

Baptist & Reflector

Statewide Edition

Telling the Story of Tennessee Baptists

Vol. 172 / No. 1; Jan. 11, 2006

this week's news

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Tennesseans continue to help tsunami victims

By Marcia Knox
Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — One year after the tsunami disaster in southern Asia, Tennessee Baptist volunteers are continuing ministry to survivors.

On Dec. 26, 2004, a massive earthquake in the Indian Ocean spawned one of the most destructive tsunamis in recorded history. It left an estimated 250,000 people dead and millions without homes.

Tennessee Baptists, along with Southern Baptists from across the nation, continue to aid and share God's love with survivors.

Three Tennessee Baptist teams have returned home after ministering in November and December in Thailand.

A team sponsored by First Baptist Church, Shelbyville, helped distribute food to 2,000 families in Khao Lak, a city located 100 kilometers north of Phuket, a tourist area in the southern portion of Thailand.



KATIE HOAG of Alpha Baptist Church, Morristown, spends time with children in Bann Nam Khem, Thailand, an area hit by the tsunami which struck southern Asia in December of 2004.

The volunteers worked for an international humanitarian and disaster relief organization.

"We distributed dry goods and food in and around 20 different villages during two

daily runs, which were non-perishable goods in the morning and perishable goods in the afternoon," said Jeff Rasnick, a member of First Baptist who led the team.

The dry goods were picked

up in trucks in the morning from a warehouse then taken to a guest house used for a distribution center where the goods were reapportioned into smaller portions for the individual families.

According to Rasnick, stickers on the families' temporary and permanent housing, which would be considered substandard in the United States, determined how many bags were given to the families.

"We were able to talk with the families through Christian Thai interpreters and build relationships with the families when delivering the goods. We were also told that there were known Christians in seven of the villages," Rasnick said.

"We were able to facilitate relationships by planting the seeds for church planting and to evangelize the areas for the part to come during the reaping," he added, noting that the majority of the people were Buddhists.

— See Tennesseans, page 3

Churches encouraged to embrace Operation Warm Homes

By Lonnie Wilkey
Baptist and Reflector

NASHVILLE — Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen has launched Operation Warm

Homes Tennessee to help low-income families in the state with what is expected to be higher than normal heating costs.

"We have all felt the impact of

unusually high gas prices this year," Bredesen said in a letter on the www.WarmHomes.Tn.org web site.

"As we get deeper into the cold weather season, some Ten-

nesseans will struggle to keep their homes warm while still having money left over for other important expenses," the governor continued.

He noted the program will help low income families — including the elderly, disabled, and families with young children — with winter heating costs.

"We will put one-time resources toward supporting an existing federal program that targets the most vulnerable of our fellow citizens," he wrote.

Bredesen said the state is investing \$5 million to be used with \$21 million from the federal government to provide assistance to qualified applicants.

Bredesen also called on churches across Tennessee to embrace the program.

"I have asked every faith-based congregation and church in Tennessee to donate at least \$100 toward the effort," Bredesen wrote.

Donations will go to a non-profit, tax-deductible fund.

In December, the Administrative Committee of the Executive Board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention authorized \$10,000 to go to the effort.

TBC Executive Director James Porch also is calling on

Tennessee Baptist churches to join in the effort.

While noting that most Tennessee Baptist churches "will process many calls for help for heating bills this winter, Operation Warm Homes provides us another way to join with our fellow Tennesseans in helping bear the burden of the cold through this winter for needy people," Porch said.

"Tennessee Baptists can make a difference in the lives of people as we give together in the name of the living Christ," he added.

Donations for Operation Warm Homes may be sent to the Tennessee Baptist Convention accounting office. The check and envelop should be marked specifically for Operation Warm Homes and mailed to TBC, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024. All contributions will go directly for that cause.

Checks may also be sent to: Operation Warm Homes TN (CFMT), P.O. Box 440225, Nashville, TN 37244

More information can be found on the Operation Warm Homes web site, or questions can also be directed to the Executive Office of the Tennessee Baptist Convention at (615) 373-2255. □

Energy saving tips offered for the winter months

Editor's Note: The following energy saving tips can be found at www.WarmHomes.Tn.org. The web site notes that energy-savings are based on information from the Department of Energy's web site at www.doe.gov.

Using energy wisely can reduce consumption and save money on utility bills. Some of the following tips cost nothing and can save a lot.

- Have your furnace and gas appliances serviced annually by a qualified contractor to ensure safety and maximum energy-efficiency.
- When buying a new heating system or appliance, compare energy-efficiency ratings and annual operating costs.
- Put on a sweater and set your thermostats between 65 and 68 degrees during the winter. For sleep hours, set the temperature five degrees lower and add a cozy blanket to your bed. When away from home for more than a few hours, set your thermostat at 58 degrees. Warmer temperatures are recommended for homes with ill or elderly persons, or infants.
- Seal leaks around doors, windows, and other openings, such as pipes or ducts, with caulking or weather-stripping.
- Use draperies, awnings, blinds, or shutters

on all windows to slow the loss of heat through the glass. In winter, keep window coverings open on sunny days to let the sun's warmth in and close them at night to insulate against the cold.

- Avoid blocking heating registers and air returns with furniture, draperies, or carpet.
- Consider storm or thermal windows and doors or double-pane glass. A less expensive alternative is plastic sheeting, which can be temporarily fastened over doors or windows.
- A dirty furnace filter can drive up the cost of heating your home. Change or clean filters in heating and cooling units twice a year.
- Check to see if your attic, crawl space, and/or basement have recommended levels of insulation. Add insulation as needed.
- A humidifier, either on your furnace or as a separate unit, can help control heating costs. You'll feel warmer in moist air, so you can set your thermostat lower.
- Repair leaky faucets promptly.
- Be sure that dishwashers, washing machines, and clothes dryers are fully loaded before using.
- Drain sediment from the water heater tank at least annually. □

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SBC ethnics pioneer dies

Associated Baptist Press

DALLAS — Pioneer Baptist ethicist Foy Valentine died suddenly Jan. 7 of an apparent heart attack, family members said. He was 82.

A native Texan and Dallas resident, Valentine was executive director of the Southern Baptist Convention's former Christian Life Commission in Nashville from 1960 to 1987.

A key figure in the emergence of progressive ethical thinking among Southern Baptists, Valentine's most notable influence was as a champion of civil rights — long before Southern Baptists openly embraced the concept, colleagues said.

W.C. Fields of Nashville, longtime director of Baptist Press and a friend of Valentine's for decades, described Valentine as the most significant civil rights leader among Southern Baptists during the 1960s, '70s, and '80s.

The source of Valentine's convictions regarding racial equality "without a doubt ... came from his grounding in his faith, his love and understanding of the Scriptures, and the fact that from his earliest days, his parents and peers helped him to become a deeply devoted Christian," Fields noted.

"During those dark days, when civil rights was such an explosive issue, Foy always was well-informed, sure of the Christian approach, and he had the courage to follow through on his convictions," Fields said. "His courage was amazing." □

Oklahoma pastor, SBC leader resigns after arrest

Baptist Press

FULSA, Okla. — Lonnie Latham, pastor of South Tulsa Baptist Church here was arrested the night of Jan. 3 in Oklahoma City for "offering to engage in an act of lewdness" according to charges published in various wire reports.

In an area of the city known for male prostitution, Latham allegedly asked a male undercover police officer to go with him to a local hotel for sex.

Television cameras captured him leaving the jail the next day when he stated he "was set up"

and was in the area "pastoring to police."

When reached by phone, Latham told Baptist Press that on advice from his attorneys he declined to comment.

Latham has been pastor of South Tulsa Baptist Church since 2002. The statistical records available for the SBC show that the church grew in resident members from 995 to 1,571 during his first two years there. Information for 2005 was not available.

He also served in various roles within the denomination: as recording secretary for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and by virtue of that office as a member of the state convention's 64-member executive board, and as one of four members representing Oklahoma on the 82-member Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention. Both roles required election by messengers from churches, for the BGCO at the 2000 state annual meeting and for the SBC EC at the 2004 national annual meeting.

Baptist Press learned from officials of the church, the BGCO, and the SBC Executive Committee that Latham has resigned each of his positions. □

NBC's 'Book of Daniel' mocks Christian families

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — NBC has debuted what it calls an "edgy" new drama starring a drug-addicted Episcopal priest who has a wife who downs mid-day martinis, a 23-year-old son who is a homosexual Republican, a 16-year-old daughter who sells marijuana, and a 16-year-old adopted son who is having sexual relations with the bishop's daughter.

Though most Christians would see this as a mockery, NBC contends "The Book of Daniel," which premiered Jan. 6 at 10 p.m., is a serious portrayal of an average American family.

"None of us are perfect," Jack Kenny, a homosexual who created and produced the show, said in *The Boston Globe* Jan. 1. "We all have secrets, things we don't want our spouses or lovers to know we did, whether it's that extra martini or reliance on prescription painkillers."

The Christian watchdog group American Family Association is calling on people to

protest the show by contacting their local NBC affiliates, sending e-mails to NBC, and spreading the word about its content via church bulletins and newsletters.

At least three NBC affiliates have announced they will not air the program

"You'd be hard pressed in America to find that type of dysfunctional family, and yet NBC is going to portray it as normal," Randy Sharp, director of special projects for AFA, told *The Globe*.

"They take our Savior Jesus Christ and reflect Him as an everyday Joe. How disrespectful. ... We will be recording this show, reviewing it, and contacting the advertisers who put their dollars behind this kind of disrespect to the Christian community."

The last time AFA went after a television show that spoofed Christianity, it resulted in the show being canceled, *The Globe* noted. In 1998 ABC aired a show about a renegade Catholic priest called "Nothing Sacred," which was short-lived despite positive reviews. □

18,000 collegians challenged to share Jesus Christ

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — A capacity crowd of 18,000 college students from all 50 states and more than 20 countries filled Nashville's Gaylord Entertainment Center Jan. 2-5 for Passion '06.

"Our heartbeat is to see the campuses of this nation awaken to God," Louie Giglio, who founded the Passion movement in 1995, said.

At Passion '06, students were discipled by Giglio, Beth Moore, and John Piper, worshiped with the David Crowder Band, Chris Tomlin, Charlie Hall, and Matt Redman, met in small community groups, and were encouraged to visit the "Go Center," where more than 50 exhibitors from educational institutions and missions agencies shared with them how they can be involved in sharing the gospel throughout the world.

Students who attended Passion '05 and have since been placed on the mission field returned for Passion '06 to cele-

TBC web site visits exceed one-half million

Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — The web site of the Tennessee Baptist Convention (www.tn-baptist.org) drew 507,495 visits in 2005, an increase of 58 percent over the 320,885 visits recorded in 2004.

September brought the most visits (60,074) of any month (during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina) while the most visits on a single day was 3,367 on March 2, just before the Youth Evangelism Conference.

The day with the fewest visits was Feb. 6 (Super Bowl Sunday).

The *Baptist and Reflector* page on the TBC web site (other than home page) was the most viewed page with 158,208 total views in 2005. □

brate and testify to what God had done in the past year.

Susan Loyd was one Passion '05 attendee who responded to the call to share the gospel in New York. She visited the Go Center and spoke with representatives from New Hope New York, part of the North American Mission Board's Strategic Focus Cities initiative.

"God had already put seeds in my heart for New York City. He was already leading me there. At Passion '05, it was like He was using a megaphone," Loyd said. □

Wildfire destroys Texas church

Associated Baptist Press

KOKOMO, Texas — Wildfires sweeping across North Texas burned down Kokomo Baptist Church here Dec. 31.

While members of the church were preventing wildfires from destroying homes in their community, a fire turned the church into a "pile of rubble," according to deacon Woodrow Browning.

Members remain upbeat despite losing their facilities, Browning reported. □



Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes



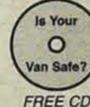
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— Continued from page 1

During the evenings volunteers held eye clinics. "We were able to pass out our tracts at the clinics when we were off duty. We created a relationship so that when people return with a message of Jesus there will be a bridge to reach the villagers. Through smiles and knowledge of the language, barriers were lowered for actual witnessing," Rasnick said.

Leroy Sterry, a member of Bethel Baptist Church, Greenbrier, and a Tennessee Baptist disaster relief volunteer, worked with the Shelbyville team on his second tsunami-related trip. He ministered in Sri Lanka last March.

He observed a lot of progress has been made in the tsunami-affected areas, noting the housing situation was better in Thailand than it was in Sri Lanka.

While that team was doing food distribution, a 10-member construction team, which included six people from Alpha Baptist Church, Morristown, was in the same area.

The team worked with government-supported Asian disaster relief efforts, nine hours a day painting and renovating six houses which had survived the tsunami, according to Jeff Taylor, a member of Alpha Baptist.

Taylor related that one man whose home they helped renovate had lost around 30 family members. The man lived in a two story house with his surviving son. He would bring the team a photo each day of one of his relatives who died.

"The man opened up to us and hugged us for our assistance," Taylor said.

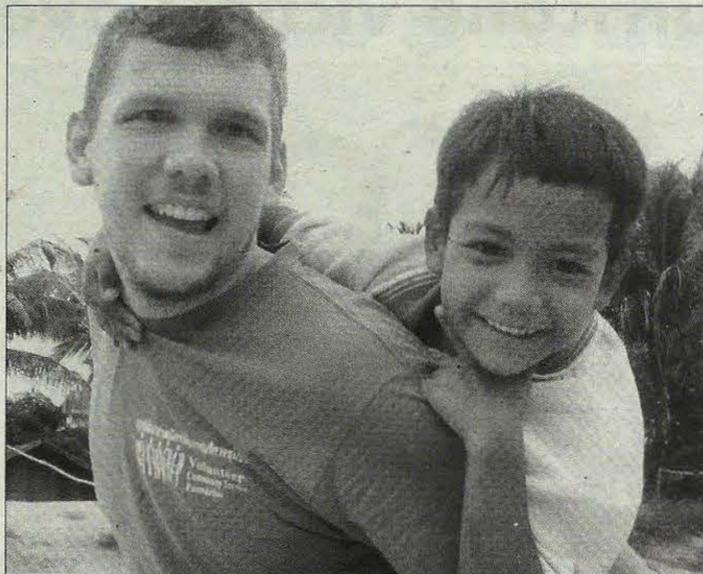
Khao Lak is a fishing community where more than 5,000 people died. The area was completely devastated, Taylor reported.

"We understood that the people were mad at Buddha for letting the tsunami happen, and the area was still devastated a year after it occurred," Taylor said.

With Bible studies going on in the area, Taylor expressed hope that relationships developed with the people will help spread Christianity among the people.

Glenn Eddington, a member of Two Rivers Baptist Church, Nashville, and a Tennessee Baptist disaster relief volunteer, also worked with the team.

While working on the door and window installation team, Eddington participated in a series of prayers with his team on site before the work began and then later with the families after the work was finished.



TRISTIN PARKER of Lancaster Baptist Church, Lancaster, plays with a child in Thailand while serving there in December, ministering to victims of the tsunami which struck southern Asia in late 2004.

Even though the team didn't see any decisions for Christ with the families, the full-time volunteers have started a Bible study in Bann Nam Khem, Eddington reported.

"It was a blessed time just to be there, and it grabbed at my heart string. I would go back and work there."

Another team of six volunteers, sponsored by New Salem Baptist Association, Carthage, recently worked in Bann Nam Khem, north of Khao Lak, doing construction and food distribution, according to team leader Mark Stinnett, associational director of missions.

"It was awesome," said Stinnett who was on his first overseas mission trip. "God put the team together, and God was with us. The connection that we made with the Thai people was unreal. God was working."

According to Stinnett, one Thai worker who attended a Bible study made a decision for Christ. The team worked the first week doing sealing and painting on concrete block structures and putting in windows and doors on homes. The second week the team painted and did construction in the morning and in the afternoon distributed food and supplies.

Noel Willems, a member of First Baptist Church, Columbia, and a Tennessee Baptist disaster relief volunteer, served with the team in the fishing village.

According to Willems, the team was able to talk to all the owners of the homes where they worked who were living somewhere else while the work was being finished. He estimated that the team worked on almost 12 houses.

"The Thai people were friendly. We represented a high profile humanitarian organization so everyone rec-

ognized us in our t-shirts from their history of working in the area.

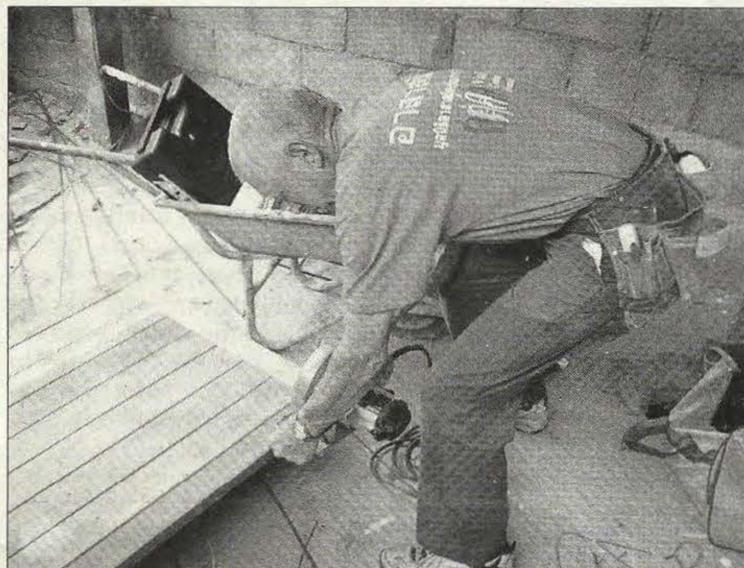
"We understood that prior to the tsunami there were only three Christian churches in the area, but after the tsunami there are now 23 Christian churches," he said.

Willems observed that "people are now more interested in the Christian gospel" and that they were grateful for the food distribution in the refugee camps.

He observed that Buddhists in the country are slowly accepting the idea of Jesus as Lord instead of Buddha. His team worked with one Buddhist who has begun to attend Bible studies. They are hopeful he will one day accept Christ. □



VOLUNTEERS from several Tennessee churches and associations recently served in Khao Lak, Thailand. From left are Tim Bates, Lancaster Baptist Church, Lancaster; Mark Stinnett, director of missions, Salem Baptist Association; Charlie Overcash, Hilldale Baptist Church, Clarksville; Tristin Parker, Lancaster Baptist; Noel Willems, First Baptist Church, Columbia; and Bobby Moss, Lancaster Baptist.



NOEL WILLEMS of First Baptist Church, Columbia, helped paint and renovate houses that survived the tsunami which struck southern Asia in late 2004.

Churches underutilize Internet, survey shows

LifeWay news service

NASHVILLE — Research results released for the first time in the January/February edition of *Facts & Trends* magazine show one out of every four Protestant churches in the United States has virtually no involvement with the World Wide Web.

Facts & Trends is published bimonthly by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The study, conducted by Ellison Research (Phoenix, Ariz.) among a representative sample of 871 Protestant church ministers nationwide, explored how churches use web technology. It shows 27 percent of all churches have no connectivity at all — no staff e-mail, no web site, and no Internet connection.

The survey showed larger churches were far more likely to have web sites than smaller churches. The larger church web sites also tended to have more content such as special pages for youth.

While the research shows that 58 percent of all churches provide Internet access for their staff, a similar study conducted in 2004 by Ellison Research showed 91 percent of all ministers have access to the Internet. The current study demonstrates that in many cases, ministers have personal access but not access through their church.

Only half of all churches provide staff with e-mail, and just under half maintain a web site. The proportion with an active Internet site has not changed significantly over the past year.

Relatively few Protestant churches use e-mail prayer chains (23 percent), have an e-mail church newsletter (18 percent), or have an online member directory (4 percent).

The proportion of churches making some use of the Internet is lower in the South (65 percent) than it is in other parts of the country. The smallest churches (with less than 100 in the congregation) are much less likely to use the Internet (60 percent) than are midsize (100-199 people; 86 percent) or larger churches (200 people or more; 96 percent). Churches led by older ministers are also much less likely to be connected than are those with a pastor under the age of 60.

Presbyterian churches are the major denominational group most likely to be using the Internet (92 percent).

Most other major denominational groups were about average, but Baptists from outside the Southern Baptist Convention (such as Progressive Baptist, Missionary Baptist, American Baptist) are much less likely than others to make any use of the web (54 percent). In general, mainline and evangelical churches do not differ much in church use of the web.

The study also explored web content among churches with active Internet sites. Only four types of content are provided by a majority of all Protestant churches with a web site: a map and/or directions to the church (70 percent), a calendar of upcoming events (65 percent), a statement of beliefs (60 percent), and pages for specific ministry departments (56 percent). In addition, half of the churches provide staff e-mail addresses on their site. □

DSCC students serve hurricane victims over holiday

For Baptist and Reflector

DYERSBURG — While many students across Tennessee were hurrying home for the holiday season after final exams, a team from Dyersburg State Community College prepared to serve part of their Christmas break doing disaster relief work for hurricane victims in New Orleans Dec. 17-22.

The Baptist Collegiate Ministry at DSCC offered the opportunity.

The group was hosted by First Baptist Church, Avondale, a suburb of New Orleans, which was hit by hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

The Tennessee students slept in the parsonage of the church, since the pastor's family had moved into a new home just days prior to Katrina. The parsonage was spared by the storms, but the church building suffered damage.

The DSCC team painted four rooms with two coats of paint, cleaned the furniture, and prepared it for use. A previous volunteer team had done some clean-up work in the church after part of the roof was damaged and water stood inside the building for weeks. A second crew had replaced damaged sheet rock and repaired the roof.

The DSCC team also cleaned up the church library, repainted shelves, cleaned up and resorted books, and got the library ready for use. They also cleaned up the Avondale church kitchen and stripped and waxed the entire floor of the fellowship/children's building. The team also was able to help work at one home.

"Pastor Marc Daniels from the Avondale Church shared with us that most of the members of the church had not been able to return home for five to six weeks after the storms, and when they returned most found much damage to their own homes," said Stan Cavness, campus minister for the Baptist Collegiate Ministry at DSCC.

"The church members had been very concerned about their church building, but most were still trying to get their families back in a safe home and had been unable to do a lot to the church.

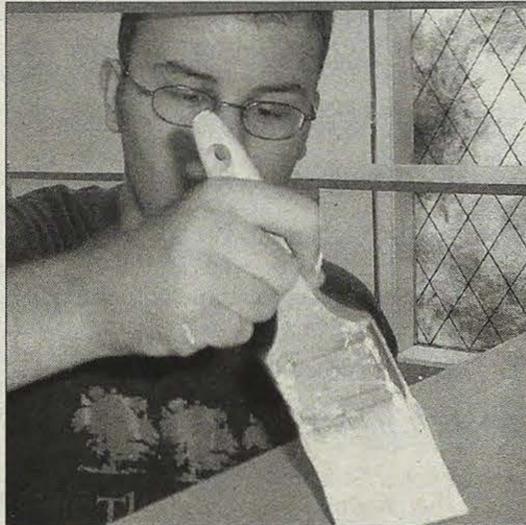
"Amazingly, the church was ministering in the community ... helping coordinate services and needs the many families needed," Cavness said. "While we were there the pastor was busy helping families meet their needs and the church had been used to feed the people in the community for several weeks prior to our arrival to help."



TEAM MEMBERS WERE, from left, Rhonda McQuay, Samuel Buchanan, Kim Neill, Sam Stephens, and Sara Ellen Wright.

The DSCC team was able to tour the city of New Orleans and see the areas flooded, as well as the canals where the levees had broken. They also toured New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Funding for the trip came from fund-raising events held by the Baptist Collegiate Ministry, area churches, and the Tennessee Baptist Convention. □



SAM STEPHENS paints library shelves at First Baptist Church, Avondale, near New Orleans, La.

Student's view

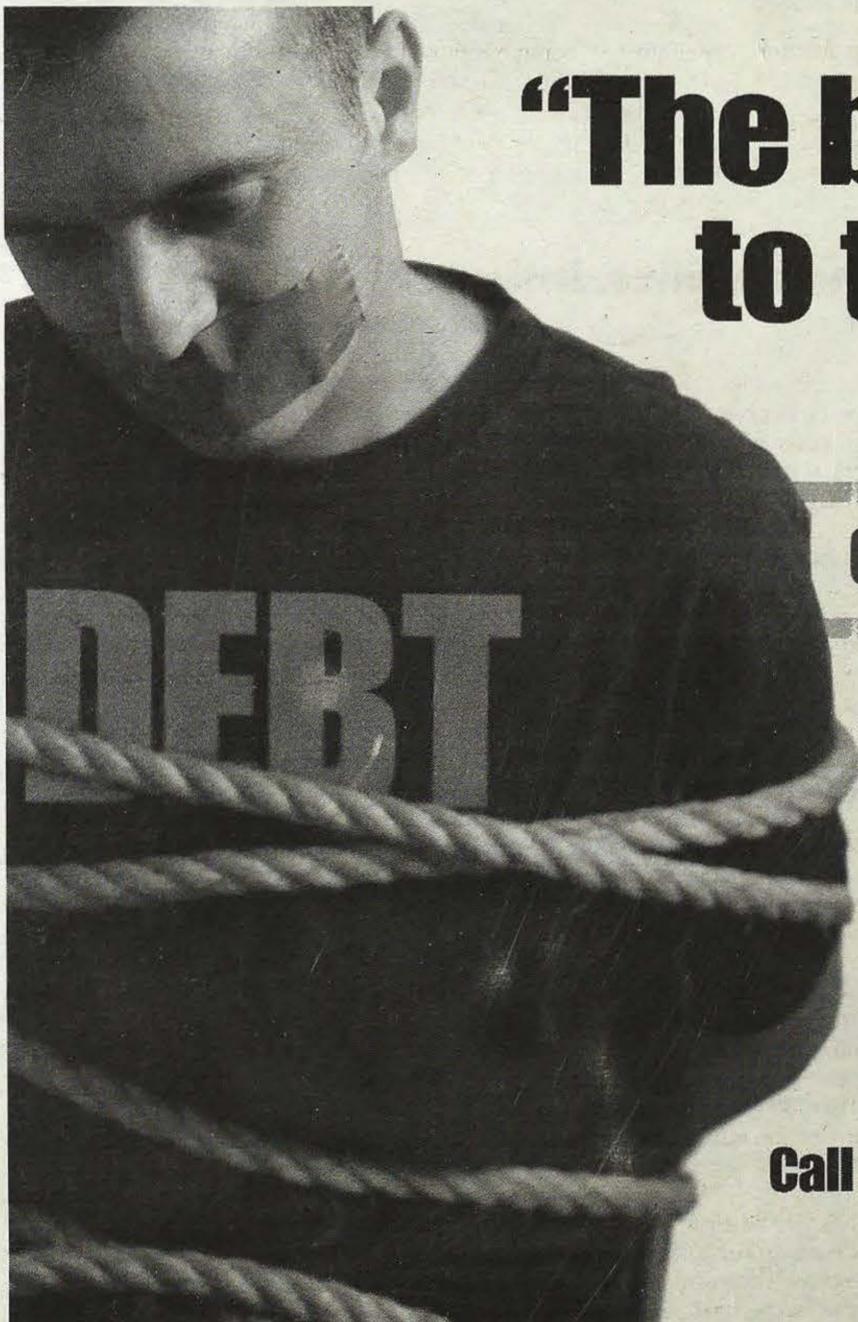
By Samuel E. Stephens
For Baptist and Reflector

DYERSBURG — When we first came to the southern Louisiana area I didn't see a lot of economic depression or architectural damage so in my ignorance I thought the people of New Orleans were back on their feet again, I was very mistaken. As soon as we crossed the bridge that led to the east bank it was as if we entered a war ravaged city.

But throughout the week as we worked on the church and helped individuals in the community I noticed something amazing. Though many of these people lost everything in the storm their faith in God kept their hope alive and gave them strength like superman.

In a way the people we met blessed us more than I think we blessed them. Their situation reminded me not to be attached to earthly things because all of that can be taken away in a heartbeat.

We as Christians must live each day as if it was our last on earth. We must get up, get out, and reach this world for Christ. □



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Tennessee Baptists rose to the challenges of '05

reflections



By Lonnie Wilkey, editor

Natural disasters in 2005 were rated by Southern Baptist state editors as the top news story in 2005. That certainly was true in Tennessee.

From the tsunami which struck Asia late in 2004 through the devastation of Hurricanes Rita and Katrina, Tennessee Baptists rose to the challenges created by each.

Always known for our volunteer spirit, 2005 was no different. Hundreds upon hundreds of Tennessee Baptists traveled to disaster-affected areas to share the love of Christ with people devastated by the natural disasters.

In addition, Tennessee Baptists opened their wallets and gave in record amounts to help disaster victims. And when people had to be evacuated from New Orleans, Tennessee Baptists opened their churches, and in some cases, their homes to the hurricane victims.

The most gratifying part was seeing "labels" disappear as Tennessee Baptists of all persuasions (Democrat/Republican,

moderate/conservative, African American/white; etc.) come together for a common cause to help people in need and, at the same time, share God's love.

Also in 2005, Tennessee Baptists continued to travel and participate in volunteer missions in Iowa, Montana, Rio, Portugal, and Canada. I traveled with a team to Montana last summer as the vision for this new partnership (which began officially this month) was shared with both Tennessee and Montana Baptists.

Tennessee Baptists rose to the challenges presented by Crossover Nashville, held prior to the SBC annual meeting last

June in Nashville. Tennessee Baptists helped make it the largest pre-SBC evangelistic thrust since the effort began in 1989. More than 1,100 people accepted Christ during the effort.

Tennessee Baptists also dealt with other issues in 2005, including Belmont University's decision to elect its own trustees. This issue is still not resolved, so it needs to continue to be a matter of prayer for all Tennessee Baptists.

We faced the challenges of 2005. Only the Lord knows what Tennessee Baptists will face in 2006. Our job is to pray and be ready for whatever the new year brings. □

guest columnist



By Susan Wilhoit

Make financial resolutions for '06

The beginning of a new year offers a fresh perspective on our goals. While contemplating eating healthier and exercising more, consider including the following three commitments to your 2006 New Year's "financial" resolutions.

- I resolve to create a budget. A promise to live within your means is good, but a plan is even better. Start by writing down all sources of monthly income. Then make a list of all fixed expenses. Use your checkbook register, bills, and receipts to help jog your memory. Be careful to discern the difference between "needs" and "wants" when planning for purchases. Check the Internet or go to the library to find a simple budget worksheet to use.

- I resolve to work towards getting out of debt. Write down all sources of debt, and include the balances, interest rates, and payments. Prioritize the highest interest rate balances and work on those first. It may be worth taking money out of a low interest earning account to get out from under your credit card debt. Consider using a low interest rate loan for debt consolidation. For now, always pay an amount greater than the minimum on your credit card balances. In the future, be careful to use your credit card for convenience only; not for purchasing items that you can't afford.

- I resolve to save toward the future. Contact your employer and enroll in the company 401(k) or 403(b) retirement plan. If it offers a company match, then invest at least the minimum amount of money necessary to receive it. Regardless of a company match, employee contributions are still a bargain because each dollar (up to your contribution limit) is invested pre-tax. Don't have much to save? Start small; try to invest 1 percent of your salary now, and then increase it by 1 percent each year until you reach your goal. If your company doesn't have a plan, or you have extra dollars to invest for retirement, open a Roth (if eligible) or Traditional IRA. Both IRAs have specific tax advantages that can help you grow your nest egg. And don't forget that you can still make a 2005 contribution to your IRA until April 17, 2006. (The regular deadline is April 15, but because it falls on a weekend this year, the deadline is extended to the next Monday).

We all strive to be financially independent at retirement. For most of us, that will require planning and commitment. □ — Wilhoit is manager of client education for GuideStone Financial Resources of the SBC.

letters to the editor

A little late

A little late, but thanks to Chief Warrant Officer Charlie King of Clarksville for singing the second verse of our national anthem at the annual meeting of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

When provided the opportunity, more Christian vocalists should do the same.

Bob Osburn
Somerville 38068

Two cents worth

Our church chose not to have service on Christmas Day. If you had service I pray you had a worshipful experience! With that said, I wish to offer my "two-cents" on the debate of "service or no service," especially on the content of the letter "Answer to God" in the Dec. 21 issue.

The letter consisted of a list of reasons why churches may want to cancel service. The writer said, "If churches cancel services on Christmas and New Year's Day, I have a list of other times they may want to do so as well, so that they can thoroughly deny the gospel and accommodate themselves to the world." Now that statement seems to imply that if your church chose not to have service on Christmas your church has denied the gospel (not thoroughly however!) and your church has adjusted its actions by the world. To that I say — HOGWASH!

Such teaching is foreign to the New Testament and is more in line with pharisaical legalism.

Many local churches this year have labored for the Lord in their communities and beyond. They have visited, witnessed, preached the Word, taught the people, fed the hungry, clothed the poor, and the list could go on. But now as the year closes, "woe be unto them" for they have apostatized themselves by not having service on Christmas Day! "Apostatized" may be too strong of a word for this discussion. However, with the rhetoric that is being used I think it fits.

The letter goes on to say that those canceling services can "cancel away with a clear conscience." But I would ask, "Has the conscience of the local church been afforded room to work?" It appears what is happening is manipulation of the conscience (whether intended or not), and the Baptist belief of "the competency of the soul in religion" is being discarded. Not to mention our autonomous nature we speak so much about. The writer further states of those canceling service, "... you won't have to answer to anyone for it! Except of course, God. But He isn't that important to you in any event so what do you care" According to the writer's criteria, if your church canceled service for Christmas, then God is not important to you.

What Paul said in Colossians 2 may offer some light on this legalism at Christmas. He said, (vv. 8-10) "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him"

The believers that make up the local church are in right relation to the gospel because they are complete in Him. Hallelujah! Not because they have service or don't have service on a specific day — even when Christmas falls on Sunday! Listen to v. 16 of the same chapter, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days." That's clear enough.

I offer these questions as a means of perspective on this issue:

(1) How many churches had service because of fear of what a sister church down the street might say?

(2) How many pastors wanted to cancel services but led their church to have services for fear of what their brothers in the ministry might think of them?

(3) How many attended on Christmas day because it was

"expected" of them?

(4) Is a church in denial of the gospel for the sole purpose of not having service on Christmas?

Mike Jones, pastor
Plateau Missionary Baptist
Church, Crossville 38571

Get politics out

In the Nov. 26 issue of the *Baptist & Reflector*, O. Jewell Barrett offered a solution for some of the problems facing the Tennessee Baptist Convention by suggesting that all the messengers for one year be lay people.

I think that his solution should be taken a step further. I believe that our churches should send more lay people to the convention each year and that these people nominate and elect lay people as officers of our convention, both state and national. This would relieve the pastors from all the political maneuvering and allow them to be more involved with preaching the gospel and ministering to their members.

Also, the words conservative, moderate, and liberal should be banned and the word Christian be substituted for these titles. Paul tells us in Romans 2, that "there will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For God does not show favoritism." Does this not apply to the conservative, the moderate, and the liberal whatever these terms are?

I have attended a small country church for most of my life. We only have one full-time staff member (our pastor) and he does not have the time to participate in politics. Let's get politics out of the church and put Christ back into the operation of our churches, our associations, and our state and national convention.

Charles E. Ross
Athens 37303

Resource available

As many of you know, the Southern Baptist Convention, at

its annual meeting in Nashville last June, overwhelmingly adopted a resolution on Educating Children which challenged parents and churches to investigate their local schools to determine if homosexuality is being promoted.

Many parents and churches really care about this issue, but do not know where to begin.

There is a great web site (www.lighthousepolicy.org) that provides factual information about homosexuality, strategies at work in our schools, a test to determine what degree homosexuality is being promoted in your school, and a library book alert with a very long list of books that are currently being flooded into our school libraries and curriculum. Pastors, ministers of education, and parents can use this information to help them to investigate their schools.

Linda Wall is the founder of this ministry. She was raised in a Southern Baptist church, but began a lesbian lifestyle in college. She continued to live that life as a public school teacher for 10 years. She has repented of her sins and is now a champion for Christ.

Please join me and many others who are very concerned about the indoctrination of our children into homosexuality. This issue has hit home with me, as I have a younger brother who left his wife and two daughters in 1998 to live a homosexual lifestyle. He was a minister of music in three different SBC churches. Many SBC church members grieve over this same issue.

Our public schools have no business promoting this perverted lifestyle in any way. Homosexual activists are very successful in promoting their philosophy of life in American educational institutions K-12 and at the college level. We are wrong if we do not get involved and do our best to stop this avalanche of perversion.

Larry Reagan, pastor
Adams Chapel Baptist
Church, Dresden 38225



Church Health Matters

"Building healthy churches empowered by the presence of God."



DISCIPLESHIP Matters

In using the term discipleship as a function of church health, discipleship is not being used as a term for a church program. Discipleship is about the process of growing the believer to maturity.

This is accomplished through Bible teaching, discipleship programs, small group studies, prayer, and individual and corporate worship. Included below is the contact information for members of your state missionary staff that are available to help you and your church in "making disciples."

Your state missionary staff is committed to the vision of "Making Christ Known By Serving Churches." Visit www.tnbaptist.org for information about how the Tennessee Baptist Convention can serve your church.

Bible Teaching Programs

- Ken Marler, *Adults/General Leadership*.....(615) 371-7934
- Bruce Edwards, *Youth*.....(615) 371-2094
- Bill Choate, *College*.....(615) 371-2057
- Vicki Hulsey, *Children*.....(615) 371-2081

Discipleship Programs

- Mark Miller, *General Leadership*.....(615) 371-2048
- Bruce Edwards, *Youth*.....(615) 371-2094
- Vicki Hulsey, *Children*.....(615) 371-2081

Spiritual Formation of the Believer

- Tim Holcomb(615) 371-2055

Prayer

- Don Pierson(615) 371-7909

Worship

- Paul Clark(615) 371-2041

The following discipleship resources are available to help your church. For information, contact Mark Miller at 615-371-2048.

- Discipleship: God's Life Changing Work, Administrative Planning Guide, LifeWay Church Resources
- How Your Church Can Become a Disciple-Making Church, Steve Williams.



What is Healthy Discipleship?

By Mark Miller

Every Tennessee Baptist needs to grow and should grow in their "followship" of Christ. We know that time and nourishment are needed for an infant to become an adult. In a similar manner, time and spiritual food are needed for Christians to grow.

Churches need believers to become more mature. When they do, churches are healthier and their attempts to build a community to reach others are more fruitful.

Discipleship ministry has the sole purpose to grow mature Christians. I have three children. Bringing them home from the hospital for the first time was a very big deal. Getting up in the middle of the night to change a diaper was not a big deal.

Few would disagree that the process of maturity is less glamorous than the birthing of a new life. However, Jesus made both a priority. Just as giving birth to a child is not all there is to parenthood, leading a person to faith in Christ is not all there is to disciple-making.

Churches are responsible for creating an environment that encourages believers to grow and rightly form their faith. Today, many churches are doing that very well. As a result, they are healthy and having a remarkable impact on people's lives.

Tennessee churches have a wide variety of approaches to disciple-making. The discipleship team of the Baptist General Convention of North Carolina identified four approaches to disciple-making.

The first approach uses sermons and the worship experience in order to move worshipers along in their discipleship journeys.

Consider strengthening your pulpit-oriented discipleship approach by providing an outline for taking notes, preaching a sermon series on a given topic, utilizing January Bible Study and Annual Doctrine Studies, and incorporating a forum on applying the subject in a believer's life.

Another approach that most churches use is "program-oriented" discipleship. This approach uses one or more programs to guide the discipling of church members. Through the programs (and associated products, curriculum, and resources) of the church, participants are moved along in their discipleship journeys. This approach typically offers topical and age group studies, which are usually held at set times. Discipleship Training is still a viable option for churches.

A third approach uses systematic, sequential sets of opportunities in order to move persons along in their discipleship journeys. The focus tends to be on helping persons mature in their faith through faith formation, gift-discovery, and involvement in ministry and missions. Examples of this process-approach include: the "Purpose-Driven" model based on the baseball diamond and other sequential disciple-making processes. This approach customizes discipleship based on the uniqueness of the individual.

The last approach that many churches utilize is the person-centered approach. This approach focuses on personal relationships whereby the pastor and other church leaders move others forward in the discipleship journey. Coaching and mentoring are key tools in this approach.

A healthy discipleship ministry can utilize any combination of these approaches to ensure that Tennessee Baptists are becoming fully-devoted followers of Christ.



Foundational Discipleship for Children and Youth

The purpose of Children's Bible Drill is to help children increase their knowledge of the Bible, develop skills in effectively handling the Bible, learn how to apply the Bible to their life, and begin developing memory skills. Children who are fourth, fifth, or sixth graders are eligible to participate. While preparing for the drill, children spend time learning Bible

verses, the books of the Bible, and Key Passage titles and references:

For information on Children's Bible Drill, visit www.tnbaptist.org and look for Childhood Ministry or e-mail Vicki Hulsey, Childhood Education specialist, at vhulsey@tnbaptist.org.

Youth Bible Drill is a significant and important youth ministry event for students in grades 7-9. While preparing for the drill, youth develop skills in using their Bibles to locate books and verses, memorize passages, and locate passages dealing with doctrinal and ethical concerns. While preparing for Youth Bible Drill, students increase their love for the Bible; its words and phrases become a part of their lives.



Youth Speakers Tournament

The Youth Speakers Tournament is for students in grades 10-12 and is designed to encourage them to grow toward Christian maturity. Youth are challenged to think seriously about their commitment to Christ. Youth Speakers Tournament can: 1) encourage growth toward Christlikeness; 2) challenge youth to seriously think about their commitment to Christ; 3) help teenagers express their faith verbally; 4) stimulate spiritual growth as teenagers engage in research, study, prayer, preparation, and practice of speech; 5) help youth develop poise and confidence; 6) help teenagers develop the skills to articulate truth in a way that people will hear and understand; and 7) help youth be ready to stand for Christ in their churches, at school, in their work places, and in their communities.

For information on discipleship options for youth, visit www.tnyouthministry.com or e-mail Bruce Edwards, Youth Ministry specialist, at bedwards@tnbaptist.org.



The purpose of Xtreme Bible Challenge is to ignite a fire, a desire, and a love for God's Word in the hearts of high school students. Xtreme Bible Challenge is a three-year intensive Bible study of the Pastoral Epistles. The Pastoral Epistles comprise the New Testament books of I Timothy, II Timothy, and Titus. These are the letters that the Apostle Paul wrote to pastors Timothy and Titus whom Paul had mentored through the years. One of these books is studied each year. If the high schoolers participate in all three years of Xtreme Bible Challenge, they will have a wealth of knowledge about each of these books, the background surrounding the writings, and the authorship and life of Paul. They will also have the enjoyment, as "icing on the cake," to engage in a competition which will be held on regional and state levels in the spring of each year.

For information on discipleship options for youth, visit www.tnyouthministry.com or e-mail Bruce Edwards, Youth Ministry specialist, at bedwards@tnbaptist.org.

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

- Feb. 16Regional Church Architecture Conference, Wallace Memorial Baptist Church, Knoxville
- Feb. 16-18Bivocational Ministers and Wives Retreat, Music Road Hotel and Inn, Pigeon Forge
- Feb. 16-18Southeast Youth Ministry Conclave, Chattanooga Convention Center, Chattanooga
- Feb. 17-18Great Commission Prayer Conference, First Baptist Church, Powell
- Feb. 24-25Winter Blast (Missions Day Camp Training, Acteen Activator Training, Youth on Mission Point Team Training), Baptist Center, Brentwood
- March 3-4East Tennessee Handbell Festival, Carson Newman-College, Jefferson City

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

Baptists asked to recommend members of TBC boards, committees

Baptist and Reflector

At right are replicas of the forms which have been developed for Tennessee Baptists to use to recommend people for service on Tennessee Baptist Convention boards or committees. Please DO NOT use the replica forms.

Each year the Committee on Boards and Committee on Committees conduct a lengthy process to select nominees to the convention for positions on the boards and committees of the convention. This process is dependent upon Tennessee Baptists nominating qualified people for these positions.

Forms for both the Committee on Boards and Committee on Committees processes are being mailed to each church in the Tennessee Baptist Convention. Additional forms are also being mailed to directors of missions. Your prayerful attention to this opportunity to recommend Tennessee Baptists for positions is encouraged.

The completed form should be mailed to Chairman (either Committee on Committees or Committee on Boards), TBC, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024-0728 by Feb. 10. Also, forms may be faxed to the Exec-

RECOMMENDATION FORM

For Executive Board/Institutional Boards of Trust, Committee on Committees, TBC 2006

East _____ Middle _____ West _____

Please use this form, or the electronic form found at www.tnbaptist.org, to recommend resident members of Tennessee Baptist churches to the Committee on Boards. Mail recommendations, or submit electronically, to Chairman, Committee on Boards, Tennessee Baptist Convention, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024-0728 or fax to 615-371-2093. All recommendations are considered by the Committee on Boards. However, no person submitting a recommendation should assume his recommendation will automatically be submitted to the Tennessee Baptist Convention. All members of Tennessee Baptist Convention churches are encouraged to submit recommendations by February 10, 2006 of trustees of institutions, Executive Board, and committees. Recommendations received after February 10, 2006 will be considered as vacancies occur. (This form will be copied for all committee members. To insure legibility, please type or print as neatly as possible).

I recommend _____ for the _____ Board/Committee.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Executive Board | <input type="checkbox"/> Belmont University | <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Homes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Committee on Committees | <input type="checkbox"/> Carson-Newman College | <input type="checkbox"/> Children's Home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baptist Health System, Memphis | <input type="checkbox"/> Union University | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennessee Baptist Foundation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baptist Health System, East Tennessee | <input type="checkbox"/> Harrison Chihowee Academy | |

Address _____ Telephone (Home) _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ (Business) _____

Age Range: 20-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 over 60

Gender: M _____ F _____ Ordained Minister _____ Layperson _____

Church Membership at: _____ Association _____

Address _____

Church Staff Member? Yes _____ No _____ Title _____

After you have secured this person's permission to submit their name for recommendation, please complete the following questions:

- List the nominee's present and/or past experiences on any TBC Board(s) (Committee(s) and dates of service.
- Indicate the amount of the nominee's church's mission gifts given through Tennessee Baptist and SBC causes in 2004. \$ _____
- Indicate the nominee's occupation (former occupation, if retired). Please be specific.
- Is the nominee willing to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of the Tennessee Baptist Convention Board/Committee for which he is being recommended? Yes _____ No _____
- What gifts, abilities or experience does the nominee possess that qualifies him/her for consideration on a Tennessee Baptist Board/Committee?
- Describe the nominee's present involvement and activity in his/her local church.

Name: _____ Address: _____ Phone: (____) _____

Church Name: _____ Association: _____ Layperson _____ Minister _____

How do you know this individual? (pastor, director of missions, fellow church member, friend or other _____)

utive Leadership Group at (615) 371-2093. An electronic form can also be found and submitted at www.tnbaptist.org.

Each recommendation form is copied and submitted to each member of the respective committees. Tennessee Baptists are reminded

RECOMMENDATION FORM

Convention Committees, TBC 2006

East _____ Middle _____ West _____

Please use this form, or the electronic form found at www.tnbaptist.org, to recommend resident members of Tennessee Baptist churches to the Committee on Committees. Mail all recommendations, or submit electronically, to Chairman, Committee on Committees, Tennessee Baptist Convention, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024-0728 or fax to 615-371-2093. All recommendations are considered by the Committee on Committees. However, no person submitting a recommendation should assume his recommendation will automatically be submitted to the Tennessee Baptist Convention. All members of Tennessee Baptist Convention churches are encouraged to submit recommendations by February 10, 2006 of trustees of institutions, Executive Board, and committees. Recommendations received after February 10, 2006 will be considered as vacancies occur. (This form will be copied for all committee members. To insure legibility, please type or print as neatly as possible).

I recommend _____ for the _____ committee.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Committee on Arrangements | <input type="checkbox"/> Committee on Boards | <input type="checkbox"/> Committee on Resolutions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Committee on Audits | <input type="checkbox"/> Committee on Constitution & Bylaws | <input type="checkbox"/> Historical Committee |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Committee on Credentials | |

Address _____ Telephone (Home) _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ (Business) _____

Age Range: 20-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 over 60

Gender: M _____ F _____ Ordained Minister _____ Layperson _____

Church Membership _____ Association _____

Address _____

Church Staff Member? Yes _____ No _____ Title _____

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Name: _____ Address: _____ Phone: (____) _____

Church Name: _____ Association: _____ Layperson _____ Minister _____

How do you know this individual? (pastor, director of missions, fellow church member, friend or other _____)

that numerous recommendations are presented and all recommendations are given consideration. No person making a recom-

mendation should assume his or her recommendation will automatically be submitted to the Tennessee Baptist Convention. □

Phil Waldrep Ministries presents the Second Annual

NORTH ALABAMA BIBLE CONFERENCE

JANUARY 22-25,
2006

6:30pm each night
(Doors open at 5:30pm)
Decatur Baptist Church
2527 Danville Road SW
Decatur, Alabama
for information call
Phil Waldrep Ministries:
(256) 355-1554
All seats free!



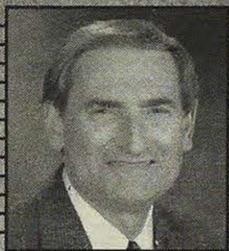
Ergun Caner
Sunday Night



Bob Pitman
Monday Night



Jerry Vines
Tuesday Night



Jimmy Jackson
Tuesday Night



David Jeremiah
Wednesday Night



Larnelle Harris
Monday Night



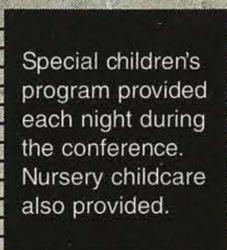
Charles Billingsley
Wednesday Night



Rex Terry
Worship Leader



Joe & Cindy Schmidt
Children's Program
Leaders



Special children's program provided each night during the conference. Nursery childcare also provided.

For information online:
www.philwaldrep.org

Cable companies offer 'family tier' channels

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — The nation's two largest cable providers, as promised, have announced the makeup of their "family-friendly" programming tiers.

Comcast, the nation's largest cable operator, announced its new "family tier" package Dec. 22, selecting Disney Channel, Nickelodeon, Nick Games & Sports, National Geographic, Science Channel, Discovery Kids, PBS' Kid's Sprout, Food Network, HGTV, DIY Network, CNN Headline News, The Weather Channel, C-SPAN 2, and C-SPAN 3.

Time Warner, the second-largest cable company, announced earlier that its family tier would feature Disney Channel, Toon Disney, Nick Games & Sports, Boomerang,

Science Channel, Discovery Kids, Food Network, HGTV, DIY Network, FIT-TV, La Familia, CNN Headline News, The Weather Channel, C-SPAN 2, and C-SPAN 3.

A trade group for the cable industry announced Dec. 12 that several cable companies, including Comcast and Time Warner, would roll out a pricing model that features family-friendly programming in early 2006. Cable operators are hopeful the move will help derail the Federal Communications Commission's support for a plan that would give consumers even more choice over what cable channels they could purchase individually.

"Offering a Family Tier to our customers is one more step in Comcast's efforts to provide a broad array of family-friendly programming," Steve Burke, the company's chief operating officer, said in a news release. The company said its family selections "primarily feature TV-G content" and "meet existing contractual programming requirements."

Comcast's Family Tier bundle is expected to cost \$14.95, while the Time Warner Cable Family Choice package will be priced at \$12.99.

The family tiers are an add-on to both Comcast and Time Warner basic service tiers, which the companies say federal law requires, with households required to pay a monthly fee for a digital cable set-top box.

The basic service tier, which customers must buy if they are to have cable in their home, includes local broadcast stations

and public/educational and government access channels.

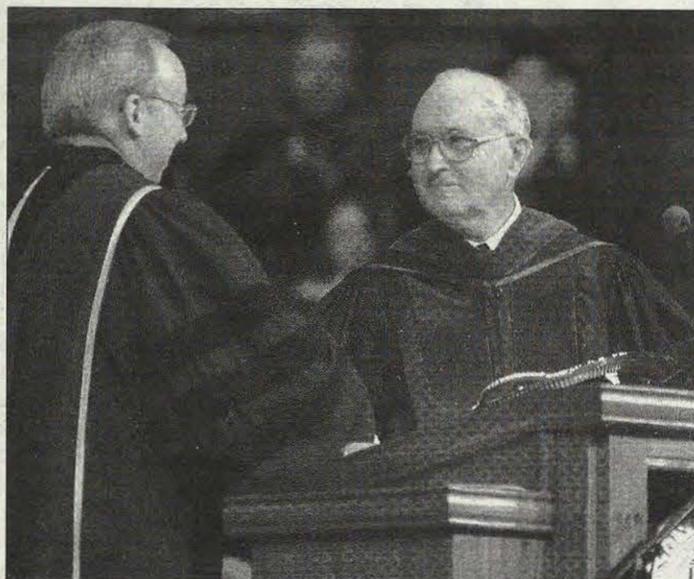
This required tier includes Fox Broadcasting Company, whose programs are often targeted by family activists for their offensive content, plus ABC, CBS, NBC, UPN, WB, and PBS.

Time Warner's announcement prompted Brent Bozell of the Parents Television Council to charge that the company is "deliberately offering a product designed to fail." Bozell noted that, according to Time Warner, no family would want to watch sports, classic movies, religious programming, or "any news channel other than Time Warner's CNN." Comcast also lacks a sports channel on its family tier.

Channels such as Animal Planet, History Channel, Travel Channel, the Game Show Network, and ESPN that are not on either company's family tier are "appropriate for family viewing," Bozell continued, calling Time Warner's family tier "a very bad joke" and more evidence that "it is families, not the industry, that should decide what is appropriate family programming."

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said, "If nothing else, this announcement by Comcast and Time Warner reminds us that the final responsibility for a family's welfare rests with parents.

"Existing technology within cable boxes, as well as the v-chip within most televisions, allows parents to control what programs can be seen on the television in their home," Land said.



Union honors Bob Agee

David Dockery, left, president of Union University in Jackson, presents the school's Robert E. Craig Service Award to Bob R. Agee, a former Union faculty member and administrator and retired president of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee. The award is named after the university's 13th president, who led the university for more than two decades and was responsible for re-establishing Union with the churches of the Tennessee Baptist Convention. Craig was also responsible for relocating the university campus to north Jackson. Agee, who now directs the Christian studies program at Union and also serves as executive director of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools, delivered the commencement address Dec. 17 to 250 graduates during commencement services held at West Jackson Baptist Church.

"The more choices parents have, the more empowered they are to make the best choices for their family," Land said.

Land also indicated he was pleased that Comcast included a faith-based channel in its family tier offering. □

SBC CP gifts under last year's pace

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Year-to-date contributions through the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program are 1.83 percent below the same time frame in 2004, according to a news release from SBC Executive Committee President Morris H. Chapman.

As of Dec. 31, 2005, the year-to-date total of \$45,424,989.76 for Cooperative Program (CP) Missions is \$846,995.90 under the \$46,271,985.66 received at the same point in 2004. For the month, receipts of \$14,622,239.09 were 2.38 percent, or \$340,508.45, above the \$14,281,730.64 received in December 2004.

Designated giving of \$10,589,328.46 for the same year-to-date period is 2.05 percent, or \$212,872.02, above gifts of \$10,376,456.44 received at this point last year. The \$3,670,570.04 in designated gifts received last month is \$455,314.15 below the \$4,125,884.19 received in December 2004, a decrease of 11.04 percent.

For the SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget, the year-to-date total of \$45,424,989.76 is 95.70 percent of the \$47,466,313.74 budgeted to support Southern Baptist ministries globally and across North America.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' method of supporting missions and ministry efforts of state and regional conventions and the SBC. □

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — CHILDREN

First Baptist Church, Mt. Juliet, Tenn., a congregation with 800-900 in attendance, is seeking a minister to children and pre-school. Church desires someone with a passion for God and children and with the ability to build a dynamic ministry in a growing community. Please send resume to FBC, Attn. Search Committee, P.O. Box 226, Mt. Juliet, TN 37121 or carver@fbcnj.org.

MINISTRY — DOM

Salem-Troy Baptist Association is searching for a director of missions. Please send resume or recommendations to Search Committee, Salem-Troy Baptist Association, 51 County Road 2233, Troy, AL 36079.

MISCELLANEOUS

For sale — 1989 Bluebird School bus, 72 passenger, excellent condition, \$6,500.00. Contact Gath Baptist Church, (931) 934-2655 or e-mail gathbaptist@blomand.net.

MINISTRY — OTHER

Forest Hills Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn., is seeking an office administrator/manager. This position also serves as the pastoral ministries assistant. Call the church office at (615) 373-8074 for an application or e-mail a resume to jwilkins@fhbc.org.

◆◆◆◆

Nashville Baptist Association, 420 Main St., Nashville, TN 37206, (615) 259-3034, is seeking a ministry assistant, 40 hour week, with benefits. Skills required are Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Publisher proficiency, multi-tasking, team player with desire to serve, familiar with ACS. Resume deadline: Jan. 20, 2006.

The Fellowship of Tennessee Baptist Evangelists



Floyd "Lammie" Lammersfeld, president, McKenzie



Harold Hunter, vice president, McMinnville



Gary Buck, music coordinator, Nashville

2006 Evangelists Conference

When: Jan. 23, 10 a.m. - noon
 Where: Inglewood Baptist Church, Nashville
 3901 Gallatin Road
 Host Pastor: Kevin Shrum
 Program Personalities:



Ronnie Owens, Tazewell



Terry Wilkerson, Lebanon



Benny Jackson, Memphis

- Great preaching with anointing and fire in an "old time revival" atmosphere.
- Gospel music by the singing evangelists to warm your heart. Gary Buck will lead us. Come early to hear the music.

For more information, contact Floyd "Lammie" Lammersfeld at (731) 693-9760.

Meaning of 'born again' unclear to many: Barna

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — After a series of telephone interviews conducted in October, the Barna Group determined that much confusion surrounds what it really means to call oneself a "born again Christian" in America.

Research indicated that the terminology used by followers of Jesus Christ reflects a variety of meanings, Barna said, and while the most widely held description is simply "Christian," "that term represents a segment of adults who engage in less religious activity and possess less orthodox views than do people who associate themselves with other descriptions."

Although 80 percent of adults in the United States call themselves "Christian," Barna found that 68 percent, or two out of

three adults, consider themselves "a committed Christian" and 45 percent use the phrase "born again Christian."

Barna discovered that one-quarter of those who call themselves born again did not meet the Barna Group criteria for born again, generally meaning they rely upon something other than God's grace as their means to salvation.

The standard Barna uses to determine whether a person is born again is if they claim they will go to heaven after they die because they have confessed their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior.

The research suggests that phrases do not necessarily possess universally understood meaning, Barna said in a late-November news release.

"With more than 250 Protestant denominations in the United States and the increasing diversity and customization within the spiritual realm, it's not surprising that there is very

limited common understanding with such language," George Barna said. "The challenge may be to avoid reliance on labels and brief adjectives as religious profiles. In our sound-bite society, with everyone moving quickly and making snap judgments, the temptation is to rely upon simple characterizations to provide a broad perspective on who a person is and what they represent."

For more information, visit www.barna.org.

Adams nominated to lead Ill. Baptists

Baptist Press

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. — Illinois native and Southern Baptist missions leader Nate Adams is

To the best of our knowledge all ads in the *Baptist and Reflector* represent legitimate companies and offerings. However, one should always use caution in responding to ads.

the unanimous choice of the Illinois Baptist State Association's executive director search committee to become the IBSA's next executive director.

The committee will present Adams to the association's executive board this month at a special meeting called by board chairman Jerry Day.

Adams has served the past eight years as vice president of missions mobilization for the North American Mission Board,

leading the work of more than 80 full-time employees responsible for recruiting and mobilizing the SBC entity's national missionary force, its vast network of missions volunteers, creating mission education resources, and more.

He is the author of four books, including *The Home Team: Spiritual Practices for a Winning Family* and *The Acts 1:8 Challenge*. □

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — PASTOR

Bivocational pastor. If interested please send resume to Pastor Search Committee, Woodcliff Baptist Church, 108 East Commercial Ave., Monterey, TN 38574.

◆◆◆◆

First Baptist Church of Pegram is looking for the man that the Lord has in store to lead our congregation as pastor. Send resume to P.O. Box 396, Pegram, TN 37143.

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An established vibrant church located in the fastest growing community in Middle Tennessee is prayerfully seeking the man God is calling to be our senior pastor. Send resume to Miracle Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 68, LaVergne, TN 37086.

◆◆◆◆

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

MINISTRY — MUSIC

First Baptist Church, Scottsboro, Ala., is seeking a full-time minister of music and worship leader (Sunday AM — live TV and radio). For more information, call (256) 574-3308 or e-mail musicsearch@fbcscottsboro.org. Send resume to First Baptist Church, c/o Minister of Music Search Committee, 215 South Andrews St., Scottsboro, AL 35768.

MINISTRY — STUDENT

First Baptist Church of Dover, Ark., is seeking a full-time minister to students, grades 7-12. Masters of religious education or masters of divinity degree required. Deadline, Feb. 1, 2006. Please submit resume to Search Committee, P.O. Box 397, Dover, AR 72837.

◆◆◆◆

Growing church in Northeast Tennessee seeking a full-time minister of youth. Applicants must have minimum of 2 years full-time experience as a minister of youth serving on a church staff. A bachelor degree is also preferred. \$30,000-40,000 dependent upon years of experience. Please e-mail resume to jconnell@boonetrailbaptist.org or mail to Boone Trail Baptist Church, 1985 West Carroll Creek Rd., Gray, TN 37615.

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minister's corner

Fresh beginning

By Ray Sorrells

There is something about a new year that reminds us of a fresh beginning and a new start. This is in keeping with the grace and mercy of God through Christ. He offers individuals a fresh beginning. I think this is also true for His churches.

This is good news because we all need opportunities for beginning again.

As we enter into AD 2006, God offers us the challenge and opportunity of drawing nearer to Him and of serving Him more faithfully. If as Christians and churches we take advantage of that, we can experience New Year "Revolutions," not just resolutions. We have the privilege of seeing the Lord do His mighty work through us — spiritual and congregational growth, more people brought to saving faith in Christ, hurting people's lives touched and transformed by the power of God, among other glorious results.

The year 2005 has been a tough year for many people. There have been natural disasters in the U.S. and many other places in the world. Many are just worn down by the everyday demands of life that can deplete our energy and our ability to keep focused on God's call on our lives and congregations.

The new year reminds us that we can begin again.

And the Lord doesn't want us just to rely on our own resources or our own resolutions to be better and to do better. The One who has called us is there to energize and equip us to do His good will. There is a wonderful Scripture in Isaiah that tells us this: *But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint* (40:31).

The key is to "wait upon the Lord." It is to enter the new year personally and as His churches looking to the Lord, leaning on and learning of Him, and living for Him.

May God renew us and use us in 2006 for His glory both personally and as churches of this association as we walk into the new year with Him! □ — Sorrells is director of missions for Watauga Baptist Association, based in Elizabethton.

New, or more of the same?

By Jim Clayton

There's just something about "new" isn't there? It may be a "new" house, a "new" car, a "new" boat, or something as simple as a "new" shirt, dress, pair of shoes, or a toy. But the important thing is — it is "new."

The same thing can be said about a "new" year. It holds so many possibilities for us, especially as a church. And now, here we are, getting ready to begin another "new" year. What will this year hold for us as a church family?

Well, while most of the answer to that question is in the mind, will, and heart of an Almighty God, some of it is bound up in the decisions we will make. Will this "new" year bring more of the same for you, for us? Or, will it, well, be "new."

I hope we are ready to make some "new" changes and commitments. Maybe they need to be in the area of attendance, or outreach, or tithing, or missions, or just verbal encouragement and support. Maybe some of us need to make a "new" commitment to sharing our faith, our testimony with others. Maybe some of us need to have a "new" outlook on our building program or the capital stewardship campaign.

I don't know what needs to be "new" in your life, but I know One who does know. He knows every change we need to make and He is ready to bring those changes about — when we are ready.

So, how will you prepare for this "new" year? It's something to think about, isn't it? □ — Clayton is senior pastor of Dixie Lee Baptist Church, Lenoir City.

Life matters

By Scott Linginfelter

Focal Passage: Matthew 9:18-31, 36-38

In this passage we find one of many stories in the Bible which focuses on a concern for life. First we see the "ruler." Matthew uses the word "behold" which means "look!" and can be translated "suddenly." It gives emphasis and urgency to this man and his mission of life. He "worshiped" Jesus, which shows his humility and sincerity about life. He asks Jesus to lay His hand on his daughter and "she shall live," showing us his devotion to life. Here is one of the special things about this man's mission of life; he wasn't pleading for his life. While this man still possessed his own life, he came pleading for the life of another.

In a day when abortion is legal, it seems to me the height of hypocrisy for those who are alive to argue for the killing of the most innocent and most vulnerable in our society. After all, it could have been their own life which was taken, and I am reasonably certain they wouldn't want that. This man cared about life, and not just his own.

The next angle in this story of life is that of Jesus. Matthew begins by saying, "while he spake." Jesus had just been talking about His own life and death, and how it affected His disciples. Now, when

given the chance to give life to someone else, He "arose and followed" ultimately bringing the girl back to life.

In this story, we see not only Jesus' concern for life, but also His view of life and death. Jesus said she wasn't dead, just sleeping. He didn't mean that she was literally asleep. He meant that He could bring her back from death. This is the same terminology He used to describe Lazarus who He later plainly said was dead (John 11:14).

You see, for us, death is final. That is what makes it so hard to bear. Yet from Jesus' point of view, death is a temporary state much like sleeping through the night brings us quickly to the morning. That is why Paul says *we sorrow not, even as others which have no hope* (I Thessalonians. 4:13), when it comes to the issues of death and the resurrection.

Jesus isn't teaching "soul sleep" though, as some would have you believe. Jesus is teaching that death is a temporary separation of body and spirit. Thus Paul says at Jesus' return *them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him* (v. 14). Spirit is with Jesus; body in the ground. Jesus understands death.

Compare Jesus to the mourners. They wail at the finality of death, and scoff at the possibility of life. This gives us a third angle on life, those who don't treasure or understand it.

Live in respect

By Eric Taylor

Focal Passage: Leviticus 19:32; II Samuel 19:31-39; I Timothy 5:1-2

On Sunday, Jan. 15, 2006, Southern Baptists will be highlighting the importance of respecting human life. On this Sanctity of Human Life Sunday the emphasis is on having Christ-like love and respect for the elderly in your church and community. While the unborn often get the majority of our attention (for good reason) on this day, we cannot neglect those who have built our nation and many of our churches.

Therefore, we must . . .

**Honor the elderly
(Leviticus 19:32)**

The Bible tells us that we are to "rise in the presence of the elderly." In other words, we are to show them the respect, admiration, and praise they deserve. I recently talked with an IMB missionary who said in most countries and cultures the elderly are valued, respected, and looked up to for leadership and advice. Yet, I am afraid we live in a country where there is little respect for the elderly and in a culture where anything "old" is considered bad.

Sadly, this attitude has crept its way into the church in many forms. I recently learned of a church whose members instructed its pastor search committee not to even consider a candidate over the age of 40. Today many "contemporary" churches mock anything "old" or "traditional." Today, many churches are proud to tell people that "We

don't have any old people in our church." As if it is some kind of disadvantage to growth to have elderly church members. All this while the largest group of senior adults (Baby Boomers) is reaching retirement age.

I find it interesting that along with respecting the elderly is the command to "Fear your God." Could it be that the lack of honor shown to our seniors today is a symptom of the fact that many in our society have little fear of God?

**Give them dignity
(II Samuel 19:31-39)**

David's treatment of the 80-year-old "Barzillai" is a powerful example of the dignity that we should always show those that are in their senior years. David remembered how this man helped him when he and his army were fleeing an angry and murderous Absalom. David offered to care for Barzillai and his family in his aged years. David was willing to sacrifice for the man who sacrificed for him. Yet, David showed even greater respect by accepting Barzillai's decision to not return with him to Jerusalem in order to live out the remainder of his years at home.

One of the greatest ways we honor God is when we show dignity and honor to those created in His image. In the case of the elderly, our younger church members would do well to treat those who are older with the dignity they deserve. In many cases, they have fought the fights we will never have to fight. They have run the race and have kept the faith. As a pastor I am deeply indebted to the pastors of a

**Sunday School Lesson
Family Bible Series
Jan. 15**

The story continues by showing us that not only is Jesus concerned with the existence and continuation of life, but He is also concerned with one's quality of life, both physical and spiritual. Jesus heals a woman with an issue of blood, two blind men, and has compassion on the crowd. All of these actions have obvious physical ramifications; Jesus cares about our quality of life.

Yet, the woman with the issue of blood was also considered unclean and unable to worship in the Temple as she undoubtedly desired to do. The physical blindness which was cured has numerous spiritual parallels in Scripture where Jesus opens the spiritual eyes of those blinded by sin. Jesus' compassion on the crowd prompted His commandment for us to pray for workers in the harvest. Jesus' physical care and cure had as much or more spiritual healing as it did physical. Social compassion must always be accompanied by a sense of urgency for spiritual deliverance or it isn't the compassion of Jesus. Let us have the same heart for life that Jesus shows. □ — Linginfelter is pastor of Mount Carmel Baptist Church, Maryville.

**Sunday School Lesson
Explore the Bible
Jan. 15**

generation before who fought and won the battle for the authority of Scripture in Southern Baptist life. It is disturbing to see many younger pastors so unwilling to seek their guidance and leadership, even in our own Tennessee Baptist Convention. Let's give all of our seasoned citizens the dignity they deserve.

**Consider them family
(I Timothy 5:1-2)**

Paul's simple advice to Timothy is something that should be heeded in every church. Paul commands Timothy to "reprove not an elder" and to treat the older women in the church as one would treat his or her mother. In other words, we should love the elderly women in the church and treat the older men in our churches with the same respect we would treat our own fathers, encouraging and comforting them, not treating them harshly ("reprove") or with a lack of respect.

The author of our Sunday School quarterly gives us some words of wisdom to ponder. J. Samuel Simmons wrote, "The way we treat our elders is the model our children and others may use in relating to us when we are old. If that holds true, how will those younger persons treat us when we are old?"

"We may be writing the script right now by the way we treat the elderly." □ — Taylor is pastor of First Baptist Church, Middleton.

Deaths

◆ **Robert W. "Bob" McConnell**, 75, former minister of music at the former Park Avenue Baptist Church and Cherry Road Baptist Church, both in Memphis, died Dec. 27, in Bonham, Texas. He also served churches in Texas and Louisiana. He is survived by his wife, Wanda McConnell of McKinney, Texas, and a son.

◆ **Herbert Cox**, minister of music emeritus of First Baptist Church, Athens, for 29 years, died Dec. 6. He also served on the staff of at Grace-land Baptist Church, Memphis. He is survived by his wife, Sarah S. Cox; and three daughters.

Associations

◆ **Hamilton County Baptist Association**, Chattanooga, will offer two week-end training events for English as a Second Language volunteers to become certified. Classes will be offered Friday, Jan. 27, from 5-8 p.m. and on two Saturdays, Jan. 28 and Feb. 4, from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Students are adults from more than 40 foreign countries. Call Becky Witt for information and to register at the association office at (423) 267-3794 or visit the association web site, www.Baptistassociation.com.

Knott retires as volunteer chaplain

Baptist and Reflector

NASHVILLE — Linda Knott recently retired as volunteer chaplain, Tennessee Prison for Women here, after serving seven years. She has ministered at the prison for 14 years, serving several times as interim chaplain.



KNOTT

Knott, a member of First Baptist Church, Donelson, and member of the Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board, will continue to lead a weekly Master-Life Bible study for women inmates of the prison and minister at the prison in other ways.

Knott was director of the missions center of Woodcock Baptist Church, a downtown church, from 1994-97. She was a member of the Tennessee Woman's Missionary Union staff from 1976-82 as Acteens consultant.

She also was a member of the WMU council of Nashville Baptist Association for 27 years. □

◆ **Cumberland Baptist Association**, Clarksville, is seeking a part-time associate associational missionary. Send resumes to Cumberland Baptist Association, P.O. Box 3837, Clarksville, TN 37043 or call (931) 358-9036 for information.

Churches

◆ **Shelby Avenue Baptist Church**, Nashville, will host evangelist John Kurtz of Mt. Juliet Sunday, Jan. 22, at 10:45 a.m. For information, contact the church office at (615) 227-2961.

◆ **Vonore Baptist Church**, Vonore, voted recently to build a new Family Life/Ministry Center. The addition includes a two-story office and education building, a full size basketball court, and a commercial kitchen. Vonore Church had more than 215 people join the church during the last three years and has expanded to two Sunday morning worship services.

◆ **Cedar Grove Baptist Church**, Kingston, recently held a revival where 26 people made decisions for Christ and numerous others made rededications. Henry Linginfelter of



INMATE RONALD MOORE, center, of the South Central Correctional Center, Clifton, receives his associate's degree in Bible Dec. 8 from the South Central R.G. Lee School of Union University, Jackson; Indian Creek Baptist Association, Waynesboro; and Lawrence County Baptist Association, Leoma. Moore is the first graduate of the school to earn his associate's degree. Participating in the graduation are, from left, Bruce Wood, principal of the correctional center's school and a Union University graduate; Ray Maynard, director of the South Central R.G. Lee School and director of missions, Lawrence County Association; Moore; Paul Veazey of Union University; and Randall Runions, chaplain who is a Baptist. Moore hopes to continue his studies at Union and earn his bachelor's degree.

Alcoa served as evangelist.

Leaders

◆ **Triune Baptist Church**, Triune, has called **Reed Buntin** as pastor effective Jan. 1. Buntin comes to the church from Tusculum Hills Baptist Church, Nashville, where he served for three years as associate pastor. He also served as pastor of New Union Baptist Church in Russellville, Ky. A graduate of the University of Mississippi and

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, he also served on the executive board of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

◆ **Ninth Street Baptist Church**, Erwin, ordained **Marvin Hampton** and **Terry Jones** as deacons Dec. 18.

◆ **Antioch Baptist Church**, Johnson City, recently called **Kenny Adkins** as associate pastor.

◆ **Richard Land**, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, Nashville, since 1988, has been called as interim pastor

of Tusculum Hills Baptist Church, Nashville.

◆ **Jim Growden**, former pastor of Westwood Baptist Church, Manchester, is serving as director of the Shepherd's House in Tullahoma. It is operated by the Citizens for Homeless Relief Inc., and was opened in May 1999 to help the homeless in Bedford, Coffee, Franklin, Moore, and Warren counties. The ministry provides physical shelter or temporary shelter and food for homeless people. For more information, contact Jim or his wife, Carol, at the Shepherd's House at (931) 393-4818.



LADIES OF FIRST BAPTIST Church, Dunlap, stand by the baby quilts they made for expectant mothers of Van Cleave, Miss. Van Cleave is the town Sequatchie County adopted to help victims of Hurricane Katrina. The ladies made 20 quilts which will be sent soon to Van Cleave. The ladies are, from left, front row, Wanda Cagle, Theresa Carlton, Pat Griffith, Lorain Price, Jeanette Hartman, and Vina Childress; back row, Cynthia Price, Carol Purdy, Flossie Narramore, Polly Lamb, Grace Steele, and Lois Hargis.



NEW DEACONS ordained Nov. 27 by Kimball Baptist Church, Kimball, are, from left, Dean Cartwright, Hoyle Heiskell, James Church, and Roger Payne.

In Pikeville

Small church finds ways to raise money for LMCO

Baptist and Reflector

PIKEVILLE — Just about six years ago, Lee Station Baptist Church here, didn't give to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for international missions.

When it began giving about five years ago, the small church set a goal of \$300.

Since then, the congregation has learned about the offering and become excited about it, reported Bill Wolfe, pastor.

This year the church, which draws about 55 people to Sunday School, set \$2,200 as its goal and already has given \$2,300. People will continue to give until Jan. 15.

This year Betty Lively of Lee Station

quilted a quilt to raise money for the offering. Members gave gifts for a ticket which allowed them a chance to win the quilt at a drawing. The gifts totaled \$925.

Several years ago Lively started a cake and pie auction for the Lottie Moon Offering. The first year she baked about 20 cakes and pies for the event. This year the auction raised \$320.

Member Bill Neal is also known for his enthusiasm for the offering. One year when Wolfe suggested money from the general offering could be used to meet the goal, Neal suggested that might not be a good idea. It might keep people from really trying to meet the goal, he advised.

He has proved to be right, said Wolfe.

The church's students are also active in raising money for the offering. A boy and girl will volunteer to receive a pie in the face to mark the end of the effort. The first year this was held Wolfe and a deacon were the target for the pies.

Wolfe, who has served the church as bivocational pastor for three years, said he is proud of the congregation. The members are generous and many are sacrificial in their giving. About half of the congregation is elderly, many of whom are on fixed incomes.

"We have a good time but we want to emphasize giving," said Wolfe.

"We're glad to be a part of what the Lord's doing through the Lottie Moon Offering," he said. □