

Baptist & Reflector

Wide Edition

Telling the Story of Tennessee Baptists

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Throughout nation, the world

Convention celebrates 25 years of partnership missions

Note: This issue of the *Baptist and Reflector* highlights 25 years of partnership missions in the Tennessee Baptist Convention. In addition to the following other articles pertaining to the partnership are placed throughout this issue.

Archie Knox
Baptist and Reflector

WOODBRIDGE — For 25 years, more than 21,000 Tennessee Baptist partnership mission volunteers have reached globally and locally to assist people in partnership projects, according to Kim Margrave, volunteer missions specialist of the Tennessee Baptist Convention. "Why do partnership missions?" Margrave. The answer is simple, continued.

Partnership missions enables volunteers to be involved in strategic ministry. Tennessee Baptists have gained a broader worldview, know better how to support missions/mission personnel, have a greater sense of lostness, not just around the world but also in their communities."

Partnership missions projects over the years have been as varied as the types of people from churches to individuals who are called to serve in hunger, con-

struction, veterinary, medical, evangelism, church planting, and musical projects.

For a quarter of a century, there have been 13 official partnership projects:

Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso) — 1980-1985 (note: not a partnership as we have today)

- Michigan — 1980-2000
- Venezuela — 1986-1988
- Philippines — 1989-1992
- Chile — 1992-1995
- Poland — 1995-1997
- Canada — 1995-2005
- Costa Rica — 1997-1999
- Rio de Janeiro — 1998-2006
- Portugal — 2000-2005
- Iowa — 2002-2007
- Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary — 2006-2010
- Montana — 2006-2010

In addition to these long-term efforts, the TBC has been involved in numerous shorter relationships through the North American Mission Board and the International Mission Board.

Over the years, there have been seven TBC partnership missions staff and their assistants who have overseen the coordination of the projects including TBC retirees Carroll Owen, Clarence Stewart, Jarvis Hearn, and Bill Wilson;

Terry Sharp, IMB state and associations services director; Tim Bearden, former Missions Mobilization Group leader who is now serving as conference centers senior manager, and Margrave.

Tennessee Baptist partnership missions has its roots in a world hunger response, which evolved into the first volunteer mission project with the then Southern Baptist Convention Foreign Mission Board (now International Mission Board).

When a special TBC world hunger committee launched a world hunger response to Africa in 1978, what became partnership missions was born.

The *Baptist and Reflector* reported in 1980 that if messengers approved the Upper Volta recommendation at the Tennessee Baptist Convention annual



MISSIONARY Sharon Fairchild, center, and Wayne Causey, minister of music at Forest Hills Baptist Church, Nashville, pray with two new converts in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Causey traveled with the Tennessee Mens Chorale in September of 2004 as part of the Tennessee Baptist Convention's partnership with Baptists in Rio.

meeting in November that Tennessee would become the first state convention to enter into a "total impact project" in a foreign country as partners with the FMB.

— See Convention, page 3

this week's news

Northern Baptists more likely to offer evangelism training than classes on Christian basics. — Page 2

President welcomes messengers to Clarksville. Page 5

Campbell County Baptists respond to tragedy at Kingsboro school. — Page

Tennessee pastors, minister honored by state convention. — Pages 10, 14, & 17

State Baptist collegiate ministry students spend fall week helping hurricane victims. — Pages 16, 18

Operation Inasmuch takes members outside church walls

By Lonnie Wilkey
Baptist and Reflector

KNOXVILLE — A simple concept to get a church involved in missions has skyrocketed and is now being used by churches all over the country.

"Operation Inasmuch" was developed in 1995 by Tennessee Baptist pastor David Crocker while he was serving as pastor of Snyder Memorial Baptist Church in Fayetteville, N.C.

Crocker said he talked with his staff during a retreat about how to revitalize the church. "We discussed innovative ways of



CROCKER

renewing the church, admitting to one another that the traditional 'revival' or series of evangelistic meetings would not likely get the job done."

Crocker said someone suggested getting church members away from the church site to do ministry and Operation Inasmuch was born. The name is taken from Matthew 25:40: "... Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

"The mission of the church has not changed since the first century," Crocker observed. "What has changed countless times is the method of accomplishing that mission. Operation Inasmuch offers no new

task for the church, but it does offer an effective way of doing an old task, namely being the hands and feet of God in a broken world."

Put simply, Operation Inasmuch "is a one-day mission blitz by church folk in their community," said Crocker, who brought the concept with him to Central Baptist Church, Fountain City, Knoxville, about three years ago.

At Snyder Memorial, plans were put into place, a time and ministry sites were chosen, and members enlisted to participate.

Crocker estimated about 75 percent of the church's average attendance spread out over the city of Fayetteville repairing homes, building wheelchair ramps, conducting Backyard Bible Clubs, and a host of other ministry activities.

Operation Inasmuch was so energizing for the church that they said, "We can't stop. We have to keep doing it."

Other churches in the Fayetteville area began to inquire about conducting such a

massive missions blitz, so Crocker developed a manual.

As the popularity of Operation Inasmuch

began to spread, Crocker was asked to put the concept into book form. In August *Operation Inasmuch: Mobilizing Believers Beyond the Walls of the Church* was released. The book also contains a DVD ROM to use as a resource. The purpose of the book "is to share the model of ministry that has worked basically in every church that has tried it," Crocker said. "Operation Inasmuch can be used by churches of any size and any denomination," he added.

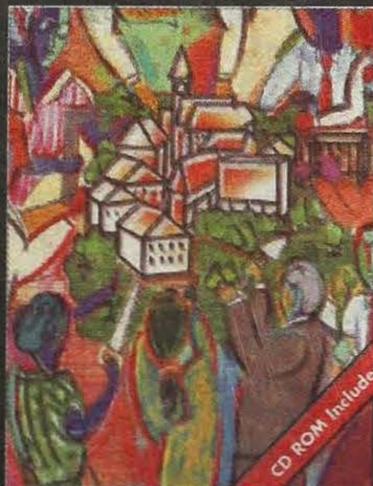
Crocker noted that chapters eight and nine in the book are a "how to" on how to conduct

the missions blitz from beginning to end.

Since returning to Tennessee (he was formerly pastor of Central Baptist Church, Johnson City before moving to Snyder Memorial), Central, Fountain City, has conducted Operation Inasmuch projects and has introduced it to other churches in the — See Operation Inasmuch, page 3

Operation Inasmuch

Mobilizing Believers
Beyond the Walls of the Church



DAVID W. CROCKER

about
your
newsjournal

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Survey: churches offer limited training opportunities

LifeWay news office

NASHVILLE — Southern Baptist churches are less likely than average to offer regular classes in the basics of Christianity, the basics of their denominational beliefs, and how to study the Bible, according to a recently released study.

The study, conducted among a representative sample of 872 Protestant church ministers nationwide, explored what types of classes or education churches offer at least once a year (not including sermon topics on the subject). Conducted for LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, the survey found the only type of class or education a majority of all Protestant churches offer to their congregations is a new member class.

Ellison Research of Phoenix, Ariz., conducted the survey, which was published in the November/December 2005 issue of *Facts & Trends* magazine.

The average Protestant church offers classes or education on 4.6 different topics in a typical year. However, this number is 3.5 topics or classes among churches with an average attendance of fewer than 100 people; 4.5 among churches with 100 to 199 people; and 7.9 among churches with 200 people or more.

The most common type of class or education churches offer is for new members (60 percent offer this at least once a year). Following this are classes on the basics of Christianity (47 percent), how to study the Bible (43 percent), evangelism or outreach training (39 percent), spiritual growth or spiritual renewal (37 percent), and effective prayer (35 percent).

Other relatively common types of education include a spiritual gifts inventory (31 percent), marriage enrichment (28 percent), leadership development (26 percent), the basics of the church's denominational perspectives (25

percent), and parenting or child development (20 percent).

Types of education regularly offered by relatively few churches include financial management (17 percent), a skills and talents profile (15 percent), grief recovery (9 percent), substance abuse recovery (8 percent), health, weight loss, or exercise (7 percent), ministry in the workplace (5 percent), divorce recovery (5 percent), and life skills (4 percent). Only 4 percent of all ministers named any other type of class offered by their church at least once a year.

The survey showed that while Southern Baptist churches are somewhat less likely than average to offer regular classes in the basics of Christianity, the basics of their denominational beliefs and how to study the Bible, they are more likely than average to offer education on marriage enrichment and evangelism or outreach training.

Ron Sellers, president of Elli-

son Research, noted that a study did not include topics that are the focus of a sermon series that are offered on an irregular basis.

"What we measured in this study was the issues to which churches have a regular, ongoing commitment — offering them at least once a year," he said.

Sellers also noted that the study helps demonstrate what churches really emphasize.

"Churches are focusing on basics: what is Christianity, why is necessary for church membership, how to study the Bible. When they go deeper, they tend to focus on basic Christian practices: prayer, evangelism and spiritual growth.

"These are all critical, churches also need to recognize why many people come through their doors in the first place. Often they're seeking real answers to marriage problems at work, raising children or financial worries." □

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Convention celebrates 25 years of partnership missions ...

Carroll Owen reflects on initial years of partnerships

By Marcia Knox
Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — Awareness of world missions and relationships that it built were two major impacts in Tennessee from partnerships with Baptists in the United States and abroad, said Carroll Owen, who served as convention ministries director for the Tennessee Baptist Convention from 1979-88.

Owen traveled to Upper Volta once, Venezuela twice, and also made numerous trips to Michigan. Under Owen's supervision, Clarence Stewart joined the TBC in 1986 as foreign missions ministries consultant.

Tennessee Baptists initial experiences with partnerships were in Upper Volta and Michigan.

From 1980-85 Tennessee Baptists did a project for humanitarian aid in Sanwabo in Upper Volta, Owen recalled.

Volunteers had to live in primitive conditions and some ended up sleeping under a tree, he noted. The first volunteers who went to Upper Volta built facilities for vol-

unteers who came later, Owen said. "It was a pioneer work and became one of the first of its kind."

Owen said they know of 518 volunteers who traveled to Upper Volta during that first partnership.

The TBC retiree recalled one "God-thing." Volunteers were building an earthen dam to make a 53-acre lake to teach the people in Upper Volta fish farming, he remembered.

They were there during the eight months it normally was dry in Upper Volta, he continued. "While the volunteers were digging the lake with a bulldozer they normally would leave it in the hole. One night the team decided to take it out and the next

day it came a huge downpour. They had a lake," Owen said.

"The most gratifying thing to me was what the partnership did for the Africans and the impact it had on the volunteers who went," he said.

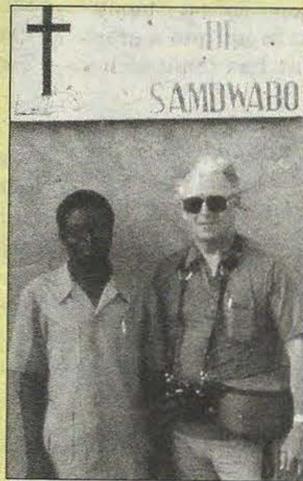
He also observed that Tennessee volunteers also helped boost the spirit of missionaries who worked there. Upper Volta had its share of spiritists and Muslims, Owen said. "We witnessed to them by our works and showed our concern as Christians."

John Mills, then the FMB area director for West Africa, told Owen after Tennessee's five-year involvement with the country ended that the number of churches in Upper Volta increased from 12 to 39, which was considered amazing then because it was not an intentional church planting effort.

As to the Michigan partnership, churches became involved and "developed emotional ties with each other," Owen said.

During the partnership the number of churches in Michigan grew from 100 in 1980 to about 400, Owen said.

"Every church in Michigan was either started or helped by the Tennessee Baptist Convention," Owen said. □



CARROLL OWEN met with this pastor in Upper Volta in the early 1980s.



OWEN

Continued from page 1

Davis, who chaired the TBC hunger committee, led to the TBC Executive that "We cannot tackle the whole world, so we decided some place where we can even if that place is small." That TBC decision to the proposed ministry in Volta, and invited by the mission through the FMB, five-year project utilizing TBC manpower and FMB relief funds set the for the next 25 years.

Those who have led the partnership reflected on why Tennessee Baptists became and how volunteers benefited from the efforts.

Awareness and relationships the big impact in Tennessee from the partnerships," Owen, TBC convention director from 1979-88. "It personalized world as with the first two partnerships, and it became a long benefit for Tennessee."

The first partnership in Upper Volta benefited the volunteers because it was a layman's effort in the beginning with few pastors. Volunteerism is everybody.

In addition, we were doing associations in Tennessee which were assigned to number of associations in Michigan," said Owen. "The SBC Mission Board established the Michigan partnership. It was a 20 year partnership. Churches got involved developed emotional ties with other."

According to Owen, every partnership in Michigan was either started or helped by the Tennessee Baptist Convention. "We don't know how many volunteers went to Michigan, because the partnership did not funnel volunteers through our office," Owen added. "Enthusiasm grew from direct contact with churches in Michigan."

The "Venezuela and Tennessee Baptists United for Partnership, God's guidance is evident in all that was accomplished," said Stewart, who served as the TBC Partnership director from 1988-

There were 1,305 volunteers evangelistic services, churches, serving on

medical teams, and meeting physical and spiritual needs. Teaching and training teams increased the development and strengthening of leadership in the churches."

Stewart reported 13,000 professions of faith and many other decisions. "The Venezuelan partnership impacted lives on every level. At least 10 volunteers later committed to become career missionaries. Also 50 Venezuelans came to Tennessee to lead in evangelistic crusades," he said.

The Philippine partnership projects included evangelism, program retreats, medical teams, health care instructors, cooks, construction workers, church planting, and music instruction, he recalled.

Stewart observed the partnership with Philippines "was quite successful, but it was an adjustment for our volunteers, because of the greater travel time and the widespread poverty in the country. However, 550 volunteers who served there adjusted well and had rewarding experiences. Thousands

came to know Christ through their ministry."

"With regard to growth numbers in Chile, I can say after some 10 years later there were a goodly number of professions of faith," said Hearn, who served as TBC partnership and telecommunications director from 1992-1994.

"Much of our work in Chile was like the other projects before us in that we had teams going down to do building and repair projects in the country," added Hearn. "Repair work was also done on churches and a parsonage. We also had sports teams go to work with young people in the development of basketball skills."

Hearn observed that Tennessee missions groups worked from one end of Chile to the other end. There were several hundred volunteers who served and ministered there, he reflected.

"Partnership missions is one of the greatest things Southern Baptists can do," said Bill Wilson, who served as TBC convention ministries director from 1990-97.

"It impacted my life to see what God was doing with partnership missions, the TBC staff, the SBC missionaries, and that the work was appreciated by the state convention. I was excited to see what God was doing there in the partnership countries."

"God used Tennessee to impact the partnership countries, because of the Tennessee volunteers," said Sharp, who served as TBC partnership/volunteer missions specialist from 1994-2001.

"We can trace a significant impact in the partnership countries today, because volunteers

made mission trips and gave a face to missions. Tennessee pioneered partnership missions. Lives were impacted at home and abroad."

In analyzing the partnerships that Sharp experienced, he saw them in various stages of development. "Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, had been reseeded by the IMB missionaries and was in the harvesting and reaping stages when Tennesseans arrived. Poland and Canada were on the forefronts of partnerships with Tennessee. Costa Rica was a complimentary partnership."

When Sharp joined the IMB in 2001, Tim Bearden, Missions

Mobilization Group leader, split the partnership responsibilities with Margrave who did the day-to-day operations while he worked on the partnership agreements, training events, and orientations.

Margrave had already assumed some of the partnership responsibilities in 1999. She has coordinated the projects for Tennessee since 1997-present and Iowa from 2002 which runs until 2007. She has been involved with projects in Rio since 1998 and is also working with the projects at the Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary from 2006-2010 and Montana from 2006-2010. □

Operation Inasmuch takes ...

— Continued from page 1

city as well. The most recent was held last month in cooperation with five other churches and involved 766 volunteers who conducted about 50 ministry projects, Crocker said.

In addition, three other large churches in the city did stand alone Operation Inasmuch projects and had about 1,000 volunteers each, he added.

Crocker observed that many churches are using Operation Inasmuch as a tool for Rick Warren's *40 Days of Community*, his follow-up book to *40 Days of Purpose*.

The value of Operation Inasmuch also has caught the eye of government officials.

In 1998 the North Carolina Governor's Summit on America's Promise and Volunteerism named Operation Inasmuch as one of eight "exemplary programs." It was the only church-

related program in the state to garner that distinction.

Crocker is passionate about the program because he "knows it works," but even he has been surprised at how other churches have embraced the concept.

"We did a specific thing at a specific time to respond to the needs of that church and community," Crocker recalled. "We had no clue it would become what it has become."

"Over time it became apparent that God had something greater in mind for it," he said.

The book is published by Lake Hickory Resources of St. Louis, Mo. Crocker said it will be marketed in bookstores and also can be purchased from the web site — www.lakehickoryresources.com — or from Crocker directly.

Crocker also is available to answer questions from church leaders and can be contacted at www.operationinasmuch.com. □

Results of TBC Partnerships Reported by International Mission Board

Country	Increase in Number of Churches	Increase in Total Church Membership
Faso	41.9%	71.3%
les	21.1%	39.4%
ica	12.5%	13.7%
	12.9%	0.4%
	4.8%	8.0%
ela	1.4%	8.7%
	5.2%	not available

Former directors, volunteers reflect on partnership mission

Editor's note: The following personal testimonies are a compilation of just a few of the literally thousands of people who have been involved in partnership missions with the Tennessee Baptist Convention since 1980.

Have to be flexible

"One year I went to Puerto Montt, Chile, to do some video work in preparation for promoting the Tennessee/Chile partnership.

"After I arrived I was told I would be preaching every evening at the First Baptist Church of Puerto Montt in a revival.

"I had brought just one message with me to the city thinking that I might be asked to speak some place while there doing the taping. The church had 40 members, but it was filled every evening with people from around the city.

"God blessed our efforts and there were 21 professions of faith and some 25 rededications during the five nights."

Jarvis Hearn
TBC partnership & telecommunications director
1992-94

Highlight

"The highlight of my tenure was to see partnership volunteers come to a deeper spiritual commitments through sharing the message of salvation, and the great number of people who received the gospel as a result of the volunteers witnessing.

"God's guidance was evident in all that was accomplished in the Venezuela and Tennessee partnership. In Venezuela we had 1,305 volunteers. There were 13,000 professions of faith and 200 other decisions. Out of many volunteers, 10 committed to become career missionaries.

"The Venezuela partnership impacted my life because of the Venezuelans' receptiveness.

"The partnership with the Philippines was quite successful, but it was an adjustment for our volunteers because of the greater travel time and the widespread poverty in the country. However, the 550 volunteers who served there adjusted well and had rewarding experiences. Thousands came to know Christ through their ministry."

Clarence Stewart
TBC partnership missions director
1988-92

Life-changing

"My experiences with part-

nership/volunteer missions have been life changing.

"Where I once walked out the door of my home into a community, I now walk out into a great big world that has come to my doorstep.

"Volunteer mission trip experiences have allowed me to see the world through God's eyes and not through my clouded vision. It has deepened my faith and my dependence on God, and has given me an urgency to share the good news of Jesus Christ. Working with missionaries has given me a glimpse of the real sacrifices people make.

"As a professor at Belmont, I began to teach my health classes from a worldview and broaden the students' thinking. I have shared mission experiences in the classroom by often showing video of these trips of the needs of people around the world. I began to require more service learning, a more hands-on reaching out to the community.

"I have learned things from these missions experiences that I could not learn from sitting in the church pew or Sunday School classroom. God's Word has become so much more than memorized Scripture. The Great Commission has become my personal command. I have personalized Matthew 28:19-20 in my Bible by writing: 'Go, Betty, and tell!'"

Betty Wiseman
Belmont University professor

Helps to refocus

"God used that first mission trip to help turn our church's focus from inward to outward.

"When we participated in our first mission trip to Michigan in 1993, we were a small church averaging less than 95 in Sunday School.

"The first Michigan trip was a result of our initial *Experiencing God* study group's embracing Henry Blackaby's concept

that every church is a world missions strategy center.

"Mission trips have consistently helped our members mature in the faith. As we have left our comfort zones, our faith has been stretched. We have returned home more committed to fulfilling the Great Commission in our community."

Joe Sorah, pastor
Calvary Baptist Church
Elizabethton

"I have seen God work through missions. I am convinced when we join Him in such endeavors that He applies special grace to our efforts blessing the recipients and participants the same.

"I would encourage anyone who has never participated to give it try. Missions is 'caught and not taught.' Once you catch 'it,' there is no cure. I have been involved in over

A prayer of thanksgiving for partnership mission

By James Porch
Executive Director/Treasurer
Tennessee Baptist Convention

As the Tennessee Baptist Convention, during annual session in Johnson City in 1980, acted to begin partnership missions, no messenger could even imagine the magnitude of the venture — now over 25 years in the process.

Only our Heavenly Father fully knows the scope of impact of thousands of Baptists from the Volunteer State whose energy, witness, and work have reached literally around the world.

As we gather to celebrate, may we thank God for leading us as a state convention to maintaining and increasing this witness vigil.

Father, we celebrate all of the churches

who connected personally to the world mission effort by moving beyond sending and began going that others may see Jesus in them.

Father, we celebrate the joy experienced by volunteers who saw lives changed as they bore their witness to your saving grace.

Father, we celebrate the untold thousands of hours and days of hard work as kingdom builders labored to make meeting and worship places ready for believers.

Father, we celebrate the great sacrifice of money, time, and energy by willing Tennessee Baptists who responded to your call to many not knowing exactly why.

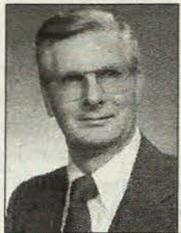
Father, we celebrate the persons who volunteered for a short mission season only to hear your voice beckoning them to give the rest of their lives in vocational missions.

Father, we celebrate much of which we were unaware, but known to you; and besides, your love is more important than all we know.

Amen! □



PORCH



HEARN



STEWART



SORAH



LEDBETTER



BETTY WISEMAN, center, a professor and former basketball coach at Belmont University, is flanked by one of the many sports evangelism teams she has led over the years. This group went to Poland in 1997.

100 volunteer mission projects. Whether it was serving as helping the needy of my local community, leading or participating in regional, national, and international mission trips, or benefiting from IMB volunteer mission

efforts as a career mission partnership/volunteer mission flows through my veins."

Dale Lee
director of mission
Maury Baptist Assoc
Col



JAMES PORCH, center, executive director-treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, was given a Portugal flag by International Mission Board missionaries in 1998. With him are TBC staff members and leadership from the convention time. From left are Terry Sharp; missionary Steve Ford; Sager, then president of the TBC; Porch; missionary Steve Tim Bearden; and Michael Smith, then president of the TBC Executive Board.



MEDICAL MISSIONS has been a vital element of most Tennessee Baptist Convention partnerships. Here, Dewey Dunn, a physician from Belmont Baptist Church, Nashville, works in a clinic in the Philippines in 1991. Dunn has organized hundreds of medical volunteer international medical mission trips.

Partnerships have enhanced TBC for 25 years

lections



Lonnie Wilkey, editor

Partnership missions, volunteer missions — whatever term you choose to use doesn't matter. What does matter is that through partnership missions, Tennessee Baptists have helped other Baptists work in other parts of the world. Tennessee Baptists also have played major roles in helping to bring Jesus Christ to people who may not have heard about Him otherwise.

Like I did one know in 1980 a group of Tennessee Baptists journeyed to Upper Volta (Burkina Faso) for a project with the SBC Foreign Mission Board that they were starting an enterprise that would lead to the development of partnerships with conventions overseas. In fact, the TBC actually pioneered what eventually became the partnership concept for the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

No one can dispute the results. Tennessee Baptists have made a difference over the past 25 years and no doubt will continue to do so in the years ahead.

I will never forget my first taste of Tennessee partnerships. I had the opportunity and blessing to travel with a medical team led by Dewey Dunn to the Philippines in 1991. It was an eye-opening experience for a country boy from rural South Carolina.

When I returned home, I wrote, "For the first time in my life, missions has become real. Though I have written numerous stories and interviewed many missionaries, nothing compares with actually being on the field and witnessing things for yourself. And, after two weeks in a Third World country, I also see the world in a different light. The real world is not a nice home, two cars, and color television. The world is the stark reality that millions of people live in absolute poverty."

Those words written 14 years ago are still true today. Partnership missions has given thousands of Tennessee Baptists the joy and fulfillment that one gets from being obedient to God and

venturing out of individual comfort zones to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

I summarized my first overseas missions trip with these words: "Something I overheard summed up the trip for me. As we were leaving one of the clinic sites, a volunteer told a local Filipino pastor that would probably be the last time they would

see each other.

"The pastor just smiled, shook his head wisely, and said, 'I'll see you in Heaven.'

"That's what missions is about."

True then, true today. Partnership missions has helped Tennessee Baptists keep focused on what really matters. May that always hold true. □

a word
from our
president



By Roger Freeman

Welcome to Clarksville!

What do Wilma Rudolph and Mason Rudolph have in common? They are both from Clarksville! Wilma Rudolph won three gold medals in track and field in the 1960 Rome Olympics. Wilma Rudolph Boulevard is a main highway through Clarksville. Mason Rudolph was a world class PGA golfer who finished second in the 1975 Masters to Jack Nicklaus when the Golden Bear set a Masters' record of 17 under par.

Clarksville is the home of Wilma Rudolph, Mason Rudolph, the 101st Airborne, 135,000 citizens, and many wonderful Baptist churches.

Our great city welcomes Tennessee Baptists to our 2005 State Convention. Only one other time in the past 100 years have Tennessee Baptists met in Clarksville. After nearly a century, the Baptist Churches of Clarksville say, "WELCOME, TENNESSEE BAPTISTS!"

God has placed on my heart one small phrase of a Bible verse as our pre-convention challenge: Be Courteous, (I Peter 3:8). Courtesy is humility and Holy Spirit love put in action. Courtesy is thinking and praying before speaking. Courtesy is Christ-likeness toward others. Courtesy is thinking of the other person first.

"Be courteous" when you check into the motel and greet the desk clerk. "Be courteous" when the server asks for your order in the restaurant. "Be courteous" when you are looking for a parking place in downtown Clarksville. "Be courteous" when making a motion or speaking to an issue on the floor of the Convention. "Be courteous" should your point of view not prevail on a certain issue. "Be courteous" to fellow Baptists and to every one you meet in Clarksville.

Jesus Christ is our Savior, Lord, and example. Jesus always thought of others even when He went to Calvary's cross. Let us be like Jesus at our Convention. "Be courteous."

Thank you, Tennessee Baptists, for the privilege and great honor to serve as your President this past year. You have been a blessing to my life. □ — Freeman is president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention and pastor of First Baptist Church, Clarksville.

Knowing when it's time to transfer the mantle

in both
of
pulpit



Johnnie Godwin

When I write these words, I'm looking back from the pulpit to the pew side during worship services. It's time to pass the mantle of being an interim pastor to the one coming to be full-time shepherd. It's a bittersweet and a sad time but an integral time in God's design for the church.

What it means to wear a mantle

In the dictionary, a mantle is a loose, sleeveless cloak or gown over other clothes. Figuratively, a mantle symbolizes authority or responsibility. Like the Tishbite, more or less out of nowhere and left in the wind. He was a man of prophetic authority and responsibility. After Elijah completed God's assignment, God directed him to pass the prophetic mantle to Elisha. The whole story is fascinating (I, II Kings).

I'm primarily interested in the transferring of Elijah's mantle to Elisha and what happened before and after that time. Elijah's ministry was ended and one that glorified God, it was relatively compared to that of Elisha which lasted over half a century. Both Elijah and Elisha were prophets, but they carried the same mantle at the same time. God took Elijah

and replaced him with Elisha.

When it's time to transfer the mantle

The time to transfer the mantle comes when God guides a church to receive a new Holy Spirit-appointed pastor. So, actually, God does the transferring of the mantle. I wouldn't quibble over terms, but I prefer to say that I have not been an intentional or an accidental interim pastor but a providential one. Now, it's time for me to go and for another to come. Eventually, the same is true of each pastor, whether an interim is involved in the transfer of the mantle or not.

When Elijah transferred the mantle to Elisha, the school of prophets and others accepted that transfer and accepted Elisha (II Kings 2:15). But they also wanted what they could not have: namely, they wanted Elijah back too (II Kings 2:16-18). Elijah's time was over; it was Elisha's time to lead; and he did.

The people in a church need to let go of the former pastor and the interim pastor and follow the new pastor. As in death, the separation brings a change of proximity, but it does not end a loving relationship between a church and a former pastor. It's good to visit the past and celebrate it, but it's not good to live there. It's over; and it's time to get on with the present and the future.

Why I feel good about the transfer

I'm delighted with what I believe God will do with the new pastor and his new people. I leave without regret and feel good about going. How could I feel this way when I and wife

Phyllis are loved, and we love the people we are leaving?

First, because it seems to be God's will, which is always good. Second, because we've been blessed more than we could bless the people. Our ministry has been partial and mostly preaching. You see, we've had other ministries too and haven't been able to give full time. The new pastor will be available 24/7 and will both glorify God and nourish the sheep.

As the end of this interim neared, I enjoyed hearing a member say, "When you came, we were in shambles; now we're together. Thank you." No, my head is not swelled, and I know my feet are made of clay. I'm truly humbled by the way the church has expressed great love and appreciation for Phyllis and me. I'm even more grateful, however, for any and all of the ways God may have used us in this church for His glory. It's supremely about Him (and also about His love and will for all of us). The interim has been great.

But it's time to go. I'll probably keep popping up from time to time as did Elijah. But appearances will never be to take back the mantle from Elisha. It will only be to support the new Elisha and visit the church in worship of God and fellowship with one another.

A word about former pastors

Whether former pastors serve for a long time or a short time, they tend to get better in a church's mind after they're gone. Once, when I was a real pastor, one of the deacons was a thorn in my flesh (which was an

exception to most of the deacons). After my pastorate there, I came back several years later to speak at a church anniversary. That same deacon met me and told how I had been the greatest thing in that church since sliced bread — so to speak. I wasn't that good back then, and I hadn't gotten better. Psychologists might say the deacon had confabulated: namely, he remembered what never was.

I suppose most of us tend to confabulate when time dims or softens the hard memories and leaves joyful ones — or replaces them with good ones that never happened. Such memories are probably all right unless they detract from the new "Elisha" and his current ministry as pastor. Which leads me to say a word for churches and new pastors.

A word for churches and new pastors

Let the honeymoon begin. Get to know each other without focusing too much on the past or too much on problems to be dealt with in the future. Consider reading and adopting a pastor-church mission statement that matches truths like those stated in Ephesians and elsewhere in the New Testament. What are they? Here are examples: glorify God, testify to the spiritually dead how to be made spiritually alive, serve in unity, build a foundation under one another; gladly follow God in Christ by being a servant-pastor and a faithful church.

To God be the glory! □ — Copyright 2005 by Johnnie C. Godwin, who welcomes comments from either side of the pulpit via johnniegodwin@comcast.net.

Additional reflections offered on TBC partnership missions

Editor's note: The following personal testimonies are a compilation of just a few of the literally thousands of people who have been involved in partnership missions with the Tennessee Baptist Convention since 1980.

God used Tennesseans

"God used Tennessee to impact the partnership countries because of the Tennessee volunteers. We can trace a significant impact in the partnership countries today because volunteers made missions trips and gave a face to missions.

"Tennessee pioneered partnership missions. Lives were impacted at home and abroad.

"The highlight of my tenure was Prince Edward Island, because Canada is a big place and all their ministries were affected. PEI was a whole city. It was a church plant that affected all the Maritime Provinces. Community Church with pastor Wallace Jordan was the mother church for PEI growth in churches.

"Canada developed a strategy. The turning point for the volunteers came because it was more than economic construction teams. The idea was to build churches here to become partners there. Interim pastors from Tennessee came to help out their churches. Also there was already the sister church project

in Michigan which enabled Canada to match churches as partners.

"The mission trips that impacted my life were the Rio crusades because it was a joint venture between Tennessee with the Carioca Baptist Convention in Rio.

"It was definitely a 'God thing' in pulling this partnership off between Tennessee and Brazilian Baptists, and there was a revival."

Terry Sharp
International Mission Board,
TBC partnership/volunteer
missions specialist, 1994-2001



SHARP

Trips have been special

"One of the highlights of my ministry has been my involvement in volunteer missions overseas.

"These trips have been very special in my life and ministry.

"God has taught me some things that I will never get away from learning. I have learned what the word flexibility means. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to serve through Partnership/Volunteer Missions."

Roy Davis, director of missions
Cumberland Plateau Baptist
Association, Crossville



DAVIS

Excitement is full throttle

"I never go on a mission trip that my life is not changed.

"My excitement about what

God is doing in the kingdom work normally runs open throttle. But I confess that my visits to fellow Baptists in other states and international countries including Honduras, Las Vegas, Montana, or New York City pushes the throttle a little more. The Father is doing some great work around the world."



TAYLOR

"The commitment of our missionaries and national pastors is a challenge to my own walk of faith."

Phil Taylor, director of missions
Bradley County Baptist
Association, Cleveland

Trip changed my life

"For two months before I and a deacon in my church went (to Upper Volta in 1982), we went two or three days a week to push garbage and learn to operate a bulldozer from Millard Rogers, the stepfather of one of our White Hall Baptist Church (Trenton) youth Greg McFadden, who later became the pastor of First Baptist Church of Humboldt. Millard was not a church going man but he was very curious about why we wanted to operate a dozer and why we wanted to go to Africa. We had several opportunities to tell Millard our story.

"The time finally came and we were off to Africa for our one-month project. While we were

there, we did indeed operate the dozer, tractors, and dump truck every day. One of the projects was to construct an earthen dam for a water catchments pond.

"What I saw and experienced that month changed my life. I have never been the same. I saw things and I experienced things that changed my heart and gave me a new perspective as a husband, father, and pastor! Robert and I came home and began to tell our stories and Millard became a believer too.

"After that 1982 volunteer trip to Upper Volta, I volunteered for mission service in other international countries. In 1993-1999 my wife Kathy and I served as long term IMB missionaries to Eastern Europe. I also worked as the mission administrator for the Central Europe Mission including Roma-

nia, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Poland.

"In June 1999 I became director of missions for the son Baptist Association. Since 1999-2005, we have taken 22 volunteer teams to work in Romania.

"Over the years I have asked, 'Why are we so blessed in America?' answer came to me in a that says, *To whom much is given, much is required.* I believe that God has blessed The way He has blessed u a purpose so that His lo be known by the world."

Mike Kemp
director of missions,
Baptist Association, T



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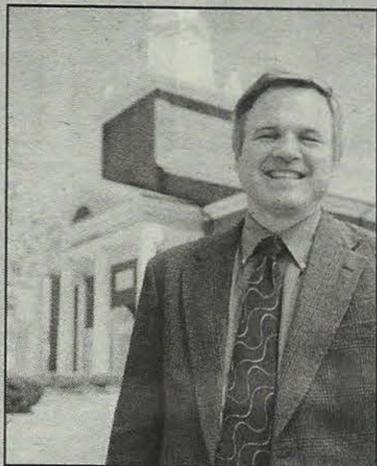
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Carson-Newman provides a rich context for me to share my international journey, to challenge students to reach for God in character and in study, and to nurture the truth that the unexamined and undisciplined life is not worth living.

Dr. David Crutchley
Professor of Religion
Interim Pastor
Smithwood Baptist, Knoxville

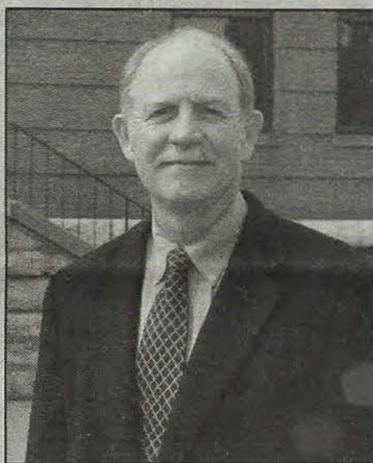


Christianity is faith full of verbs; words like love, touch, give, share, listen, pray, and go. Thank you, Carson-Newman College, for an excellent liberal arts education, but more importantly, for professors and staff who exemplified the verbs of faith in their relationships with me. My place of service today as an Associational Missionary is affirmed by your investment in my life.

Rev. John Parrott, Jr.
Associational Missionary
Holston Valley Baptist Association
C-N Class of 1978

I am eternally grateful for Carson-Newman's quality spiritual and educational impact on my two sons. As a parent and as a pastor, I commend the College for its dedication to maintaining its Tennessee Baptist roots.

Dr. Mike Boyd
Senior Pastor
Wallace Memorial Baptist Church
Knoxville

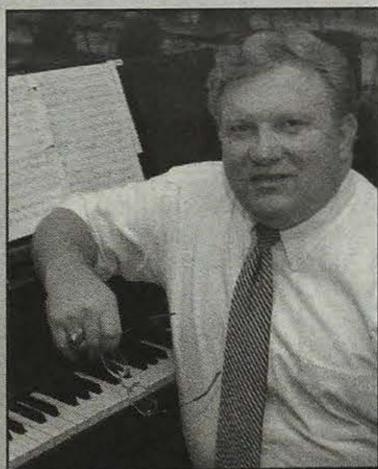


Christian faith and Baptist heritage are very important to me. Carson-Newman College was fundamental in helping me understand both. In my prior Naval career and now in the practice of law, the strong fundamental education I received at Carson-Newman has given me and my family the proper focus as we traveled throughout the world and then returned to settle in East Tennessee.

Richard T. Wallace
Attorney
C-N Class of 1968

I have met C-N friends and fellow alumni in Brazil, Russia and Poland, literally all over the world. We are all proud of our Carson-Newman heritage. We could not have chosen a better environment in which to learn, to live in the ministry of the Church and to prepare us to love God's people.

Mike Bundon
Minister of Music
Caver Dam Baptist Church, Knoxville
C-N Class of 1975



At Carson-Newman, I am serving alongside others who are trying to shine like stars in the universe (Philippians 2:6). Through Appalachian Outreach and Baptist Collegiate Ministries the opportunities to put my head knowledge and heart knowledge into action are innumerable.

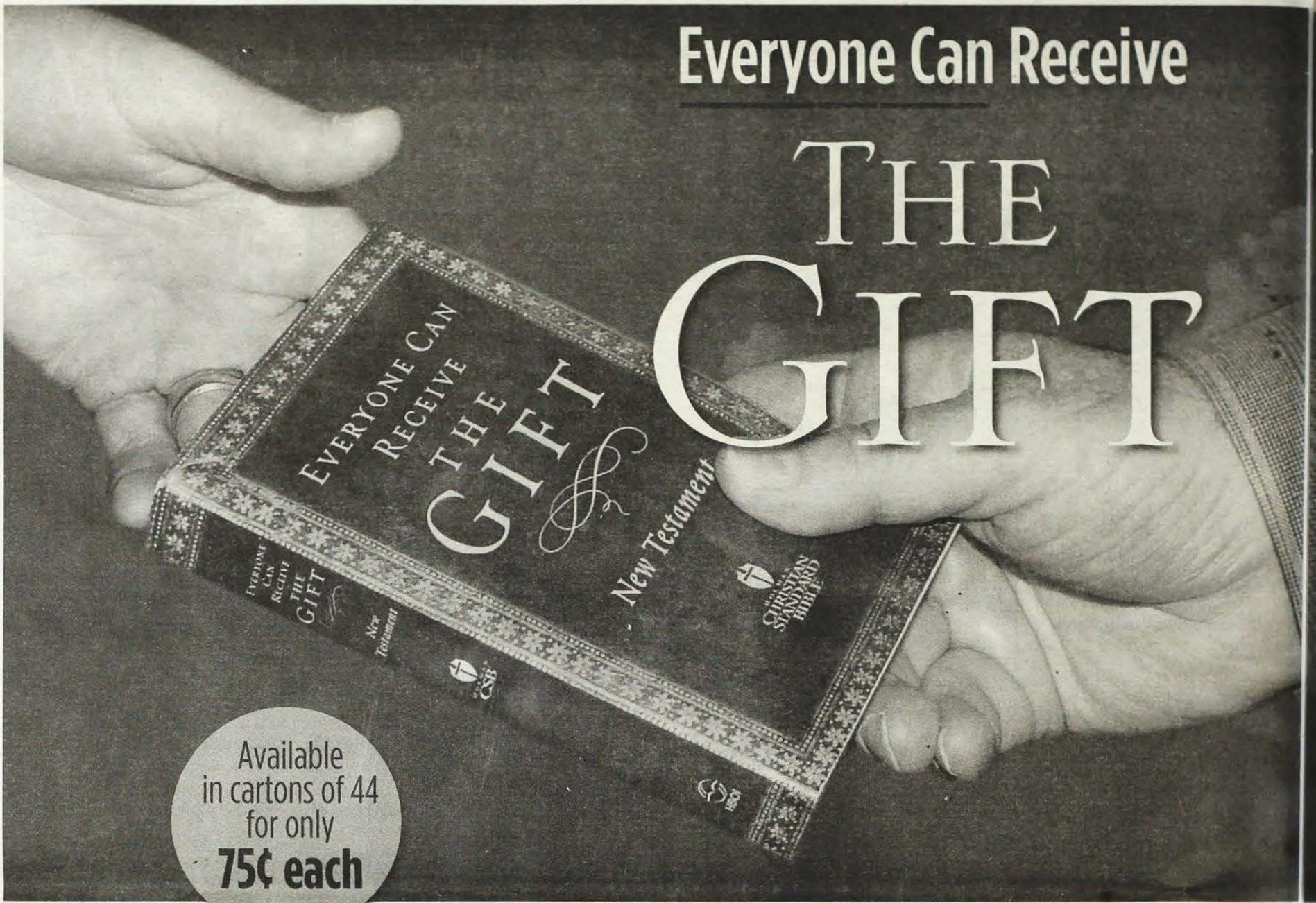
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Campbell County Baptists respond to school shootings

Marcia Knox
List and Reflector

ACKSBORO — Campbell County Baptist Association and churches are responding to an open crisis intervention briefing and prayer sessions for the community, which was triggered Nov. 8 by a lone student allegedly killing an assistant principal and seriously wounding two others on staff at a local high school.

Campbell County Association director of missions Glen Petree is currently involved in organizing the emergency first responders to the shooting at Campbell County Comprehensive High School, Jacksboro, and offers of crisis intervention through the CISM (Critical Incident Stress Management) program. Petree is a trained crisis interventionist and also serves as the chaplain for the emergency medical technicians.

In addition, Campbell met associational pastors and ministers to schedule a community prayer and encouragement service which was held Nov. 13, at the LaFollette Church of God.

Petree reported at least 15 Baptist churches in the area that have opened their doors to the community to help people recover from the tragedy. One of the assistant principals that was wounded in the

chest is Jimmy Pierce, 56, who is currently recovering listed in serious, but critical condition at University of Tennessee Medical Center, Knoxville. He is a member of First Baptist Church, LaFollette.

The principal who was shot in the abdomen is also listed in serious, but stable condition at the Knoxville hospital is Gary Seale, a member of the LaFollette Church of God. Another assistant principal Ken Bruce who was also shot in the chest later died at a LaFollette Hospital. He was a member of a local Catholic church.

"State mental health counselors were available Nov. 9 at LaFollette Middle School and Jacksboro Middle School for anyone who wanted to talk," said Petree.

"The State CISM team, which I work with in the area, has offered to do a debriefing for the high school students and teachers and the Campbell County School System Central Office.

"We have six trained leaders in school crisis counseling on the local CISM team. We are also available to all first responders which includes the EMTs and other emergency personnel."

Petree has already had one referral from the local office of emergency management.

"Hillcrest Baptist Church, LaFollette, which actually overlooks the high school, has

opened its doors to the community. Hillcrest Church pastor Chris Thomas opened the church for counseling, people who want to talk, and for prayer. Other churches in the area, New Horizon Baptist Church and Indiana Avenue Baptist Church, both in LaFol-

lette, have also opened their doors for prayer and discussions. Two churches held candlelight services and prayer vigils Nov. 8."

Petree considers Pierce a good friend and went to school with him in the community. Pierce serves as a greeter and

offering bearer at First Church, LaFollette. His wife Elda Kate also is active in the church. The couple has one daughter, Holly, a student at the University of Tennessee.

Petree is asking for prayers for the victims and the community. □

Wilson reflects on partnerships

List and Reflector

RENTWOOD — "Partnerships in missions is one of the great things Southern Baptists do," according to Bill Wilson, served as the TBC Conventions Ministries director from 1971-97.

It impacted my life to see what God was doing with partnership missions. The TBC and the SBC missionaries, that the work was appreciated by state convention. I was glad to see God was working there in the partnership areas."



WILSON

Wilson was over the partnership area when the Philippines, Chile, Poland, Canada, and Michigan were in operation and the consideration of partnerships for Costa Rica and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, began.

Wilson enjoyed getting to know International Mission Board missionaries. He recalled Elizabeth Oates, now deceased, who helped get the partnership with Baptists in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, off the ground. "She was a compassionate missionary."

"There was openness in Rio de Janeiro, and it was always good for volunteers," Bill Wilson said. "I visited in one Brazilian home of a mother and teenage girl. The mother had dropped out of church. The girl prayed and pleaded with the Lord, and the mother made a profession of faith."

"There was an impact on people who went on a missions trip to Rio, and they never were the same people. People in Rio were open to Americans. Our people loved it. We saw some strange things, but God was there," he said.

"The highlight of my TBC mission trips was in Rio at the First Baptist Church of Frequentia with its medical and evangelism teams. But I loved every TBC partnership." □



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Bivocational Pastor of the Year

Bobby Sebastian gives members credit for growing church

By Connie Davis Bushey
Baptist and Reflector

COOKEVILLE — Bobby Sebastian said his award as Tennessee Baptist Convention Bivocational Pastor of the Year should go to the members of Poplar Grove Baptist Church here where he serves.

"When you're bivocational they're the ones who have done it," he said.

Those members, with help from Sebastian, have done a lot for Poplar Grove over the 12 years he has served. The church has grown from 50 in morning worship in a small building over 100 years old to 350 in worship in a building built seven years ago.

Poplar Grove has relocated and completed two building projects. The church has added two full-time staff members and two part-time staff members. In 2003 it baptized 42 people and in 2004 it baptized 42 people.

Another big change is that several years ago members became involved in foreign missions for the first time. Since then a family from the church has moved to Romania where they serve as independent missionaries and members have served in Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, the Philippines, Dominican Republic, and Appalachia. Sebastian himself has served in Romania seven times in the past five years.

Sebastian also is a financial advisor/investment manager for clients through Wachovia Securities. He manages about \$30 million.

He joked that people wonder if he can be honest as a money manager and pastor. Since he is a pastor part-time then he will be honest part-time, he said with a smile.



BOBBY SEBASTIAN, pastor, Poplar Grove Baptist Church, Cookeville, sits in his office at the church.

Seriously, Sebastian said he may move into being a full-time pastor in a couple of years, because "my heart's here. But there's part of me that does like being a giver (to the church)" or a "net financial attribute." He also is able to manage both jobs because he operates his own office.

Of his ministry at the church, Sebastian said, "It's a real adventure. It's exciting. It's like boiling a frog; it just kind of happens slowly."

Worship today at Poplar Grove is blended Southern Gospel and contemporary and until recently was led by Tim Parton, who is a member of the Gold City Quartet and a former member of the Gaither Vocal Band.

The changes in music style started when God sent Andrew Ishey to the church. He was a member of the Kingsmen Quartet and the Palmetto Boys. Ishey led worship for a while and directed several music events at the church.

"We couldn't pay them to be here and they're here," said Sebastian of these musicians.

Just three years ago the staff included only Sebastian and a part-time secretary. Then Justin Randolph was named youth/outreach pastor. He helped begin the FAITH outreach program

and AWANAs which draws about 250 children each Wednesday night.

Carol Buckner, director of education, was a long-time member of the church and public school teacher who felt called to teach women. She did and her classes blossomed. She directs ministry to women, senior citizens, and children.

Sebastian began his ministry in Freewill Baptist churches. He graduated from Freewill Baptist College in Nashville. He served one church as full-time pastor but resigned after suffering burn-out and making mistakes because of a lack of maturity, he said. He and his wife, Delayne, and their two sons moved from Virginia to Cookeville where she is from. He never wanted "to deal with the general public again."

Several years later, while selling life insurance and teach-

ing Sunday School at Washton Avenue Baptist Church in Cookeville, Sebastian was to preach in the absence of pastor at Poplar Grove. Members called him as pastor.

He and the church have benefited from his bivocational ministry, said Sebastian. He became known as "drop ball," he is forgiven because he knows he is busy. The church benefited because members have assumed more responsibility for the church.

He especially credited time members who spearheaded the relocation and folks like Tony Ellis, who managed construction of the first building, and his late wife Joyce, who was church secretary.

Of the congregation, he said, "I've tried to be behind the scenes trying anything. They've worked hard and not looked at me at all," said Sebastian. □

History of Baptist and Reflector now available

Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — *Telling the Truth in Love: A Brief History of the Baptist and Reflector From 1835* has been released.

The paper is celebrating its 170th anniversary this year.

The book, written by former editor Wm. Fletcher Allen, was not intended to be a comprehensive history, but it is a good beginning point, according to current editor Lonnie Wilkey.

"Other than special issues of the paper commemorating key anniversaries; there has never been a written history of the *Baptist and Reflector*," Wilkey observed.

"We trust readers will enjoy this compilation of our past," the editor added.

The book will be distributed complimentary while supplies last. Individuals who would like a copy mailed to their home can call Susie Edwards at (615) 371-2003. There will be cost for shipping and handling. □



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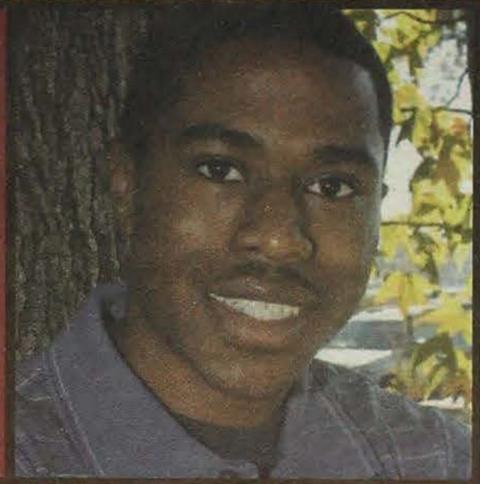
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Derrick Anderson
Major: Biblical Studies
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“I have been placed in situations where I have needed to rely on fellow students, professors, and administrators and that is why a strong community is essential. The people at Union have become part of my family. Even after I had only been at Union for a few months, I began calling it home. Whenever I was away, I would refer to going back to Union as going home”

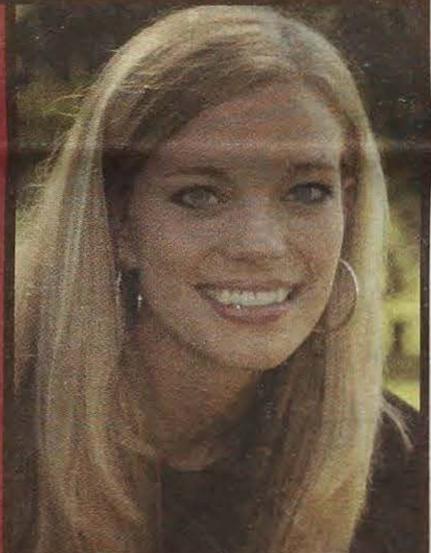
“There will be no other time in my life where I am able to learn so freely without hindrances and obstacles. Besides preparing me for my career, college provides an opportunity to mature in my faith, to face new challenges, to interact with diverse people and to push myself.”

Brad Spencer
Major: Biology
Collierville, Tenn.

“I am going on to professional school and I need what Union University offers to prepare me. I’m looking for an edge to be more competitive and more marketable. Excellence in education is very attractive and appeals to those who want to succeed.”

“This is what I build upon. Every experience whether in the classroom, friendships or whatever contributes to feeling prepared professionally. College is a good springboard from childhood to adulthood and a Union education gives you an edge.”

Ashley Oldham
Major: Athletic Training
Martin, Tenn.



“Union has grown under David Dockery and his leadership. He has brought some of the major leaders of the world to Jackson, and he has brought in excellent teachers to every area. Union’s reality and its reputation have grown under his leadership. Union is now at a higher level than it has ever achieved. I think more people across the nation today know about Union than at any time in the school’s history.”

“I can tell you this: As a Baptist pastor there are very few colleges -- even Baptist colleges -- that I can recommend with a clear conscience. Union is one of the few. I can count on my hands the ones I would recommend, and Union is on the top of the list.”

Steve and Donna Gaines
Pastor, Bellevue Baptist Church
Cordova, Tenn.

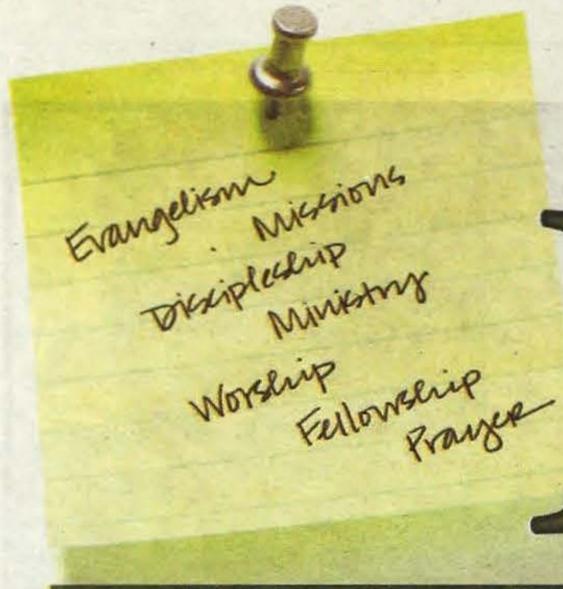
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Church Health Matters

"Building healthy churches empowered by the presence of God"



Why Church Health Matters?

By Gary Rickman

This is the inaugural issue of the section, "Church Health Matters," in the *Baptist and Reflector*.

Each issue we hope that you will turn to these pages for concerns and information related to church health.

The "Church Health Matters" section will be replacing the information you have been receiving through the "Green Light", the "Men's Ministries Newsletter", and the "Tennessee Volunteer Missions Network Update".

On these pages, you will find matters that discuss church health along with editorials, feature stories, interviews, and practical suggestions for your church to consider relating to church health. You will also find information about calendar events that pertain to church health matters.

The seven areas of church health that will be addressed on a regular basis are — evangelism, discipleship, missions, prayer, ministry, worship, and fellowship.

In the weeks to come, as you read your *Baptist and Reflector*, be sure to look at the new, *Church Health Matters*, to find information not only for pastors and church staff, but also for every church member who is interested in the health of their church. Keep your eyes and heart open for new, interesting insights, and events relating to church health. For indeed, Church Health Matters.



Healthy Thinking

by James Porch

Dr. Charlie, our Presbyterian family doctor, cultivated his keen sense of humor. Each visit to his office would include a good joke or witticism in addition to excellent medical care.

One day I got the jump on him and declared, "Charlie, I wish you would quit practicing medicine and get it right." Rather firmly, he quickly replied, "I can't and you don't want me to. Each patient I see is another learning experience for the rest of my practice."

A physician wisely refers to his vocation as practicing medicine. He routinely relies upon his knowledge of anatomy and physiology, available medications, and diagnostic procedures with the awareness that treatment of some diseases, or illnesses, may exceed his practice. Sometime his best intent does not result in restored health. Nevertheless, his commitment to quality human health feeds his passion to continue to practice medicine.

Church Health, the wholesome, Christ-intended lifestyle of the local church, requires diligent consistent practice. Just as a family doctor uses basic techniques in his ministry, even more a church family must rely on basic church health practices with the abiding hope of fulfilling Christ's desire for that local family of faith.

The emphasis of this writing will relate to points of practice commendable to the life and nurture of the local community of faith that seeks to be a Christ-healthy church.

Each local church has the responsibility to individually recognize Christ's unique calling to minister within its local community and even unto the world. Honoring a specific calling begins in prayerful discovery of the ministry that God may be calling only that church to accomplish for Him.

At the same time, a healthy church needs a sense of New Testament structure in ministry. In Acts 2:42-47 one of Luke's descriptive summary passages, he records seven basic functions of the church, each worthy of practice. These include fellowship, missions, evangelism, worship, prayer, disci-

pliship, and ministry. Regardless of extension into any other ministry field, the seven constitute the heart function of a healthy church.

Quite often a congregation experiences disruption or dysfunction and the experiences testing that can result in ineffective ministry or even cleavage in the body. The New Testament tells us that Jesus was about healing broken lives. The New Testament healing instances attest to Jesus' care for His highest creation: people. Christ created the church and assuredly His power extends to the church. As Christ heals individual lives, so He desires to heal His gathered body.

Without exception, the New Testament churches knew the value of relationships. Many who experienced conflict in their churches bear witness to failure to bring love for God and a love for each other.

No church, regardless of present or past successes, merits the right to the future. Actually, a healthy church passes the gospel on to the next generation. Such churches hold precious a sense of today and tomorrows, and intentionally train the younger generation in the administration of the Lord.

We do well to remember that Jesus, all, Christ is head of the church. Yet Christ has entrusted leadership roles to those committed to serving Him. Jesus, the Great Shepherd offers us His true example that leaders function as shepherds in understanding, extension of love, and care for His flock.

The Great Commission mandates that Christ expects the local church to promote the existence and growth of God's expanding kingdom on earth. In this mission endeavor, a healthy church with care and understanding for such a task will seek a joint effort with other healthy churches. In such activities, cooperative mission enterprises pursue an aggressive effort to literally "Go into all the world."

Finally, may I commend an healthy church "IE." If church health becomes the pattern for the local congregation, the body can present the reality and the possibility that the community of faith will see the church as it presently and envision what that church can become.

Ministry Strategies Team Explains Church Health Response Through Associations

By Jerry Essary

Over the past several months the TBC Executive Ministries has been going through a reorganizing process. A large part of the reorganization grew out of a desire from our TBC associations and churches to move from a programming structure to a resourcing and funding process.

To accomplish this desired effect local associations were asked to form into clusters that would allow us to pool resources to a smaller geographical area. To help facilitate this change four state missionary staff, Steve Miller, Mark Miller, Archer Thorpe, and myself were assigned to take on the new role of ministry strategist to work with a specific area of Tennessee. Holt has East Tennessee; Miller has Middle Tennessee; Thorpe has the West Tennessee areas; and I have West and lower west Middle Tennessee.

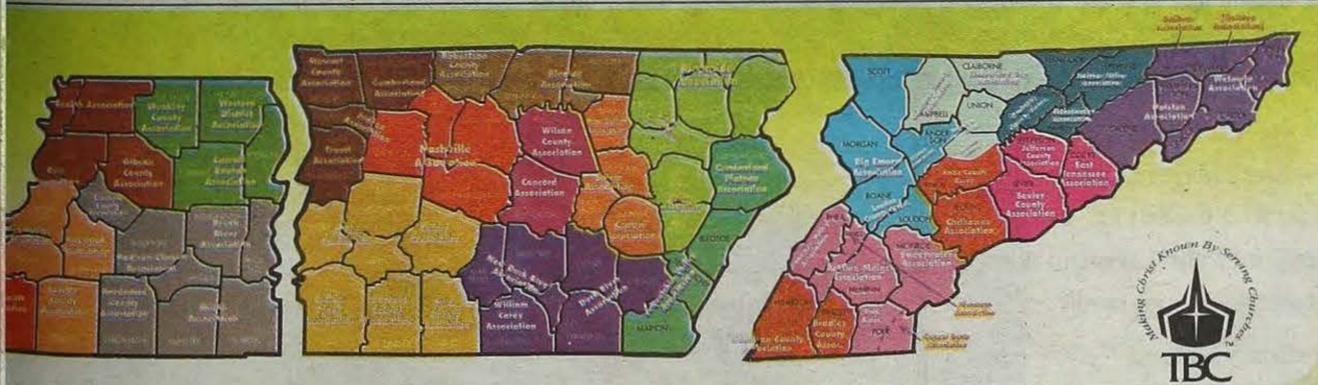
The newly formed Ministry Strategies Team determined to operate out of a mission statement: "Our spiritual journey is to facilitate intentional partnerships, identify discovered needs of churches to God-given resources, and coach for greater church health." This can be accomplished by working with a cluster of associations, an individual association, or an individual church or group of churches.

The Ministry Strategies Team has been busy facilitating intentional partnerships with the newly formed clusters of associations. In some cases, these associations have worked together in the past and others are forming new and vibrant partnerships. Each time the directors of missions have met, they have forged new territory of partnerships with the TBC as well as each other. They are beginning to find new ways to discover the real needs of their local churches and are developing strategies to help meet those needs.

Once the needs are discovered, they are connected to God-given resources. The process begins as the ministry strategist presents the discovered need to the state missionary staff's ACCTS Team in the form of a cluster project. The project is discussed, a team leader from the state missionary staff is assigned, who will begin to work with the local cluster of associations, individual association, or group of churches or individual church to bring the best possible resources to fill the need.

The Ministry Strategies Team is working toward the day when the real needs of individual and groups of local churches are being discovered and met translating into greater church health. Healthier churches impact their communities, state, nation, and world for Jesus Christ.

Associational Cluster Groups



Coming Up! Coming Up! Coming Up! Coming Up!

- 12 - Tennessee Men's Chorale Local Church Concert, Madison Avenue Baptist Church, Maryville
- 20-21 - Hispanic Evangelism Conference, First Baptist Church Hispanic, Lebanon
- 27-29 - International Student Retreat, Fall Creek Falls State Park, Pikeville
- 27-28 - The Youth Project for Youth Choirs, Carson-Newman College and First Baptist Church, Jefferson City

For information on upcoming events, see the TBC web site at www.tnbaptist.org.

Suggested Reading

Hemphill, Ken
The Antioch Effect: 8 Characteristics of Highly Effective Churches
Broadman & Holman, 1994

Hemphill, Ken
EKG: The Heartbeat of God
Broadman & Holman, 2004

Macchia, Stephen A.
Becoming a Healthy Church
Baker Books, 1999

McNeal, Reggie
The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church
Leadership Network, 2003

Rainer, Thom
Breakout Churches
Zondervan, 2005

Scazzero, Peter
The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship that Actually Changes Lives
Zondervan, 2003

Schwartz, Christian A.
Natural Church Development: A Guide to Eight Essential Qualities of Healthy Churches
Church Smart, 2000

Walling, Terry, and Rick Tansey
Maximum Health: Navigating Your Church to Greater Health
Church Smart, 2003

Warren, Rick
The Purpose-Driven Church
Zondervan, 1996

Wood, Gene
Leading Turnaround Churches
Church Smart, 2001

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If you are unable to attend convention this year, please visit www.tbcsurvey.org and take a few moments to complete the survey. Thank you for taking the time to share this information with us. We appreciate your willingness to partner with us in Making Christ Known in Tennessee and Around the World.

Bivocational Staff Minister of the Year**Helping teenagers is Kevin McGehee's passion**

By Connie Davis Bushey
Baptist and Reflector

LEWISBURG — Kevin McGehee is a busy guy. He is athletic director/teacher, Marshall County High School, and youth minister, East Commerce Baptist Church here. He runs a small farm and lawn mowing service. He is a husband and a father to three children.

McGehee, who was named Bivocational Staff Minister of the Year by the Tennessee Baptist Convention, said he has gotten burned out at times, but "I never get burned out on young people."

He joked that instead of teens driving him crazy, "I drive them crazy."

While a student at Belmont University, McGehee knew he wanted to work with teenagers as a teacher and coach, which he has done 16 years at Marshall County. He has served as youth minister at East Commerce for eight years.

Actually, his two main jobs are complimentary or "go hand in hand," McGehee explained, which makes his work easier.

At school this year he teaches weight lifting and drivers education. They aren't high pressure courses like calculus, he noted,

so he is able to be more friendly and respectful of the students without having discipline problems.

As athletic director he attends about 85 games a year in which he has another chance to befriend students. Marshall County has about 800 students.

He tries to show students he cares about them, said McGehee. He has had students approach him at school with serious problems because they heard he is a minister.

Students are facing increasing pressure to be involved in sexual activity, observed McGehee.

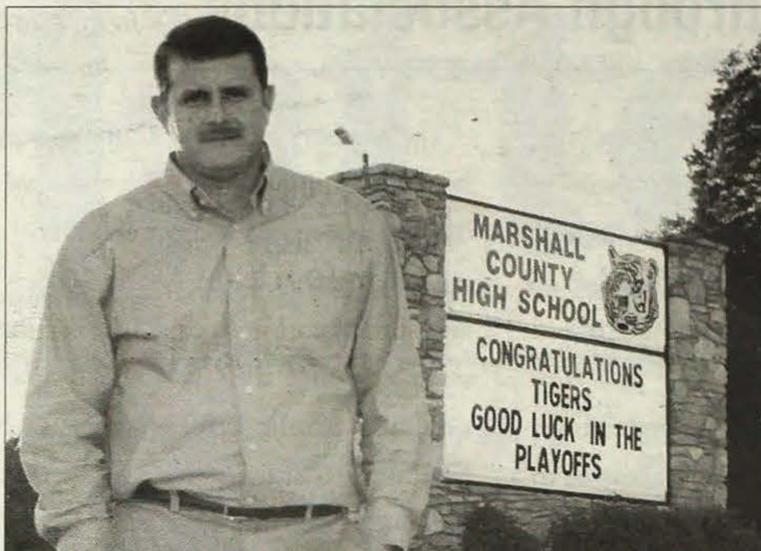
"It's sad what they face. Christian kids are definitely in the minority."

At school he helps lead Youth Alive, a Bible study which draws about 25 students at 7:15 a.m. on Wednesday mornings.

"We (Christians) still have a foothold even though the government doesn't want us to."

At East Commerce Church many of the youth who attend are the only Christian or church-goer in their families, reported McGehee.

Both those youth and the youth with Christian families are facing "real world issues," he added, so he and church leaders



KEVIN MCGEHEE, athletic director and teacher, Marshall County High School, Lewisburg, stands by the school's sign.

try to focus "on what God's Word says" about those issues. He has seen four teens make professions of faith since September.

Sometimes teens without families in the church come regularly for a while and then abruptly stop attending church. He's been known to put out "an APB," on them or notice to students that he would like to hear a report on the student, he said with a slight smile. He usually gets a report, he said.

"You just hope you've given them (students in the church)

enough that they have something to come back to." You know teens, he said, they can be high on a band, then sports, then the Lord, and then "hit a bump in the road and life's over with."

Because he also is at school, "I get to hold them (students in youth group) accountable and they hold me accountable."

He's proud of the youth group he leads. Just two months ago at the beginning of the church year they set a goal to grow to 30 "and we're getting very close."

McGehee is proud of the fact

that he sent Katie Hargrove to the group this summer to work at Copper Basin Association, Ducktown times.

McGehee also helps organize an annual rally held by the Marshall County Christian Alliance which McGehee started.

Of the about 70 youth who have graduated from the group in eight years, four became youth ministers.

McGehee thanks his family for any success he has had. His mother, Patricia, of Lewisburg raised her two sons, Kevin, 13, and Tim, 16, after her husband, Joe McGehee, died. He was pastor of First Baptist Church, Lewisburg. Tim McGehee is pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Tullahoma.

His father's death has helped him minister to many students who have endured family loss and death, said McGehee.

He also thanks his wife, Aldridge McGehee, and children, Mary Kate, 10; Benjamin, 6; and Abby, 3. Amy is a school teacher along with teaching Sunday School to youth.

"My family shares my passion with everybody." □

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Small Church Pastor of the Year

Success is measured by changed lives, says Marcom

Donnie Wilkey
Pastor and Reflector

CLARKSVILLE — Terrell Marcom, the 2005 Small Church Pastor of the Year, is modest about the growth he has seen in the years as pastor of Excell Baptist Church here.

"Clarksville is booming. The city is growing around us," the Minnville native said.

What's more, he continued, there are roughly 90,000 people in the city who do not attend church on any given Sunday.

Still, no one can argue that he has had a major role in the growth at Excell since 1996.

At the time the church had about 60 people in regular attendance. The church is now averaging about 160 weekly in worship and about 120 in Sunday School. Not bad for his first only pastorate.

R. Michael Weaver, a deacon at Excell who nominated Marcom for the award, noted the church "had become a stagnant church with an uncertain future."

"We prayed about our future. God answered our prayers," Weaver wrote on the nomination form.

Nine years later Excell is "an

alive and well church. I give God the glory and praise Him for sending Terrell Marcom to lead our church."

Marcom, however, gives all the credit for the church's turnaround to God and for a congregation open to following God's will.

He recalled that when he arrived at the church they had a debt of \$102,000. One year later, they had paid only \$1,000 in principal, Marcom said.

The pastor talked with the deacons. After time spent in prayer the deacons voted to place an additional \$400 per month on their note, with all of it going to the principal. Before long the church was paying an additional \$1,000 a month to reduce the principal, Marcom related.

In two years the debt was reduced to \$36,000 and the church was given a \$50,000 estate gift. A year later the church received another gift in excess of \$171,000.

"God didn't give us \$200,000 to draw interest," Marcom said. "He expected us to do something with it."

And the church did. Church leaders announced plans for a new sanctuary. Later a plan to



TERRELL MARCOM, the 2005 Small Church Pastor of the Year, has a passion for disaster relief work. He stands beside the disaster relief trailer recently purchased by Excell Baptist Church, Clarksville, where he has served as pastor for nine-plus years.

raise funds for the new building was begun. Church members pledged \$314,000.

"We prayed, stepped out on faith, and He has continued to bless," Marcom said.

The church has since built a new \$1 million worship center and only owes \$485,000. In addition the church purchased a house adjacent to the property

to use for office space and classrooms and completed a new parking lot in October.

Marcom noted that "if I've done anything right it was to go slow in making all big decisions and trying to bring as many folks along as we could."

"Basically, God has been good to us. That's the bottom line."

Along with the growth in

numbers and financial resources, Marcom has witnessed spiritual growth as well.

The church has several outreach programs and has gotten heavily involved in Tennessee Baptist Disaster Relief.

Marcom has seen members grow in their faith. He can point to five individuals among the many who have been baptized during this pastorate whose lives were dramatically changed. Among those five are now two deacons and a Sunday School teacher.

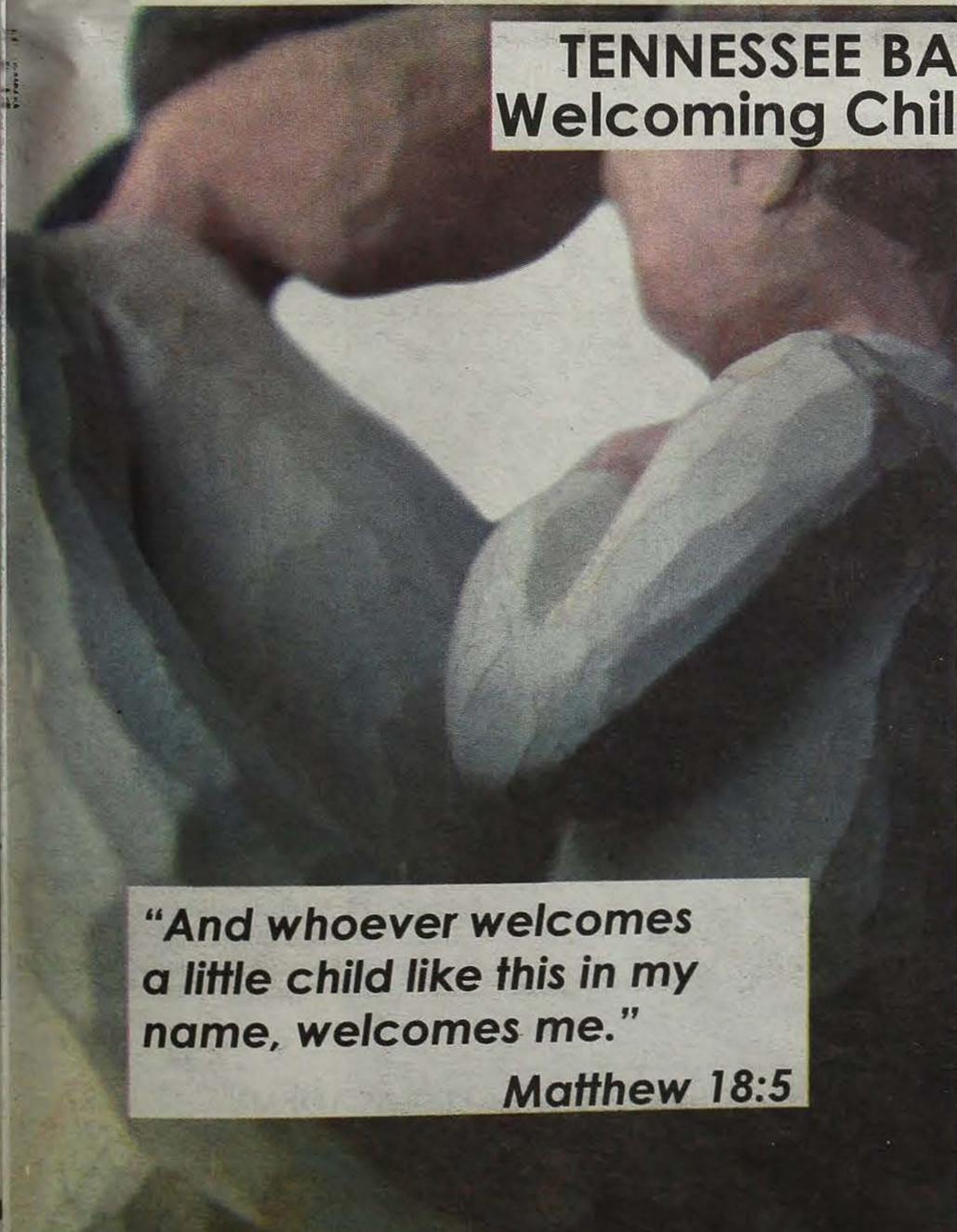
"Hopefully there have been more lives changed, but if it is just those five, then we have been successful."

Success is not measured in numbers, but by changed lives, he stressed.

Marcom and his wife Dana, who he credits as a big help to his ministry, have four children — Cassidy, Heath, Jordan, and Jack. All four were born in Clarksville and the Marcoms now consider the city and Excell as "home," he said.

"I always said in college that I wanted to go to one place, spend my life there and make a difference. I just thought it would be Africa, not Clarksville," he said with a grin. □

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"And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name, welcomes me."

Matthew 18:5

Tennessee BCM students spend break helping hurricane victims

By Stacy Murphree
Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — During campus fall breaks, more than 700 Tennessee Baptist Collegiate Ministry students traveled to assist with ongoing hurricane relief efforts in Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

Although the need for clean-up work is widespread along the Gulf Coast, Tennessee BCM students feel that by working together, each team helping several families, an impact was made.

"I was really proud of how hard all of our students worked. With over 700 students, together we made a real difference," says Cindy Chanin, Tennessee Baptist Convention collegiate ministry specialist at Volunteer State Community College in Gallatin.

BCM teams were housed in local Baptist churches and partnered with them to reach those needing help with clean-up work in their community. Students worked 10-12 hour days participating in a wide variety of tasks including removing yard debris, repairing roofs, removing and installing new drywall and insulation, and performing other mud-out type jobs on homes that had sustained flood damage.

A team of BCM students from Tennessee Tech University, Cookeville, repaired the roof at First Baptist Church of St. Elmo, Ala. The physical labor performed by the students was motivated by the congregation being able to worship again in their building.

"As I climbed upon the roof of the church to help I realized that the important thing was that this roof, even if for a moment in time, will protect someone as they hear about our Savior," says Ellen Womac, Tennessee Tech student.

The residents of homes were grateful for the help they received. Teams of students completed projects that could have taken individuals or families several days or weeks to complete.

"Local residents were deeply appreciative of our students' sacrificial service. Many property owners stated that six weeks of work was accomplished during the students' work visit," says Bob Hall, TBC collegiate ministry specialist at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

More than 100 UT-Knoxville students served in the Atmore, Ala., and Gautier, Miss., areas.

BCM students were often asked the cost for their time and labor, and they were always glad to share why they had come as a volunteer. These times also presented opportunities to pray with families and share about Christ.

"Helping people with no strings attached opens natural doors for sharing the gospel," says Chanin.

Damon Billings, TBC collegiate ministry specialist at Walters State Community College, Morristown, and Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, agrees.

"We had the opportunity to tell many families why we were so eager to help and in a couple of cases we were able to pass out Bibles as a further testimony of our inspiration of service," he says. Walters State students along with some from East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, served in Pascagoula, Miss.

One aspect that was most meaningful to students was having the opportunity to build relationships with individuals and families who had been affected by the disaster. While on a work site, students took the time to talk with individuals, listen to their stories, and encourage those they were helping.

"Students were able to meet the people who were affected by the hurricane. It seemed that this was significant in making the hard work a more special experience," says Denise Roebuck, TBC collegiate ministry specialist in Cleveland.

BCM students had the opportunity to see Southern Baptist relief work in action. More than 300 BCM students serving in the Biloxi and Gulfport areas received meals cooked by a Mississippi disaster relief feeding unit stationed in the parking lot of First Baptist Church, Biloxi. These students also used disaster relief trailer shower facilities provided by Alabama and South Carolina.

"Those who provided our shelter and our food were well



DENNIS PRITZEL of UT Martin and **Mallory Huber** of the University of Memphis "mud out" a house near Picayune, Miss.

organized. No one discussed it, but there was no doubt about what our common purpose was for being there together in that place," says Jim Alexander, TBC collegiate ministry specialist for Austin Peay State University, Clarksville.

Alexander led an Austin Peay BCM student and alumni team serving in Biloxi and the surrounding areas.

In addition to going and participating in hands-on hurricane relief work, Tennessee BCM students have raised funds for American Red Cross and TBC Disaster Relief fund have collected donations to assist displaced families who have temporarily moved to the area.

Several BCM teams are planning additional hurricane relief trips for winter and spring breaks.

"Students have expressed only interest but also eagerness to return to continue with disaster relief work," says Billings.

These fall break trips as well as future relief trips are being funded by the TBC disaster relief fund as well as funds raised by students through BCM. □

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— Pastor Dallas and Lisa Gibson, Providence Baptist Church, Seymour; parents of Danielle and Luke

"We wanted our children to attend The King's Academy for the biblical world view education."

— Pastor Deron and Bonita Cobb, Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Knoxville; parents of Joanna and Joshua

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Staff Minister of the Year

Whatever music is done, do it well, advises Chuck Esary

Lonnie Wilkey
Artist and Reflector

SHELBYVILLE — As a minister of music and worship, Chuck Esary is well aware that everyone has his or her own likes/dislikes and opinion on what is the most appropriate music to use during a worship service.

Esary, who has served at First Baptist Church here since 1990, understands that concept and he attempts to use a mix of contemporary and traditional. More importantly for him, however, is not what music he chooses, but that the music is done well.

"Too many times we settle for pretty good," Esary observed. "That doesn't fly in today's church."

"People expect their music to be done well."

And as far as the congregation at First Baptist is concerned, Esary also apparently has done "well."

So well that he was nominated by church members and chosen as the 2005 Staff Minister of the Year in the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

Until he received a letter from the TBC informing him of the award, Esary didn't even know he had been nominated. He learned later that his wife, Therine, knew about the nomination, but keep it a secret.

The Alabama native is thankful and humbled by the honor.

"I don't do anything that other ministers of music don't," he said.

Ironically, Esary never sang in a choir until he was out of college.

Esary's dad was the music director at a small rural church in Alabama, but the church did not have a choir.

Esary had a love for instrumental music and played in the band in high school and also at the University of Alabama.

After college he began to sing and soon became a part-time minister of music before accepting the call into full-time ministry and then enrolling at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

One of Esary's goals at First Baptist is to help his choir members and others "achieve things

they didn't think they could do."

The choir records a CD each year and for the first time, a DVD. "I try to help them use the gifts God has given them," he said.

"I try to help people find places to use their gifts and talents for God's kingdom."

For 11 years the church held a Living Christmas Tree each year for the community that was effective in reaching people who normally did not attend church. The Christmas program had to be discontinued for awhile, but Esary is confident it will begin again, possibly next year.

In nominating Esary for the award, Bill Joe Nix, a deacon at First Baptist, observed that he "has shown a high degree of music and creative ability in leading our choir and congregation in worship and song for almost 15 years."

Dan Clevenger, director of missions for New Duck River Baptist Association, endorsed Esary's nomination.

"Dr. Esary has consistently served with excellence throughout his life. Along with his competence, he is always humble as he walks with the Lord and is always quick to give credit to God," Clevenger observed.

He noted Esary has not only impacted his church, but also his association and community.

Esary has remained a constant at First Baptist even through some years of strife faced by the congregation.

He acknowledged there "have been some tough times, but there also have been some great times as well."

One of his personal highlights was an extended revival about five years ago when the church baptized about 250 people

over a nine-month period and referred another 250 people to other churches for baptism.

"It was an experience you don't often get to be a part of," he observed, adding that "I learned a lot about worship during that time."

As one would expect, Esary is passionate about his ministry.

"Worshipping God is our highest calling," he said. □

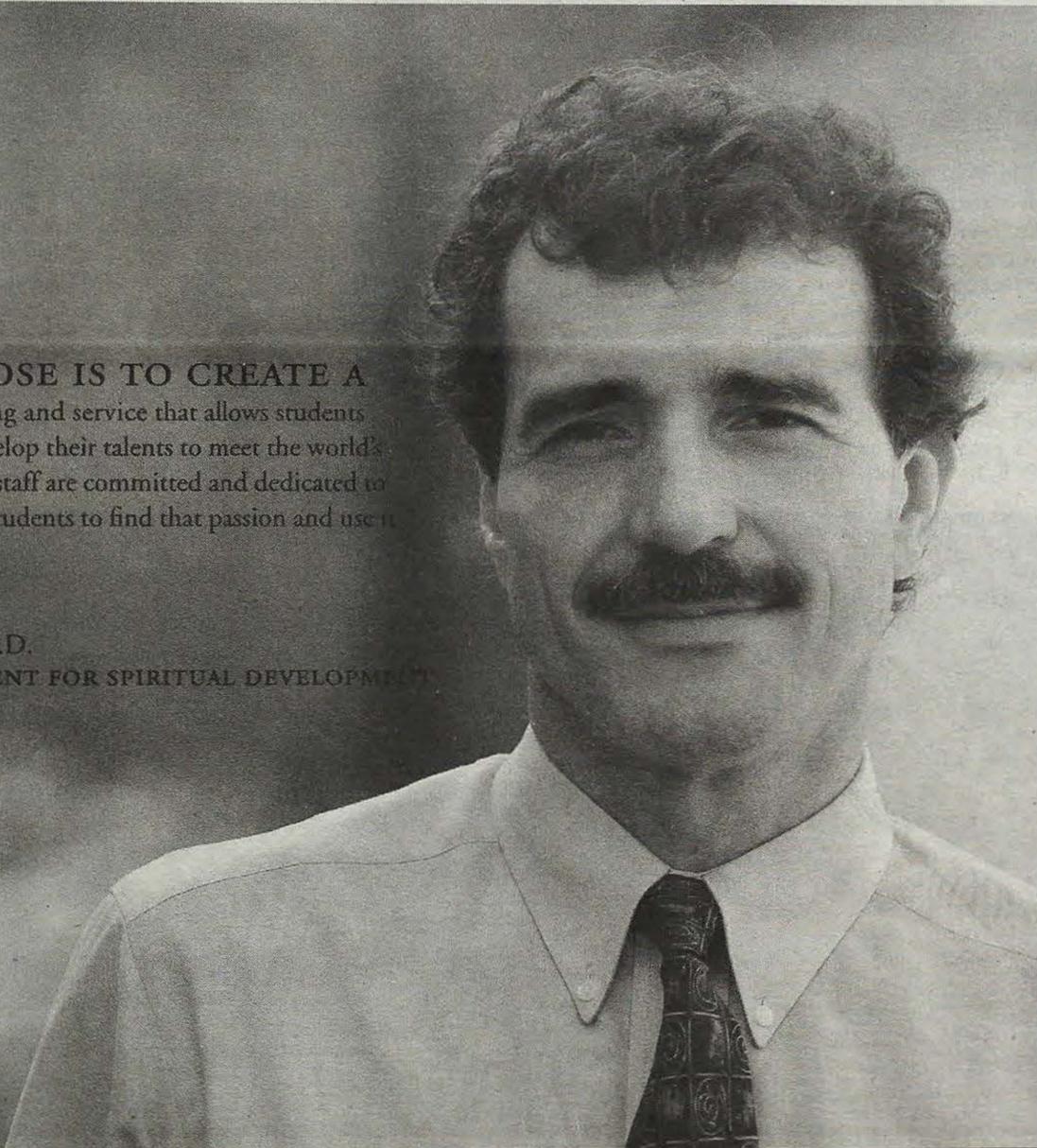


CHUCK ESARY the 2005 Staff Minister of the Year, relaxes in his office at First Baptist Church, Shelbyville, where he has served as minister of worship and music since 1990.

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Belmont Day in churches across the state will be February 19, 2006. Call 615-460-6628 if you would like someone from Belmont to preach or perform special music, or to get bulletin inserts and a DVD on Belmont to use on that Sunday.

C-N sends 170 students on fall break to Mississippi Gulf Coast

By Mark Brown
Carson-Newman news office

JEFFERSON CITY — For 170 Carson-Newman College volunteers, Fall Break was neither fall nor a break. Spread across Southern Mississippi in 85 degree weather over three days in October, 21 C-N work crews amassed more than 5,000 man-hours of relief for victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Coordinated through the college's campus ministries office, the group made up the largest institutional contingent of some 700 Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM) volunteers from colleges and universities across Tennessee (see story on page 16).

The Carson-Newman teams operated from three main areas (Hattiesburg, Biloxi, and Bay St. Louis) where local Baptist churches served as operations centers, makeshift hostels, and staging areas.

Campus Minister Jim Wilson said he wanted a large C-N turnout, hoping that those who went as relief missionaries would return as witnesses of the savage destruction and take their accounts to churches and civic groups, who might in turn send more workers to the coast.

"The news media became obsessed with New Orleans and overlooked the massive need in Mississippi," he said.

"I pray that our time there will help facilitate other con-

centrated efforts in the coming weeks and months."

"People think that FEMA is overseeing the work," said Tim Glaze, campus minister at Hattiesburg's William Carey College who helped coordinate teams with individuals needing assistance. "But it's the churches and volunteers that are doing the work. We need people."

Wilson says he is pleased with a \$115 per volunteer expenditure for a five-day trip (three work days and two for travel down and back), crediting church participation as key to the success. "Several area churches sent volunteers, vans, and paid for the gas, while four South Mississippi churches gave our workers a place to sleep. Those partnerships make this kind of service possible," he said, gratefully.

While trying to finalize accounting of the October trip, Wilson is simultaneously busy planning for two coastal relief efforts.

"We have at least one team that wants to go in December between final exams and Christmas and other students have already expressed interest in going during spring break," said the founder of Appalachian Outreach.

To accomplish the possibility of a March trip, Wilson is already communicating with churches and area volunteers. "There's no way we will be able to keep our expenses as low

because the disaster relief infrastructure won't be in place like it was," he asserted. "That means our partners are going to be very important in making this trip a success, too."

Ashley Austin, associate pastor at First Baptist Biloxi, says there will be plenty of opportunities for ministry in the months to come. "We'll need people to come and to be laborers, as well as people who are skilled," said Austin, who believes those who volunteer will be amazed by what can be accomplished in a short time. "You can put one skilled laborer with two or three who aren't skilled and they can work together to get a lot done."

While the storms left great damage to the area, Austin is grateful for the ministry opportunities that abound. "Are people coming to faith in Christ? Yes," he noted.

"There have been many people that have a lot of questions, and God has given us the opportunity to minister to them, but really, it's little to do with us and everything to do with God and the people God's sending.

"You know, we're just playing a small part in it," he concluded. "It's people like the group from C-N and from MTSU (two of the almost 20 BCM groups there), or groups from local churches all around the country — it's those people that God is using to make this really happen." □



GULFPORT RESIDENT Sharon Tucker thanks C-N student Jonathan Tullock with a hug after a C-N team removed eight rooms of ruined furniture and contents from her home, just two blocks from the coast. C-N senior Brandon Hudson (back), of Red Bank Baptist in Chattanooga, was also part of the crew.



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Seminary Preview Conference: October 13-15

Hurricane Katrina victims find new home at Union University

By Tim Ellsworth
Union news service

JACKSON — Like thousands of other residents of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, Christy Denney fled ahead of Hurricane Katrina's path.

She and her parents made their way to Alamo, Tenn., to stay with Christy's aunt and uncle.

"We only usually get to see them during hurricane season," Denney joked.

What Denney didn't realize the time was that she'd be staying much longer than she expected. A freshman in college, Denney originally planned to take some online courses this semester until she could turn home to Moss Point, Miss., and finish her schooling there.



CHRISTY DENNEY, a victim of Hurricane Katrina, has found a new home at Union University in Jackson after she was forced to leave her home in Moss Point, Miss. She is one of several Katrina victims who have continued their education this fall at Union. — Photo by Morris Bernathy

But Denney soon decided to enroll as a full-time student at Union University. Now she's decided to stay and graduate from Union in four years.

"I love the school," Denney said. "I love the atmosphere. I feel like I've been here for years

instead of just two months. It just kind of fits."

Denney is just one of 11 college students who transferred to Union University this semester because of Hurricane Katrina. To accommodate students who had been affected by the hurricane, Union extended its enrollment deadline this semester and also did everything possible to help such students academically, socially, and financially.

Steve Tien, of San Jose, Calif., previously attended Louisiana State University. A computer engineering major, Tien isn't sure yet what his long-term plans will be. But he knows if he stays in Jackson, he'll stay at Union.

"Union is like a small family where everybody knows everybody and everybody is very helping," Tien said. "If you need help they're willing to help you. It's a very nice place to be. It's a good study environment and the professors are very helpful."

Chrissy Esnault of New Orleans echoed that assessment of Union's professors. A nursing student who heard about Union from a friend, Esnault said Union's faculty members have been "outstanding."

She specifically cited the help of nursing faculty members Tharon Kirk and Jill Webb, who have helped Esnault by soliciting donations and providing her with gift cards to purchase some necessities.

"They've been helping in a lot of ways," Esnault said. "Hopefully, if everything works out, I might just stay to graduate from Union."

Naomi Larsen, chair of sociology and family studies at Union, and her husband Jonathan opened their home to students who had transferred to Union.

"We have empty rooms upstairs, so we thought that was a way we could help," Larsen said.

With an empty nest, Larsen said having two college students living with her has taken some adjustment. But it's also

been a good experience, because it's given her a chance to interact with people from a different background and culture.

Larsen added that people from local churches have been generous with their support by providing donations to the two

students living with her.

"I think it helps people too because they have a face to put with where their money is going," Larsen said. "It's not just a faceless organization but it's going to people they know."

For Denney, it's the assis-

tance of faculty members like Larsen, Kirk, Webb, and others, as well as from many of the students who have helped, that means so much.

"They just loved me and took me in," Denney said of the Union community. "It was really good to feel that love." □

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Iowa Baptists celebrate anniversary

Baptist Press

WINTERSET, Iowa — The 10th annual meeting of the Iowa Baptist Convention of Iowa returned to the church where the convention was founded in 1955, First Baptist Church here. In addition to the 10th anniversary, messengers also celebrated 50 years of Southern Baptist work in the state.

The Nov. 4-5 meeting was attended by 127 messengers and 38 guests from 47 church-

in the midst of a partnership with the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

During the convention, Iowa Baptists approved a strategic plan for 2006-2010 and adopted a Cooperative Program budget of \$1,822,276, a .22 percent increase over the previous year.

As in previous years, 20 percent of Cooperative Program gifts from Iowa churches will be sent to the Southern Baptist missions causes and 80 percent will be used for Iowa missions and ministries. □

The Iowa convention is

Ancient church ruins in Israeli prison may be earliest Christian structure

By Greg Warner
Associated Baptist Press

MEGIDDO, Israel — The ruins of an ancient Christian church, found within the walls of an Israeli prison, may prove to be one of the earliest churches ever discovered and could change the historical understanding of the Christian church in the region.

Two elaborate mosaics loaded with Christian symbols — presumably the floor of a relatively large sanctuary — were unearthed recently by prisoners working on an expansion project for the Megiddo prison, near the site of the end-of-the-world battle of Armageddon described in the book of Revelation.

Some archaeologists say the evidence dates the mosaics to the late third century or early fourth century, when Christianity was outlawed by the occupying Romans and most Christian worship was held secretly in homes.

If the church was operating in the third century, it "would be very surprising, since Christianity was persecuted sporadically until the conversion of [Roman Emperor] Constantine around [A.D.] 312," said Richard Vinson, professor of New Testament at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond.

"If it proves to be as early as some of the early news reports suggest, it would be much earlier than most scholars of early Christianity would expect such

a thing," Vinson said.

Two prominent fish symbols at the center of one mosaic, pottery shards found on top of the floor, and the style of Greek used in the mosaics' inscriptions all suggest the floor was made in the late third century. Soon thereafter, the symbol of the cross replaced the fish as the dominant worship symbol, archaeologists say.

Joe Zias, former head of the Israeli Antiquities Authority, which controls such finds, said his "gut feeling is we may be looking at a Roman building that may have been converted to a church at a later date," Zias said.

The earliest existing churches are considered the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, both from after

A.D. 330, decades after Constantine's decree legalizing Christianity. But little of the original buildings exists in either case. The 30-foot-by-15-foot floor of the Megiddo church would be a major find.

But even a date in the late fourth century would be significant, scholars say. "Even though by that time Christianity was favored in the [Roman] Empire, this would be one of the earliest — if not the earliest

— building discovered," said Vinson. It's not yet known if the Megiddo site will be preserved intact and opened to visitors if the mosaics will be removed a museum. □

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MINISTRY — SENIOR ADULT
Central Baptist Church, Johnson City, Tenn., is accepting resumes for the position of senior adult minister. This is a part-time position with a work week of 30 hours. If you are interested, please send resume to Mr. Frank Hutchins, Senior Adult Minister Search Committee, Central Baptist Church, 300 N. Roan St., Johnson City, TN 37601.

MINISTRY — COMBINATION
First Baptist Church, Fernandina Beach, Fla., on Amelia Island is prayerfully seeking a children's/education minister. Located in a growing community with a deep history steeped in tradition, we are seeking a minister with a vision for the future and an appreciation of our past. A minimum requirement: seminary degree in children/education ministry. Resume to Children/Education Minister Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 416 Alachua St., Fernandina Beach, FL 32034.

Seeking full-time education/youth minister with God-filled spirit, passion for education, and desire to lead growing youth group. Two years college preferred, three years experience required. Send only new resumes by Nov. 19, 2005 to Search Committee, Liberty Baptist Church, 5199 Lakeland Dr., Flowood, MS 39232.

Jefferson Street Baptist Church is seeking a full-time minister of music and education. This candidate will primarily be responsible for music while assisting the staff in the promotion of Sunday School and developing an ongoing discipleship ministry. For more information please call (478) 272-7750 or send resume to Search Committee, 209 N. Jefferson St., Dublin, GA 31021.

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MINISTRY — CHILDREN
Church is seeking person to fill the full-time position of minister of childhood education. Minimum of two years experience in full-time children's ministry and bachelor's degree required. Send resume to Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 701 South Main St., Jonesboro, AR 72401.

Aloma Baptist Church is searching for a minister to families with children to facilitate ministry to children from birth through age 12, and to equip families as centers of spiritual nurture. Please send resume to Families/Children Ministry, 1815 SR 436, Winter Park, FL 32792 or e-mail valerie@alomachurch.org.

MISCELLANEOUS
Southwest Baptist Church is looking for a used or "repo" modular building for their young congregation. If you know of such, please call or e-mail Central Baptist Church, Crossville, Attn. Missions, phone (931) 484-8426, e-mail billy@cbccrossville.org.

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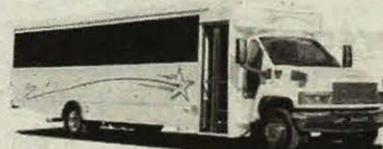
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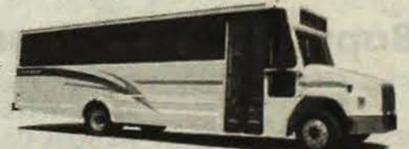
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book review

Dawn Ferguson

Dinner with a Perfect Strangerby David Gregory
Waterbrook Press, 2005

What would you do if you received an invitation for dinner from Jesus?

That's the dilemma facing Nick Cominsky, the primary character in David Gregory's new book *Dinner with a Perfect Stranger*. Nick — although working 70 or 80 hours a week and seeing very little of his wife and 20-month-old daughter — decides to show up at the restaurant and see who among his friends is behind this practical joke.

What Nick discovers is that whoever this 30-something man in the blue business suit is, he's playing the part of Jesus "in such an unassuming way." After a few minutes of trying to figure out who this character is, he asks Jesus "am I supposed to know you?" To which Jesus replies, "That's a good question. I would say the answer is yes." Nick goes on to say that he's never met Jesus as far as he can remember, and Jesus responds "That's true."

Such is the clever dialogue based on the premonition that if you had a chance to dine with Jesus what sort of questions would you ask Him? This is the point to which Nick finally arrives when he decides to "play along" and just pretend that his dinner companion really is Jesus. What he experiences is the most interesting dialogue he believes he's ever participated in and some questions about religion he's never heard talked about in or outside church — although church is not really a part of his life, it was at one time when he was much younger that his mother made him attend.

Nick's first question expresses his doubt with the fact that Jesus said "no one comes to the Father except by me." He is perplexed that different religions worship God in so many ways and he doesn't understand how Jesus can just say He's the one and only way. This brings up a very interesting discussion about various religions and their beliefs. Other questions concern God's disciples, hell and heaven, and the pathway to God.

Gregory's book can be easily read in about an hour, but it needs to be mulled over. Many of the answers to Nick's questions given by Jesus are well-crafted and packed with truth. For example, there's a discussion about how good you have to be to really be good and how much good is enough to get into heaven. During this dialogue, Nick compares the goodness of Mother Teresa to the evil of Adolph Hitler. He places himself slightly above the dividing line of average between the two and leans towards Mother Teresa.

In addressing the comparison and the basic fact that all men are sinners, Jesus replies, "It doesn't take horrendous outward acts. For the universe, humanity's rebellion is more like cancer than like a heart attack. It isn't a small murder that destroys the world. It's selfishness, discontentment, envy, pride — all the daily sins of the heart. God has to deal with the cancer."

In an interesting moment, Nick asks Jesus how to get in touch with Him again, and Jesus takes one of Nick's business cards and writes Revelation 3:20 on it. When Nick gets home after dinner, he searches several minutes for his Bible. When he finally finds it, he turns to Revelation and reads: "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he will be with me." — Ferguson is a correspondent for the *Baptist Reflector*.

Look to God for wisdom

By Mark Brown

Focal Passage: Job 28:12-19, 23-28

Seminary and money. While they might sit well together in that sentence fragment, they do not go well together in reality. At least they didn't when I was a divinity school student. A welcome opportunity to pick up extra cash came along, so I jumped at the chance to help a classmate move one of his friends from the trailer the couple rented to their first house.

There were three of us and we worked to get the contents loaded on a truck, paying little attention to what we were carrying until it came to the heavy stuff. As for boxes and such, we moved them with little regard for what they were or what they might contain. That's how we spent the morning and early afternoon; we grabbed boxes, walked the ramp into the back of the truck, stacked them and went back for more. We got a bite to eat on the way to the new place, hoping it all came off the truck easier than it went.

By the time we drove to their new house, mid-afternoon was rolling toward evening. We quickened our pace, happy by the thought of \$40 each. We were really humming when I heard a sound I will never forget. It wasn't a holler, and it was way more than a yelp. It had notes and it had lilt. It was a man-scream.

It came from Ralph, my buddy who had arranged the job. I can't replicate his noise, much less spell it. Suffice it to say that it's what the late Jerry Clower would have

sounded like had he been a slain-in-the-spirit charismatic.

I catapulted myself — no easy feat, mind you — from mid-way in the truck down the ramp, across the patio, and into the kitchen in what seemed about three steps.

Ralph was upright; his back rigid against the kitchen wall. At his feet and scattered about were brooms, mops, and curtain rods. On the floor between him and the spilled items was a long cardboard tube that had contained the menagerie until the bottom fell out.

Ralph was still slammed to the wall, his mouth open dentist-wide, and his bulging eyes fixated on a double-barreled shotgun that some ninny had included in the tube with the brooms and mops. When the stock-end of the gun had butted against the floor, the dangerous end of it just sort of leaned back. It rested against his chest with the barrels pointed just under his quaking chin.

"Are you okay," I asked, stifling my laugh while moving the gun. (I wondered why the packer of the tube thought sliding a 12-gauge in with the mops and brooms was a good idea, but Ralph didn't need conversation, so I kept it to myself.)

Ashen-faced, he mumbled, "All I could think was, Where can I go but to the Lord?"

Then Ralph took a break.

Ultimately, Job was asking Ralph's question. His life had been established on integrity. If it was right, he did it. If it wasn't right, he had no part of it. He also had plenty of stuff: cattle, sheep, servants, even children. I don't think Job had thought the two were connected, but

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Satan and Job's friends certainly did.

Like the contents of that cardboard tube, Job's life got shaken out and lay haphazardly in front of him. He was left against the wall of pitiful existence with danger pointed straight at him and nowhere to go. Nowhere but to the Lord.

How many times have you faced deep loss or physical pain and wondered what becomes of those who face trouble without the belief that God still cares, that God understands what makes absolutely no sense to you, if God is still there?

Job didn't have much. In fact, he didn't know nearly as much as he once thought he had known. So he asked questions. In anger, anguish, and astonishment, Job asked questions of God. That means that Job demonstrated his faith through the questions he asked. He didn't ask if God existed. He asked God where He was in all of this junk. Job's faith remained. Had Job not been faithful, he would not have wanted to die; he just would have.

The book of Job is not about the relationship of suffering to faithfulness, but rather it's all about how faith fosters questions and, in turn, how questions nurture faith toward the grand objective, which is wisdom. □ — Brown is director of news and publications at Carson-Newman College and a member of First Baptist Church, Jefferson City.

Adopted as God's children

By Kevin Shrum

Focal Passage: Romans 8:15-27

Adoption is a wonderful thing. A couple in a church I pastored in Kentucky adopted the young boy of a woman unable and unwilling to care for him. On the day the adoption was finalized we celebrated together — an unwanted child had found a home! When God found us there was great rejoicing in heaven as we were adopted into the family of God (Luke 15:1ff.).

The special status of the adopted, vv. 15-17

God has adopted us into His family, the family of God. Adoption affords us a special status as a child of God. In fact, it is the Spirit of God who activates adoption procedures as a person places his faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We are able then and only then to call God "Abba, Father!" As children we are heirs to all that God desires to give us in Jesus Christ. And even when we suffer we discover that our suffering as a child of God assures us that we will be glorified just as Jesus suffered as was glorified.

The future glory of the adopted, vv. 18-23

Sin wrecked and ruined human nature and the natural world. The curses of Genesis 3:14-19 declare

that 1) man is cursed, 2) woman is cursed, 3) Satan is cursed, and 4) the earth is cursed. In essence, suffering visits all of these categories. Even creation groans for redemption. Though we have been saved from the curse we must struggle with the effects of the curse in our flesh and in a sinful world.

But we suffer and endure sin in hope, because the hope that we have is that in Jesus Christ we will be redeemed and the world will be renewed. One day we will be set free from the bondage of corruption in the glorious freedom of God's children (v. 21). And what glory that will be!

The certain hope of the adopted, vv. 24-25

Hope is the anticipation of a thing that is looked forward to. Christian hope is the anticipation of the guarantee that what God says will come to pass. The Christian anticipates final redemption, completeness in Jesus Christ, and the final culmination of all things in Jesus Christ. Yet, because we have not seen these things come to pass as of yet, we eagerly wait for it with patience (v. 25).

Living a life of hope requires faith. If hope is the anticipation of things to come, faith sustains hope by assuring the believer that the

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things hoped for are not just fanciful thoughts but actual realities yet to be experienced (Hebrews 11:1-2). Hope combined with faith is made complete by love, the pre-eminent Christian virtue (1 Corinthians 13:13). This is why faith, hope, and love are the essential characteristics of the company of the adopted.

The unique help given to the adopted, vv. 26-27

Not only are we adopted into the family of God through a living hope, we are enabled and empowered to live for God by the power of the Holy Spirit because "the Spirit also joins to help in our weaknesses." Further, the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with unspoken groanings so that our praying is empowered and effectual. In other words, as adopted children of God we have hope, Holy Spirit power, and the assurance that God will hear our prayers even when we cannot speak or know how to articulate our deepest hurts and heartaches. Praise God He adopted us! □ — Shrum is pastor of Inglewood Baptist Church, Nashville.



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Union among top buys in education

Union news service

JACKSON — Union University has been included in the 2005 edition of "America's 100 Best College Buys," an annual report that evaluates academic quality and cost.

The report is issued by Institutional Research & Evaluation Inc., an independent research and consulting organization. The newest findings are based on the organization's 15th annual National College Survey.

The research company compiled its report from a survey of 1,477 accredited U.S. colleges and universities that offer four-year undergraduate degree programs and provide facilities for both room and board. Of the institutions surveyed, 1,044 schools responded.

To be considered for inclusion in the list of 100, a college or university must also have had an entering freshman class in fall 2004 with a high school grade point average and/or ACT score equal to or above the national average, and an out-of-state attendance cost in 2005-06 for two semesters below or not exceeding the national average by more than 10 percent.

Union's average grade point average for entering freshmen at the time of the survey was 3.5

on a 4.0 scale. Its average ACT was 24.3. Annual costs for tuition, fees, room and board average \$22,260.

Only about one third of the 100 schools chosen in 2005 are privately funded. □

Precedent set in defining 'parents'

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Ground has been broken in the realm of defining parentage in the context of new reproduction technologies after the Tennessee Supreme Court ruled Oct. 6 that a woman who gave birth to triplets conceived with their father's sperm and eggs donated by another woman had legal rights as a mother, even though she is not genetically related to them.

The babies were born in 2001, and Charles Galiwango and Cindy Culpepper lived together, sharing parenting and

financial responsibilities, *The Tennessean* newspaper in Nashville reported. But when their relationship ended, a unique custody battle ensued.

Legal scholars say the 4-1 decision could be used in future cases involving nontraditional

parents, such as homosexual couples.

"The woman is the child's legal mother with all the rights and responsibilities of parenthood," Chief Justice Frank F. Drowota III wrote in the majority opinion upholding earlier

decisions to grant Galiwango and Culpepper joint custody of the children, with Culpepper listed as the primary custodian. Galiwango was granted visitation rights and ordered to child support, *The Tennessean* said. □

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MINISTRY — PASTOR

Colonial Heights Baptist Church, 108 Colonial Heights Rd., Kingsport, TN 37663, is seeking an associate pastor who is an energetic, dynamic, seasoned individual to provide leadership in the areas of education, evangelism, and discipleship. Will have supervisory responsibilities for administrative and facilities maintenance staff. Reports to the senior pastor. Requires seminary training with a minimum of 5 years experience in the areas listed above. Leadership and teamwork skills required. Send resumes to the church, attention Wayne Strong.

◆◆◆◆

Mission-minded, Southern Baptist, country church seeking a bivocational pastor; beautiful area, great opportunities to do God's work; 50 miles west of Nashville. Send resume to FBC, Pinewood, c/o Deborah Boutwell, 6794 Piney River Rd. N., Bon Aqua, TN 37025 or e-mail to boutwell_d@bellsouth.net.

◆◆◆◆

Bivocational pastor. If interested please send resume to Pastor Search Committee, Calvary Baptist Church, 6252 Memphis Arlington Rd., Bartlett, TN 38135-2462.

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West Shiloh Baptist Church is in search of a full-time pastor. Send resume to Pastor Search Committee, 9881 Hwy. 142, Stantonville, TN 38379.

MINISTRY — MUSIC

Associate pastor of worship. Full-time, must be able to lead both contemporary and traditional styles of worship music. A desire to work with youth would be a big plus. Send resume to Gum Springs Baptist Church, Attn. Search Committee, 5270 Marion Rd., Cunningham, TN 37052.

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MINISTRY — STUDENT

First Baptist Church, Hayti, Mo., is seeking a full-time youth director. Please send resume to Youth Search Committee, c/o First Baptist Church, 201 East Lincoln, Hayti, MO 63851.

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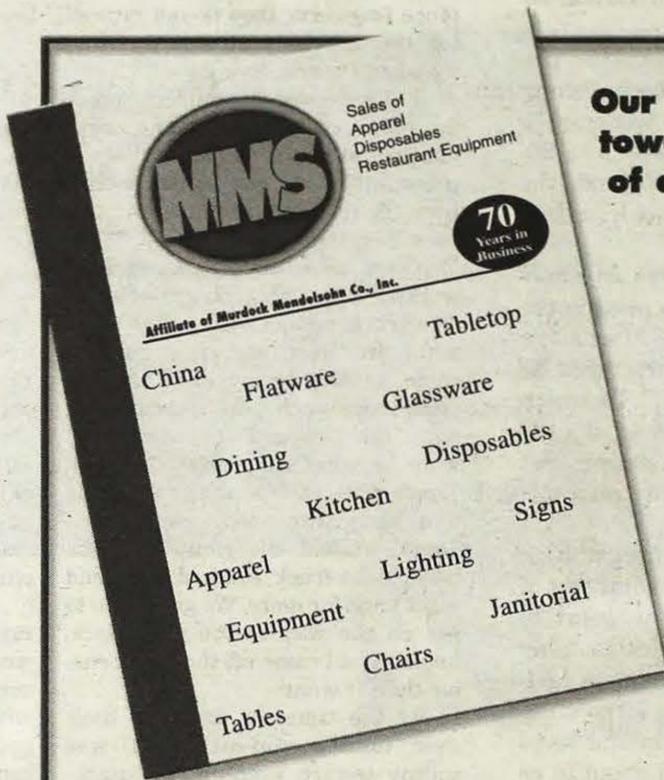
Snyder Memorial Baptist Church is seeking a full-time minister to youth. The position requires at least 5 years experience in student ministry and a seminary/divinity school degree. Snyder Memorial, a CBF/SBC church, is located in Fayetteville, NC. Please send resume to Youth Search, SMBC, 701 Westmont Dr., Fayetteville, NC 28305 or e-mail resume to larryd@snydermbc.com. Check out www.snydermbc.com for more information about the church.

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Growing church of 800+ in Orlando area seeking minister of students, high school ministry focus. Desiring leader in biblical discipleship and sanctification. Send resume to Youth Ministry Search, 2354 Winter Woods Blvd., Winter Park, FL 32792.

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Clinch River Baptist Church of Lake City, Tenn., is seeking a dynamic, Christian leader of young people to fill the full-time position of minister of youth. Please mail resume to Kenny Clotfelter, 108 Redwood Rd., Clinton, TN 37716 or e-mail clotfelter@wmconnect.com.



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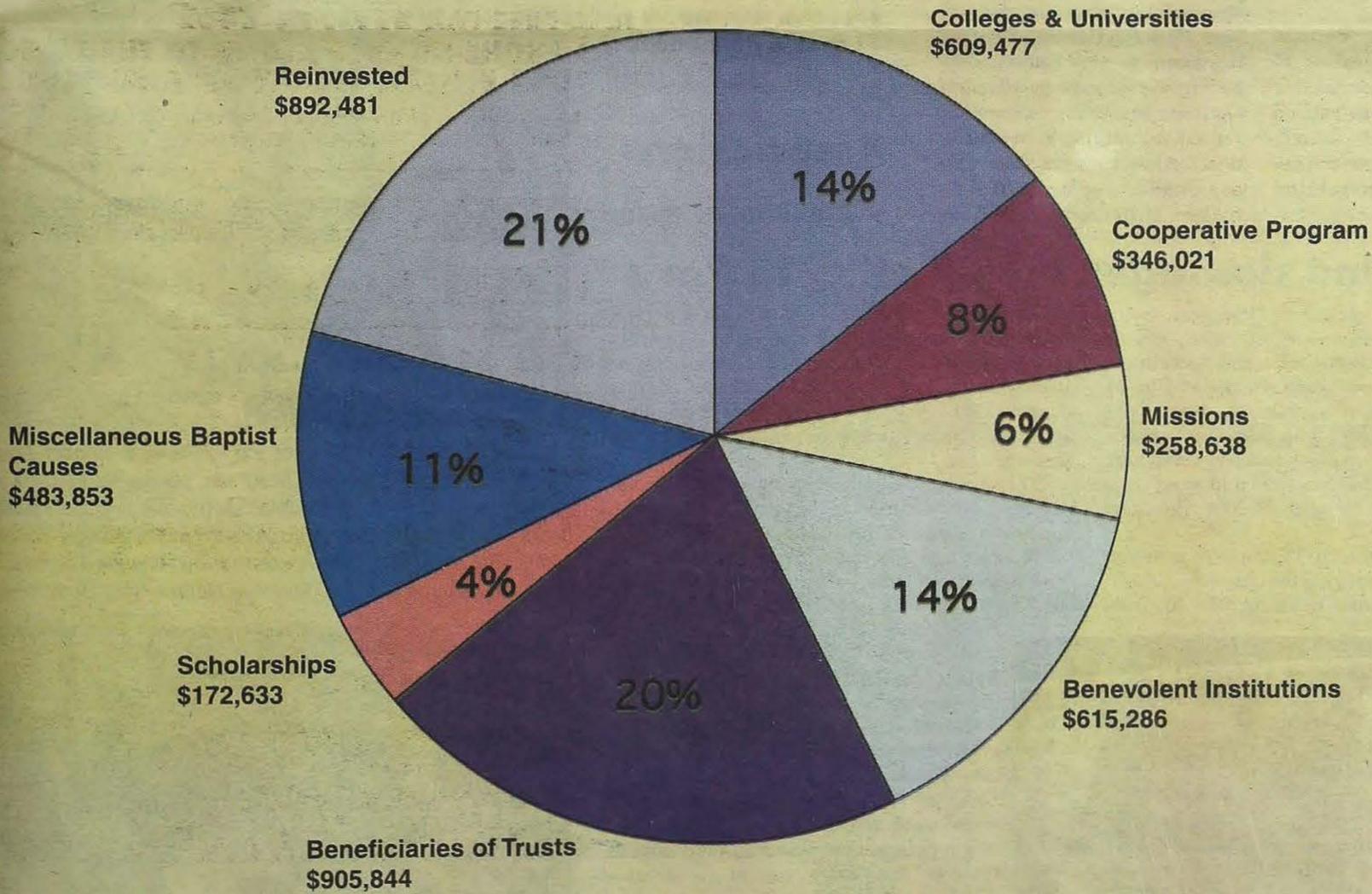
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Deaths

◆ **McKnight Fite**, 89, a retired Baptist pastor of Chattanooga died Oct. 22. A graduate of Union University, Jackson, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, he served several churches in Kentucky, Texas, and Tennessee. In Chattanooga, he was pastor of St. Elmo Avenue Baptist Church from 1955-1968. He also served on the Hamilton County Baptist Association camp board in Chattanooga and the *Baptist and Reflector* board of directors. He served as pastor of Arlington Baptist Church, Knoxville, on the Tennessee Baptist Foundation board of trustees, and the East Tennessee Baptist Hospital, Knoxville, board. After retirement, Fite served several churches around Jefferson City on an interim basis. He is survived by his wife, Dorothy Nell Jernigan Fite; two daughters, and a son.

Leaders

◆ **Tim Hale** of Maryville has been called as pastor, Bays Mountain Baptist Church, Kingsport.

◆ Short Creek Baptist Church, Christiana, called **F. Murray Mathis** as pastor effective Nov. 1. He is retired pastor, Third Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, and former Tennessee Baptist Convention president.



LUDON SANDLIN, left, chairman of deacons, Highland Park Baptist Church, Lawrenceburg, receives a plaque from the Tennessee Baptist Convention from **Ray Maynard**, director of missions, Lawrence County Baptist Association, on the 50th anniversary of the church, which was celebrated recently. **James Lee**, former pastor, preached during the morning worship service.

◆ **Ron Blaydes**, pastor of Ellejoy Baptist Church, Seymour, has resigned.

◆ **Jack Hitch**, pastor of Oak Hill Baptist Church, Friendsville, has resigned.

◆ **Tom McLemore**, pastor, West Maryville Baptist Church, Maryville, has resigned.

◆ Knox County Baptist Association, Knoxville, has called **Tom Hodges** of Maryville as Montgomery Village Baptist Center director. He comes to the Baptist center from Broadway Baptist Church, Maryville, where he served as minister of education for the past six years. He is a graduate of Western Kentucky University, Bowling

Green, Ky. He and his wife Rose Ann have four children.

Churches

◆ **Cave Springs Missionary Baptist Church, Rogersville**, recently dedicated its new building with afternoon services on Oct. 16. Tours of the building were provided along with a media presentation of the story of the new structure.

◆ **Indian Springs Baptist Church, Kingsport**, celebrated its 50th anniversary on Nov. 6.

Associations

◆ **Indian Creek Baptist**



STEVE JETT, center, signs an agreement at Hermitage Hills Baptist Church, Nashville, which will lead to an "adoption" between and his wife, Susan, to his right, and the church. The Jetts International Mission Board missionaries to Germany. Looking are **Poly Rouse**, left, senior pastor, and **Brenda Rogers** of church. Beginning in the summer of 2006 Hermitage Hills plan send teams every quarter of the year for the next five years.

Association, based in Wayneboro, held its annual meeting recently. Elected as officers were **Joey Franks**, pastor, Leatherwood Baptist Church, moderator; **Lawrence Steiner**, pastor, Grace Baptist Church, vice moderator; **Linda Griggs**, member, Ray's Chapel

Baptist Church, clerk; **Gary Anderson**, member, Philadelphia Baptist Church, treasurer. ◆ A team from **Sullivan Baptist Association, Kingsport**, conducted ical missions work in Nicaragua Nov. 5-12.



THE LEADERSHIP TEAM of the Chilhowee Baptist Association Ministers Wives Fellowship, Maryville, pause, in photo above during an Oct. 14-15 trip to Massachusetts and Connecticut. The team held two events for women and ministers wives. Tennessee were, at bottom, **Pat Brown**; second row, **Glenda Thomas**; top row, from left, **Sandie Hodges**; **Michelle Hearon**; and **Beth Armstrong**.

Strong wind damages New Bethel in Paris

Baptist and Reflector

PARIS — Western District Baptist Association disaster relief chain saw teams responded Nov. 11 with a work day to remove trees downed by straight-line winds Nov. 6 at Covenant Home Ranch, an independent outdoor ministry camp here run by local Christian businessmen and supervised by **Brodie Swisher**, a member of New Harmony Baptist Church here.

Jim Twilbeck, Western District Association director of missions, reported that he received several phone calls Sunday morning, Nov. 6, from

local residents reporting damage from a possible tornado. **Twilbeck** said both the Federal and Tennessee Emergency Management Agencies did assessments Nov. 7 on New Bethel Baptist Church, Paris, and at least five church members' houses and mobile homes were also damaged from the storm.

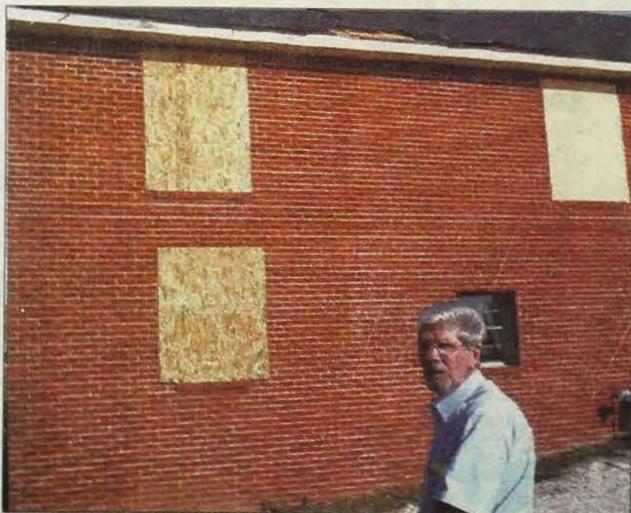
"The church is temporarily meeting at Chapel Hill Methodist Church, Paris, until insurance estimates are finalized," he added.

"It looks like a possible tornado damaged the church and the homes. The church looks like a bomb went off in the inside with all the glass windows shattered and blown out, and the walls actually moved several inches. New Bethel Church's walls are bowed out from the damage."

National weather service out of Memphis reported at 2:30 a.m. Nov. 6 straight-line winds caused extensive damage just north of Paris. The winds at their peak were estimated to be near 120 mph cutting a path almost nine miles but not continuous and 300 yards at its greatest width.

TEMA officials added that this weather system may have been a part of the killer weather system that made a path through Indiana and Kentucky on the same night.

Twilbeck reported that a team from Shady Grove Baptist Church, Paris, also responded in the community by helping clean up a yard. In addition, First Baptist Church, Paris', disaster relief chain saw trailer was on site at the ranch. □



PASTOR JOHN BOWLES of New Bethel Baptist Church, Paris, surveys the damage to the church by straight line winds on Nov. 6.



JOHN PERKINS, center, pastor, Southside Baptist Church, Son City, is honored by the church on Oct. 26 with a Pastor Association Dinner and to celebrate his 70th birthday. A music program was presented along with a devotional by the daughter of **Pe Debra Scalf**. Also participating were members of an Hispanic community being ministered to by the church.