at least two months on a contract basis while a final decision is reached, according to sources and a NAMB spokesman.

Based at NAMB's Media Production Group in Fort Worth, Texas, the radio staff is responsible for producing five weekly 30-minute programs, each broadcast free by up to 400 stations, mostly during non-peak or overnight hours.

Once the mainstay of Southern Baptists' broadcast ministry, the radio programs produce no revenue and have dropped in popularity, NAMB says. "Strength for Living," the preaching show known as "The Baptist Hour" when it launched the SBC's radio ministry in 1941, is now available on about 400 radio stations, reaching 430,000 radio listeners.

"Over the course of several months and as part of a comprehensive communications study, NAMB has been taking a close look at radio operations to determine their effectiveness and the viability of continuing this area of ministry," NAMB said in a statement to Associated Baptist Press.

A decision is expected "sometime in the next few months," the April 28 statement said.

Begun as the Radio Commission in 1941 by Baptist pioneer Samuel Lowe, the Fort Worth-based ministry later became the Radio and Television Commission when TV programming was added.

The RTVC was dissolved and combined into the new North American Mission Board during the SBC's restructuring of its agencies in the 1990s. The television ministry, still based in Fort Worth, was spun off as FamilyNet after a merger with Jerry Falwell's cable TV ministry. But the radio programs, which once numbered almost a dozen, remained separate and administered by NAMB, which is based in suburban Atlanta. □

House protects parental rights

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. House of Representatives easily approved April 27 a bill to prevent interstate abortions on minors without parental notice.

The House voted 270-157 for the Child Interstate Abortion Notification Act, which would

SBC causes bolstered by 'Widows' Might

Baptist Press

DALLAS. — The death of a spouse is always difficult, but for a minister's wife who has served alongside her husband, often for decades, the loss of a spouse also may mean the loss of a ministry. Hundreds of widows, however, have found a way to continue contributing to the kingdom of God through a prayer ministry sponsored by GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Widows' Might prayer ministry involves widows who volunteer to pray daily for a variety of special needs pertaining to Southern Baptists' missions and ministries around the world. Additionally, prayer is offered for needy servants of God who are not widely known and who otherwise might not receive prayer support.

"We often hear from widows who share how blessed they feel to be a part of the Widows' Might prayer ministry," said Susie Hawkins, who volunteers her time to lead the ministry. She is the wife of GuideStone's president, O.S. Hawkins.

"It is a wonderful way for these women to still feel connected to the work of God in the Southern Baptist Convention. Many of them feel isolated, having been active in their church and/or husband's ministry," Hawkins added. "Despite age, illness, loneliness, or economic struggles, the women of the Widows' Might are eager to pray for God's power to be present in the work of our Southern Baptist Convention."

Widows' Might participant Lessie Cumbie of Seymour, Texas, wrote, "Words cannot be put on paper to express how much the Widows' Might prayer ministry has helped me. I am 82 years old. I moved back to my hometown after my hus-

band went to be with our Lord. I didn't know what to do. I asked God, and His answer was, 'You can pray.'"

The Widows' Might ministry was named after the widow who gave her last two mites for the Lord's work and whose influence has inspired generous giving on the part of all believers through the ages. In Luke 21:3-4, Jesus praised her because while others gave "out of their abundance ... she out of her poverty put in a livelihood that she had."

"That spirit of giving is the spirit we want to exemplify in the Widows' Might," Hawkins said. "To give all we have to prayer, asking God to 'exceedingly abundantly above all that we think.'"

"There is a 'widows' might' today in the power of prayer," said O.S. Hawkins. "The widow who gave her two mites was chosen by Jesus as a model of impacting the world for good. The prayer ministry has the potential of impacting today's world in ways beyond our comprehension."

Widows who participate in the ministry receive a Quarterly Call to Prayer, as a means of staying informed on all aspects of Southern Baptist life so they can keep their prayers focused and specific. The quarterly publication includes prayer requests from the International Mission Board, North American Mission Board, World Missionary Union, Southern Baptist seminaries and SBC entities such as the Executive Committee, LifeWay Christian Resources, GuideStone Financial Resources, and the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

For more information about the program contact GuideStone Financial Resources at 1-800-551-0511. □

LifeWay's 'Fast 50' not just for SBC attendees

For Baptist and Reflector

NASHVILLE — Following the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention which meets here June 21-22, LifeWay Christian Resources is sponsoring "Fast 50 — 50 Seminars for Growing Church Leaders."

"Fast 50" is designed for pastors, church staff, church leaders, denominational leaders, and lay leadership from churches.

The event will feature 50 seminars led by specialists from SBC entities and successful ministry practitioners.

Seminar leaders will include LifeWay President Jimmy Draper; Jim Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., and author of *Dangerous Intersections*; Ken Hemphill, national strategist for Empowering Kingdom Growth; Bill Fay, speaker and author of *Share Jesus Without Fear*; Jerry Rankin, president, International Mission Board; and others.

Seminars will cover topics such as evangelism, discipleship, Sunday School, general church leadership, age-group specific leadership, and missions leadership.



DRAPER

Though geared for people who would be attending the annual meeting, it is open to SBC attendees as well, said Phillips of LifeWay's communications department.

Tennessee Baptists live within driving distance of LifeWay are especially invited to take advantage of the seminars, Phillips said.

The program will include an address from Draper, as well as LifeWay's VBS Beach Block children ages 3-12 and a trilogue for youth.

"One of the things we've heard from folks coming to SBC is that they would like to sharpen some of their skills, find out what other churches are doing, and get some leadership development," said John Garner, associate to the vice president of LifeWay's corporate affairs.

"This was a need we've met since the convention is going to be right here in Nashville where LifeWay is located," Garner continued. "We can capitalize on having some of the best folks right in this city to lead these conferences."

Participants can choose from eight one-hour conference sessions during the two-day event. The cost for adults is \$50 for one day and \$80 for both days and includes box lunches. The cost for children and students is \$15 per day, with a limit of one per day for families.

For more information, call 254-2022 or go to the website www.lifeway.com/events. □

Bluegrass Baptist Church

Legendary coach challenges Hendersonville-area teenagers

Donnie Wilkey
List and Reflector

HENDERSONVILLE — Pastor Leonard Markham has a simple explanation as to how he is able to have legendary college football coach Bobby Bowden speak at Bluegrass Baptist Church here on April 24.

"I asked. He accepted," Bowden, who is entering his 16th season as the head football coach at Florida State University in Tallahassee, is the all-time winningest football coach in NCAA Division IA history. Bowden also is an active Southern Baptist who frequently shares his faith in churches across the country.

Bluegrass used Bowden's appearance not only to celebrate the church's 35th anniversary but also as a tool to reach out to athletes, particularly football players.

"We invited football teams from Hendersonville, Gallatin, White House," Markham

"We knew Coach Bowden has a heart for high schoolers and middle schoolers," Markham said. "He has spoken at Fellowship of Christian Athletes and has a calling to this group."

"We knew he would relate to the youth."

Markham said the church saw Bowden's appearance as an outreach to young people who don't know Christ.

"We were not looking for a reward. We were solely focused on giving this for evangelism," the pastor said.

Markham and Bowden did not disappoint. Markham and other church leaders.

"We directed most of his remarks during the morning service, which attracted more than 735 people, to the football players and other youth in

attendance. Bowden, known for his humor and "folksy" presentations, prefaced his statements by telling the others in the auditorium his comments "also apply to you."

Bowden got serious as he related the death of his 16-year-old grandson who died in an automobile accident last year.

What helped him cope with his grandson's death was the assurance he had that his grandson was in heaven. "He was saved."

Bowden told the youth "you're right where you need to be every Sunday." He encouraged and challenged them to attend church each week and to learn about God.

"Face the reality that there is a heaven and a hell," he said.

He told them to "not let the nuts at your school confuse you. They will tell you I'm lying."

"I've read the last chapter of the Book! I know how it comes out."

Bowden exhorted the teens to "not put Jesus off until it is too late."

Drawing upon personal experiences, Bowden related that "Christianity is the only way I know where you win by surrendering." He challenged those in attendance to surrender their lives to Jesus Christ. "Christ is the only guaranteed victory," said the coach who has more than 350 wins to his credit.

"Coach Bowden did exactly what we wanted," Markham said. "He gave a simple, basic gospel message and people responded."

Markham noted there were 17 families present that Sunday who are prospects for the church or who made decisions to accept Christ as Savior. Some of the decisions were made by non-members. "We sent their commitment cards to their respective churches for follow-



BOBBY BOWDEN, head football coach at Florida State University, delivers a message April 24 to members and visitors at Bluegrass Baptist Church, Hendersonville.

up," the pastor said.

He related that one of the best football players at Hendersonville High School wrote on a commitment card, "I am renewing my commitment to Jesus Christ today."

Markham also related the story of a church member who worked hard to get her entire family in church on that Sunday. Included were an unchurched couple and her stepfather who had never been in a church service in his life, Markham said.

"She told me, 'I know seeds were planted in their hearts.'"

Clint Niehaus, who attends the church and is an assistant football coach at White House Middle School, brought about 30 people to the service. He said he thought it was a "wonderful opportunity." Niehaus agreed the event was a good evangelistic tool. Some may be hesitant to attend church to hear a pastor, but they might be willing to come to hear a coach who has given his life to the Lord. "It may connect with them."

Church member Joe Goode was a college classmate of Bowden and his wife, Ann, at Howard College (now Samford



LEONARD MARKHAM, right, pastor of Bluegrass Baptist Church, Hendersonville, and member Jake Judd, center, present a commemorative plate to Bobby Bowden. Bowden was the guest speaker during the church's 35th anniversary celebration.

University) in Birmingham.

"I was impressed that he targeted his message to the ballplayers. They can relate to him. His talk should have had an impact," Goode predicted.

Markham noted that when the opportunity became available to get Bowden to speak, "I had a choice as a pastor. I could give in to my fears or I could trust God to make it all happen by providing all the resources we needed."

"Every need for people and finances were provided by God," Markham said, noting Bowden did not want an honorarium. The church simply paid for his expenses to come to Hendersonville, he said.

"The Bobby Bowden event was an act of faith. We believe God wants us to reach our community for Jesus Christ."

"Bluegrass Baptist Church passed the faith test on Sunday, April 24," the pastor said. □



LEONARD MARKHAM, right, and Robert Woody, who became the church's first pastor 35 years ago, display a plate commemorating the anniversary.

Most teenagers lack basic knowledge of Bible, say surveyed teachers

en Camp
ciated Baptist Press

ALLAS — A significant number of American teenagers are "clueless" when it comes to a working knowledge of the Bible, and that means they cannot receive a quality education, a new report states.

A national report reveals 98 percent of the country's leading high-school English teachers believe biblical literacy gives students distinct educational advantages, but most teenagers lack enough understanding of the Bible to be able to receive what teachers recognize as a quality education.

The "Biblical Literacy Report" presents the findings of a study of high-school English teachers in tandem with a Poll revealing what teens know about the Bible. The John Templeton Foundation provided a grant for the research.

Marie Wachlin, teacher trainer at Portlandia University in Portland, Ore.,

interviewed 41 of the nation's top-ranked teachers to determine what they thought students need to know about the Bible. The sample consisted of 22 women and 19 men from 34 schools in 10 states, selected for the survey based on referrals by colleagues, students, and parents and on lists of high-school teachers of the year.

Forty of the 41 teachers said Bible knowledge gives students a distinct educational advantage. Ninety percent said it was important for both college-bound students and the general student population to be biblically literate.

Surveyed teachers identified 72 "need to know" terms from the Bible, such as "Ten Commandments," "Garden of Eden," "Golden Rule," and "Good Samaritan." Wachlin characterized such terms as "the common currency of our language."

The surveyed high-school English teachers overwhelmingly agreed Western literature is steeped in biblical references, and a majority estimated that fewer than a fourth of current students

are biblically literate, meaning they are familiar with the books of the Bible, general themes, and key characters in Scripture.

Without Bible knowledge, teachers said, students are "confused," "stumped" and "clueless" in analyzing literature, Wachlin said. Biblical illiteracy limits pupils' understanding, limits classroom discussion, and limits the scope of what literature teachers can teach, she concluded from her interviews.

Only four of the 30 public schools in the study — compared to all four private schools — offered a unit or course about the Bible, and economically advantaged school districts appeared far more likely to offer academic study of the Bible than poorer districts.

Wachlin and Templeton were joined by pollster George Gallup Jr., Charles Haynes of the First Amendment Center, and Biblical Literacy Project chairman Chuck Stetson in announcing their findings during an April 26 webcast from the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

American teenagers may have a passing acquaintance with some terms in the Bible, but a sizeable number don't know what they mean, Gallup observed, citing a poll of 1,002 teenagers in May and June, 2004, that gauged their level of biblical literacy.

"The good news is that strong majorities of American teens recognize the basic meaning of widely used Judeo-Christian terms," Gallup said, including many of the terms on the high-school English teachers' "need to know" list.

"However, substantial minorities lack even the most basic working knowledge of the Bible. Almost one out of 10 believes that Moses is one of the 12 Apostles. About the same proportion, when asked what Easter commemorates, or to identify Adam and Eve, respond, 'don't know.'"

Pointing to religious intolerance and controversy regarding the role of religion in public life, Gallup asserted the study of the Bible as literature in public schools could "be profoundly healing and have a calming effect." □

No pompoms

I appreciate the need for the letters section to be open to a variety of viewpoints and topics. I wonder, however, what constructive purpose was served by two recent letters stridently attacking pastors and churches that pursue a contemporary style of worship. One letter even calls for church members to put their pastors in their place. If you want examples of the kinds of attitudes that steer emerging young pastors from active involvement in denominational life, these two letters are excellent ones.

When I listen to the contemporary Christian music of the day, I hear young believers calling for a commitment to serve God sacrificially and worship him fervently. I have yet to see "pompoms and clogging feet, somersaults over the pulpit while the orchestra/piano jazz a well-known hymn," but I have witnessed young people on their faces before God earnestly seeking His presence and power in their lives.

The moving of God's Spirit in the hearts of his followers did not cease with B.B. McKinney and Hines Sims. He now moves in the hearts of Chris Tomlin, David Crowder, Steven Curtis Chapman, and many others who labor to reach their generation for Christ. Just as McKinney and Sims responded to the marvelous grace of God in their lives to effectively communicate the gospel in their music; so do Tomlin, Crowder, and Chapman. And they do it without shaking the first pompom.

Jack Carver
Taylorsville, N.C. 28681

All about Him!

Glancing over some back issues of the *Baptist & Reflector* recently I could not help but take note of the controversy regarding musical format in worship. I have the highest regard and respect for those that would differ from my view, but I was of the impression that it was really supposed to be about Him and not about us.

If music (of any kind) can enhance a young person to be in church, participating in sincere worship and not be out on the street pulling the wrong strings, then I must endorse the musical format chosen. As long as God doesn't have a problem with it, I most assuredly won't disagree.

It would be wonderful to fill our churches with all ages of believers and sing our hearts out in traditional praise to Him! Society has changed however and quite honestly, we have all contributed to the change.

In this day and time a young man or woman has a lot more options to pursue, than singing any kind of Christian music and being involved with a church. Possibly, those that find fault with music that has a contemporary flavor have so many young

people and young adults at their church service, they find it hard to find a seat. What a wonderful problem that would be, but chances are that they are just concerned about their faith and their church, as are many of us.

Recently the *B&R* had a story about a Barna study that disclosed that one out of every three American adults is unchurched. This is an awesome challenge to the person who cares about his fellow man and his faith. Acceptance to change is certainly not the easiest thing for many of us, but if musical format will help introduce someone to Christ, how can we deny the method? Two young Christian people singing a contemporary Christian song praising God and have the accompaniment of an electric piano and a guitar are still just two Christians singing with heart and gratitude to God.

For someone to be concerned about his faith, I have nothing but admiration, yet the world is a bit different than it was 30 years ago. Change is not going away and if a new concept will help someone learn about his creator and salvation, then who are we to knock the method. Pray often that God would allow you to understand, with heart and humility, the changes that transform this universe each day. Pray frequently that you would be what God wants you to be. Place effort behind accepting destined change that strengthens God's purpose.

There are enough judges ... they find fault on a daily basis with Christian principle and would block Him out of our life if we let them. Strengthen your Christian walk with His company and unity for His purpose.

John Kramer
Bolivar 38008

Pianist's viewpoint

I read with great interest Norris Gilliam's letter concerning the state of music in our churches ("Next Step?" in the April 13 issue). Please permit me a response from an instrumentalist's viewpoint.

I have been privileged to be a pianist/instrumentalist since I was 16 years old — soon will be 27 years, most of those with my home church. I've seen firsthand the "evolution" of music in our worship services from 1978 until now. I was raised on the grand old hymns of the faith along with older southern gospel. These still have a special place in my heart. I personally did not care for "contemporary Christian" music; it just wasn't my style.

Over the last ten years or so our church has been exposed to, and has embraced, a more blended-style of music in our services. We are blessed to have a very conservative pastor and have had conservative music ministers to lead our services and our congregation. None of them would put a song of any

style in the music portion of our services if the words were anything less than God-honoring. We also are blessed to have arrangers and composers who use their God-given talents to put a fresh touch to our favorite hymns.

The bottom line to the arguments over the style of music that should or shouldn't be in our church services is that it's not about us; it's about God, and our music should reflect as much. If the music presented cannot honor God, it has no place in our services. Granted, some churches will prefer the old hymns and choir anthems, while others are OK with a blended or more contemporary style. Once again, whatever we sing (or play) in our services, we need to honor God first and foremost.

Richard Brooks
Union City 38261

Nail on the head

A big thank you to Norris Gilliam who recently hit the nail on the head when he made the statement "a crowd at any price" (letters, April 13 issue).

Some churches have become a place for Sunday entertainment. Some of these churches need to change the listing of services to read: Sunday Entertainment Matinee at 11 a.m., Evening Performance at 7 p.m., and Mini Series, Wednesday at 7 p.m.

Many of our preachers no longer preach about sin and hell. Instead they have gotten to the point of preaching "feel good sermons." They want the congregation leaving church feeling good about themselves. They want their congregation to be able to say "I'm not so bad." There is more in the Bible about God's judgment than there is about God's blessings.

Most of us of the older generation have become the "left behind" people of our small rural churches. Praise music has replaced or is replacing our good Southern gospel music. It will not be long before hymnals cannot be found in our churches. That will be a shame!

Large screens in the front of our churches are becoming part of the decor. They will soon replace the bulletins, song books, and even Bibles in our churches. The younger people will be like the school children today. They can no longer do simple math without the aid of their computers and calculators. Our youth will not be able to find any of the Books of the Bible. They will not even be able to tell you if a certain book is in the Old or New Testament.

Look around and notice how many of our churches have even dropped the word Baptist from their names. These churches are selling their identity for more in attendance. Will what they believe be next?

The next step is a crowd at any cost. Far too many of our Southern Baptist churches are

already taking that next step.

That old time religion that was good enough for our forefathers and for us evidently is not good enough today.

Chuck Kelly
Rockwood 37854

Actions speak

The life and legacy of Pope John Paul II certainly do not need my defense, but in response to the letter from the *B&R*, "Another viewpoint," in which the writer says, "he never one time presented the plan of salvation," I submit that Pope John Paul lived that plan in his daily life. In doing so, he drew people from all races and religions to Christ.

His actions spoke much louder than words ever could.

Lauren Chapman
Kingsport 37660

No comparison

In response to the "Major flaws" letter in the April 20 issue, it is very easy to explain why you don't apply the same phrase in describing the brutality of starving a helpless person to death to the taking of the life of a duly convicted criminal. There is no comparison, and it seems to me that an application of common sense would bring one to this conclusion.

Most of the people who are put to death by the state have a "rap sheet" as long as two arms, in addition to conviction of a specific murder. It continues to amaze me how some professing Christians soak up the world's view on the vital issues of life and death, instead of going to the Word of God to find out what He says about it.

Does the writer believe that no one was ever stoned to death for a criminal offense in Bible days because some witnesses lied or made honest mistakes? God is in control. All we have to do is obey. He never told us to figure out all the ins and outs of His commandments — just do them.

God is the one who gave us capital punishment and it is the duty of the state to carry it out, when a person has been convicted by a jury of his peers. I would also be curious to know how this writer has missed all the years of activists judges who do anything but rule by the law. A goodly number of them make up their own laws as they go along, according to what they personally believe.

I suggest spending a bit more time investigating what is going on in the courts, not to mention the contents of Holy Writ. I do not wish to be unkind and I submit these remarks in love, because I don't know any other way to say it.

Ernestine S. Bonicelli
Millington 38053

Concerns

I have read and studied both *The Purpose-Driven Church* and *The Purpose-Driven Life* and

think they are great books. I have seen both books make a great difference in the lives of Christians. Rick Warren has been clearly blessed in his life with Christ and in his ministry at Saddleback. He has made a great contribution to Christianity in America.

Having said that, I have some concerns. One is the simplicity of the books, which is very basic teaching that is in Sunday School and church school. The passages in the books should be understood and practiced in church. Why then are the books so desperately needed? Didn't we listen to our teachers?

The second concern is the priority. I recently was in *The Purpose-Driven Life* the best-selling hardback book. I told me noted how wonderful it would be if everyone would put its words into practice. I am not sure that included the Bible, which is the best-selling book of all time and should be the one we put into practice. Rick Warren is a faithful pastor and Christian, but the Bible book inspired totally by the Spirit and is our guide to life and practice.

My greatest concern is the reason for the sprouting of "purpose-driven" churches. Again, this is still not the solution if it means that churches are actually seeking to serve Christ and be a blessing to the world. It suggests, though, that of us (pastors and church members) have no real, authentic word of God for our congregation, but have to share it on a second-hand.

It is very easy to buy a program (such as *The Purpose-Driven Church*), install it, and let it determine our church for the next few years, another idea hits the market.

As Christ's undershepherd, we have a responsibility not to install someone else's program but to diagnose our congregation and equip them for the work of ministry. This involves prayer, conversation with the flock, and listening to the Holy Spirit. It takes time and effort and doesn't come in a box for \$149.99 (with posters and advertising materials included).

Christ doesn't call us to be like Saddleback (no matter how wonderful it is) or to be like Warren (despite his many accomplishments). He calls us to an authentic relationship with Him, as Christians in our congregations.

The answer may be found in a book, but it is the one on "Holy Bible" and the solution isn't "purpose-driven church" but Holy Spirit-empowered congregations. That will require church leaders who aren't following the latest fad, but are Alpha and Omega, the beginning and are intent on finding the will.

Tim T.
Knoxville 37923

Remember the importance of mothers

families after



By Paul Barkley

would like to take a point of personal privilege today to express some of my thoughts about the importance of mother in the family. With the emergence of Promise Keepers, the Christian community is being brought back to the importance of the family and the responsibility that he has to protect and provide for his family. I am afraid that we are losing our sense of the significance of mother in the family in some very subtle but significant ways. In the early years of the

1940s, 50s, and 60s, it was the expected role of the mother to stay home and take care of her children. I can almost feel the tension that begins to come up for some of the women who read these words from me and fear that I am just another of those women bashing male chauvinists who want to keep women "in their place." If I know my heart at all, that is not the case. I do, however, want to invite us all to consider the irrefutable evidence that is surfacing from research in developmental psychology that the first two years of a child's life will, in many ways, establish the foundation for the rest of that individual's life. Confidence, competence, self-esteem, and many other facets of temperament are being indelibly formed during these years. The importance of being cared for in the home during

these formative years has been proved over and over again.

I do not want to be misunderstood to be saying that one will be in danger of raising the next Charles Manson, Jim Jones, or David Koresh if mother is not present in the home during the first two years of life. Studies do show, however, that the children who were cared for in their homes during these years had more confidence, competence, and self-esteem as adolescents.

I am grateful to my own mother for staying home with us boys during these important years. I also value immensely the experience my own children had because their mother, my good wife, was able to stay home with them until they went to school. I give the majority of the credit for the good results of our "perfect children" to my wife's efforts in staying home with

them while they were young.

I must say for those mothers who struggle with the conflict between their maternal desire to stay home and the absolute necessity to go to work to provide income for the family to live that I truly believe that God will honor your honest desire to provide for your family and help you develop quality time to enhance these attributes in your children in spite of the necessity of working outside the home.

My heart felt desire today is to strike a blow for the importance of mothering, give testimony for the way I experienced it in my own life, and encourage us as the Christian community to rethink our focus on priorities and reset some of our goals for the family. □ — Barkley is associate professor of psychology and religion at Baptist College of Health Sciences in Memphis.

reflections



By Lonnie Wilkey, editor

What I really meant to say

I was reminded of a valuable lesson while I was on a mission trip in Cuba earlier this year.

When dealing with another language what you say is not always interpreted as such.

My team members still laugh that I caused my translator to have a "panic attack" the night I preached in Cuba. My sermon was built around the three friends who carried their crippled friend to Jesus and lowered him through the roof. The problem was I didn't say "lowered." I used the term "lifted down." Now, I knew exactly what I was saying, but unfortunately my translator didn't have a clue. But God brought both of us through that experience and I know without a doubt that He blessed that service.

Unfortunately that reminder didn't last long. I discovered that sometimes what I mean doesn't always translate to others, even here in Tennessee. Recently, I wrote an article praising senior adults and encouraging churches to take advantage of this valuable resource.

I included a sentence in that article which said "we don't need to allow ... them (senior adults) to become simply a group that takes sightseeing tours."

I didn't mean to imply that senior adults should not be involved in fun activities and take trips, or worse yet, that it was wrong to do so. As long as they are able, they should do whatever they enjoy. Fellowship and "getting out of the house" is important to people regardless of age.

What I meant by that statement was that churches should not push senior adults aside and not allow them to do anything else. Senior adults have so much to offer our churches. They are valuable resources.

A dear, sweet lady in my church took me to task over that statement and I am glad she did. She didn't talk about me behind my back, but came to me directly. Our churches today and our world would be a much better place if we all took that approach. Once I explained what I meant, she accepted that explanation and I respect her and value her opinion.

We need people around us who are not afraid to give honest feedback and opinions.

This past Sunday was Senior Adult Sunday on the SBC calendar. I hope churches took advantage of this day to thank their senior adults for what they do.

If not, plan a special celebration soon. Our senior adults deserve our appreciation. □

Choose 'gifts from the heart' for Mother's Day

parent speaks



By Carolyn R. Tomlin

celebrated this year on May 8th, families across our nation pay tribute to their mothers on this special day. As the day unfolds, churches, magazines, newspapers, and television focus on ways for the mother in your family. The internet site offers a 25-minute television, each under \$100. Popular magazine suggests purchase mother a day at an exclusive spa, another a week-long vacation to unwind from the pressures of motherhood, and there is the one that offers a day of maid service for a six

month period. Granted, these sound exciting but out of reach for most families.

What do mothers really desire on this day?

After talking with several mothers of various ages, I came up with this list. Could these ideas say "I love you" better than commercial presents? These gifts from the heart may involve dad to assist younger children.

(1) Create a permanent handprint by placing a child's open hand in a plaster of Paris mold. Found at a craft store, these kits are inexpensive and simple to make. Using a nail, write the child's name and date on the mold. Hang and admire in your home.

(2) Plant a miniature garden in a glass gallon jar. Begin with a layer of pea gravel, add potting soil, cover with moss, and two or three tiny ferns. Place a minia-

ture figure inside. Punch some holes in the lid and keep covered. This garden will maintain a perfect environment for the plants without adding water.

(3) Collect favorite recipes from the extended family. Write each recipe on an index card and place in a decorative box. Cover with bits of lace, buttons, or shells.

(4) Draw family portraits and place in a frame for hanging. Identify each person and add the date of this art work.

(5) Make a list of "Why I Love My Mother." Write on poster board and laminate for durability.

(6) Using small pieces of paper, list simple jobs for children that will help mother with house work. Place these in a basket for mother to draw one daily. Include: empty the trash for one week, feed the pet, clean

my room, set the table, and others as appropriate.

(7) Gather wild flowers, tie a ribbon around the stems and present as a gift to mother.

(8) Glue shells or buttons on a picture frame with a photo from a family vacation.

(9) Purchase three or four small herbs and place in a large flowerpot. Children will learn to identify and understand the use of herbs in food preparation.

(10) Create a Bible book mark. Write "...a woman who fears the Lord will be praised." Proverbs 31:30.

For godly mothers, it's not the price of the gift, but the thought that counts. And these gifts from the heart may be those that are treasured for years to come. □ — Tomlin writes for numerous Christian publications. Her husband, Matt, is pastor of Ward's Grove Baptist Church, Jackson.

Letters to the editor

Reports AA

would like to respond to the article about Celebrate Recovery in the April 20 issue. First, I say I am a recovering alcoholic and drug addict (clean for 30 years) and am a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. I became a Christian when I was 22 years old and became addicted to drugs when I was 16. I was given prescription for startle syndrome. This condition lasted 28 years until I joined AA, although I taught at Bible School, Training Union, and As. The medical profession assessed alcoholism as a disease. I truly believe I have a chronic incurable disease with a chemical imbalance that does not produce happy endorphins. I had an imbalance of the mind that led to a compulsion to take anything

to make me feel better. I am not responsible for having this disease, but I am responsible for my sobriety. AA has taught me how to use the power of God to live with this disease and maintain abstinence one day at a time. In my using days, I certainly did not live above sin and still do not.

In the article, the featured pastor claims Celebrate Recovery's steps are different from AA in that each step is based on a Bible verse. The only difference in those steps and the steps of AA are in step 1. He uses powerlessness over "our addictions and compulsive behaviors" instead of the one word "alcohol." In step 12, he uses message to "others" instead of "alcoholics." It scares me to read he believes people that are real addicts/alcoholics can be cured. I learned to pray daily for God to keep me clean

and sober as He provides my daily bread. As to confronting relapse as sin, we certainly forgive and welcome anyone who has a relapse and comes back. To drink again is often fatal. We remember the story of the prodigal son and know that person already has enough guilt and shame.

He also states that people "choose to use alcohol and drugs." How does he compare that statement with his first step, "we admitted we were powerless?" Does powerlessness and ability to choose have the same meaning? Another statement says they "deal with the future rather than the past, which is the focus of AA members." How does that work with steps 4-9 where we look at our past to see where we have been wrong, confess these wrongs, and make amends?

I am certainly not saying Alcoholics Anonymous is the exclusive way to get sober, but since he admits he never really attended meetings, how can he say he has something better? I would hope the Baptist and Reflector would check out programs that claim to be better than a program that has helped millions since 1935.

Name withheld by editor

Editor's note: The Baptist and Reflector did not mean to imply AA was not a good program. The intent of the article was to let people know there is another program available to help people with addictions. The paper would never endorse one over another. God can use anyone or any program to accomplish His purposes in the lives of individuals. — Lonnie Wilkey

SBC president challenges Tennessee Baptist church planters

By Norm Miller
Baptist Press

HENDERSONVILLE — Southern Baptist Convention President Bobby Welch said that he's "beginning to see the makings" of "something extraordinary" within the denomination.

Welch spoke at a recent Tennessee Baptist Convention church planters meeting, focusing on Welch's Everyone Can Kingdom Challenge for Evangelism.

The Everyone Can campaign "is getting the same touch, the same feel about it" of a great revival, said Welch, who moved to Nashville in February expressly to generate support for evangelistic activities related to the June 21-22 SBC annual meeting.

Welch launched the Everyone Can campaign last year via a nationwide bus tour, traversing the country and urging Southern Baptists to "Win ... Witness ... & Baptize 1 MILLION" people.

Recalling what he'd heard about the famous Shantung revival, Welch confessed to the church planters he had thought something like that may never happen again.

Years later, however, Welch witnessed a similar event in



SBC PRESIDENT Bobby Welch, center, visits with Tennessee Baptist church planter Henry Wilson and his wife, Barbara.

Tanzania.

"I saw people in Tanzania coming out of the bush country, looking for the message of God," he said.

"I woke up one morning, and the people were lined up at the door before daylight. Hands folded and heads bowed, they were waiting for someone to share the gospel with them," said Welch, who for 30 years has served as pastor of First Baptist Church in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Similarly, people are ready for a spiritual awakening today, he said.

"The wind is blowing out there. I can feel it.... We might be jumping up and down on the end of the diving board and into the next big thing God is going to do," Welch said to a chorus of "amens."

"You'll be crucial to what happens," said Welch, advising the church planters to get ready for revival and an influx of new Christians. "You are the people at ground zero. You may very well catch that wave of the power and love of God."

A Vietnam veteran, Welch encouraged the church planters

not to wait for June, but to start now in "the world where you live. Dive in. Attack it. Go out there with all four wheels burning rubber. They're ready. They're waiting. They want you to come."

Welch outlined for the church planters the sermon he's preaching from Jeremiah 8:20 as he travels Middle Tennessee, noting the longing of the harvest, as well as the laborers, the Lord and the length of the harvest.

Referring to the laborers of the harvest, Welch noted how often he hears people say, "It's all about the Lord and it's not about us." If you believe that statement, then it's time to prove it — or stop saying it and singing it."

Such a statement must be proven beyond the walls of the local church, Welch said. "Because that's where the harvest is — out there," he said, pointing out the window.

"That's where your future and spiritual fortune lies — in the streets. Remember, you're starting a church. You're not jumping on what somebody else has done."

Larry Gilmore, who heads the Tennessee Baptist Convention's Evangelism Strategies Group, told Baptist Press he's

not only grateful that efforts are encouraging church planters Gilmore oversee, but is also elated. Welch's evangelistic emphasis in the Nashville area is an awareness of the need for



GILMORE

the whole convention in all of us to focus on evangelism, Gilmore noted.

Gilmore said Welch's move toward the Crossover Network evangelistic events June 21-22 ensure "a lot of seed is sown. We'll reap a good harvest. The greatest days of harvest in Middle Tennessee will be 24 months after Crossover."

Gilmore believes that news for church planters.

"Our president has a mission to help us focus on mission than anything we've heard in a long time," he said. □



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Jackson

Alan Teel wears multiple 'hats' in his ministry roles

Connie Davis Bushey
Artist and Reflector

JACKSON — Alan Teel is the first person in Tennessee and possibly in the Southern Baptist Convention to be appointed as a missionary by the North American Mission Board to serve as a Baptist Collegiate Ministries director of Church and Community Ministries director of an association.

Teel serves as CCM director of Madison-Chester/Crockett Baptist Association, based in Jackson, and as BCM director at Jackson State Community College.

His unique role is funded by the Tennessee Baptist Convention, the association, and NAMB.

"I wear a lot of different hats," said Teel, but "I'm the happiest I've ever been in ministry. I just love it." Teel has served in the dual role for a year and a half.

Builder's cap

He probably wears a baseball cap on Saturdays these days to keep the sun out of his eyes. He is leading the building of a Habitat for Humanity house by the association.

Teel has several baseball teams. Known for his love of sports, he played baseball during high school in Mississippi. At least one of his baseball teams is a New York Yankees, one of his favorite professional baseball teams.

Volunteers gather each Saturday to work on the house for Tondra Fuller, the recipient who is a single mother of three boys, ages 10, 11, and 12. The association's churches are raising the \$20,000 needed for the house.

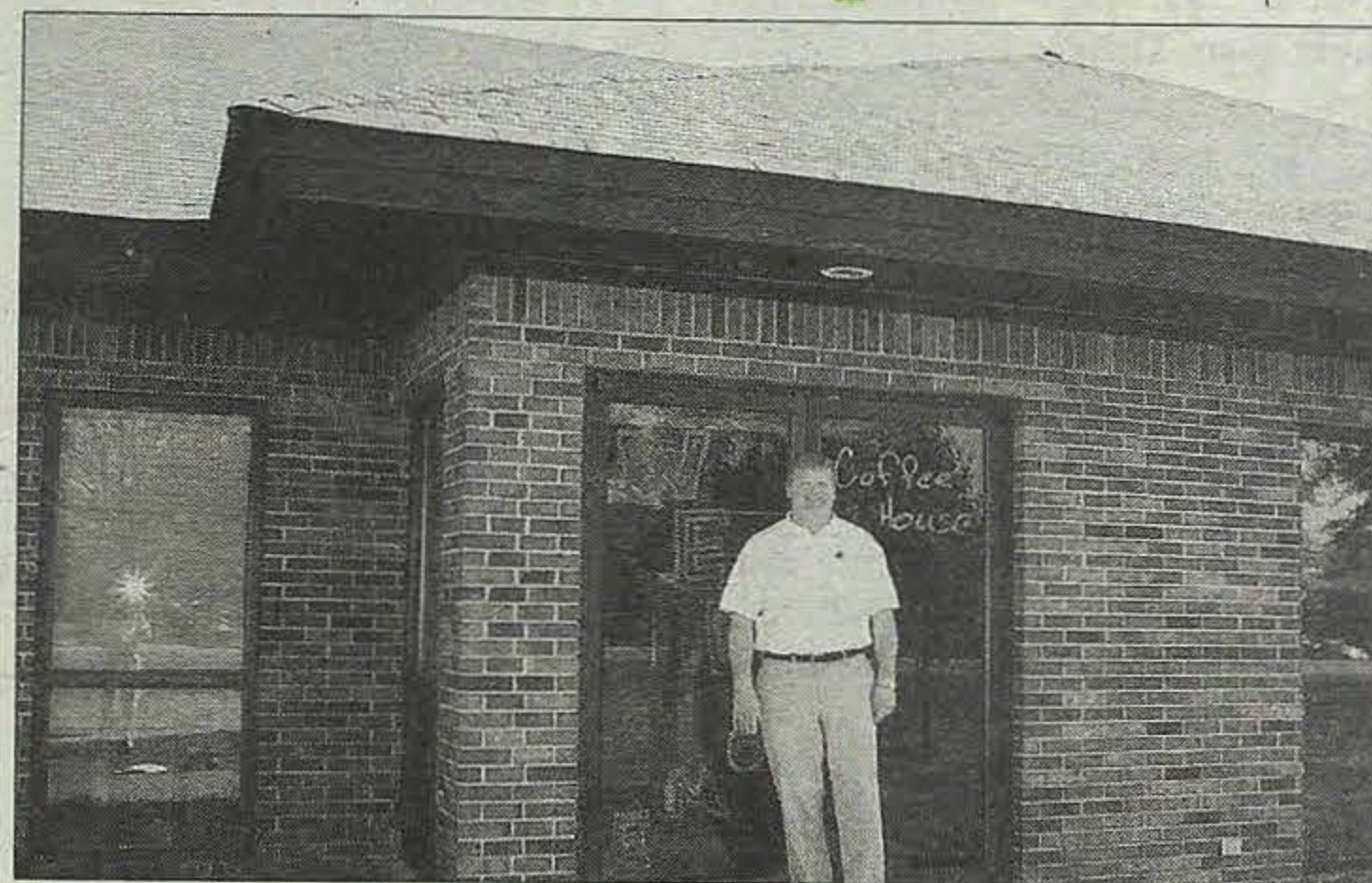
The association is certainly up to the challenge, Teel said, noting it has 68 churches. In fact, he hopes the association will build

additional Habitat for Humanity houses as well as churches, possibly two or three churches partnered together.

Leading students

Teel might be seen wearing a Mississippi State University Bulldogs or Green Bay Packers cap or shirt when he leads students at Jackson State, which has about 3,600 students. He's a fan of both ball teams.

Just recently Teel and about 10 students went midtown bowling. During spring break in March, he led seven students to minister in New



ALAN TEEL stands in front of the Baptist Student Center at Jackson State Community College. It is located across from the college's campus, which is in Southeast Jackson.

Orleans, La., through New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, his alma mater. "It was fantastic," he reported.

He's planning the regular pancake breakfast for students which is held during finals. It will draw about 60 students and teachers, said Teel, who is the former minister of students and education, Calvary Baptist Church, Jackson.

Association

Teel might be seen playing golf with some former peers — student ministers of churches. They are working together to plan Project Acts, a youth mission activity to be held in Jackson for four days in July and August.

This summer he also will help coordinate the about 185 World Changers who will descend upon Jackson in June. World Changers is a NAMB program. Also in June he will serve as camp pastor of a World Changers group serving in Muncie, Ind.

This summer he will coordinate the work of two NAMB summer mission teams coming to the association to serve. One is from Baltimore, Md., and the other is from Bartlett.

Orleans, La., through New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, his alma mater. "It was fantastic," he reported. He's planning the regular pancake breakfast for students which is held during finals. It will draw about 60 students and teachers, said Teel, who is the former minister of students and education, Calvary Baptist Church, Jackson.

Ministry through TBC

Toward the end of the summer, Teel will travel to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to serve with other CCM workers in Tennessee. The project is to support the Tennessee/Rio Baptist Partnership.

Then Teel will start gearing up for the fall semester at Jackson State, such as planning coffee houses for the BCM students. He helps the students enlist Christian music groups to perform at the coffee houses.

Dreams

Teel said despite all of his assignments, he has time to dream.

"I love the idea of people of different races worshipping together and seeking the purpose of Christ," he said.

He hopes to lead the association and students in continuing to minister

in the neighborhood where they are building the Habitat for Humanity house. He noted the project is one instance where his two roles overlap.

His job also overlaps as churches support the student ministry. He has great support from association churches who provide the Wednesday lunch, he reported. Teel also has dreams of developing the student ministry although JSCC students commute to the school, which makes it harder to reach them. Ministry at JSCC is made easier by the fact that President Bruce Blanding formerly ran a school



ALAN TEEL visits with two students of Jackson State Community College at the Baptist Student Center. They are Liz Thompson, left, First Baptist Church, Huntingdon, and Wendy Ward of Faith Baptist Church, Henderson. The students live at the student center in apartments housed in the center.



TONDRA FULLER visits with Alan Teel in front of the house the Madison-Chester/Crockett Baptist Association is building for her through the Habitat for Humanity program. Teel is leading the project.

in Africa whose students included children of Southern Baptist missionaries.

Fulfilled dreams

Teel credited his wife, Connie, for supporting his demanding and flexible schedule and helping him make it work. They have two children, Allison, 3, and Gregory Jr., 11 months. Connie also operates a business out of their home developing web sites.

He also credited his "wonderful Christian parents," Carl and Nona Teel of Henderson, for his ministry. His father surrendered to a call to ministry when Alan was a young teenager. Carl Teel has served as a pastor of churches since then, now serving Unity Baptist Church in Jack's Creek.

While Alan was a student at Union, he said he realized he could have "a very fulfilling life" serving as a layman. While a layperson, his father was a deacon and Sunday School director and his mother was VBS director.

"But I came to the realization that I was not going to be really fulfilled unless I was doing it full-time," he said of ministry.

Bill Choate of the Tennessee Baptist Convention staff worked with Beverly Smothers of the TBC staff and Larry

Murphy, director of missions, Madison-Chester/Crockett Association, to develop the combined job from two positions. Choate works with collegiate ministries and Smothers works with CCM workers in associations and NAMB.

The development of the role enables "the association to maximize the use of the facility (student center), using it for office space, college ministry, and church/community ministry. Churches are able to connect with all of these ministries," said Choate. "On a larger university campus this would not be possible. What Baptists are doing in Jackson is an appropriate use of personnel and facility."

Murphy said the association is grateful for the arrangement for several reasons. The TBC is funding most of the salary enabling the association to use funds it used for the CCM role for missions and ministry. The new position will encourage the association to be more involved in the JSCC ministry because it is working closely with Teel.

Finally, the arrangement has been very successful because of Teel's hard work for the past year and a half and his God-given skills, said Murphy. □

I'm the happiest I've ever been in ministry. I just love it. — Alan Teel

And he will help association churches hold Backyard Bible Clubs and Vacation Bible Schools.

On Sundays, he avoids all of sports memorabilia, at least the wearing of it. In his associational role, Teel said he speaks almost every Sunday in a church's worship service, which he enjoys because he doesn't feel led "to pastor a church."

Leading worship services reminds him of the years he was a member of Baptist Stu-

dent Union (now BCM) revival teams while a student at Union University. The teams led weekend revivals in churches. Teel sang, led music, and worked with youth. He enjoyed it and did it so much — about 30 weekends in four years — that his parents began to worry he wasn't studying enough, he admitted.

His job also overlaps as churches support the student ministry. He has great support from association churches who provide the Wednesday lunch, he reported. Teel also has dreams of developing the student ministry although JSCC students commute to the school, which makes it harder to reach them. Ministry at JSCC is made easier by the fact that President Bruce Blanding formerly ran a school

Union banquet to feature Dole

Union University news office

JACKSON — Union University has announced that former Senate Majority Leader and U.S. presidential candidate Robert Dole will be the keynote speaker for the Ninth Annual Scholarship Banquet at Jackson's Carl Perkins Civic Center on Tuesday, Sept. 27.

Dole accepted Union's invitation while in the midst of a national tour to discuss his new book, *One Soldier's Story* is a memoir of his harrowing experiences in World War II, drawn from personal letters and other documents his family saved. Dole also gives a candid account of his three-year struggle to recover from near-fatal wounds suffered in combat during the final months of the war.

Dole has represented the Republican Party as its chairman, presidential nominee, and vice presidential nominee. He served as Senate Majority Leader and as chairman of the powerful Senate Finance Committee.

Among the previous keynote speakers for the Union Scholar-

ship Banquet are George H.W. Bush, Mikhail Gorbachev, Lady Margaret Thatcher, Colin Powell, James Baker, and Rudolph Giuliani.

The event has generated about \$3 million since 1997. Lead and premier sponsors joined other donors in 2004 to purchase 135 tables for contributions between \$1,000 and \$15,000. Contributions for the event with former President George Bush totaled \$500,000.

For ticket information, including table sponsorships and individual balcony seating, contact Union's office of university relations at (731) 661-5050. □



DOLE

S. Carolinians to vote on marriage amendment in '06

Baptist Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. — South Carolina citizens will vote next year on a constitutional amendment banning "gay marriage."

An amendment protecting the traditional definition of marriage passed the South Carolina House by voice vote April 26, placing it on the November 2006 ballot. It previously had passed the Senate. It received widespread bipartisan support.

South Carolina joins three

other states — Alabama, South Dakota, and Tennessee — that also will vote on state constitutional marriage amendments next year. Others likely will follow.

"It's just another protection against activist judges in other states," South Carolina Rep. Greg Delleney, a Republican, was quoted as saying in *The State* newspaper.

The South Carolina amendment states, in part: "A marriage between one man and one woman is the only lawful domestic union that shall be valid or recognized in this State."

All total, 18 states have constitutional marriage amendments. They have passed by an average of 70 percent of the vote. It is possible that by the end of 2006, more than half of the states will have adopted a marriage amendment.

The amendments ensure that state courts cannot issue a ruling legalizing "gay marriage." Massachusetts has no marriage amendment, and its high court

legalized "gay marriage" there.

The amendments, though, have one weakness — they can be overturned in federal court. For that reason, conservatives and traditionalists are pushing for a marriage amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

The marriage amendment in the U.S. Senate is Senate Joint Resolution 1 and in the House it's House Joint Resolution 39. □

Dead Seas Scroll exhibit extended

Baptist Press

MOBILE, Ala. — In response to crowds of visitors drawn here for the Gulf Coast Exploreum's Dead Sea Scrolls exhibit, the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) has authorized the scrolls to be on display two weeks longer than originally scheduled. The scrolls will be displayed through May 8.

As of April 21, the scrolls exhibit had attracted more than 172,000 visitors. For weeks, the

gallery has operated daily to 95 percent capacity demand for tickets to the it had only grown as the on close date of April approached. Now, the extension to May 8 makes an additional 40,000 tickets available. □

Graham assoc. relocates to N.

Baptist Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Billy Graham Evangelistic Association has moved its international headquarters from Minneapolis to Charlotte, N.C., where a \$27 million facility on 63 acres of land off Billy Graham Parkway was dedicated April 23.

Charlotte Mayor Pat McCrory, North Carolina Lt. Governor Perdue and about 500 others joined Billy Graham for a private ceremony and to the building, which will employ 300 full-time employees. □

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There will be a Deaf Ministry conference May 13-14, 2005, at First Baptist Church Millington, 5010 West Union Road, Millington, Tenn. Contact person Gary Stafford, (901) 872-2264. The times for this conference will be Friday from 6-9 p.m. and Saturday, 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. The conference will be led by the Michelle Swaney Center on Deafness, University of Tennessee. There is a \$15 registration fee. In order to register for this conference, contact the Tennessee Baptist Convention at 800-558-2090, ext. 7916 or go to www.tnbaptist.org news and events or e-mail imarks@tnbaptist.org. The deadline for registering is May 10, 2005.

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Brinkley Heights Ministries expands outreach in Memphis communities

Baptist and Reflector

MEMPHIS — Brinkley Heights Ministries Inc., an outreach ministry of Brinkley Heights Baptist Church here, serves three of the most impoverished areas of North Memphis: Binghampton, Glas, and Nutbush.

Brinkley Heights Ministries (BHM) seeks to elevate families and individuals past the oppressive barriers of poverty by providing opportunities for spiritual, social, educational, and economic growth," according to Jenni Bear-Bearden, BHM director of development.

The irony is that where the need is greatest, the resources are the least," Bearden. "Currently, BHM's community programs provide families with crisis assistance, counseling, adult mentorship, financial workshops, youth clubs, mentoring, recreational sports, children's after school activities, summer day camps, but so much more is needed."

The mission of Brinkley Heights Ministries is to be a Christ-centered non-profit organization providing families the opportunity for spiritual, social, educational, and economic growth.

Brinkley Heights Ministries has developed a vast array of programming to fill its outreach ministry. The programs include: Brinkley Heights Urban Academy, a private Christian academy which currently houses a pre-kindergarten and a kindergarten classroom; Street Reach, a network of eight summer camps spread across three neighbor-

hoods serving over 500 inner-city youth ages 5-14; Emergency Services, a clothes closet, food pantry, and spiritual counseling program is operated year round; Tutoring/Mentoring/After School Programs, 70 students ages 6-18 participate in one or more of the tutoring, mentoring, and after school programs; sports teams, two basketball teams that compete in the Memphis Athletic Ministries sports league; Financial Literacy Program, a partnership with Consumer Credit Counseling where around 15 individuals are enrolled; and Adult Mentoring, neighborhood women are paired with women from outside the community to strengthen them.

Additional programs are seasonal outreach with back-to-school supplies, around 400 neighborhood young people are given school supplies; Christmas Sharing Program, around 15 neighborhood families in need are paired with and adopted by other families; and Christmas Toy Store, around 100 families participate by selecting from the donated toys.

The Neighborhood Outreach Center is the dream of many individuals and families in the Brinkley Heights service area. It will be a safe place; open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Center houses a number of programs and services.

A grand opening celebration for the new Outreach Center will be held the weekend of June 10-12.

With a groundbreaking ceremony held in the fall of 2004, the community

stepped out on faith that the Lord would provide the resources. The new building is on the site of the original Brinkley Heights Church.

Around 150 volunteers from Carpenters for Christ in the spring 2004 worked on the 12,000 square foot building, and the building was eventually completed with the help from other groups.

Now Brinkley Heights Church has a new chapel for Sunday services and a Outreach Center, which houses a gymnasium and classrooms for its Urban Academy and other community outreach classes.

According to Bearden, Sunday School classes from Germantown Baptist Church, Germantown, are furnishing the classrooms in the center. The gym will also house additional basketball teams and soccer teams.

Karen Cox, wife of Brinkley Heights Pastor Tim Cox, noted that the Urban Academy is continuing to grow and additional teachers are needed for first grade and three-year-old classes. Street Reach



THE NEW Outreach Center of Brinkley Heights Ministries in Memphis will hold a grand opening celebration Friday - Sunday, June 10-12.

volunteers are also needed for this summer's Backyard Bible Clubs and to do lawn service, painting, and light construction on elderly and single-mom homes.

Donations are also needed to fund new teachers positions, additional ministries staff positions, and the daily operation of the Neighborhood Center.

To find out more about Brinkley Heights Ministries needs, contact Tim and Karen Cox, or David Cox, Street Reach director, at (901) 324-3022.

"Brinkley Heights staff, members, and volunteers, continue to believe that God will take care of all their needs," added Bearden. "God has something amazing in store for the Brinkley Heights Community." □ — Article compiled by Marcia Knox of the TBC Missions Mobilization Group.

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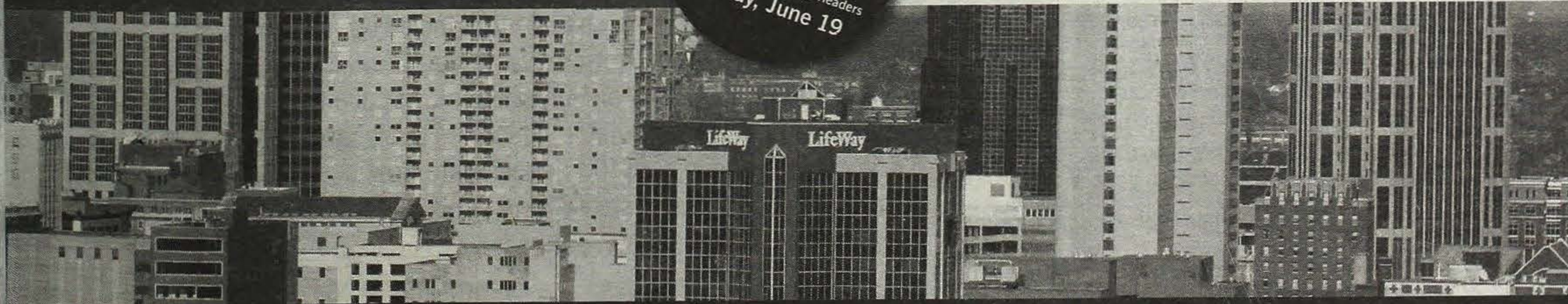
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Frist, pro-family leaders call for end to filibusters

Baptist Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Saying that the battle over judicial filibusters has major implications on the future of abortion, "gay marriage," and other cultural issues, religious leaders April 24 urged Christians to call their senators and demand an up-or-down vote on President George W. Bush's judicial nominees.

"We need to let our voice be heard because the outcome of this debate will shape the future of this nation," Family Research Council President Tony Perkins said at a rally broadcast to hundreds of churches nationwide.

Dubbed "Justice Sunday," the rally originated from a jam-packed Highview Baptist Church here, where Perkins and other pro-family leaders gathered, saying that the filibusters have targeted specific

justices for their conservative Christian beliefs.

The rally came as Republican leaders in the Senate consider a controversial parliamentary technique that would change Senate rules to eliminate the filibuster against judicial nominees. As of now, 60 votes are needed to overcome a filibuster. If the rules are changed, a judge will be confirmed with 51 votes. The rule change would not impact the filibustering of other action, such as legislation.

Democrats have used the filibuster to block 10 of Bush's 52 nominees to the appeals courts. In many instances, their pro-

life views were the target. Two abortion rights groups — Planned Parenthood and NARAL Pro-Choice America — have led the campaign against the nominees.

All of the nominees have enough votes for confirmation but not enough votes to overcome the filibuster.

"We've learned that we're going to have to exercise our Christian citizenship beyond just the ballot box," said R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. "We're going to have to follow this through all the way to the nomination and confirmation of judges." Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist of Tennessee spoke to the rally via a pre-taped

message, asking viewers to call their senator — whether it be a Democrat or Republican — and urge an up-or-down vote on nominees. He said that if the filibustering continues, Republicans will consider the rule change, which opponents call the "nuclear option," supporters the "constitutional option."

"Some Republicans — even some conservatives — don't think we should press the issue of requiring votes of judicial nominees," Frist said. "Their concern is that in the future, Republicans won't be able to use this same device to obstruct Democratic nominees."

"That may be true, but if what Democrats are doing is wrong today, it won't be right for Republicans to do the same

thing tomorrow," Frist added.

Other speakers included Charles Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship; James H. Jones, son of Focus on the Family; Charles Pickering, a Southern Baptist who was filibustered after being nominated to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals; and eventually was placed on the court by Bush using an appointment and has since retired. □

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MINISTRY — MUS

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Madison Baptist Church accepting resumes for full-time music/missions pastor. Send resume to Robert McBrock, Steam Mill Ferry Rd., J. TN 38301.

Calvary Baptist Church of City, Tenn., is accepting resumes for a full-time minister of music and youth. College degree preferred with seminary training. If you are interested send resume to Calvary Church, Personnel Corridor 300 West First Ave., Lenoir City, TN 37771 or e-mail DRJCBC@wmconnect.com. For more information call Dr. J. Jenkinson at (865) 986-356

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book review

Dawn Ferguson

Broken on the Back Row

by Sandi Patti

Howard Publishing Co., Inc., 2005

"Everybody has a story," writes Sandi Patti toward conclusion of her autobiography entitled *Broken on the Back Row*. "Maybe yours isn't as destructive or as dramatic as mine. I hope not. But if it is, I hope this book has encouraged you to reach out to God no matter how far you've fallen. Never forget that He can find you, no matter how deeply you're mired in the muck."

Patti candidly admits to all the muck she was mired in about 10 years ago when she went through a painful divorce and admitted to having an affair with one of the members in her group. In fact, she's very up-front in the preface to the book and warns the reader that if they know her as a Christian entertainer there are chapters in her life that she is going to unfold in the book that are disappointing — full of foolish mistakes, bad decisions, and sin. "If this isn't the book you were expecting, now's the time to return it and ask for your money back," she writes.

At the height of her career in 1991, she had won 28 Dove Awards and five Grammys. She had four children and a packed schedule of performance dates. "Yet at the same time, something in my life was broken. In the depths of my heart, I often felt like the most miserable person on earth, a lost lamb stumbling away from the shepherd's fold," she writes.

Her misery is caused by several things, but chief among them is the fact that she is aware that she is committing sin through an immoral relationship. She finds herself visiting a church one Sunday and sitting on the back row of the balcony. Alone, she is overcome by grief and starts crying. Toward the end of the service as the minister gives the invitation he makes a special plea to visitors. "But maybe you've been visiting with us here this morning, and you're not ready to tell us your name. Maybe all you want to do is sit on the back row of the balcony and cry. That's OK. We want you to know that the God we serve knows how to find you. He hasn't forgotten about you. We serve the God of second chances, of new beginnings. We serve the God who sets His children free."

During this moment, Sandi becomes convinced that God is speaking to her and assuring her that He is the God of second, third, fourth, etc. chances. From here, she describes the long process of restoration. The pastor who gives these words, Jim Lyon, becomes Sandi's shepherd and guides her through the restoration process.

According to the book jacket, Sandi Patti is the most recorded female vocalist in contemporary Christian music history with 39 Dove Awards, five Grammys, and Billboard music awards. This personal account of her journey shows that her success in music did not guarantee success in her personal life. In fact, she spent a great deal of her life being miserable. When she is broken and her healing begins — she goes through more difficult times, but she is able to be the victor this time around because of God's amazing and unfailing grace.

If you're a fan of Patti's or if you're broken and have not experienced restoration, you should read this book. Dawn Ferguson is a freelance writer in Gallatin.

Believe God

By Robert Segrest

Focal Passage: Genesis 17:15-19; 18:10-15; 21:1-5

Can I totally trust God with my life? That's the question each person must answer in the affirmative before an eternal faith-walk with the Lord can begin. However, once we are on The Way, our faith will be tested many times by the events and circumstances of life. Christian maturity is ours when we grow to believe that with God all things are possible.

Abram and Sarai began their journey of faith as senior adults when, at God's command, they left their home in Mesopotamia to go to the land of Canaan. By faith they believed God when He told them that one day their descendants would own the land. However, fulfilling that promise demanded an heir and the couple had no children.

One day God came to Abram telling him more about the son they were to have. The Lord also changed their names. Abram, meaning "great father," became Abraham or "father of a multitude." Sarai became Sarah meaning "princess." In God's eyes, Sarah had become royalty because she would be the matriarch of God's chosen people, Israel. From her womb would come many descendants and some would be great and godly kings.

Rather than be thrilled at this blessed news, Abraham was astounded. It brought him to the edge of his faith and he fell down

laughing at the absurdity of such a thing. How could he and Sarah have a child when he was 100 years old and she was 90? When the Lord first hinted that Sarah would bear a son, she was 60. But that was 25 years ago. Giving birth at 60 would have been a rarity, but at 90 that would be a miracle. That's exactly why God waited as He did. The Lord wanted Abraham and Sarah to know for certain that their son's birth was by His hand alone.

Abraham struggled with God's birth announcement and for a moment he reverted to his old faithless pattern of attempting to carry out the Lord's plan for Him. It had to do with Ishmael, Abraham's son by Sarah's handmaiden Hagar. Ishmael was the result of a plan hatched by Abraham and Sarah to produce an heir, but God would not even consider their plan. Sarah would be the mother of the heir of promise. The boy's name would be Isaac and he would carry forth the covenant God initially had made with his father.

Sarah knew nothing of Isaac. She found out about him when three angels visited their tent on the plains of Mamre. Abraham, not realizing the men were angelic beings, invited them to rest and refresh themselves before traveling on. However, during the visit it became clear that these were no ordinary men. God spoke through them informing Abraham that within a year Sarah would give birth to their son.

Sunday School Lesson Family Bible Series May 8

Inside the tent, Sarah was listening and when she heard she was going to become a 90-year-old mother, she laughed to herself thinking how ironic it was that as an old woman she would finally have the delight of bearing a child. Sarah's laughter, though, was not an expression of joy, but rather one of unbelief.

The angels asked Abraham about his wife's laughter. Emerging from the tent, Sarah denied she had laughed. But she had. Sarah simply could not believe that God would intervene and enable her to conceive a child at her age. Both Abraham and Sarah had short memories concerning the power of God. That's why they were asked, "Is anything impossible for the Lord?"

That question was answered in a few months when Sarah held Isaac in her arms. The true son of the covenant, Abraham circumcised Isaac when he was eight days old as God had commanded. Despite some serious setbacks in their faith, Abraham and Sarah trusted God for themselves and their family. God faithfully did what he promised and the whole world was blessed. □ — Segrest is the eastern regional vice president of Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes. He lives in Chattanooga.

Persevere in serving the Lord

By Michael Julian

Focal Passage: Jeremiah 37:13b-17; 38:3-6, 17-18

And not only this, but we also exult in tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope. These words from Romans have comforted tens of millions for nearly 2,000 years.

The Old Testament abounds with examples of godly perseverance. Abraham, Jacob, Noah, Job, David, and Esther immediately come to mind. These saints of God experienced various trials throughout the course of their lives. The common thread of perseverance binds them together eternally. But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.

Jeremiah stands in this company of saints. By today's misdirected standards, Jeremiah's ministry would be regarded as a failure. By God's standards Jeremiah faithfully walked the path set before him. Hardships and persecution surrounded Jeremiah like a pack of hungry, starving wolves.

Only God's righteous right hand prevented Jeremiah from being torn to pieces. In the face of tribulation and the threat of death, Jeremiah persevered in serving the Lord. In chapter 20 he said, *But the Lord is with me like a dread champion; therefore my persecutors will stumble and not prevail. Jeremiah's confidence in the Lord overpowered and*

demolished his fear of man.

At the beginning of our lesson we discover Jeremiah at the Gate of Benjamin, as the captain of the guard comes out to arrest him. He accuses Jeremiah of attempting to desert to the side of the Chaldeans. Jeremiah sharply rebukes the captain, but his words have no effect on the outcome. Once he is brought to the officials, they proceed to beat him and cast him into the jail in the house of Jonathan the scribe. Their anger erupted from the messages Jeremiah had been sent to preach. He warned them that the Babylonians were coming, and now here they are besieging the city. Moreover, Jeremiah has been prompting the people to submit to the yoke of Babylon. Unfortunately, that made Jeremiah the target of their anger and aggression.

The news of Jeremiah's arrest reaches King Zedekiah, and he sends for the prophet to see if there is a word from the Lord. Jeremiah affirmatively exclaims he has a word from the Lord. He had to realize that the message could further enrage the officials and possibly the king as well. Jeremiah does not hesitate, nor is he reluctant to speak. Serving the Lord, even in the pit of danger, was the desire of his heart. The message to the king confirmed that Zedekiah would be given into the hand of the king of Babylon. There is the perseverance of a saint of God.

After the encounter with Zedekiah, Jeremiah was transferred to a

Sunday School Lesson Explore the Bible May 8

different holding place, one more suitable to sustain his life. Again, Jeremiah warned the people of the impending capture of the city by Babylon. And as we would expect, the officials approach the king calling for the death of Jeremiah. They claim he is discouraging and weakening the resolve of the men of war and all the people remaining in the city. In actuality Jeremiah is giving them a prescription for living. If they will heed this word, they will claim their own lives as booty. The city's capture is a foregone conclusion. Jeremiah is desperately seeking to persuade the people of this reality.

Our lesson passage closes with one last attempt by Jeremiah to convince the king to obey God's word. The formula is simple, obey and live or disobey and witness the destruction. If you read ahead, you will learn that Zedekiah witnessed the swift and terrible judgment of the Lord. Zedekiah did not trust the Lord or His word. Jeremiah trusted the Lord wholeheartedly, and he persevered in serving the Lord in the face of persecution, beatings, and even the threat of death. □ — Julian is minister of youth and activities at First Baptist, Mt. Pleasant.



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Leaders

◆ On Sunday, April 24, **David Wilson**, pastor, Judson Baptist Church, Nashville, resigned to return to the pastorate of Southcrest Baptist Church, Lubbock, Texas. He has served the Nashville church for almost three years.

◆ On April 17 College Heights Baptist Church, Gallatin, called **Jeffrey T. LaBorg** as senior pastor, effective Sunday, May 22. He is pastor, Sharon Baptist Church, Savannah, where he has served since 1993. He will be the second pastor of the 28-year-old congregation.



LA BORG

Larry Gilmore of the Tennessee Baptist Convention staff is the first and founding pastor. He currently is TBC evangelism director. Sharon Church has ranked in the top three percent of Southern Baptist churches for evangelistic growth. La Borg is a former president of the TBC Pastors Conference and currently is a member of the TBC Executive Board and its Education Committee. He is a graduate of Liberty Baptist University

in Lynchburg, Va., and is studying at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary. As pastor, La Borg will serve as chairman of the board of College Heights Christian Academy, the largest K5-12 private Christian school in Sumner County. He and Kristi, his wife, are parents to Bethanee, a fifth grader, and Bradlee, a third grader.

◆ North Knoxville Baptist Church, Knoxville, will ordain **Daniel Aaron Flatford** to the ministry on Sunday, June 5, at 6 p.m., at the request of Calvary Baptist Church, Heiskell. Flatford is serving Calvary as associate and youth pastor. He graduated from Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Pineville, Ky., in 2004. While a member of North Knoxville Church he worked with the church and supervised its summer program for children. Guy Milam, pastor of North Knoxville, will lead the service.

◆ **William Sims III**, pastor, First Baptist Church, Union City, for six years has been called as pastor, Byne Memorial Baptist Church, Albany, Ga. His last Sunday was April 24.

◆ New Home Baptist Church, Martin, has called **Scott Chadwick** as pastor, effective in July. **Randy Potts**

is interim pastor.

◆ Ashport Baptist Church, Ripley, has called **Hugh Pennell** as pastor. Formerly he was interim pastor of the church.

◆ Avondale Baptist Church, Chattanooga, called **Brad Johnson** as senior pastor on April 17.

◆ **Mike Dawson** has announced his retirement June 26 as pastor of First Baptist Church, Columbia. In honor of



DAWSON

his retirement after 50 years in the ministry, FBC will host a retirement service and reception on Sunday, May 14, in the worship center at 4 p.m. The reception will be held immediately after the service. For more information, call the church office at (931) 388-2655.

◆ **Bill Adams** has been called as associate pastor at New Prospect Baptist Church, Lawrenceburg.

◆ **Bob McIlwain** is serving as interim pastor of Highland Park Baptist Church, Lawrenceburg.

◆ First Baptist Church, Knoxville, has called **Michael**

and **Carol McEntyre** to staff positions. He will serve as minister to youth and she will serve as part-time minister to university students. Both are Tennessee natives and graduates of Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City.

◆ **Amy Dwight Wilkins** has been called as adult minister of missions and discipleship at King's Cross Church, Tullahoma.

◆ **Paula Settle**, intentional interim minister to children at Central Baptist Church, Bearden, Knoxville, recently received the Anne Neil Award from the North Carolina Baptist Women in Ministry.

◆ **Wes Rankin** has been called as pastor of West Colonial Hills Baptist Church, Kingsport. He holds degrees from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Germantown.

◆ **Tony Crawford** was called recently as minister of music and children at Sunnyside Baptist Church, Kingsport.

Churches

◆ For the third consecutive year, the youth ministry of **Candies Creek Baptist**

Church, Charleston, paired a home through Outreach. The youth workers did some pre-entry work and painted the home owner. The youth ministry is led by **Myers**.

◆ Members of **Grove Baptist Church, Lawrenceburg**, are moving into their new building. The church has been rebuilding after being destroyed by fire last summer.

◆ **Noeton Baptist Church, Morristown**, held a burning and building dedication service on April 17.

Statewide Events

◆ The June 4, 8-9 outreach to participants of **Bonnie's** a music festival held near Manchester, is still seeking volunteers. It is being led by **Duke River Baptist Association** based in Tullahoma; **New Dawn Baptist Association**, based in Shelbyville; **William Carey Baptist Association**, based in Fayetteville; and the Tennessee Baptist Convention. For more information or to volunteer, contact **Kerry Walker**, pastory Baptist Church, Manchester, at (931) 728-4588.

Belmont University hosts, confronts ambassador of Sudan

Belmont news service

NASHVILLE — Belmont University played host to an unusual event in April — the ambassador of Sudan came to campus knowing he would be confronted by students angered by the genocide occurring in the region of Sudan known as Darfur — mass killings that many international observers say are being aided by the Sudanese military.

Before Ambassador Abdel Bagi Kabeir even had his turn to speak, Belmont sophomore soccer player Amr Ali, a Sudanese refugee, addressed the crowd of several hundred students, faculty, and community members and issued a very personal challenge to the ambassador.

Ali, who is currently majoring in political science at Belmont and is interested in working in refugee law at the United Nations, will become an American citizen soon. He described how he and his family emigrated to the United States five years ago after the Sudanese government persecuted his family, beat his father, and confiscated his mother's business.

"The United States has not only been gracious to accept me as a refugee, but in a few months I'll also be a citizen of

the United States," he told Kabeir and the assembled crowd. "I want you to look at me," Ali said, addressing the ambassador directly. "This is the future. The people that you have oppressed, the people that your government has kicked out of the country will go back and make a better Sudan. We will make the country greater than it has ever been since you have raped it since 1989."



KABEIR

Ali's statement received thunderous applause. An estimated 2,000 non-Arab villages have been destroyed in Sudan's Darfur region, and Sudan's government is accused of providing military assistance, including helicopter gunships, to rogue Arab Muslim militias in the attacks. Homes, livestock, crops, trees, commercial structures, wells, and irrigation, nearly all of the physical infrastructure necessary to support survival and community life, were intentionally decimated. Under the 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention, the definition of genocide includes "deliberately inflicting on a group conditions of life calculat-

ed to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part."

Kabeir came to Belmont at the invitation of Todd Lake, Belmont's vice president for spiritual development, who said the ambassador's visit came after numerous phone conversations between the two men. Lake began calling the ambassador after reading about the situation in Darfur because of a vow Lake made to himself after the mid-1990s genocide in Rwanda in which 800,000 people died that, the next time such a crisis emerged he would not stay silent or uninvolved.

Lake says Kabeir was informed that his Belmont audience would have a clear point of view against the Sudanese government, which denies the situation in Darfur is a "genocide" and claims it is doing all it can to stop the killing.

In addition to those who questioned Kabeir, some 70-100 students made their views known by staging a walk-out in protest of Kabeir's presence on campus. The students, affiliated with the campus chapter of Amnesty International, walked out after their faculty advisor, history professor Daniel Schafer, was given a chance to speak and called Kabeir a "genocide denier" and said the ambassador "is not here to listen to our concerns, but to pretend to lis-



PARTICIPATING in the presentation at Belmont University Nashville, were, from left, **Thon Chol**, a Sudanese ambassador; **Ruby Dunlap**, assistant professor, Belmont School of Nursing; and **Todd Lake**, vice president for spiritual development.

ten to our concerns."

The Amnesty International students organized a petition-signing and letter-writing campaign to urge the U.S. Congress to pass the Darfur Accountability Act, a package of measures designed to pressure the government of Sudan to stop assisting the genocide and to take steps to stop it.

Lake said Kabeir was not invited in order to "give a platform to a genocide denier," but

to provide an opportunity for the Belmont community to express concerns to him about the genocide in his country.

"The purpose of the visit of Ambassador Kabeir is to draw attention to the continuing genocide in Darfur," said Lake, adding that the ambassador's visit was part of a series of events designed to raise awareness about the Darfur genocide in the Belmont community. □