

Baptist & Reflector

Statewide Edition

Telling the Story of Tennessee Baptists

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With Russian academy

C-N explores additional ministry opportunities

By Mark Brown
Carson-Newman College news office

JEFFERSON CITY — From its East Tennessee location on the banks of Mossy Creek, Carson-Newman College is fulfilling its mission of being a Christian institution of the highest quality while reaching out to the world.

Near the halfway mark in a partnership with Russia's St. Petersburg Evangelical Theological Academy, Carson-Newman is exploring the possibility of providing unique ministry avenues for several English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers.

"If our pilot program succeeds like we expect, we will have volunteer opportunities for experienced ESL educators," said Danny Hinson, director of C-N's Center for Global Education.

"Ultimately, we might need as many as 15 teachers who would be able to travel to St. Petersburg. We are excited by the impact this could have for our students as well as those whom they will serve."

Two years into a five-year agreement with the academy, C-N already has sent several theological educators to lead two-week courses at the school, which opened its doors in 1989 just as the former Soviet Union was breaking apart.

Professors who have participated in the partnership say the experience is remarkable.

"I feel like I have certainly learned more from my experiences teaching there than I have been able to impart," said Walter Crouch, vice president of church relations, who will make his third trip to St. Petersburg next fall.

"I have especially learned great lessons about humility and cooperation."

Crouch said the sole focus of the academy "is given to equipping pastors so they can win Russia for Jesus Christ. It's quite an amazing experience," he said.

Academy co-founder and president Sergei Nikolaev visited the Carson-Newman campus recently. He emphasized the pre-eminence of theological education to the academy, but noted the school needs a broader range of academic programs.

The academy has 75 students on its main campus and another 200 spread across the country through extension centers.

"There are certain things we need — classes in biblical languages, missiology,

and ethics, without which we could not survive," he said. "But providing other opportunities like sociology and ESL offerings will help our students and our school," the president observed.

Nikolaev said the opportunity to offer ESL and other curricula support the institution and its mission of serving Christ.

"If we offer courses besides our theological program, people will come to learn and they will also hear the gospel."

Hinson plans to travel to St. Petersburg this summer, along with his wife Jan, an ESL educator, for the first installment of the pilot program.

"We will take two of our graduate students or a couple of local ESL teachers for an intensive four-week introductory course at the academy. That will help the school fulfill its objective of having second-year students able to read, write, and be conversant in English."

In turn, Nikolaev hopes to be able to send two of his students to Carson-Newman so they can prepare to become English tutors.

Hinson is also excited about other opportunities as well. "As it happens we use the Bible to teach English, so even those who aren't interested in using the skills for their theological education will be exposed to the gospel." □



CROUCH

Disaster relief efforts continue on Gulf Coast

Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — Forty-five Tennessee Baptist volunteers have returned from New Orleans where they served as the only remaining Southern Baptist disaster relief team still feeding victims of Hurricane Katrina.

The Tennessee disaster relief volunteers cooked and served meals Feb. 5-13 with a Salvation Army kitchen unit for 1,000 medical volunteers in addition to Hurricane Katrina victims and the homeless, according to David Acres, state disaster relief director.

The Tennessee team included volunteers from East and Middle Tennessee.

Bill Curington, a member of Roseberry Baptist Church, Knoxville, served as the blue cap over the Tennessee volunteers.

"We served over 20,000 meals since our team arrived," said Curington. "This is a new experience for Tennessee Baptist disaster relief volunteers to work with a Salvation Army equipment," he added.

According to Curington, volunteers prepared meals and also rode on five Salvation Army canvas trucks to distribute breakfast and lunch meals into the communities.

— See Disaster relief, page 3

Set Free Nashville helps men with addictions

By Linda Lawson
Baptist and Reflector

NASHVILLE — Set Free Nashville, a new church and a ministry, has been launched to help men struggling with addictions and other destructive behavior to turn their lives around through the transforming power of Jesus Christ.

It also represents an example of the wide variety of churches being planted to meet the needs of people in the diverse communities of Tennessee.

Chuck Benson, who formerly ran an inner-city ministry, Heart of the City, serves as church planter for Set Free. He also is the new works pastor for Eastland Community Church, a new church in East Nashville serving as a strategic partner with Set Free.

"We are looking to plant a church and then the ministry will flow out of the church," Benson said. He and five others serve as the leadership team and temporarily operate out of a house on the grounds of Two Rivers Baptist Church. They conduct Sunday morning serv-

ices in rented space in downtown Nashville and also help with a downtown Thursday lunch and outreach effort led by Two Rivers.

In addition to reaching out to those grappling with depression, homelessness, or addictions to drugs and alcohol, Set Free hopes to minister to their families.

"Not only does the man need to be reconciled to God, but so does the family," Benson said. "We can only do that by having the church established to be able to reach the community."

Set Free, which began in Yucaipa, Calif., in 1993 and now operates in eight states, was launched in Nashville in June 2005 in connection with the Crossover evangelism thrust.

Jerome Cunningham, director of the ministry arm of Set Free Nashville, described it as "a way of life, a lifestyle change," with three phases, beginning with the 60-day farm phase sometimes described as "beans, rice, and Jesus Christ."

"This gives them the opportunity to separate themselves from their environment and to allow the power of God to work



JEROME CUNNINGHAM, a former teacher who became a Christian through Set Free in Gainesville, Ga., directs Set Free Nashville.

in their lives," Cunningham said. "We share testimonies. We share the Word of God through memory verses. We have Bible studies. We have guest speakers. All of this is an opportunity for the individual to accept Christ as the head of their lives."

Cunningham said those who complete the farm phase of Set Free may then move on to the workhouse phase. "This is a slow transition back into being productive," he said. Partici-

pants work and pay a \$75 fee toward the costs of housing and food. During the third phase, discipleship, Set Free participants go out into the community to help individuals and churches.

"We do community-related events, fellowshiping with other churches, and giving the community information about what we do," Cunningham said. "We don't do any advertising. We do everything by word of mouth. It's strictly the power of God working in an individual's life."

"We have been likened to a rehab," Cunningham acknowledged. "But the power of God can do more than any rehab could ever do."

To date, six Nashville-area men have completed the three phases of Set Free, with the farm phase taking place at a facility operated by Set Free of Gainesville, Ga. Set Free Nashville is seeking a location to house at least 75 men.

Cunningham, a former teacher, knows the effectiveness of Set Free from personal experience that began in 2004. — See Set Free, page 3

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Registration opens for childcare at SBC meeting

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Registration is now open for families planning to enroll their children in the preschool childcare or the children's conference from June 11-14 in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Greensboro, N.C.

For all information regarding registration, visit www.sbc.net and click on "2006 SBC Annual Meeting" then "Children/Students."

Childcare for infants through 2-year-olds will be available from Sunday afternoon through Wednesday. (For children 3 and older, see below.) A \$10 one-time nonrefundable registration fee is charged for each child. For each session, a \$5 per child fee is charged, with a maximum charge of \$40 per family for the full four days of childcare. Lunch will be available for the preschool children on Monday and Tuesday for a cost of \$5 per lunch. Complete payment is due for all sessions and for lunch, if requested, upon arrival for the first session. Please be prepared to pay by check made out to Pleasant Garden Baptist Church.

Questions about this year's childcare can be directed to Tricia Jackson at (336) 674-5382.

Children ages 3-4 will be part of the children's conferences, along with other age-graded conferences for ages 5-9 and 10-12.

Children's Conferences International will provide an age-graded, Scripture-based conference for all children ages 3-12. This year's theme, "Rescue 109," will include fun songs, crafts, skits, games, and an obstacle course and perhaps even a visit from local fire and rescue personnel who will share how they serve their cities.

The cost for the children's conference is \$45 per child. However, only \$20 is required per child to register, which is nonrefundable. The balance (an additional \$25 per child) is due upon arrival at the conference, although advance payments for the full amount may be made.

Questions about this year's children's conference program can be phoned to Children's Conferences International at (317) 336-6101. □

GuideStone assets reach new high

Baptist Press

DALLAS — As the financial books closed on Dec. 31, GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention attained a new all-time high in total organizational assets of \$8.9 billion.

The increase in assets was

due to significant growth in retail and institutional investments, retirement rollovers, increased contributions from participants, and the investment growth in assets. GuideStone assets closed at \$8.3 billion in 2004 and at \$7.3 billion in 2003.

"2005 was an exciting and challenging year for our organization, and we are pleased to end the year on a financial high note," GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins said.

"We believe our continued growth is a reflection of our investment philosophy and the performance of the financial markets, but our foremost goal is to add value to our participants' accounts and hopefully a higher level of financial security in their retirement years." □

S. Dakota House challenges ruling; bans abortion

Baptist Press

PIERRE, S.D. — In a direct challenge to the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, the South Dakota House of Representatives easily passed a bill Feb. 9 that would ban nearly all abortions in the state.

The bill passed by a vote of 47-22 and now goes to the state Senate, where a vote is expected to be tight. Ten of the Senate's 35 members are sponsors. It is not known whether Gov. Mike Rounds, a pro-life Republican, would sign it.

Supporters of the bill — which has an exception for the mother's life — hope it leads to the overturning of *Roe*, the infamous decision that legalized abortion nationwide. Opponents of the bill tried unsuccessfully Feb. 9 to add an amendment making an exception for rape and incest.

If it passes the Senate and is signed into law, a legal challenge almost certainly will follow.

The bill would make it a felony for anyone to perform an abortion. The mother would not be charged with a crime. The language of the bill — named the Women's Health and Human Life Protection Act — says that "life begins at the time of conception" and that scientific advances since 1973 have proven that the unborn child is indeed life.

The bill says the goal is to "fully protect the rights, interests, and health of the pregnant mother, the rights, interest, and life of her unborn child, and the mother's fundamental natural intrinsic right to a relationship with her child." The bill is based on the findings of a task force that studied abortion.

South Dakota's legislature passed similar legislation in 2004, only to see Rounds issue a "style-and-form" veto, sending it back to the legislature for minor changes. Rounds said in '04 that he agreed with the bill's intent, but was fearful that its wording

would lead a court to strike down not only the bill but also the state's other restrictions on abortion. The House agreed to Rounds' changes, but the Senate defeated the reworded bill, 18-17, when a senator who previously had supported it switched and voted against it.

But Roger W. Hunt, the bill's chief House sponsor told BP he believes he has the votes in the Senate to pass the bill and is confident Rounds will sign it. Since that 2004 vote, an election has taken place. □

FBC, Dallas, pastor likely headed to FBC, Jacksonville

Compiled from ABP, BP reports

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Less than a week after bidding farewell to retiring pastor Jerry Vines, First Baptist Church here — one of the country's largest congregations — is expected to nominate Dallas pastor Mac Brunson as his successor.

The Jacksonville church posted a simple announcement on its web site Feb. 9: "Please join us this Sunday, Feb. 12, for an announcement from the pulpit committee." Several well-placed Baptists in Jacksonville said Brunson will be announced as the candidate.

"That's what I've been told," state Sen. Stephen Wise, a prominent member of the church, told Associated Baptist Press Feb. 9. "It's pretty well known. I was told in an e-mail this morning."

Brunson already fills one of Christianity's most legendary pulpits — First Baptist Church of Dallas — where W.A. Criswell and George W. Truett rose to fame. But the Dallas church has lost some of its luster — and membership — in recent years. With about 10,000 total members, it is about a third the size of the Jacksonville church, which counts 28,000 members and occupies nine blocks of downtown.

Brunson has long been mentioned as a candidate for the Jacksonville pastorate. He asked the Dallas congregation Jan. 8 to pray for him concerning a major decision about his future. He declined to tell reporters any details at the time.

Baptist Press reported Feb. 13 that Brunson, during his message on Sunday, Feb. 12, at FBC, Dallas, told the congregation he would preach Feb. 19 in view of a call at FBC, Jacksonville.

Brunson expressed "great grief" that "the press and certain people have robbed me of a sacred obligation I have of talking to my congregation."

During his tenure at First Baptist Dallas, Brunson called on the church to set new levels of missions giving, including the largest Lottie Moon offering in SBC history, giving \$1.2 million in December of 2003. □

Revival begins on Ky. college campus

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — A massive movement of prayer on a college campus has led to an extended time of corporate worship that had some students staying in the school's chapel as long as 12 hours, and a Southern Baptist evangelism leader hopes it could be one of the spots where revival breaks out among a new generation.

At Asbury College, a Christian liberal arts college with more than 1,200 students in Wilmore, Ky., near Lexington, the student body gathered for regularly scheduled chapel service at 10 a.m. Feb. 6, but soon ended up staying for hours according to a news release from the school.

"Following the morning chapel the altar was crowded with students seeking the Lord — two and three deep, with people praying in groups around the auditorium," Asbury President Paul Rader said. "Throughout the day there has been a beautiful awareness of the holiness of God. Many students took off their shoes with a sense of standing on holy ground."

"God is answering the passionate and persistent prayer of committed students who have been fasting and praying for weeks for this kind of spiritual breakthrough. We are all rejoicing in it," he said.

In hopes that God would have His way in lives across their campus and community, Asbury students have individually committed to interceding for their peers and have collectively signed up for more than 40 hours of prayer for their school each week.

John Avant, vice president for evangelization at the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board, expressed excitement about what is going on at Asbury, especially in light of similar explosions of enthusiasm among Christians in Missouri and Alaska. □

Church arson fires continue in Ala.

Compiled from news reports

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. — Four more churches in central Alabama were damaged or destroyed during the night of Feb. 6, just days after a suspected arsonist set five churches in another part of the state on fire, according to Baptist Press.

Associated Press reported Feb. 13 that another church in northwest Alabama, near the Mississippi state line, was set ablaze on Feb. 11, bringing the total number of churches burned to 10.

At least four Southern Baptist churches are among the 10 that have been burned thus far. □

Set Free Nashville helps men with addictions ...

Continued from page 1

"I came through the doors broken. I knew of God, but I didn't have a relationship with God," Cunningham said. "Set Free helped me establish that relationship."

Realizing "God has placed a call on my life," Cunningham moved to Nashville to help with the start of Set Free in Middle Tennessee.

Benson, a former sales tax auditor who sold his business in 2003 to accept a call to full-time ministry with the homeless, believes Set Free provides a channel for God to change the lives of men who have hit rock bottom in their lives.

"You're disciplined by someone who's been there longer than you and that makes you want to turn and bring somebody along with you," Benson said. As he spent three days incognito at the Gainesville, Ga., location, "I saw the transformation when talking to guys at 6:30 in the morning who are radiating what I would liken to the glow Moses had when he came down from Sinai with the tablets. It's only through the power of our resurrected Lord indwelling the individual that enables them to make it through."

For the future, Cunningham said Set Free Nashville hopes to accomplish four goals: (1) secure location; (2) build awareness in the Christian community about the ministry; (3) minister to those who don't know Christ; and (4) teach God's Word.

"Set Free is just a title for God's mission as a lifestyle

Set Free participants testify to changed lives

By Linda Lawson
Baptist and Reflector

NASHVILLE — When Ashley Burnett's wife and two daughters were killed in a car accident, his life began a downward spiral that included addiction to drugs.

An engineer by profession, Burnett, who came here in 2005 to help start Set Free, described himself as a "functional addict. I had access to money. I was killing myself really fast, but I managed to maintain image."

Burnett and three others involved in Set Free Nashville shared their stories of transformed lives.

When Burnett felt his employer and others in Virginia were beginning to notice his problems, he moved to Georgia, "thinking I could get myself right." After failing at saving himself, Burnett chose Set Free because he believed he needed the Spartan environment to move beyond his drug addiction.

After the first 60 days of Set Free in Gainesville, Ga., Burnett said, "I really didn't want to go. I came from less than zero to about zero. I thought if I can do that in about 60 days I need to stay here and find out more about this Jesus stuff. He



SET FREE NASHVILLE leaders, from left, David Graham, Ashley Burnett, and Ray Cook participate in a Bible study at their ministry house on the grounds of Two Rivers Baptist Church.

just changes the way you live.

"I've had all the material things, but I've never been as happy as watching people change their lives. I feed off that," Burnett said.

William Furlough had spent one day on the streets of Nashville when he met Burnett at a clinic where he was seeking help for his addictions. When Burnett told him about Set Free, Furlough agreed to go to Gainesville, for 60 days of intense discipleship.

"I went; it works," Furlough said. "When you have no place

to go, there is God. I'm staying with the program and staying with the Bible. I told them if they would help me get off drugs and alcohol I would help start Set Free Nashville. Set Free saved me from myself."

Ray Cook worked for CNN for 19 years, beginning as a video journalist and working his way up to director. But addiction to alcohol led to his loss of his job, his family, and everything he owned.

A friend told Cook about Set Free and urged him to try it.

"I had been brought up with

Christ in my life, but I had never gotten into it," Cook said. At first, when he read the Bible he couldn't understand its words. Other men suggested he pray, asking God to help him comprehend the truths of God's Word.

"Once the Bible started getting in me I wanted more," Cook said. "The happiness I have now within me I never want to lose."

David Graham thought he could swap drugs for the pain in his life and ended up losing relationships with loved ones, including his oldest son. When he reached a point where suicide seemed the only solution, someone gave him the phone number of Set Free, a miracle in itself. Set Free doesn't advertise or publish its number.

Graham called and was told to get a bus ticket to Gainesville.

Once at Set Free, Graham enjoyed learning the Bible verses, but he didn't like the food or the disciplined program. He was constantly in trouble.

Finally, he told the director he was willing to submit to the rigors of the program and "do whatever you tell me. I humbled myself down. I started changing that day. I know it was God through Set Free Who changed me." □

change. We're here to introduce the lifestyle change, not just feeding them for that day but keeping them fed for a life-

time," Cunningham said.

Benson said they already have been approached about establishing Set Free in Chat-

tanooga, Knoxville, and West Tennessee "and we're not off the ground here. We may not necessarily replicate the farm

phase in every city we go into, but we could replicate the church. We will be a planting church." □

Disaster relief ...

Continued from page 1

The Tennessee volunteers were lodged at FEMA's Tent City.

The Tennessee team usually had around 19 people go to work at 3 a.m. to have the meals ready by 10 a.m., said Curington. "The Salvation Army was amazed at our hard workers and their good attitudes. We impressed them."

Acres said disaster relief volunteers will continue to be needed for clean-up efforts related to Hurricane Katrina.

Tennessee Baptist Disaster Relief continues to accept donations to help victims with the Hurricane 2005 Relief Fund. Donations may be sent to: Tennessee Baptist Disaster Relief, Tennessee Baptist Convention, P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024-0728. Designate your check to: Hurricane 2005 Relief Fund. Or donations may be given online at the Tennessee Baptist Convention web site at www.tnbaptist.org. □

Dockery among evangelical leaders taking stance on global warming

Baptist Press

WASHINGTON — A coalition of 86 evangelical leaders called Feb. 8 for action on global warming, most significantly the passage of legislation to decrease carbon dioxide emissions.

In a statement an organizer of the coalition described as "ground-breaking," the leaders said global warming, also known as climate change, is "mainly human-induced" and they urged other evangelicals to help combat the problem.

Several prominent evangelicals, however, did not endorse the statement, including Southern Baptist ethicist Richard Land, Focus on the Family founder James Dobson, and Prison Fellowship founder Charles Colson. They have said there is a lack of consensus among evangelicals about the extent and cause of global warming.

Among those signing the statement were several Southern Baptist leaders, most notably author and Southern California mega-church pastor Rick Warren. Also endorsing the

document were some Southern Baptist academics, including Timothy George, dean of Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Ala., and David Dockery, president of Union University in Jackson.

The current SBC president, Bobby Welch, was not among the signers, nor were any former SBC presidents or any of the six SBC seminary presidents.

The new global warming coalition, known as the Evangelical Climate Initiative (ECI), made four claims in its statement, which was unveiled at a Washington, D.C., news conference. They were:

- "Human-induced climate change is real;
- "The consequences of climate change will be significant and will hit the poor the hardest;
- "Christian moral convictions demand our response to the climate change problem;
- "The need to act now is urgent. Governments, businesses, churches, and individuals all have a role to play in addressing climate change — starting now."

In their statement, the signers said "many of us have required considerable convincing before becoming persuaded that climate change is a real problem and that it ought to matter to us as Christians. As evangelicals we have hesitated to speak on this issue until we could be more certain of the science" of global warming.

The evangelicals cited the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which has been researching the issue since the late 1980s, and the National Academy of Sciences in asserting that global warming is mostly caused by human beings. According to the evangelicals' statement, the IPCC has documented a 50-year rise in global temperatures and has predicted a continued increase, mostly because of human beings.

In January, Land, Dobson, and Colson were among 22 conservative Christians who signed a letter urging the National Association of Evangelicals not to take an official position on global warming because it "is not a consensus issue."

"We are evangelicals, and we care about God's creation," the 22 leaders said. "However, we believe there should be room for Bible-believing evangelicals to disagree about the cause, severity, and solutions to the global warming issue."

A lack of consensus among Southern Baptists is enough to keep him from signing the new statement, said Land, president of the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

"It would be unethical and irresponsible for me to sign such a statement giving the impression that there is a consensus among Southern Baptists on this issue when there is clearly not one," Land told Baptist Press. "We will continue to foster discussion and debate on issues such as global warming and Christians' responsibility for the stewardship of the environment and the best ways to address our energy needs in the future. But until and when a consensus develops among Southern Baptists, it would be a disservice to Southern Baptists to give the impression that such a consensus existed." □

From Metairie Baptist Church

Katrina helped lead minister to FBC, Sweetwater

By Connie Davis Bushey
Baptist and Reflector

SWEETWATER — On Saturday, Aug. 27, of last year Jeff and Emily Smith got up and Jeff checked the national hurricane center's web site.

That is a natural thing for a resident of New Orleans, La., to do during hurricane season, he explained. Tracking hurricanes "was almost like a spectator sport" for New Orleans residents, he added.

In 2004 the couple had evacuated when Hurricane Ivan struck the area. So when Jeff, minister of education, Metairie Baptist Church, Metairie, La., saw Hurricane Katrina was headed for his home, he and Emily started packing and moving valuables up off the floor in case of flooding. They took several changes of clothes, a game to play as they waited, and their wedding photos. They had married just a year earlier.

The couple were recent graduates of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Emily was a chaplain for an area hospice organization.

The couple evacuated to Natchez, Miss., and then Franklin, Tenn., to stay with family. Emily's parents live in Franklin. Her father is Ken Marler of the Tennessee Baptist Convention staff.

Just like when Ivan struck, the couple expected to return home in a couple of days. In Natchez the home they stayed in didn't have power. When visiting a mall they saw some TV reports and began to realize the extent of the damage caused by Katrina.

In Franklin, they learned more news and began trying to make contacts back in New Orleans. Smith ministered to church members by trying to contact them. He learned that text messaging on cell phones worked. Using cell phones to make phone calls didn't work. Smith developed a place on the church's web site for folks to report on their plight and communicate with other members.

The couple learned their home and the church had not been flooded. Soon a Southern Baptist disaster relief shower unit was installed on the church parking lot and disaster relief volunteers were using the facility.

On Sept. 6-8 the couple returned home to find an eerie, very quiet neighborhood. Smith said the streets had no street lights or stop lights. Trees and utility poles were lying on the ground along with power lines. National guard soldiers were on the ground and in helicopters flying overhead.

Although he hasn't been in a

war, he would describe it as a war zone, said Smith.

Back in Franklin, Emily learned her job would be drastically different because so many of her patients had died or been moved from New Orleans. She would have to accept fewer hours and a much smaller salary if she kept it. She resigned.

Smith's job at Metairie Church was only part-time. Before Katrina hit he had learned the church wasn't ready to call him full-time. He had already told the church he would be looking for another church position.

After Katrina, Smith realized he and Emily could not live on his part-time salary. He also realized the church would be financially strapped to pay all of its staff members and that this was God's way of leading them to another opportunity.

Smith was so glad when Phil Holmes, pastor, First Baptist Church, Sweetwater, called him in Franklin. Holmes had heard of Smith's situation from Ken Marler while Marler was leading a conference for the church.

Effective Dec. 1 First Church, Sweetwater, called Smith to its staff. Prior to serving Metairie Church and studying at NOBTS, he was youth minister for eight years at a church in Nicholson, Ga., and



PHIL HOLMES, left, pastor, First Baptist Church, Sweetwater, stands with the church's new associate pastor/minister of education, Jeff Smith in Smith's office at the church.

an employee of a supply company. He worked in construction supply.

Smith asked for prayer for Metairie Church, where Thomas Strong, professor at NOBTS of Lebanon, is pastor.

The disaster relief workers used the church facility until Christmas, said Smith. It and the neighborhood "won't be back to normal for a while," said Smith. Stores are still closing early and re-construction is slow.

He thinks often of the "great Christian people" at Metairie Church. He was a member of the church or on the staff for

about two years.

The way he and Emily left the church was "not the way you'd expect to go. Usually you have some transition time. Instead we just got yanked out."

"People there are still suffering from the shock of it all."

The Smiths have settled in Sweetwater. The town is a good size for them, smaller than New Orleans and, for Smith, bigger than Nicholson, Ga.

"God can bring about a good change even out of the worst circumstances. In our case, despite the tragedy of Katrina, God led us to a new place of ministry," said Smith. □

Ron Phillips of Hixson

Former SBC leader, NAMB trustee chairman now feels excluded

By John Pierce
For Baptist and Reflector

HIXSON — When Judge Paul Pressler and Paige Patterson launched a revolution within the Southern Baptist Convention, they found an eager soldier in Ron Phillips, who served as chair of the Home Mission Board (now North American Mission Board) in the early 1990s.

Phillips, 58, has been pastor of Central Baptist Church of Hixson, near Chattanooga, since 1979 — the year when what proponents call "the conservative resurgence" began within the SBC.

Today Phillips — who had "an experience with the Holy Spirit" in 1989 that changed his life and ministry significantly — sees himself on the excluded side of SBC life.

"I do believe Paige [Patterson] and others have betrayed every one of us," said Phillips, whose ministry is now known as Abba's House and draws about 3,000 worshipers each Sunday.

The congregation identifies itself as "a Spirit-filled Southern Baptist Church" that "operates in the gifts of the Spirit while holding to the Word of God." Phillips said his congregation affirms biblical authority — what he thought was the sole issue in the SBC controversy.

"We thought it was a commitment to a higher view of Scripture rather than a narrowing view of fundamentalism," said Phillips, who helped carry out the radical

reshaping of the convention as HMB chair.

Any criticism that he is now on the receiving end of what he helped create is certainly "fair," Phillips confessed. He said he has apologized to many who were excluded from SBC life in recent years.

"I was much younger," he said. "But I was very serious and sincere."

Phillips was elected president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention in 1991 — after his "experience with the Holy Spirit." There were no problems, said Phillips, because "I didn't get up and talk about it." Phillips told the *Baptist and Reflector* his church still supports the SBC, Tennessee Baptist Convention, and the Hamilton County Baptist Association. During the 2004-05 fiscal year, Central Baptist contributed \$22,100 through the Cooperative Program.

In his book, *Awakened by the Spirit*, released by Thomas Nelson Publishers in 2000, Phillips shares his emerging theological and historical perspectives as a "Spirit-filled" Baptist.

Phillips said his passion for evangelism and missions remains high but he is finding it harder to support the work of Southern Baptists. He said convention policies — including the one recently adopted by the SBC International Mission Board that excludes missionary candidates who use a private prayer language — are pushing more good Baptists away.

"We're shocked and betrayed by what has happened at the International Mis-

sion Board," said Phillips. "I feel like it is a precursor to a total booting out of Baptists with charismatic leanings."

In response, Patterson said neither he nor anyone else to his knowledge ever made a promise to include charismatic persons in all aspects of SBC life. And his position on gifts of the Spirit, he said, has been public for years and is documented in a commentary he wrote on I Corinthians.

"The Bible says not to forbid speaking in tongues since the miracle of Acts 2, for example, was a miracle of God," said Patterson. "However, Paul builds in so many restrictions in I Corinthians 14 as to make the practice of mere utterance, what is practiced mostly today, virtually of little value."

Patterson said, as a Baptist, he would not forbid anyone from speaking in tongues, but would not call such a person to be his pastor or appoint someone with such leanings as a seminary professor.

"I cannot imagine why anyone could feel betrayed," said Patterson, now president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. "Most of us don't make deals; we try to understand Scripture and faithfully preach it." Phillips, however, cited such a promise from page 158 of Judge Pressler's book, *A Hill On Which To Die*, released in 1999 by the Southern Baptist publishing house, Broadman & Holman.

Phillips said he and Pressler serve together on the National Religious

Broadcasters' (NRB) board. He believes Pressler was sincere in his statement.

That assurance, however, is not being kept by SBC leaders, said Phillips. And the growing restrictions within SBC agencies make it harder for him and others to stay connected.

"I think this is an effort to exclude 'Word and Spirit' people" from the SBC, he said.

Phillips also said that members of his congregation are no longer able to serve as missionaries — even as volunteers — of the SBC agency whose trustees he once led.

NAMB spokesman Marty King, however, said the agency does not screen volunteers for possible charismatic leanings. The board does have a policy, King said, that prohibits appointed missionaries and endorsed chaplains from practicing glossolalia (speaking in tongues), including a private prayer language.

Phillips said he and his congregation are relating to a wider group of Christians than before. Independent Baptists, and even so-called moderate Baptists within and outside the SBC, are more open to him than current Southern Baptist leaders, he said.

Phillips said he and his congregation are partnering for missions where they find acceptance and support. "We want to go where we are celebrated, not just tolerated," Phillips said.

"I don't want to be divisive. Everybody doesn't have to be like me," he added. — Pierce is editor of *Baptists Today*.

Focusing on the minor won't make Satan 'sweat'

reflections



By Lonnie Wilkey, editor

I was browsing through Baptist Press last week and an article caught my attention: "Chowan College agrees to change mascot to comply with NCAA rule."

Chowan College is the second oldest Baptist school in North Carolina. For years their team name has been the "Braves," a natural selection because the very name of the school "Chowan" is Indian.

The school is located between the Chowan and Meherrin rivers in northeastern North Carolina, and both rivers are named for Indian tribes, according to the Baptist Press report.

The school is not changing its name, but will change the team nickname.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association deemed last

August that colleges cannot have North American mascots or nicknames. The NCAA established a rule to keep colleges and universities from "displaying hostile and abusive racial/national origin mascots, nicknames, or imagery at any of the 88 NCAA championships." The policy went into effect Feb. 1.

The policy basically affected 18 schools, including Florida State University (the Seminoles), according to Baptist Press.

Several schools, including Florida State, won permission to retain their mascots and nicknames because they have the approval of the tribes from which their nicknames are derived.

Chowan agreed to change their nickname, according to their college president, because it would take time and money for "a battle that could not be won."

Another Baptist school — Mississippi College in Clinton, has appealed to keep their mascot and nickname — the

"Choctaws." They did get approval from the Choctaw tribe to keep their name.

In an age where illegal recruiting and college athletes getting into trouble with the law appears to be rampant, it seems the NCAA is more concerned with a minor issue such as team nicknames.

This NCAA rule is just another example of going to the extreme to be politically correct.

Now, if a school such as Florida State had a mascot dressed as an Indian going around shooting arrows or "scalping" the opponent's mascot, we might have a problem. But, in Florida State's case, all I have ever seen is the mascot dressed up as an Indian warrior riding a horse after touchdown. Granted that I am not of Indian descent, but I don't view that as offensive.

More than anything the Florida State nickname as well as Chowan's and Mississippi College's, appear to be based on history or geography.

Too often, minor issues take the focus away from what is

really important.

I'm not just picking on the NCAA because it happens in all areas of life — even in church.

Christians are as guilty as anyone of focusing on minor or insignificant issues instead of what really matters — telling a lost world about Jesus Christ.

We get so busy worrying about the color of carpet, the type of music, or any other multitude of things that we forget that the ultimate (and only) goal of church should be to focus on Jesus.

What happens in our churches and in our Christian life should be all about Him and nothing else.

Satan has to be pleased when church members fight over the color of carpet or the padding on the pews. When we do that, we aren't causing him any distress.

Only when Christians go out and tell others about Jesus and how He can change their life do we make Satan "sweat."

Let's quit focusing on the minor and deal with the important stuff. I would rather please God than Satan any day. □

serving churches



By Bill Northcott

Assistance for churches in the interim period

Your pastor has just announced his resignation. Feelings in the congregation run the gamut of emotions. Some saw it coming. Some are surprised. Some feel grief. Others feel jubilation. If the pastor has left under duress, some may blame others for his exodus.

Regardless of the emotions, life goes on — the church must face the future. There are a couple of things that need to happen, and the sooner the better.

First, the church should consider the question of who will step up to lead the congregation. Nature abhors a vacuum. The exodus of the pastor may result in a scramble among those in the church who want to "take over the reins." If the pastor has left in response to growing conflict, the problem is exacerbated. Which "side" will fill the vacuum? The potential for loss is great. It is to be hoped that there are mature lay leaders in the congregation who will recognize the critical need for a balanced decision leading to interim leadership.

Second, the church should elect a pastor search committee. Care should be taken that the steps followed in this process are in compliance with the church's Constitution and Bylaws. There is a tremendous amount of preparation that goes into getting the Search Committee ready to do its work.

These are two areas that have occupied a lot of my time in the last couple of years. My conviction that the interim period is a marvelous time of unique opportunity has grown to new proportions. Consequently, a concerted effort has gone into the ministries of preparing for the interim ministry.

The church-minister relations office at the Tennessee Baptist Convention maintains a list of men who have received special training as Transitional Interim Pastors (TIPs). We also have consultants who provide training for search committees.

Our office would be pleased to consult with your church about the TIP ministry and/or training for your pastor search committee. Call me at 1-800-558-2090, ext. 2099 or locally at (615) 371-2099 for more information. □ — Northcott is church-minister relations specialist for the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

Fuzzy line exists between church and the world

guest columnist



By Todd Brady

Distinguishing between the church and the world is getting harder and harder these days. Although the thought has floated in my mind for some time, my 2-year-old son recently drove its reality home to me.

As we were driving in our van, Jack, in typical fashion was positioned snugly in his car seat, loudly naming whatever he saw. "Police car!" "Hospital!" "Water tower!" "Doggie!" "School bus!" Not being able to go anywhere without his enthusiastic commentary, our usual response during our journeys is always "Yes, Jack. That's right. What else do you see?"

However, we were all thrown for a loop on this particular day when Jack proved himself completely wrong about a particular appraisal. Given the day in which we live, though, I don't blame him.

Passing a beautiful brick medical complex located near our home, Jack immediately exclaimed, "church!" I hesitated not knowing how to respond to my backseat tour guide. Church architecture is by no means an indication of a congregation's biblical fidelity, but how do you explain that some churches these days do in fact look like office buildings or warehouses? I've thought it for

some time, but I felt it strongly on that day — distinguishing between the church and the world is getting harder and harder these days.

With that experience resounding in my mind, the next day on the way to work I saw a nearby church sign advertising, "Attend Happy Hour this Sunday Morning!" Was the pang in my stomach the result of my overly caffeinated morning coffee, or was there really something wrong with this picture?

I started thinking about the leaders of that church. Do they truly believe that their creativity and seemingly cute use of worldly bar room images will cause people to flock to their morning worship service? Moreover, what do the thousands of pagans who pass that church each day think of such a worldly appeal? Even more importantly, what does God think?

If those experiences were not enough, I did a double, triple, and quadruple take when I passed the church with a sign screaming, "Elvis in concert! Sunday, 7:00." The thought came again — distinguishing between the church and the world is getting harder and harder these days.

If Christians like me are troubled by such silly messages coming from churches, how much more do non-Christians find themselves perplexed by the confusing words and actions of the church? We say we are not like the world, and the Bible clearly commands, *Do not love the world or*

the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world — the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions — is not from the Father but is from the world (1 John 2:15-16).

Are we as the church trying to get the world to like us and to come join us by doing our best to be like them? Try as we might, it will not work. And even if it might, the world will end up having more influence on the church than the church will on the world.

One of the favorite eateries of our university community is the local Mexican restaurant. Go in at any time during the day and odds are that you will find a handful of Union students or faculty over in the cor-

ner munching on chips and salsa. While the food is quick, good, and inexpensive, there is only one problem. When you leave, you smell like any number of the numerous combination plates offered on the menu. To eat there means you carry the restaurant's odor the rest of the day.

I am finding some churches these days smelling strangely like the world. Some look too much like the world. Some talk like the world. Some act like the world. Distinguishing between the church and the world is getting more difficult.

If the line between the church and the world seems fuzzy to me, imagine how fuzzy it must be to those in the world. □ — Brady is minister to the university at Union University in Jackson.

CHURCH OF THE COVERED DISH by Thom Tapp



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Is Camp for the Camper?

by Tim Bearden

About three decades ago when I first entered into Christian camping as a ministry, I learned a simple phrase, "Camp is for the camper." That statement has taken on various new meanings over the years, but it is still very true.

The point is the camp or conference center experience offers a unique opportunity to anyone willing to step out of the normal fast paced life.

Camps and retreats offer a unique opportunity for fellowship in an outdoor environment. In a camp or retreat setting, new temporary communities come together. An example is last summer's youth camp at Linden Valley.

During the mornings the group had a time of solitude during which they could not talk. They could read, pray, or just sit and listen to the sounds of nature. A few mornings before the camp ended, a sound began to ring out from the river walk. One person walked over to the railing and started singing praises to God. Another soon joined in and before long about 50 teenagers were singing. When the youth minister was asked about the occurrence, he responded that they were told they could not speak, but no one told them they could not sing.

Those teenagers were given an opportunity to get away from televisions, computers, telephones, some of their friends, their families, and normal distractions. As a result, fellowship in this new community became worship.

Camps and retreats offer other types of

opportunities for fellowship. In a restaurant in Savannah, Tenn., the waitress shared that she accepted Christ at Linden Valley (Camp Linden.) A shopkeeper from Gatlinburg accepted Christ as a child in camp at Carson Springs (Camp Carson). Recently, while standing in Stokely Chapel at Carson Springs a lady from Johnson City told the story of how she and her husband met in camp. And so, we have examples of eternal fellowship with our living God and life-long fellowship with a spouse.

It is very common for guests at both conference centers to reminisce about an earlier experience at camp. They look for landmarks or buildings where life changing events took place. They remember the fellowship they had.

Camps and retreats are places of unique fellowship found in working through a ropes course with a group of people you hardly know, or enjoying conversation with friends walking down a nature trail, or sitting in rocking chairs on a warm spring day.

In our time, enjoying the outdoors is becoming a thing of the past. I recently read a book about children and the outdoors in which the author referred to a young man who said he had rather play indoors, because that is where the electrical sockets are located.

That statement I learned over 30 years ago is still true, it just needs to be rediscovered — "Camp is for the camper." Is it time for you to get away and enjoy some real fellowship at one of your Tennessee Baptist Conference Centers?

How I Met *God* at Camp

by Terrell Marcom

Camp Carson (Carson Springs Baptist Conference Center) is my spiritual birthplace. At the age of nine, I felt God's call on my life. At 16 I gave my life to Jesus. At 17 I struggled with God's call to ministry.

At 18 I returned as a counselor with the youth from my church. Each of these milestones happened while attending leadership training camp at what is now known as Carson Springs.

The year was 1971 when I was nine, and I was excited to be leaving home for my first week of summer camp at Camp Carson in Newport. Little did I know that my first week of summer camp was going to start a life changing adventure.

I don't remember the speaker that year. I barely remember anything at all except that I had fun. One night I left the worship service crying and did not know why. Counselors opened the Word of God and helped me realize that God was speaking to me, and I needed to ask Jesus into my heart and be saved. I returned home from camp and was baptized at Northside Baptist Church, McMinnville.

I returned to camp the next seven years. There were wonderful experiences that kept me returning year after year. I would like to be able to tell you that learning about God was my reason for attending camp each year, but it wasn't. I was running so hard and so fast away from God. I could think of 100 reasons to attend and not one of them had anything to do with God, but God's people were faithful.

The wonderful staff year after year gave a week of their life to see that a young boy like me could experience the love of God. Their hard work paid off soon. When I was 16 years old on a Thursday night after Johnnie Hall of the Tennessee Baptist Convention staff, prayed the petitioners prayer at the campfire, we sang "The Old Rugged Cross." I knelt in a classroom in Stokely Memorial Chapel with Mary Allen, TBC staff, and a few friends at my side. That night God did what

I did not allow Him to do years before. God changed my life, and I surrendered my life to God.

For seven years I had attended leadership training camp for all the wrong reasons. Each year God was using the setting, the staff, the worship, and the Word of God to bring me to the place of conviction. The next year at age 17 most of the young people that I had attended camp with were going on with their lives. I wanted to go back one more time to make a different statement than I had ever made before at camp. I wanted to go and help young people find Jesus. I knew if Jesus could change my life, then He could change their lives as well.

At 17 and at Camp Carson for the eighth consecutive year I was back in the same familiar places, but I was a different person. The struggle that week was quite different than previous years. God was calling me into the ministry, and I was still running.

Loving staff members talked with me and encouraged me in my decisions. A few months later I told God I was willing to go anywhere and do anything that He would have me to do. I was available.

God led me to Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City (1988) and to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas (1994). Today as a husband, father of four, and pastor of Excell Baptist Church in Clarksville, I remember fondly the experiences of Camp Carson.

I return as often as I can and walk the paths where God changed the heart of a boy and made him a man after His own heart. I remember the names and faces of so many people that loved me and encouraged me. To Hall, Allen, Don Mauldin, TBC staff, retired pastor Don Pharris and his wife Carol Pharris, former TN WMU president, pastor Abe Silliman, as well as the Tennessee Baptists who envisioned the need for camps many years ago, thank you. *You made a difference in my life.*

What Are the Values of Christian Camping?

By George "Bud" Williams

Why are so many groups, churches, mission agencies, schools, youth organizations, schools, colleges, and social agencies involved in Christian camping? Because it's where five significant values are realized.

They are:

1. Genuine community is experienced;
2. Ministry to the whole person takes place;
3. Relationships are built - with God and others;
4. Memories and major life commitments;
5. Tomorrow's leaders are developed today.

These values drive the Christian camping movement as a vital instrument of change for individuals and groups.

(Excerpt from a copyrighted Focus Series article "Values of Christian Camping," published by Christian Camp and Conference Association (CCCA) Colorado Springs, Colo., at www.ccca-usa.org. Used by permission.)

What's Your Conference Center Story?

We have heard about many experiences at one of our Baptist conference centers. What was your experience? Write us about your favorite memory at Linden Valley Baptist Conference Center (Camp Linden) or Carson Springs Baptist Conference Center (Camp Carson.)

Send your comments to Tim Bearden, Tennessee Baptist Conference Centers senior manager at: 1225 Baptist Camp Road, Linden, TN 37096, or tbearden@tnbaptist.org

Coming Up! Coming Up! Coming Up!

- March 3-4 Youth Evangelism Conference, Municipal Auditorium, Nashville
- March 10-12 English As a Second Language, Baptist Center, Brentwood
- March 11 Church Planting: Is it for me?, Baptist Center, Brentwood
- March 11 Finding Your Place in Ministry, Kirby Woods Baptist Church, Memphis
- March 14 Regional Secretaries Computer Training, Leawood Baptist Church, Memphis
- March 15 Regional Secretaries Computer Training, Englewood Baptist Church, Jackson
- March 16 Regional Secretaries Computer Training, Baptist Center, Brentwood
- March 16 Church Building & Finance Conference, Wallace Memorial Baptist Church, Knoxville
- March 17-18 Missions Team Leader Training, Baptist Center, Brentwood
- March 18 Bible Fun Field Day & Journey for Kids Camp, Linden Valley Baptist Conference Center, Linden

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

Stokely Chapel Needs Volunteers

Volunteers are needed to finish the remodeling work on Stokely Chapel at Carson Springs Baptist Conference Center. Help is needed for: drywall, plumbing, rock laying, installing drop ceiling, and landscaping.

Plans are to complete the interior of the chapel by the end of March and the landscaping by the end of April.

To volunteer, contact Keith McKinney, Carson Springs Conference Center manager, at (877) 706-6336 or e-mail him at kmckinney@tnbaptist.org or Mark LeMay, TBC Facilities manager, at (800) 558-2090 or e-mail him at mlemay@tnbaptist.org.

Churches

◆ Ten men from four Nashville churches and one Springfield church will serve in Lunsar, Sierra Leone, Africa, March 18-31. The team will rebuild a Baptist conference center damaged by a civil war. It was built under the ministry of **Bert Dyson**, minister of senior adults, **Woodmont Baptist Church, Nashville**, and **Ruth Dyson**, emeritus missionaries of the International Mission Board. Team members are Calvin Dunham, Jim Kearley; Ahmed Konteh, and Keith Tobias, **Woodmont Church**; Kenny Beam, Corey Knight, and Bill Carden, **Forest Hills Baptist Church, Nashville**; Leslie Hancock, **Hopewell Baptist Church, Springfield**; and Pete Deere, **First Baptist Church, Nashville**; and O'Henry Glock, Tusculum Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Nashville. The team is still collecting funds for the project. They can be sent to Woodmont Baptist Church, 2100 Woodmont Blvd., Nashville, TN 37215.

◆ **First Baptist Church, St. Bethlehem, Clarksville**, will hold a Sunday School Leadership Conference Monday, March 20, from 6:30-9 p.m. featuring Josh Hunt, who is an author, and Missy Hunt. Deadline for reservations is Wednesday, March 15. For reservations, contact Susan Prescott at

Church's SS class aids young men from rescue mission

By Rosemary Ragan
For Baptist and Reflector

NASHVILLE — Young men from the Nashville Rescue Mission enjoyed a Christmas party complete with Santa Claus at Crieveview Baptist Church here in December.

The event was the 18th annual party sponsored by the Hoff Harless Men's Class for young men who are enrolled in the Mission's Anchor Home Program.

Some youth make bad decisions before reaching maturity: They engage in premarital relations, get involved with substance abuse or alcohol, or drop out of school only to find themselves homeless.

The Anchor Home program helps men between the ages of 18 and 24 overcome youthful

indiscretions.

These young adults live on the Mission's Lafayette Street campus, where they have the opportunity through individualized study to complete their education and earn a GED certificate. Life-recovery graduates contribute to the community by finding gainful employment and moving into stable housing. Reunions with family members are common.

Most importantly, they are given the opportunity to develop a personal relationship



HOFF HARLESS, center, along with his wife, **Martha Cathryn**, left, of Crieveview Baptist Church, Nashville, visit with young men from the Anchor Home of the Nashville Rescue Mission during their 18th annual Christmas party held for Anchor Home residents.

with Jesus Christ and become spiritually whole.

Each year, the Harless class and others contribute money for gifts which are wrapped by members of the Faith Class, who also prepare desserts and

snacks for the party.

For many of the young men, this is the first gift they have received in a year according to class members who participate in the event each year. □

(931) 648-0395 or susan.fbcsv-@charterbn.com.

Associations

◆ A Pastors and Wives Appreciation Dinner, sponsored by **Nashville Baptist Association**, will be held Saturday, March 25, from 3:30-7:30 p.m. at First Baptist Church, Nashville. Speakers will be Thom Rainer, new president of LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, and his wife, Nellie Jo. For information call Phillip Barnett at (615) 832-6909.

◆ **Polk County Baptist**

Association, Benton, will hold an Evangelism Rally Tuesday, Feb. 28, at 7 p.m. at Zion Baptist Church, Benton. Larry Gilmore Tennessee Baptist Convention evangelism director, will speak.

◆ The **Cumberland Baptist Association, Clarksville**, will sponsor a staff and wives banquet Friday, Feb. 17, at Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, at 6:30 p.m. Speaker will be Fred Landis. For information, contact the association office at (931) 358-9036.



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Small church pastors have big talents, Tennessee ministers agree

Polly House
Way news service

RIDGECREST, N.C. — Most pastors in the Southern Baptist Convention need help.

They need help because:

- 1) They are the only pastoral staff member of their church.
- 2) They work with all the groups — babies to senior citizens.
- 3) They know the name and situation of every church member.
- 4) They know if one family is on vacation, 10 percent of their congregation may be absent.
- 5) They know that every thing, critical word will get back to them.

Most churches are small
The Annual Church Profile (ACP) conducted by LifeWay Christian Resources of the

Southern Baptist Convention shows that almost 26,000 of the SBC's more than 43,000 churches have an attendance of fewer than 125 people.

In Tennessee, 1,951 of the 2,652 churches responding to the Annual Church Profile (ACP) have an attendance of less than 125 people.

This tells LifeWay that "most" pastors are probably the lone staff member at their churches. With this in mind, LifeWay sponsored the "Toolbox for the Smaller Church Pastor and his Wife" Jan. 23-25 at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center near Asheville, N.C. About 80 people from 12 states attended the event.

"Pastors, you are some of the most gifted and talented leaders in the SBC," Barry Campbell, director for the Carolinas in LifeWay's regional operations

staff member churches because it is designed to save time yet achieve the best ministry results. The book is done in an executive summary fashion, with nothing over two pages.

"We have wanted to do this conference for the pastors and wives in smaller churches for a long time," said Chris Johnson, editor of *LifeAnswers* at LifeWay, and one of the coordinators of the event. "We appreciate the work these pastors do and understand the frustrations and the joys."

Johnson understands well. He serves as bivocational pastor of **Central Baptist Church in Hendersonville.**

Johnson credited Kay

Vantrease of LifeWay's church leadership training area for helping the Toolbox conference becoming reality. "Kay is a member of a small church and has such a heart for the ministry of these pastors. She sees the needs these guys face and how LifeWay can work with them to help them make a positive impact on their churches and communities."

Challenges in ministry

The pastors attending the event said two of the biggest challenges in their ministries are developing and motivating lay leadership. Eddie Mosley, pastor of spiritual development at **First Baptist Church, Smyrna**, told the group one way to address this issue is to involve children and youth in the ministry of the church.

"In the little church in Kentucky where I grew up, my pastor trusted me as a 5th grader to take up the offering. That's been a long time ago and I still remember that. When I was a teenager, I couldn't sing. But, I got to be the 'snake man' (the one who handled all the cables) for the youth choir so I still got to go on the choir trips. It's about involving people with what they can do. I didn't get it at the time, but my pastor was training the next generation for ministry."

Mosley reminded the pastors to never use the sentence "We've got it covered" in ministry. "For example, if you have someone who asks if you need him to take up offering, don't tell him 'We've got it covered.' Let him take up the offering. You can't have too many people doing it. If someone asks if you need him to set up tables for a fellowship, don't say 'We've got it covered.' Let him help."

Small is the majority

Brandon Brasel is fairly typical of many of these pastors. He leads **First Baptist Church of Parthenon, Ark.**, a small hamlet in the northern part of the state. The church averages about 50 on Sunday morning, and about a third are members of his extended family.

"We are never going to be a huge church," Brasel said. "There just aren't that many people living here. But there are still people to reach and people who need to know the Lord."

Stan Jenkins, pastor of **Wells Chapel Baptist Church in Wallace, N.C.**, said, "We [pastors of smaller churches] are most of the pastors in the SBC. But we go to so many conferences where the ideas are just over our heads. They don't apply to our situations."

Placed by God

Tim Dowdy, pastor of **Eagle's Landing Baptist Church in McDonough, Ga.**, reminded the pastors that God has a plan for them and their ministry.

"God put you in the place where you are," Dowdy said. "He could have put you any place at any time in history, but He chose here and now for you." □

"We are never going to be a huge church. There just aren't that many people living here. But there are still people to reach ... —
Brandon Brasel

area, said to the group. "You are some of the hardest working pastors. You do it all. Plus, you rarely get any recognition for your ministry."

Campbell is author of *Toolbox for [Busy] Pastors*, published by LifeWay. It offers 100 "how-to's" for pastors. The book is designed to be especially helpful to single

Two BIG events ... One great location!

Gatlinburg Convention Center, Gatlinburg, Tenn.
March 24-25, 2006



Get-Together 2006, an event for any woman who is passionate about missions.

For more information, contact Rebekah Wales at Tennessee WMU at 1-800-558-2090, ext. 7921 or rwales@tnbaptist.org or visit www.tnwmu.org

Take a careful exploration of who you are and the work you have been given and then sink yourself into that. Don't be impressed with yourself. Don't compare yourself with others. Each of you must take responsibility for doing the creative best you can with your own life. **Galatians 6:4-5 (MSG)**



Connection 2006, a missions event for girls in grades 7 through 12

For more information, contact Jennifer Ferguson at Tennessee WMU at 1-800-558-2090, ext 2038 or jferguson@tnbaptist.org or visit www.tnwmu.org.

You were all called to travel on the same road and in the same direction, so stay together, both outwardly and inwardly. **Ephesians 4:4 (MSG)**

Registration Fee for each event:
\$35 per person, \$40 per person after March 10, 2006

In Spirit & Truth Worship Conference

"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

John 4:23-24

Presented by the Tennessee Baptist Convention Worship & Music Ministry

March 17-18, 2006
Belle Aire Baptist Church
Murfreesboro, Tennessee

A conference for those who prompt and facilitate an environment conducive to worship; namely Pastors, Ministers of Music, Worship Leaders, Audio & Video Tech teams, Praise Band & Praise Team leaders and members, Worship Committees, Children's Worship leaders, Student (youth) leaders

Luke Garrett



Featured
Conference Artist

Drew Gray,

Host Minister of Music

Paul Clark,

Conference Coordinator

David Platt



Featured
Conference Speaker

COST: \$50 per person if registration is received by February 17. Cost is \$60 after February 17.

Breakout Conferences led by:
David Platt - Pastors/Speakers
Jon Duncan - Worship Music Leaders
Audio & Visual Experts - Technology Operators & Planners
Candy Macon - Children in Worship
Rob Tims - Students (Youth) in Worship



See website for schedule and more information
www.tnworshipandmusic.org

New LifeWay president

Rainer calls for boldness in spiritually hungry world

By Chris Turner
LifeWay news service

NASHVILLE — We live in a time of great irony, LifeWay Christian Resources' president told LifeWay's board of trustees Feb. 6, the evening after his inauguration as the publishing board's ninth president.

The church sleeps while the world hungers for the truth of the gospel, said Thom S. Rainer.

"We live at a time when it takes on average 86 Southern Baptists per year to bring one person to faith in Jesus Christ," said Rainer, six days into his tenure as LifeWay's president.



RAINER

"We are living in an age of evangelistic apathy on the one hand while on the other there is a growing receptivity to the gospel. Unfortunately because of the apathy there is often no one to tell those who hunger for the gospel that salvation is found in Jesus Christ."

Rainer kept his comments brief but focused during Life-

Way's semiannual trustee meeting. He challenged trustees and employees to make LifeWay an organization "that impacts the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ."

"This is so much of who we are and we are going to become even more focused on the task of evangelism," he said. "I pray that my leadership will be one that leads us to become an organization that impacts North America, and indeed the entire world, for Jesus. We must be bold."

Rainer's address was titled, "The Joshua Factor: Five Steps Forward." He used Joshua 1:6-9 as the foundational Scripture passage for his address.

Step 1: Rainer cited a change from LifeWay having a senior management group to a senior management team. "We will look across divisional lines throughout this entire ministry, and work as a team," he said. "I want the members of our executive management team to take a more active leadership role. I like to see people empowered to do the job they believe God has called them to do."

Step 2: Rainer announced the launch of B&H Academic and subtitled the initiative A Priority to Fidelity. "Through this new line we are going to communicate that we are serious about serious matters," he said. "We are going to have the best of academic resources. B&H [Broadman & Holman] will be at the forefront of maintaining doctrinal truths. We are going to take an aggressive leadership role so when the world sees what fidelity to the inerrant word of God looks like, they will see what LifeWay stands for."

Step 3: LifeWay will unapologetically be a ministry supported by a business, Rainer said. "We have a business model and we have to have revenues over expenses," he said. "But the SBC did not put LifeWay into existence to be first a business organization. We were created because a ministry was needed. You'll hear me say this often. We will repeatedly ask the question: 'What are we doing to provide individuals and churches with relevant resources that spiritually transform lives and cultures?'"

Step 4: Rainer announced the

launch of LifeWay Research. "I believe this is the beginning of something big," he said. "LifeWay Research is an entity we are forming in gradual but aggressive steps that listens to churches, that listens to Christians, and that listens to the [spiritually] lost. We will be an authority on what's going on in the world of churches, beliefs, and the world of the unchurched. When LifeWay speaks, the world will be listening."

Step 5: An intense focus on the local church will be LifeWay's "heartbeat," Rainer said. "The local church is our heart and our mission. We serve two primary constituencies: individual Christians and churches. Though we have seen great days, we've only seen a glimmer

of what God is yet to do with in these areas."

Rainer told trustees that Christians in general, and employees of LifeWay in particular, "weren't called to be basal; we were called to be bold."

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — PASTOR

First Baptist Church, Monterey, Tenn., is now accepting resumes for a full-time pastor position. Please send resume to Monterey First Baptist Church, 106 Chestnut St., Monterey, TN 38574. Post to the attention of Sonny Gilpatrick.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Salem Baptist Church, Trenton, Tenn., is now accepting resumes for a full-time pastor position. Please send resume to Salem Baptist Church, P.O. Box 34 Trenton, TN 38382. Post to the attention of Josh Johnson.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Central Baptist Church of Martin, Tenn., with an enrollment of 500 is seeking a full-time pastor. We are located in northwest Tennessee in a college town. If interested, please send resume to Central Baptist Church, Pastoral Search Committee, P.O. Box 5 Martin, TN 38237 or e-mail us at pastorsearch@cbcmartin.org.

MINISTRY — MUSIC

First Baptist Church, Parsons, Tenn., is seeking a part-time minister of music for a choir of 25-30 voices. We also do a live Christmas Tree. For more information see our web site www.fbcparsons.org. Please send resume to Pastor, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 67, Parsons, TN 38363.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

SBC church seeking a full-time minister of music for choral and instrumental programs for all ages. Requirements include college degree in music plus five years experience. Additional years of experience may be substituted for college degree. Send resume postmarked by March 15 to Unity Baptist Church, Attn: Music Search Committee, 2329th St., Ashland, KY 41101.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

First Baptist Church of Thomson, Ga., is seeking a full-time minister of music. For job description see www.firstbaptistthomson.org/mminister.html. Send resume to Personnel Committee c/o Dr. Jim Ramsey, Pastor, P.O. Box 1205, Thomson, GA 30822.

MINISTRY — DOM

Sequatchie Valley Baptist Association (27 churches) in southeast Tennessee seeking God man to replace retiring DOM. Send resume to fbcspn@sevbaptist.org or Rev. Charlie Campbell, 306 Fifth St., South Pittsburg, TN 37380.

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — COMBINATION

First Baptist Church, Parsons, Tenn., is seeking a full-time minister of youth, children, and family ministries. Prefer someone with experience and college degree minimum. For more information please see our web site at www.fbcparsons.org. Please send resume to Pastor, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 67, Parsons, TN 38363.

MINISTRY — OTHER

Church secretary, 30 hours/week, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Monday-Friday. \$10 per hour. Computer, good communication and accounting skills required, pleasant personality. Fax resume to (615) 883-7118.

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Conversational English Workshop

There will be a 16-hour Conversational English Workshop on March 10-12 at the Tennessee Baptist Convention Building. The times for this workshop will be Friday, 6-9 p.m., Saturday, 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., and Sunday, 1:30-5:30 p.m. There is a \$20 registration fee for this workshop. Certification will be provided to those who attend all sessions and complete given assignments. To register or request additional information, please contact Tim Hill at the Tennessee Baptist Convention, (615) 371-7916, or you can find information on our web site at www.tnbaptist.org/events.

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staying fit

Are you being a good steward of your health?

Tamara Quintana

Can you honestly say, "Here am I, Lord, send me?" Think a minute before you answer. Maybe you can say, "Yes, I'm spiritually ready," but what about physically? Do you take care of yourself in such a way that you are physically ready to do whatever God asks?

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body* (NIV).

Does your body honor God? Or does it reflect the indulgence and laziness of this world? One of the biggest health crises in the U.S. today is obesity. It has generally become an epidemic. According to the Centers for Disease Control, two out of three American adults are overweight. Take a look at the people in almost any church in America, and you'll see that Christians are certainly not immune to the epidemic.

As Christians, we're supposed to be the salt and light to the world. But can the world really see a difference in us when we're overweight and out of shape?

Because I believe I can't be the kind of servant God wants me to be unless I take care of myself, I have committed to honor God with my body. That doesn't mean I plan to starve myself or work out eight hours a day to get the body of a 20-year-old supermodel. What it does mean is that I carefully consider the foods I put into my body, and I make exercise a regular part of my life.

If you feel you need to improve your physical condition, ask God to help. Ask Him to reveal areas where you need to change and to give you the energy and desire to commit to that change.

Consult your doctor and partner with him or her to achieve your goals. There may be serious health problems you can improve or avoid just by making good lifestyle choices. You have the ability within yourself, with the help of God, to limit your risk for diseases including diabetes, heart disease, strokes, and many types of cancer.

God has given us the tools we need to serve Him in an effective ministry, yet many of us choose to ignore His. Can you truly say, "Here am I, Lord, send me" if you limit Him by choosing to ignore your health? □ — Quintana is a graduate of All Saints Episcopal Hospital School of Vocational Nursing and the director of the employee wellness program for GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.



Funding missions in Tennessee and around the world

Dealing with doubt

By Scott Linginfelter

Focal Passage: *Jeremiah 20:1-13*

Pashur was a priest in charge of leading the people of Israel in worshipping God. The Bible also says he was a "governor in the house of the Lord." He was in charge of policing the Temple and keeping order. After hearing Jeremiah's prophecy of judgment, this man who was in charge of leading and even protecting Yahweh worship, rather than responding to the word of the Lord appropriately, has Jeremiah beaten and put in stocks at one of the gates to the Temple complex. This was probably a form of public punishment and humiliation.

You can imagine the words of derision being thrown at Jeremiah as people pass by to "worship" the Lord. In verse 10, Jeremiah indicates that people had called him "Magor-missabib," the name given by God to Pashur meaning "terror on every side." God meant the name for Pashur as a prophecy; the people meant the name for Jeremiah as a term of derision. They mocked the prophet of God, the message of God, and ultimately God Himself. The physical pain endured by Jeremiah was surely immense. The betrayal he felt from those he trusted, including religious leaders like Pashur must have been equally as painful.

When Jeremiah is released, his response is a three-step process. First, he continues to prophecy the

truth against Pashur and the Jews. Pashur's loved ones would be killed. Pashur and his friends would be carried away in captivity to Babylon and would die there.

Next Jeremiah went from speaking for God to speaking to God. He claimed God had deceived him, tricked him into preaching. Of course this wasn't true. God told Jeremiah what he would preach, and what the reaction would be. Jeremiah also claimed that God was stronger than he, and forced him to preach. At this point Jeremiah was right; God was stronger than him. Jeremiah's other complaint, and what seems to be the true source of all Jeremiah's doubts, is that he was mocked and derided.

Jeremiah preached judgment and destruction against Israel and it hadn't happened yet. The people assumed since it hadn't happened yet, it wasn't going to happen, and they mocked Jeremiah for it. Jeremiah admits the thought even crossed his mind to quit preaching, but the Word of God was like a fire in his bones and he couldn't quit.

At this point let me say, I don't think Jeremiah really believed the accusations he was making against God. If he did believe it, he wouldn't have prayed to God and petitioned God, and he certainly wouldn't have praised God as he did in verses 11 through 13. In anger, desperation, and self-pity Jeremiah made statements of God

Sunday School Lesson
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which he knew to be untrue. But our God is big enough to take it. He doesn't lash out in haste against Jeremiah as Jeremiah had done to Him.

Jeremiah knows all this and quickly changes his tune. He says that God is with him like a "mighty terrible one," a warrior ready to fight on his behalf. Jeremiah says his persecutors will not prevail and their "everlasting confusion (humiliation) shall never be forgotten." Indeed, we are reading about it thousands of years later. Jeremiah prays to God because he knows God rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked.

The fact is, most of the rewards for the righteous come not in this life, but the next. At the same time, God often delays judgment of the wicked, giving them opportunity to repent. God would rather that Jesus pay for our sins, than we pay for them ourselves. To the saved, He gave grace when we didn't deserve it.

To the lost, He offers the same grace. Let us pray for their salvation rather than their destruction. Remember, we didn't get what we deserved either. □ — Linginfelter is pastor of Mount Carmel Baptist Church, Maryville.

Send the light

By Eric Taylor

Focal Passage: *Romans 15:14-20, 22-25, 28-32*

When you read this section of Romans 15, you cannot help but sense that Paul was reminding his readers that he had one major purpose in life. Matter of fact, the theme of this entire section is found in verse 20: *And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel.* Now before you say, "This verse doesn't apply to me because I am not a preacher," you need to examine the word "preach" in the Greek. It comes from the word which we translate "good news" or "gospel." In its tense here, Paul is telling the Romans that his goal in life was to herald the good news of the gospel. Therefore, this verse is not just for the vocational evangelist or preacher. It is to be the aim and purpose of every church and believer. Well, how do we successfully send the light? We will be successful when our mission and ministry is . . .

Consistent with God's purpose (vv. 14-18)

Paul made it clear that his priority was to fulfill the purpose of God. He wrote, *I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me* (NIV). In other words, Paul was successful in his mission and message because he held consistent to God's purpose for his life. In his case, God's purpose was that he "might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles."

Every believer needs to find God's purpose for their life as it pertains to the spreading of the gospel.

It may be that God's purpose for you is vocational missions or ministry. However, it may be that God's purpose for you is to be a faithful minister of Jesus Christ to those in the marketplace, to the children in your church, the youth in your community. Whatever the calling is, you will not be successful for God until you match your aim with God's purpose with your life, and God's priority for your life is to be a vessel for the gospel.

Paul had determined that he was not going to speak about anything but what God had accomplished in his life. What has God accomplished in your life, and are you faithfully sharing your testimony with other people?

Characterized by God's power (v. 19)

The light cannot help but get out when the message is proclaimed in the power of God. Paul was reminding the Romans that the Gentiles were becoming "obedient" to the gospel, not by his might, but by the power of God. Any success Paul had and was going to have he attributed to the "power of the Holy Spirit of God."

I believe that many churches and Christians are discouraged today because they are not successful in accomplishing what they know to be their aim because they are attempting to accomplish it under their own power rather than the power of God. You cannot expect to accomplish great things for God minus the power of the Holy Spirit. When the power of God is working

Sunday School Lesson
Explore the Bible
Feb. 19

in you people will see God's might and hear God's message, and some may come to obey the gospel.

Compelled by God's passion (vv. 20-28)

From verse 20 through the end of this chapter, you see Paul's passion. And guess what? Paul's passion was God's passion. Paul had a "great desire" (v. 23) to carry the gospel to the unreached masses (v. 20). Paul's hunger was to carry Christ as far as Spain. I truly believe that was, and is, God's desire today: that we send the light the blessed gospel light.

Carried on by Godly prayer (vv. 29-33)

Paul recognized the importance of believers praying for his ministry. In verse 30, he begged the Romans to "strive together with" him in prayer for his ministry. He understood that his acceptance before the Judean Christians (v. 31), his personal joy, and spiritual refreshment (v. 32) depended on prayer.

The same holds true for us. As we attempt to send out the light, making the gospel our aim, we will know the purpose of God, experience the power of God, and see His passion as we "strive together" in prayer, because God is faithful to hear our prayers. □ — Taylor is pastor of First Baptist Church, Middleton.

Leaders

◆ **Neil L'Hommedieu**, pastor of Legacy Baptist Church, Indian Mound, has resigned to further his education at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.

◆ Grassland Heights Baptist Church, Franklin, recently called **Bill Wade** as part-time youth minister. Wade is on the staff of LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville.

◆ Central Baptist Church, Erwin, has called **Carroll Kirby** as music director. Besides serving churches in Tennessee, he also served churches in Alabama, Kentucky, Georgia, and North Carolina. He is a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

◆ **Wiley Rutledge** has resigned as pastor at North Johnson City Baptist Church, Johnson City.

◆ **Darrell Slagle** has resigned as pastor at Cherry Grove Baptist Church, Jonesborough.

◆ University Parkway Baptist Church, Johnson City, has called **Kathy Thompson** as music director.

◆ First Baptist Church, Piney Flatts, has called **Brian Wilson** as music/youth director. He previously served Ninth Street Baptist Church, Erwin, as youth director.

◆ Lynn Garden Baptist Church, Kingsport, recently called **Michael Wrye**, a

Kingsport native, as pastor. A graduate of Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, and New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary, he is currently working on his doctorate at the seminary. He was licensed and ordained to the ministry at First Baptist Church, Kingsport. Wrye was associate pastor of Edgewater Baptist Church, New Orleans, when the hurricanes struck last fall.

◆ Calvary Baptist Church, Humboldt, has called pastor **B.J. Thomason** from a bivocational status to a full-time status.

◆ **Jeff Lane**, senior pastor, Cumberland Baptist Church, Knoxville, for five years has resigned effective Jan. 15 to enter the investment business. He served on the Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board.

◆ **Kevin Curington** has been called as youth minister, Edgemoor Baptist Church, Clinton. He formerly served at First Baptist Church, Norris.

◆ Skyline Heights Baptist Church, Johnson City, has called **Conway Ledford** as music director. He previously served in other Holston Baptist Association churches.

◆ Salem Baptist Church, Trenton, has called **Thomas Bains** as pastor.

Churches

◆ **First Baptist Church**, Old Hickory, Nashville, is



THIS 29-MEMBER TEAM from Calvary Baptist Church, Union City, pause in front of a home worked on in Bay St. Louis, Miss., in January to help a hurricane victim of Katrina. The team, led by **Melvin B. Poe**, pastor, muddled out houses. They worked with First Baptist Church, Bay St. Louis. For more information on work to be done in this area, visit fbcbstl.org.

sponsoring a youth mission trip to Metairie, La., Wednesday-Sunday, March 22-26, during spring break. The Old Hickory team will work with their adopted church, Inglesia Roca Firme Church in Metairie, to help restore the homes of church members which were damaged by last fall's hurricanes.

◆ **Edgefield Baptist Church**, Nashville, will hold a Family Day Sunday, Feb. 26, beginning with worship at 10 a.m. Guest speaker will be Jim Williams, author of *Parenting on Point*. He also will speak during an 11:15 a.m. Bible study. A covered dish luncheon will follow. For information contact the church at (615)

255-0468 or visit www.edgefieldbaptist.org.

◆ **Hermitage Hills Baptist Church**, Hermitage, will hold a "Pray Without Ceasing" prayer conference Friday - Sunday, March 10-12, featuring Don Miller. Miller is the author of *A Room That's Like a Mountain*. Music and worship will be led by Richard Fuller and the music praise team of First Baptist Church, Hendersonville. For information, contact the church at (615) 883-5034.

◆ **Second Baptist Church**, Clinton, will hold revival Feb. 26 - March 1. Phil Glisson, evangelist of Memphis, will speak.

◆ **First Baptist Church**, Charlotte, will hold a Prayer Conference, Thursday, March 9, with Tennessee Baptist Convention prayer strategist Don Pierson as speaker. He will speak on "Options for Church Prayer Ministry."

Associations

◆ The men's ministry of **Polk County Baptist Association**, Benton, recently held its annual men and boys' breakfast at Camp Agape, Benton. Gene Williams of the Tennessee Baptist Convention staff spoke.

◆ **Gibson Baptist Association**, Trenton, will offer Spanish Class 1 from Feb. 21 - April 25 at the association office from 6-8 p.m. Cindy Pool will be the teacher. For more information call the association at (731) 855-1202. Deadline to register is Monday, Feb. 20.

◆ **Becoming God's Man**, a men's ministry conference sponsored by the **Nashville Baptist Association**, will be held Saturday, Feb. 18, from

8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at **Wood Hills Baptist Church**, Nashville. Featured speaker will be Larry Grays. Michael Christian. Words and music will be led by Buddy Mullins. For reservations, contact the association at (615) 259-3034 or admnministries@nashvillebaptists.com.

◆ **Gibson Baptist Association**, Trenton, will hold a secretaries luncheon Tuesday, Feb. 21, at noon at the office. For information, call the association office at (731) 855-1202.

Schools

◆ Spring enrollment at **Union University**, Jackson, is up 5.1 percent from last year and is a record high for the spring semester, according to Union president David Dockery. Total enrollment for this spring is 2,844 students compared to 2,707 students during last year's spring semester. Enrollment for the fall 2005 semester was a record high 2,981. "These numbers have positive implications for many aspects of our work," Dockery said. "We rejoice and thank God for His continued goodness to Union University."

Statewide Events

◆ **Team Leader Training** for leading mission trips will be held Friday - Saturday, March 17-18, at the Baptist Center in Brentwood. The 10-hour training session will range from developing prayer supporters to financing the mission trip. For information and fees, contact Heather Wilson of the Tennessee Baptist Convention staff at 1-800-558-2090 ext. 2061.

Christians have fun too: men's ministry

By Beverly Casey
For Baptist and Reflector

SAVANNAH — On the Sunday before the NFL Super Bowl 2006, the growing men's ministry of Hopewell Baptist Church here celebrated SouperBowl Sunday.

The entire day was designated as Men's Day.

The morning service featured an all-male choir and Kent Hightower, layman, spoke instead of the regular sermon.

After the morning service, the men went home to bring out aprons, tongs, and secret recipes to prepare their favorite dish. Two women of the church decorated the fellowship hall for the men, half in the colors of Pittsburgh and half in the colors of Seattle.

The evening service featured laymen John Daniel and William Morris, candidates for deacon. Their testimonies reminded the listeners that every person has a story and that no one just arrives.

Afterwards in the fellow-



ATTENDING THE SOUPERBOWL of Hopewell Baptist Church, Savannah, were, from left, Greg Wolfe, youth pastor; Dan Zavachan; and Jerry Wesenberg.

ship hall, dishes were found in categories. They included Road Kill, Don't Have Any Idea, Bambi's Relatives, Soup/Chili, Your Guess Is As Good As Mine; and Desserts.

Other cards displayed on the tables proclaimed It's Against Biblical Teaching to Sue, Tums Available Upon Request, and East at Your Own Risk.

Referees serving the event issued offenses for cutting in

line, staying at a table too long, jumping the gun, putting too much on plate, and bribing judges. Penalties included direction to move back five places in line and move back to the end of the line.

Fun awards were given for various dishes.

It was a fun time of worship and fellowship for all, and friendship building camaraderie for the men. □