

Baptist & Reflector

Statewide Edition

Telling the Story of Tennessee Baptists

Vol. 172 / No. 9; March 8, 2006

this week's news

Radio personality Dawson McAllister reaches youth from ministry based in Spring Hill. — Page 3

Week of Prayer for North American Missions underway this week. — Page 5

"Church Health Matters" focuses on deacon ministry. — Pages 6-7

Barbara Owen retires after 31-plus years of helping to tell the Tennessee Baptist story. — Page 9

BC giving remains strong

Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — Gifts from Tennessee Baptist Convention churches through the Cooperative Program remain strong after four months of the current fiscal year.

In February TBC churches gave \$3,126,196 through the Cooperative Program.

For the year-to-date, Tennessee churches have given \$2,328,107.

Gifts are \$316,022 or 2.63 percent over the amount given over four months last year.

CP receipts also are current—\$91,964 or 0.75 percent over budget needs after the first four months of the fiscal year.

"We are excited that our gifts through the Cooperative Program have met and exceeded our budget, especially over the winter months when some church services had to be canceled across the state in some areas due to bad weather," said James Porch, TBC executive director-treasurer.

"We are confident Tennessee Baptists will sustain or even increase their level of giving this year as we seek to meet missions and ministry needs in our state and around the world," Porch added. □

642 youth accept Christ at YEC in Nashville

By Marcia Knox
Baptist and Reflector

NASHVILLE — More than 12,430 Tennessee Baptist youth, their leaders, and volunteers crammed into downtown Municipal Auditorium here March 3-4 to be a part of 2006 Youth Evangelism Conference.

During commitment time at the Friday sessions, at least 642 youth accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

The YEC returned to Nashville this year after five years at the Murphy Center on the campus of Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro.

The Murphy Center was unavailable due to MTSU hosting the Sunbelt Conference Basketball Tournament.

The weekend event promised a "Revolution Now! Bringing a Generation Back to God."

According to Tennessee Baptist Convention youth evangelism specialist Kent Shingleton, the revolution can mean different things to people — from living a revolutionary life sold out for Christ to praying for Jesus to bring His revolution.

Shingleton was inspired to develop the "Revolution" theme

for this YEC two years ago when he heard the song "Jesus Bring Your Revolution," which was written by a fellow church member of First Baptist Church of Smyrna.

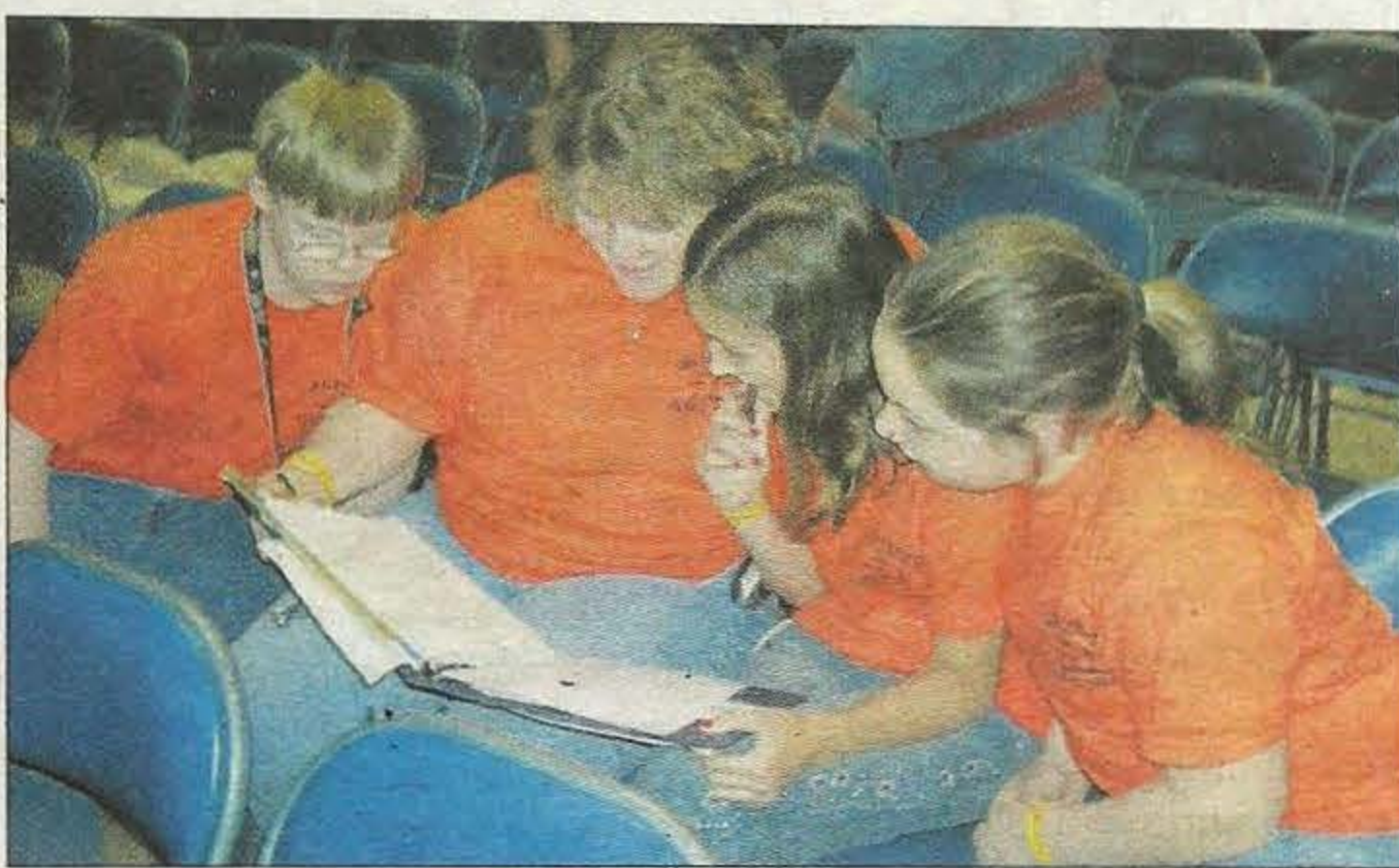
"The entire process was a result of a creative team," said Shingleton. "It was a great thing to work with a creative team of youth pastors to put the YEC together."

According to Shingleton, there were three themes working with the idea of Revolution for the YEC.

The first was to reach students who didn't know Christ and teach them what it means to have a revolutionary relationship with Him, he said.

Shingleton said the second was for students who know Christ to be inspired so that they can have an inward relationship to meet God, to pray, and read the Bible, which was explained in the teaching sessions during the Launch Points or breakout sessions at five area churches.

The third was for students to have a revolutionary life to live in the real world and have a revolution with Christ to follow Him at home, school, and teach other young people, he related.



LOOKING OVER the program for the afternoon session of the Youth Evangelism Conference on March 3 were, from left, Andrew Washburn, Kim Lowry, Grace Barnhouse, and Morgan Sides, all from Mack's Grove Baptist Church, Dresden. — Photo by Lonnie Wilkey

"Revolution was a universal theme for at least five other youth ministry conferences this year," Shingleton noted. "Revolution is a hot word in the youth culture. The YEC program this year was to identify students to be a revolutionary Christ follower of the right kind."

Teens honored

Some of the people who were honored during the Friday sessions for living revolutionary lives were two Tennessee teenagers, Hunter Moss, 16, a member of East Commerce Baptist Church, Lewisburg, who is serving as an interim minister of music at his church; and Lacie Linz, 18, who is a missions volunteer at a local hospital, helped with World Changers, and teaches a women's Sunday School class at her church, New Salem Baptist Church, Soddy Daisy.

The teenagers who were called up on stage and surprised by the recognition were given all expense paid mission trips to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for the 2007 Youth Mission Trip. — See 642, page 4

Many church visitors treated as outsiders or ignored

By Ken Walker
Baptist Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — When Thomas Hammond led a workshop eight years ago on how churches can become more visitor friendly, he had no idea he would stimulate an ongoing series of sessions that continue today.

"I'm amazed at the ride because people

have heard about it," said Hammond, who estimates he has traveled to 20 states to present the workshop. "It's meeting a need that we've neglected."

The former pastor developed the lesson after he took a job as director of church evangelism with the North American Mission Board and began the search for a new church. Although he had been a Southern Baptist for a long time, Hammond said he and his wife were ignored, ostracized, or treated like outsiders when they visited churches in the Atlanta area.

"We hear preaching on the Word of God, but we don't experience it," said Hammond, who left NAMB to become director of missions for the Metropolitan Baptist Association in Charlotte, N.C.

His unpleasant experiences prompted an effort to educate churches on how to prepare for visitors — he prefers calling them guests — on Sundays.

One reason churches fail to make a good impression on first-timers is because they focus on the wrong things, he said.

At a church training seminar sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention, Hammond noted that pastors devote considerable time to preparing Sunday morning sermons.

But he cited past research that shows most visitors decide whether to return in the first 10 to 12 minutes, long before the sermon's delivery.

The decision is based on such factors as building appearance and the friendliness of greeters, Hammond said, and the truth is most Christians aren't prepared to be welcoming.

"We tend to stop brotherly love within the four walls of the church," he said. "What if we treated everyone who came to our services this Sunday as an angel, a special guest? Not necessarily for what they've done to this point, but for their potential."

Hammond noted visitor parking as one area that shows whether a church is serious about welcoming newcomers.

While at NAMB, Hammond visited one church that had dwindled from 500 to 300 despite double-digit population growth in its area. When he surveyed the property and asked if they wanted visitors to come, leaders nodded yes. But Hammond said he didn't believe them because they only had two visitor parking spaces. — See Many, page 3

CHURCH OF THE COVERED DISH by Thom Tapp



"I think you're sitting in his place."

about your newsjournal

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N.Y. Yankees aid burglarized SBC church in Bronx

Baptist Press

NEW YORK — The New York Yankees, though just in spring training, stepped up to the plate to assist a Bronx church and its soup kitchen after a break-in.

The Yankees, whose stadium also is in the Bronx, presented a check for \$20,000 to Daniel Dupree and Greater Universal Baptist Church on Feb. 23 to cover losses the church sustained during the Feb. 7 burglary.

The Yankees "are truly a blessing," said Dupree, who has served as Greater Universal's pastor for 10 of the Southern Baptist church's 52 years. "We believe God placed it on their hearts to come through for us."

When Dupree arrived at the church on the morning of Feb. 8, the building had been ransacked; the church's safe, a television camera, and various office supplies were missing. Dupree estimates less than \$5,000 was stolen from the safe, but the total loss to the church was around \$20,000. There was no sign of a break-in and a police investigation continues.

Local news stations covered the story of Greater Universal closing its soup kitchen until the funds were replaced and security measures could be installed. Because of the Yankees' donation, the kitchen, which feeds about 125 people in the Bronx two days a week, will reopen.

The team was made aware of Greater Universal's situation through Bronx Councilwoman Maria del Carmen Arroyo.

"When we heard what had happened to our neighbor, we wanted to reach out and enable them to continue their much-needed community service," said Lonn Trost, the Yankees' chief operating officer, in a press release issued by the team. □

Wisconsin voters to consider amendment

Baptist Press

MADISON, Wis. — Wisconsin's legislature Feb. 28 sent a proposed constitutional marriage amendment to voters, making the state the sixth to place the issue of marriage on the ballot for 2006.

Alabama, Idaho, South Carolina, South Dakota, and Tennessee also are scheduled to vote on marriage amendments this year, and other states — including Virginia — are expected to follow.

Wisconsin's amendment passed the state Assembly 62-31, nearly three months after it passed the Senate, 19-14. As required by state law, the amendment had already passed both chambers in the

previous session.

Wisconsin voters will consider the issue in November. The amendment would prevent state courts from legalizing "gay marriage." □

SBC CP gifts dip slightly

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Year-to-date contributions through the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program are 1.08 percent below the same time frame in 2005, according to a news release from SBC Executive Committee President Morris H. Chapman.

As of Feb. 28, 2006, the year-to-date total of \$82,116,153.18 for Cooperative Program (CP) Missions is \$891,885.05 under the \$83,008,038.23 received at the same point in 2005. For the month, receipts of \$16,243,662.11 were 0.91 percent, or \$149,433.84, below the \$16,393,095.95 received in February 2005.

Designated giving of \$79,734,314.58 for the same year-to-date period is 11.19 percent, or \$10,044,405.49, below gifts of \$89,778,720.07.74 received at this point last year. The \$41,191,010.31 in designated gifts received last month is \$11,007,376.02 below the \$52,199,386.33 received in February 2005, a decrease of 21.09 percent.

For the SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget, the year-to-date total of \$82,116,153.18 is 103.80 percent of the \$79,110,522.90 budgeted to support Southern Baptist ministries globally and across North America. □

Wiley Drake to be nominated as SBC 2nd vice president

Baptist Press

FARMINGTON, Ky. — Wiley Drake, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Buena Park, Calif., will be nominated for second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention this June, according to an announcement by Kentucky pastor Bill Dodson.

Dodson, pastor of Bell City Baptist Church here, noted that Drake has been a regular at the microphones of SBC annual meetings in making motions about various cultural issues, yet the California pastor also has a strong track record in caring for the homeless in his community.

The SBC Executive Committee recently endorsed urging "the election of state and national convention officers whose churches give at least 10 percent of their undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program."

Information for the most recent year from Southern Baptists' Annual Church Profile sur-

national news

vey, 2004, for First Southern Baptist Church in Buena Park lists \$200 in gifts through the SBC Cooperative Program, with no information provided in other categories.

Baptist Press asked Drake for several figures, which he supplied for the past five years. For 2005: Church membership stood at 95; 67 baptisms were recorded; total receipts were \$96,450, including \$1,000 in CP gifts.

The SBC annual meeting will be June 13-14 in Greensboro, N.C. □

Miss. House OKs ban on abortions

Baptist Press

JACKSON, Miss. — Adding momentum to what some see as a national challenge to Roe v. Wade, Mississippi's House of Representatives easily passed a bill March 2 banning most abortions.

The bill, Senate Bill 2922, passed 94-25 and bans all abortions except in the cases of rape, incest, and to save the life of the mother. It now heads to the Senate.

Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour, a Republican, has said he would sign it and spark a challenge to Roe, the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court case that legalized abortion nationwide. Pro-choice groups have promised to challenge it in court.

The bill initially had an exception only for the mother's life, but the House amended it to add exceptions for rape and incest. That amendment passed, 62-56.

South Dakota's legislature passed a bill in February banning abortions except in cases to save the mother's life. It now awaits the governor's signature. Other states are considering similar legislation. Supporters acknowledge that the bills likely will be struck down in federal court, but they hope the Supreme Court will consider the constitutionality of the bills and overturn Roe. □

Push against conversions show success: worker

Baptist Press

DANGS, India — A new campaign against the conversion of Hindus to Christianity is "evidence of success" for the spread of the gospel in India, a Christian worker there says.

Militant Hindu leaders mounted a major gathering in February in the northwestern state of Gujarat, the scene of many violent attacks on Christians and Muslims in recent years. The three-day "Shabari Kumbh Mela" attracted more than 400,000 Hindus to the Dangs district of Gujarat, home to as many as 60,000 tribal Christians. Billed as a worship

gathering, the event raises major concerns among Indian Christians, who saw it as an attempt to intimidate — or force — tribal believers into "reverting" to Hinduism.

The festival featured calls for an end to evangelistic efforts in Gujarat and accusations that church workers are bribing tribal Hindus to convert to Christianity.

It ended with only one minor "skirmish" between Hindus and local Christians, news reports said. But Gujarat state officials have declared they will push new "anti-conversion" laws against press tribal Christians to return to Hinduism. Radical Hindu groups also reportedly plan to hold similar events in other Indian states.

"It is nice that the Kumbh has passed off peacefully, but the inflammatory speech delivered during the three days have sown seeds of possible conflicts," said a statement issued by the Church of North India. "This has created an environment of fear for us."

A Christian worker with contacts throughout the giant southern Asian nation, however, has more upbeat perspective.

"Frankly, I look at it as evidence of success," the worker said. "The fact that so many Hindus are coming to Christ is a major reason [Hindu nationalists] are trying to put these anti-conversion laws in place. That is a good sign." □

GuideStone trustees receive report on 2005

Baptist Press

DALLAS — "Each of our ministry areas contributed to enhancing the financial security of our participants in 2005," GuideStone Financial Resources President O. S. Hawkins told trustees of the Southern Baptist entity during their Feb. 27 meeting in Dallas.

Trustees also heard reports from John R. Jones, chief operating officer, and Jeffrey Billinger, treasurer and chief financial officer.

Retirement contributions and rollovers into GuideStone retirement plans grew by 7 percent during the past year, Jones said.

Of particular note was the success of GuideStone's retirement investment funds. For the three years ending Dec. 31, 2005, 10 of the 13 GuideStone Fund mutual funds (GS4 class) were ranked in the top half of the peer universe by Lipper Inc.

Medical plans showed significant improvement in 2005, Jones said. While medical inflation was about 8-10 percent more than 40 percent of GuideStone's medical plan participants received a rate decrease in 2005 and more than 57 percent received a rate decrease this past January. □

Dawson McAllister reaches youth via radio ministry

by Connie Davis Bushey
Baptist and Reflector

COLUMBIA — The 17-year-old from Madison called to the Nashville-based Sunday night radio talk show.

He needed to talk, it seemed. He lived with his grandmother and 11-year-old brother. His grandmother was dying of cancer.

His mother was a prostitute. He saw her when he looked for her. He would take her food.

Dawson McAllister, the talk show host, mainly listened. He asked the young man a couple questions about his situation.

The young man explained he didn't have much contact with any other family because he was gay.

McAllister asked the young man if he could send someone to visit him. The young man agreed. McAllister assured him someone would visit him within 48 hours.

A young woman called the show. She said her father had called her a slut. In response, she took an anti-anxiety medication and went to a party, where she passed out and was raped, she continued.

If she's pregnant, should she abort the baby, she asked.

McAllister asked if she had pressed charges against the young man who raped her. She said no, because it was her fault. McAllister urged her to do so. He also urged her not to finish the baby by aborting it.

Radio show

These two phone calls were made recently to Nashville-based WRVW-FM — 107.5, the River, during the Dawson McAllister Live show. It is

broadcast from 10 p.m. to midnight. The station added the show in January.

McAllister is glad to be added to the station's line up. It is a big step for his ministry, he said. The Top 40 station has about 200,000 listeners each week.

McAllister is an ordained Southern Baptist minister and member of First Baptist Church, Columbia, who has been involved in radio ministry for 15 years. He has participated in youth ministry for 38 years, primarily as a youth speaker and author based in California.

The broadcast from the Nashville station is just one of 14 other secular stations across the United States carrying Dawson McAllister Live. McAllister, who broadcasts from Spring Hill, broke into the secular radio market just last year.

His Christian talk show is heard on 200 Christian radio stations across the country.

He and his staff produce both the secular and Christian shows from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m. each Sunday night. McAllister talks to about 600 teens and young adults each Sunday evening.

Ministry

Because of the many needs of the youth he speaks with and because he has always been involved in ministry, the Dawson McAllister Association also provides Hopeline and Hope Coaches. Hopeline provides the caller with a private telephone conversation with a mature, trained Christ-

ian adult following the radio conversation.

Hopeline calls go to four call centers across the U.S. About 45 Hopeline workers receive calls in their homes.

Hope Coaches visit teens or young adults in person and mentor them. Teens and young adults learn about the ministries through the radio show or via the internet at dmlive.com or thehopeline.com. Both Hopeline workers and Hope Coaches receive training from the ministry and receive ongoing support.

Personal views

"God has done a miracle," McAllister told a group of church youth leaders recently at First Church, Columbia, referring to the addition of his show to such stations as The River. He discussed his ministry and its needs at the meeting. He held similar meetings in Nashville, Clarksville, and Bowling Green, Ky.

He never thought he would still be involved in youth ministry at 59 years old, he told the group.

He became aware of the need of teens and young adults to talk when he began receiving notes from them at the student conferences he led. At some large conferences where he would speak to about 5,000 students, he would receive 500 notes.

The notes "would break your heart," said McAllister.

He would see many make decisions for Christ and be matched with counselors, but that didn't keep students from asking him personally if he had received and read their note. It was difficult to talk to the students at those conferences one-on-one, he said. The schedule didn't allow for it and the times he tried, the students would crowd around him.

Today he talks one-on-one via

radio with about 600 students and young adults each week.

Everyone, even atheists and Mormons, "can meet at the point of pain," he explained. "There's never been a generation with more pain than today."

Christian media only reaches about three percent of the audience, he said. In contrast, one secular radio station in Oklahoma City which broadcasts the show reaches 44 percent of all females ages 18-34 in its broadcast area, noted McAllister.

On the secular radio stations, he is not allowed "to preach the gospel," he explained. He bases his

advice on Judeo-Christian values. Yet he gives "Christian answers" often, sometimes identifying them as Christian.

"We want our teenagers back," said McAllister. He mentioned the attractions of pornography, sex, and drugs.

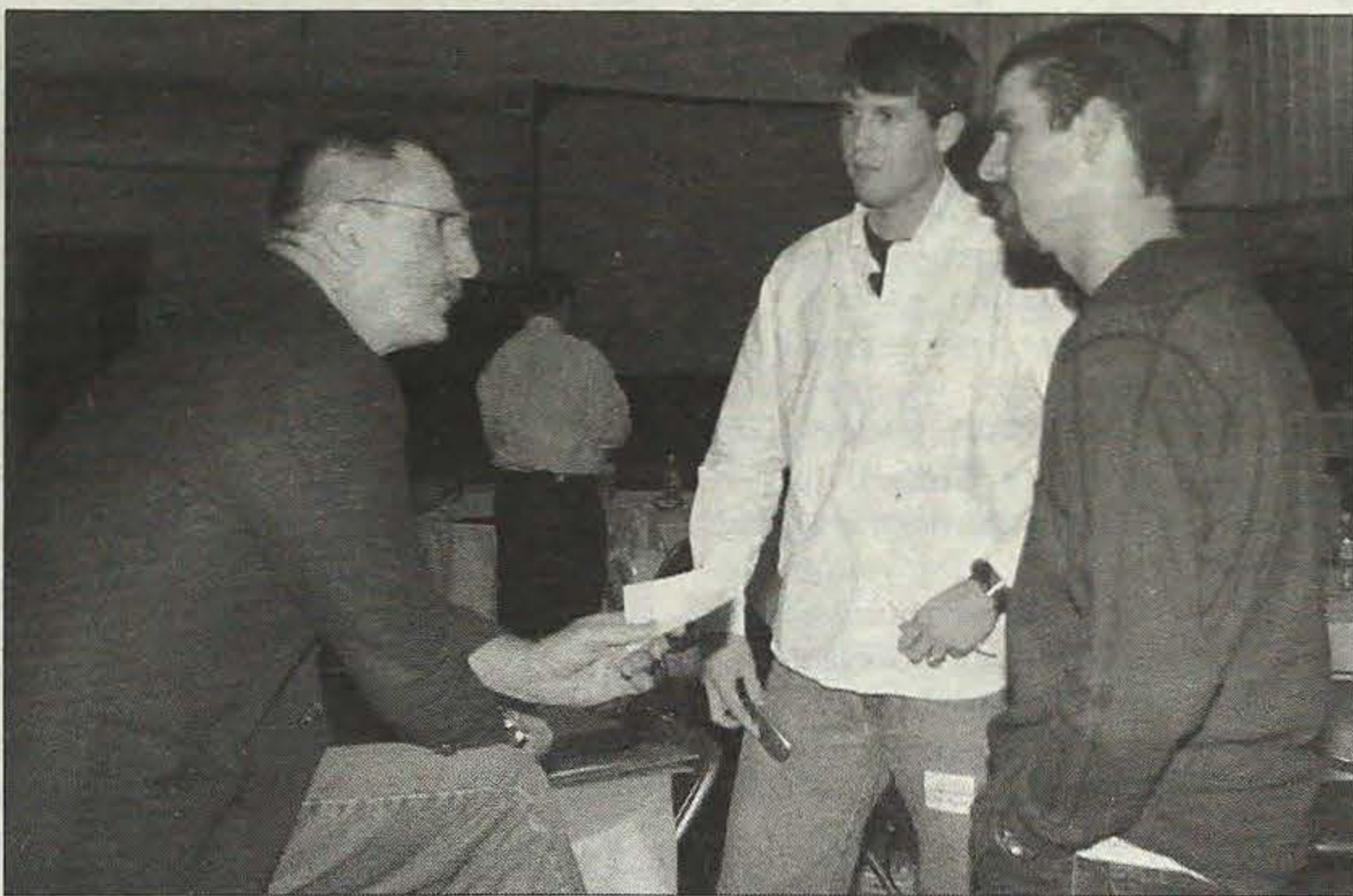
Today's students and young adults are the "loneliest, most depressed generation" he has worked with, he described.

He admitted he can no longer go home and forget the problems of those he talks with on the show.

He and his 42-member staff are seeking part-time workers to work with the Hopeline or as Hope Coaches. He and his staff will visit churches and make presentations on the opportunities.

"The devil wants us just to play in our own little yards while he takes the world to hell."

"The harvest is plentiful," said McAllister. □



DAWSON MCALLISTER visits at a recent meeting with youth leaders at First Baptist Church, Columbia, with Jon Kent, center, youth pastor, First Baptist Church, McMinnville; and Jeremy Kliever, youth pastor, Northside Baptist Church, McMinnville.

Many church visitors treated as outsiders or ignored ...

Continued from page 1

After Hammond recommended they increase that number to the level of tests they wanted, the church set aside 20 prime spaces.

Over the next two and a half years, attendance doubled not just because of increased guest parking but because they gained a more hospitable outlook, he said.

"It's a change of vision, of re-understanding your purpose," Hammond said. "It wasn't just that. But once they got it all straightened out, God blessed them. When people get focused on something besides themselves, their arms are open to whoever God brings them."

Another change that can create a more welcoming atmosphere is changing the term "visitor" for "guest," he said.

Nobody wants to be labeled a visitor. While visitors don't come back, you don't keep guests away, Hammond said.

Despite the truth that churches can't grow without guests and they won't grow if guests don't return, most spend little time preparing for company, he added.

"How much time do you think the average church spends getting ready for people who don't come to their church?" Hammond asked.

"Our focus on Sunday morning is on us," he said. "What would happen if we spent 30, 40, or 50 percent of our time getting ready for guests? Would their experience be different?"

Hammond said some factors that create a good impression include:

An attractive campus

He said this means a clean, well-maintained building that is landscaped outside, is inviting cosmetically and has plenty of directional signs in the parking lot and for such key facilities as the nursery and the front entrance.

Guest parking

The parking lot should have an ade-

quate number of guest spaces that are easy to identify. Not only must they be the best spaces, it helps to have greeters in the parking lot in addition to the front door, Hammond said.

Friendly greeters

These people should be the best of the best, he said. They should wear nametags, escort guests to the welcome center and understand the value of this time.

Training all greeters in maintaining a cordial nature is a must, Hammond said. He recalled a visit where a greeter snarled at him to make sure he wasn't a member using visitor parking.

"Preachers, it would scare us to death if we knew how people are treated in our parking lot," Hammond said.

Other steps

Some other steps Hammond outlined:

(1) Maintain a central location where guests are welcomed and receive information. He said this information

should include such items as a campus map, newsletter, information on upcoming events, summary of all ministries, and information on discipleship classes and recreation opportunities.

(2) Offer a clean, bright, cheerful, and secure nursery.

(3) Teach members to make guests feel valued, have everyone who speaks introduce themselves, and provide a post-service reception where guests can meet the pastor and staff.

Churches need to be attuned to the fact that the main reason guests show up on a Sunday morning is that they are hurting or have some kind of problem, even though they won't share that initially, Hammond said.

"Most of the time when people come they're treated like an annoyance because they're messing up our gig," he said. "They don't know how to act; they're not like us. They're lost. Show them some love and they'll want to listen to what you have to say." □

642 youth accept Christ at YEC in Nashville ...

— Continued from page 1

A love offering was collected during the sessions to purchase Portuguese Bibles for the mission trip and help scholarship some transportation expenses for the students. The total of the offering was unavailable at press time Monday, but Shingleton said it may be one of the largest ever collected during the YEC.

Other students recognized were the first and second place winners of the TBC Youth Speakers Tournament who presented their speeches at the sessions. They were: first, Aaron Pudlo, 18, a freshman at Tennessee Tech University, Cookeville, and member of Parkway Baptist Church, Goodlettsville; and second, Tori Cadenhead, 18, a homeschooler and member of Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova.

Whitehead speaks

Darren Whitehead, director of Axis Ministry of Willowcreek Community Church in Chicago, Ill., served as the guest speaker during the sessions.

Whitehead is the former pastor of students and teaching pastor at First Baptist Church, Franklin. A native of Australia, Whitehead told tales of his youth minister in the Outback, who could rival Crocodile Dundee, a fictional movie character, and inspired Whitehead to be a youth minister.

Whitehead emphasized "there is nothing that you can do to make Christ love you more, and there is nothing you

can do to make Christ love you less."

He related the biblical story of Josiah who ascended the throne at age eight and ruled a country as a teenager while creating a revolution.

"God has been raising up revolutions for years with young people," Whitehead said.

"God shows Himself to people in a revolutionary way, and God has a plan for young people. God is using young people today, and young people today are at their greatest level of influence," Whitehead cited several young people who are influencing today's pop culture.

He encouraged young people to do things to "blow people's minds to show their love of Jesus to other people. God's power is busting out all over the place in young people."

"Young people are giving all for Jesus and living on the edge. It is now time to play offense on the campus. Thousands of teenagers need to jump into the revolution to use their lives to do something historic, and release your power in the school to represent Christ."

Casting Crowns had people rushing the stage as one of today's top Christian groups and also appeared this summer at the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting in Nashville. They are known for several popular praise songs including "If We Are the Body." Their lead singer for the group is Mark Hall, a student minister at Eagle's Landing First



DARREN WHITEHEAD challenges youth during the opening session of the YEC in Nashville.

Baptist Church outside Atlanta, Ga. Some members of the group attend Eagle's Landing Church, and all the members work in their churches as youth leaders.

Also on the program was The Skit Guys: Tommy Woodard, a teaching pastor from Oklahoma City, Okla., and Eddie James of Dallas, Texas, two friends from high school who communicate God's Word in "performance comedy." They presented vignettes with popular youth culture movie heroes and told of "Things You Never Want to See." Also in the comedy performance category were audience members who did "Stupid Human Tricks" and competed in team races like guzzling down liters of soft drinks.

Spur 58, a passionate praise band which started out of Houston, Texas, led worship in sessions and delighted their young and older audience with their contemporary songs as well as hip renditions of traditional hymns.



MEMBERS OF First Baptist Church, Centerville, enjoy the YEC. From left are Callie Hedges, Joseph Gilbert, and Sandra Campbell.

Also on Saturday, church youth groups were shuttled to five different Launch Points at area churches: Two Rivers Baptist Church, Radnor Baptist Church, Park Avenue Baptist Church, Inglewood Baptist Church, and First Baptist Church, Nashville.

The revolutionary launch point sessions were created by state youth student leaders to equip their student with living a revolutionary life honoring God. The sessions were broken into teaching environments of reality, inward revolution with God, and outward revolution that God desires to bring to all

people and nations.

The goal of the Launch Point sessions was for students leave equipped for Christ's coming revolution, Shingleton explained.

Session leaders include Tony Rankin and Tambi Swirley, FBC, Nashville; Maclane FBC, Nashville; and Brian Terrell, Two Rivers; Jason Hayes and J. Lovingood, Long Hollow Baptist Church, Goodlettsville; Mike Creekmore, Radnor; Alec C. Tulip Grove Baptist Church, Old Hickory; John Nix, Church, Pleasant Grove; and Kevin Shrum and Dale Brumwell, Inglewood. □



CHANDLER MULLINS, right, of First Baptist Church, Bethel Springs, accepts a free bracelet from Erin Boyer of the staff of Linden Valley Baptist Conference Center in Linden. — Photo by Lonnie Wilkey



TENNESSEE BAPTIST youth joined in worship led by Casting Crowns.



KEEPING THE CROWDS occupied while thousands of youth entered the Municipal Auditorium Nashville was a challenge, but large balls dropped from the ceiling helped keep the youth and the leaders entertained. — Photos by Marcia Knox

Keep the focus on our NAMB missionaries

Lonnie Wilkey, editor

Many Southern Baptists are aware of the controversy surrounding an article that the North American Mission Board (NAMB) first appeared in *The Christian Index*, newsjournal of the Georgia Baptist Convention (see page 3, Feb. 22 issue of *Baptist and Reflector*).

The article criticized NAMB's evangelism and church planting strategies, its method in counting missionaries, NAMB's relationship with a private media firm, and NAMB President Bob Reccord's speaking engagements.

NAMB has taken steps to respond to the concerns, including asking a committee to be formed of NAMB trustees "who will thoroughly review all the issues raised in the article."

If any or all of the charges in the *Index* article are true, then NAMB trustees should be investigating the matters and take corrective measures if any are needed.

My hope is that the internal matters at NAMB do not take away the focus from the external — the North American missionaries who are giving their lives to sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with the estimated 244 million lost people in the United States and Canada. That's a lot of people. Out of every 10 people, one probably do not have a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ. This week numerous churches in Tennessee and across the Southern Baptist Convention are participating in the Week

Week of Prayer for
North American Missions

March 5-12

Tell His Story

National Goal: \$56,000,000

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We need to keep our focus on our missionaries and provide them with the prayer and financial support they need to make a difference for Christ in North America.

A missionary's life is not easy. Missionaries make a lot of personal sacrifices to serve the Lord they love. We have about 5,200 missionaries including career, short-term, and Mission Service Corps missionaries who are making Christ known through church planting, church and community ministries, and in other ways. We also have 2,400 chaplains who serve in prisons and hospitals and other settings, plus numerous missions volunteers who are making a difference.

The North American Mission Board has provided a breakdown of how the 2006 gifts to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering will be used.

The 2006 goal is \$56 million. Of that, 75 percent or \$42 million will be used for

missionary support (salaries, health benefits, ongoing training expenses, missionary orientation), 15 percent or \$8.4 million will be used for church planting support (rental of facilities, materials, promotional expenses), and 10 percent or \$5.6 million will be used for evangelism support (Scripture distribution, sports evangelism, special evangelism events, and media campaigns).

None of the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering is used for expenses at NAMB headquarters. These funds get to the field where the "water hits the wheel."

We need to pray for what is happening at NAMB headquarters in Alpharetta, Ga., but don't let the controversy there take away from the support of our missionaries. They are real-life heroes working at times under extreme obstacles and tough circumstances to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Our missionaries deserve our prayers and support. □

reflections



By Lonnie Wilkey, editor

Sad but true

I normally do not put cartoons on page 1, but I couldn't resist this week. Lenoir City pastor and cartoonist Thom Tapp "hit the nail on the head" with this cartoon which was a perfect fit for the story on church visitors.

Some may read that story and think, "Our church would never make a visitor feel unwelcome." You may be surprised.

Over the years I have traveled and visited countless churches. Most of the time I have been welcomed and received very warmly, better than I deserve.

But instances where guests can be ignored or made to feel unwelcome do happen.

I remember one time I was attending a church celebration (don't ask me where). Our kids were younger then and still liked to be with Mom and Dad so we made a family outing and they went with me. We went inside the church and because it was a day of celebration attendance was probably higher than usual.

We found an empty pew and as we began to enter it, a person sitting in the pew in front, turned to us and said, "I'm sorry, you cannot sit there. Those seats are saved." For once I was speechless. We turned away and stood for awhile until someone brought some chairs to place in the aisles.

If I had been a "normal" visitor in the community looking for a church home I doubt I would have ever returned. I'm sure the person meant no harm, but the individual did do some damage that day to the church's reputation.

And I have been at other churches where similar things happened although nothing quite that drastic.

As Christians we have a responsibility to make people who come to our churches feel welcomed.

People usually don't go to a church because of fancy buildings or external features. Statistics show people go to church because someone invited them and they probably will return if they are made to feel welcomed.

The story on page one was used to encourage churches and church leaders to examine closely what is done at their churches in regard to guests and to make changes if needed.

It's a sad commentary on Christians if a person can't feel loved and welcomed in church. Remember, we are God's ambassadors. No one should ever feel ignored or unwanted in God's House. □

Examining the myth of 'forgiving and forgetting'



By Paul Barkley

In my previous article (Feb. 1), I invited you to consider the concept that we, as Christians, are not to be expected to give blanket forgiveness to everyone. Since God does not do this, I think that it is unrealistic and even unethical to expect that of ourselves or others. I tried to make the case that in so doing we may even be hurting those who have wronged us by extending to them what God Himself has not given. It would not be reasonable to think that the person would believe that God had surely have forgiven them since this human being, who is infinitely less merciful than our great God, has forgiven them, that surely God has, too.

When Jesus addressed the church in Matthew 15-17, He never suggests that the believer should give blanket forgiveness to the offender. Jesus does, however, give explicit instruction on how the offender is to be confronted and how the church should respond if the offender

is unwilling to repent, confess, or acknowledge his sin. It is precisely this kind of caring confrontation that I am trying to invite us to consider as believers. This requires the offender to take responsibility for the wrong and make some type of corrective action. It is only through my confession and repentance that I am able to put myself in position to experience the grace of God which will enable me to overcome my sin. To me, it seems that when blanket forgiveness is given to people who have sinned, we rob them of the opportunity to experience the powerful grace of God, which is the only way in which the offender will be able to overcome his problem or sin. Sometimes I believe that we have unwittingly fallen into the trap of the humanist's belief that man can be his own God and pull himself up by his own bootstraps. By this, we often hinder the ability of a person to improve because we give the impression by our blanket forgiveness that their behavior, while not enjoyable or pleasant to us, is somehow acceptable.

This then leads to what I call the Christian myth of "forgiving and forgetting." Many Christians mistakenly believe that they have not forgiven if

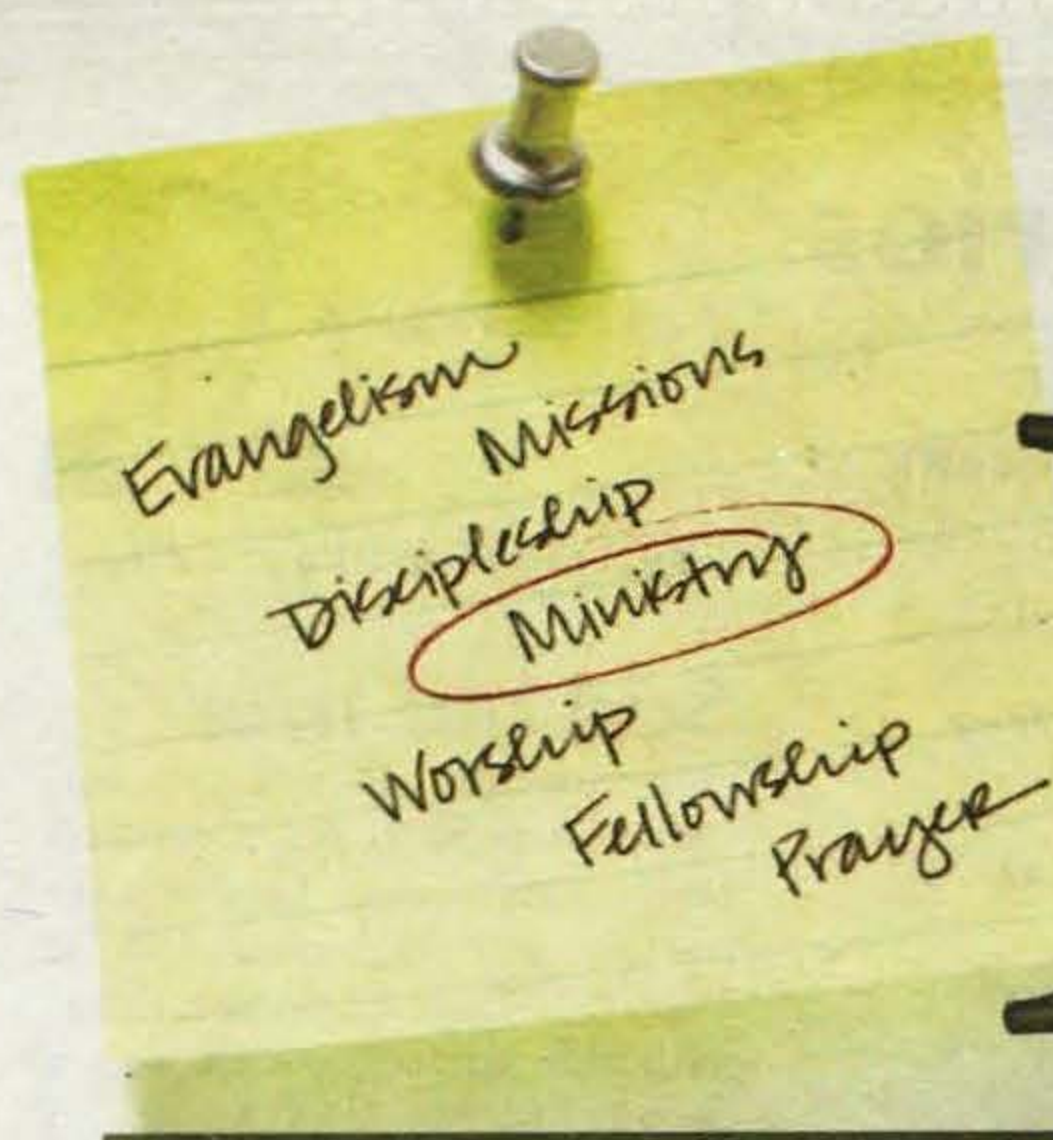
they have not forgotten the wrong. We are reminded by our spouses and friends that we must not have forgiven them if we still "harp" on their past mistakes. This comes up all the time in couples therapy where an affair has occurred. The offending spouse asks, "When is my wife or husband ever going to trust me again?" The concept is that when one repents and is forgiven that all the consequences of sin are removed. One of the consequences of being untrustworthy is not being trusted. That is the exact reason that I believe that God called lying a sin. God hates sin, not simply because it offends His holiness, but also because of what sin does to His kids.

Jeremiah reports that the Lord declares, "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." We have a dilemma. If we believe that God is omnipotent, and I certainly do, we have a problem. If God knows everything (omnipotent), how can He forget anything. May I suggest that that verse is better rendered "I will remember it against them no more." This is most certainly what I think that God does with us. Every word, deed, and even thought is recorded in the Book. God has said that when He looks at

Paul Barkley through the blood of Jesus, He will not allow my forgiven past to affect the way that He responds to me today.

It is my contention, along with many others in psychology, that any traumatic experiences that you or I may have had are indelibly seared into our psyche. No matter how hard we try to push it back, we can never get to the place where that experience is not recalled when we have other similar experiences. The act of forgiveness does not, therefore, require us to forget, but rather to respond to others as though what they did does not affect our behavior toward them in the present. I think it is even more awesome that my eternal Father loves and responds to me the way that He does even though He is aware of everything I have ever done. As one person put it, "He who knows me best loves me most." That is the model of our forgiveness of others.

This leaves us with another problem. How do we deal with forgiveness and consequences of behavior? I will save that issue for the next article. □ — Paul Barkley is associate professor of psychology and religion at Baptist College of Health Sciences in Memphis.



Church Health Matters

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MINISTRY Matters

What we now know as deacon ministry came out of the first internal conflict of the early church (Acts 6:1-7). Those seven men were given the responsibility of cultivating the internal harmony (fellowship) of the community.

They accomplished that task through creating an environment where the church's ministry touched every member in an equitable way. Modern-day deacons have the opportunity to help cultivate the same kind of healthy fellowship in their church through ministering to the needs of the church body.

Included below is the contact information for members of your state missionary staff that are available to help you and your church with your deacon ministry.

Deacon Ministry

Steve Holt(615) 371-2019

Men's Ministry

Gene Williams.....(615) 371-2064

Your Opinion Matters!

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What would you like to see more of in the Church Health Matters section of the *Baptist & Reflector*?

What can we include in these pages to serve your church better?

Please take our very short, online survey at www.tbcsurvey.org to help us help you. Thanks!



Pastors and Deacons... Partners in Ministry

by Gene Williams

Pastors who are in a partnership ministry with their deacons are modeling well the example set forth in the sixth chapter of Acts. Much of what we would call "pastoral care ministry" was assigned to the deacons in the early church so that the apostles could give themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.

Your deacons, indeed your church, may not be ready for that assignment. But you can begin the process of challenging your deacons to take on greater levels of responsibility and thereby enjoy increasing levels of blessing that come when one follows God's pattern.

Timothy needed Paul to challenge, mentor, and encourage him to accomplish God-sized tasks. Every man needs a mentor who can evaluate his spiritual maturity, educate him about his eternal significance, and suggest challenging courses of action.

Pastors can motivate, encourage, and move deacons to a higher level of service. Most deacons would be honored if their pastor asked them to take on a significant assignment. The honor that comes with the "you can do it" attitude of the pastor is just the sort of challenge the deacon needs to expand his spiritual world.

Begin by selecting a deacon you want to encourage. Watch him. Listen to his heart. Pray with him. As the Spirit brings you together in the bond of Christian love, note his skills, strengths, talents, and his passion for serving the Lord. These attributes may be sparse, but start where he is and help him move in the direction of

greater maturity.

"Significant assignment" is a relative term. Some deacons would be challenged to pray in public. Other deacons may be ready to lead services or conduct special events, so significant assignments can become much more involved for them. The point is to tailor the assignment to meet the needs of your congregation, contribute to things of eternal value, and challenge the deacon to grow in his relationship with the Lord.

Allow the deacon enough latitude to give him a sense of ownership. He must see that he is in charge of the assignment in order to grow his leadership skills. If possible, it would be wise to engineer some subtle "check-up" points that will insure success. A mentor will invest a lot of time making sure his mentoree is doing well.

If you have prepared the deacon well, he will accept the assignment as an adventure into the spiritual unknown. The risk-taking is balanced by the knowledge that there is a powerful God in Heaven who loves him unconditionally who wants to glorify Himself through this assignment. Plus is the fact that he has a caring pastor who loves and supports him through the process. All of these factors can help to create a heart pounding, soul stirring adventure for any layman.

When a task is completed, a celebration is always appropriate. Most often it will be in the form of a private "thank you" or occasional recognition from the pulpit. The greatest gain comes from the increased health of the body as the individual deacon grows in spiritual depth and leadership ability. Another great benefit to the body is a stronger spiritual bond between the deacon and his pastor.



Bret Robbe, Pastor of
Clearview Baptist Church, Franklin

Deacons Minister Through Sunday School

By Ken Walker

Clearview Baptist Church in Franklin has mushroomed since Bret Robbe arrived eight years ago, but he pastor won't take all the credit.

"When I got to Clearview, the deacons said, 'We've got to do something; the family-ministry plan isn't working and deacons are discouraged,'" said Robbe, pastor of Bellevue Baptist in Owensboro, Ky., for most of the 1990s. "The deacons came up with this. I can't take the credit."

"This" is a plan that matches deacons with each adult Sunday School class at the Franklin church. The congregation has grown from average weekly attendance of 300 in 1998 to 1,300 today.

Former Clearview Church member Howard Foshee, who designed the family ministry plan that numerous Southern Baptists have used, has endorsed the approach, Robbe said.

"His plan changed deacons from acting as boards to being focused on ministry," Robbe said of Foshee, now living in Alabama. "He would tell you this is the next generation of deacon ministry."

"We don't have all the answers," the pastor added. "We've been tweaking it for six or seven years and we're still tweaking it. But I have happy deacons."

Kentucky Baptist Convention church development leader Dan Garland said, "Guys are looking for what works. The bottom line is (Clearview Church's) deacons have embraced the concept of being servants and caring for people through Sunday School."

However, the plan isn't the only growth force. Clearview Church also recruits members into ministry activities with 76 percent of active members currently involved.

Robbe said the latter goes back to the late 1980s when he wrote his doctoral dissertation at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

He said the recruiting methods worked at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington, Ky., where he then served as singles minister; and at Bellevue Church, Owensboro, Ky., which grew from 180 to nearly 1,000 during his eight-year tenure.

"This stuff works no matter what size the church and no matter what the location," Robbe said.

Former chairman of the deacons at Clearview Church, Jim Lackey, said the deacon-Sunday School matches include class members nominating deacons, since they observe candidates' spiritual leadership and character each week.

Deacons' spouses help maintain caring relationships with women's classes, Lackey said, while most children are covered through family relationships.

Ironically, after living for a while in Texas, Lackey said he chose Clearview Church when he returned to the Nashville area nearly 20 years ago, because he wanted to attend a small church.

In his opinion, a friendly, informal atmosphere is one thing the deacon-Sunday School ties have maintained despite Clearview Church's newfound mega church status.

"The paid staff shouldn't be the only ones who minister," Lackey said. "Everyone works here and that's been a very pleasant surprise."

Lackey said one secret to its success is its yokefellow program. Men nominated as deacons must serve a one-year internship as yokefellows before being ordained even if they served in that role in another church.

"Not everyone will want to do this and we're not trying to convince them," said Lackey, owner of a health care company. "Maybe it will help your church. It helped ours."

Not only has it promoted growth, it has created a much easier church to lead, Robbe said. "We don't get bogged down in minor things," he said. "There are too many positive things to pay attention to. It makes my job a ton easier."

(Used by permission from author. Originally printed in the Western Recorder, Jan. 17, 2006.)

Books and Resources on Deacon Ministry

Deacons: Servant Models in the Church (updated edition)

By Henry Webb

Broadman & Holman, 2001

Unleashing the Power of Deacon-led Ministry

By John Temple

LifeWay, 2004

Deacons as Leaders

Compiled by Robert Sheffield

Convention Press, 1991

The Deacon Family Ministry Plan Resource Book

LifeWay, 1974

Handbook for Planning Deacon Ministry

By Robert Sheffield

LifeWay Press, 1999

The Emerging Role of Deacons

By Charles W. Deweese

Broadman Press, 1979

Deacons: Growing in Character and Commitment

A video training series by Jim Henry

LifeWay, 2002

Deacons: Partners in Ministry and Growth

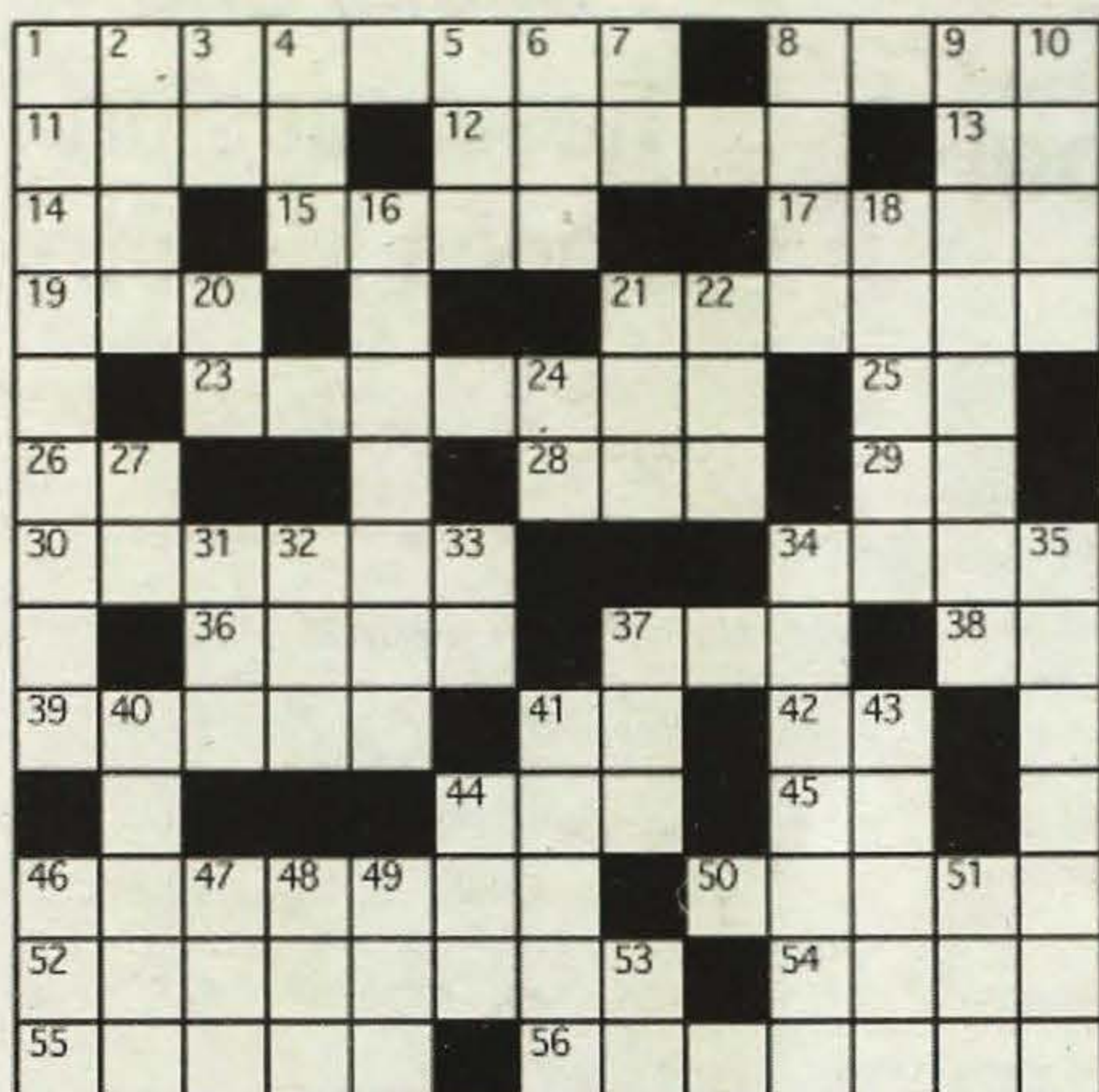
A video training series by Jim Henry

LifeWay, 1997

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

- March 16 Church Building & Finance Conference, Wallace Memorial Baptist Church, Knoxville
- March 17-18 In Spirit and Truth Worship Conference, Belle Aire Baptist Church, Murfreesboro
- March 17-18 Missions Team Leader Training, Baptist Center, Brentwood
- March 17-18 Bible Fun Field Day & Journey Kids Camp, Linden Valley Baptist Conference Center, Linden
- March 21 Regional Secretaries Computer Training, Ridgedale Baptist Church, Chattanooga
- March 22 Regional Secretaries Computer Training, First Baptist Church, Crossville
- March 23 Regional Secretaries Computer Training, First Baptist Church, Dandridge
- March 23-24 Associational Therapists' Summit, Glenstone Lodge, Gatlinburg

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



See answers on page 11

Barbour Publishing

ACROSS

1. "_____ the lilies" (Matt. 6:28)
8. Woody Guthrie's son
11. Ann, Russ.
12. Moses' brother
13. Indianapolis' state, abbr.
14. Roman Catholic, abbr.
15. "They _____ unto them" (Exod. 12:36)
17. Bean curd
19. Apiece
21. Sews quickly
23. Turns away from sin
25. House of Lords, abbr.
26. The writings that contain the new covenant, abbr.
28. "Hole of the _____" (Isa. 11:8)
29. Nickel, chem. symbol
30. High male voices
34. "Every _____ of doctrine" (Eph. 4:14)
36. "He took ... the _____ out of the house" (2 Chron. 33:15)
37. Three, prefix
38. More, suffix
39. "Pure _____ of water of life" (Rev. 22:1)
41. Overeaters Anonymous, abbr.
42. New England state, Concord is the capital, abbr.
44. Evergreen
45. Perform
46. Caleb's brother (Josh. 15:17)
50. "He riseth ... and took a _____" (John 13:4)
52. Grievance
54. Metal thread
55. "Get thee hence, _____" (Matt. 4:10)
56. The meal's last course

DOWN

1. Joseph's profession (Mark 6:3)
2. One time
3. The Empire State, abbr.
4. Girl's name, for short
5. Bilhah's son (Gen. 35:25)
6. "They work, and _____" (2 Thess. 3:12)
7. Railed transportation, abbr.
8. Small insects
9. Throw out the _____
10. Burden
16. Chinese ruler
18. Son of Shemaiah (1 Chron. 26:7)
20. Rural route, abbr.
21. Noblemen, below a baron and above a knight, abbr.
22. Snake
24. Not applicable, abbr.
27. Tellurium, chem. symbol
31. Modern Bible translation, abbr.
32. Poem
33. Sea level, abbr.
34. "_____ of heaven" (Mal. 3:10)
35. Small drip
37. Black sticky substance
40. Within, prefix
41. "Cake of _____ bread" (Exod. 29:23)
43. Howard, for short
44. Womanly, abbr.
46. Officers of the Guard, abbr.
47. Head covering
48. National Vision Associates, abbr.
49. Man's name
51. To make a mistake
53. Born, Fr.

Book promotes CP, money management

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — In an effort to maximize the work of the Southern Baptist Convention's mission boards and other ministry groups by boosting giving through the Cooperative Program, Ken Hemphill has developed a new resource called *Making Change: A Transformational Guide to Christian Money Management*.

"There are some words that we remember forever. I suppose most of you can still remember when you heard the words, 'Houston, we have a problem.' Well, the problem is multiple," Hemphill, national strategist for Empowering Kingdom Growth, said of money management during an Executive Committee meeting here Feb. 21.

Hemphill identified the financial problem by noting that Americans spend \$1.20 for every dollar they earn. In 2001, banks sent out 5 billion credit card offers, and Americans now have \$600 billion in credit card debt. Many families have as many as three or four credit cards, using one credit card simply to pay the interest on the other credit cards so that the average debt is nearly \$83,000 per family, he said.

About 14 percent of a family's expendable income is used to pay the interest on their credit card debt, he added, and Americans are now saving at a level of about 2.2 percent.

"Would it surprise you then that I would tell you that giving through the local church now stands at an all-time historic low of 2.5 percent?" Hemphill said. "That has slipped about 2 percent in the last three years, so that's pretty dramatic. If you go back to 1933 it's been at 3.2 percent. This is the lowest level we've tracked."

Furthermore, just 25 percent of church members are systematic givers, meaning they give on a regular basis and only at a rate of 2.5 percent of their income.

"Now, the incredible good news of this is that if we increase 2.5 to 5 and increase 25 percent to 50, every church sitting in here would quadruple their budget," he said. "Now you imagine what that would be at the end of the spigot in terms of what would happen for our mission agencies, our states. It's phenomenal if you think about what God could do and wants to do."

Of the total inflation-adjusted dollars given through the local church between 1968 and 2001, 93 percent was directed toward congregational finances, Hemphill said. The reason for that was not so much the selfishness of the local church but the requirement of more

funds just to keep the doors open.

"So it won't surprise that [churches'] Cooperative Program giving has declined from 10.5 percent in the 1930s to 6.8 percent today," he said.

To address the growth problem, Hemphill has written *Making Change* as a comprehensive plan designed to address both personal and corporate financial matters from a kingdom perspective. The hardcover edition of the book will be available at the SBC annual meeting in June, and a 40-study is due out no later than March of next year.

"There is going to be a seven-week study that's appropriate for small groups, whether discipleship training or Sunday School or where you find it would work best for your church," he said.

The book begins by examining the historic text on giving found in Genesis 1.

"God owns it all, He's the King, He created it for Him and we're stewards and managers," Hemphill said. "It seems to be something most of us grew up on, but an absolute revelational concept for this generation."

Making Change is a systematic study on personal finances, he said, and it addresses issues as how to make money, how to spend money, how to manage debt, how to save money and how to give money away. □



HEMPHILL

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-Paul Collins, founder of Kars 4 Kids



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Longtime TBC communicator Barbara Owen retires

Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — When her daughter Janie was an infant, Barbara Owen (then Fly) remembers driving past the Tennessee Baptist Convention offices here and telling her mother, "I'm going to work there someday."

And she did. After her daughter turned 18, the Lawrence County native joined the Tennessee Baptist Convention staff in 1974 and worked there until she retired last week after nearly 32 years in the Executive Board.

Job titles and methodology changed several times over the years, but Owen's primary task remained the same — communicating the story of Tennessee Baptists throughout the state. In the early years of her job, she was responsible for producing the TBC Leadership Directory, news releases, coordinating press conferences for disaster relief, building tours, and writing a five-minute radio script which was produced by the Southern Baptist Convention's former Radio and Television Commission and sent to radio stations throughout Tennessee which played the tape at no cost to the convention. Owen also hosted a breakfast for the Tennessee Association of Broadcasters each year.

One of her first tasks was to implement the publication of *Light* which she edited most of her tenure. The *Green Light* was discontinued last year under a restructuring of the Executive Board staff and its contents

were absorbed into "Church Health Matters" which is printed weekly in the *Baptist and Reflector*.

In recent years she moved into the former Communications Group where she was responsible for producing corporate pieces such as the Pocket Calendar, Resource Directory, and the Church Plans and Calendar of Events booklet.

During her last year or so of employment Owen returned to the Executive Leadership office where she worked for several years before taking over public relations and communications responsibilities in the early 1980s.

For six years Owen produced the *TBC Journal* and for the last three years she served as the convention's recording secretary before giving that role up last November.

She particularly has enjoyed producing the journal because it has been a way of helping to record the history of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, she observed. She will continue in a part-time role for the next month to complete the current year's *Journal*.

The highlight of Owen's ministry has been the people she has worked with and the relationships she has developed. "The friendships I have



BARBARA OWEN retired from the Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board staff Feb. 28 after more than 31 years, many of those in the area of communications. She was joined at a reception in her honor by her husband, Carroll, left, and James Porch, center, TBC executive director/treasurer.

developed across the state have been wonderful," Owen said.

She noted that she also has enjoyed "telling people about Tennessee Baptists."

During her tenure she has worked with four executive director/treasurers — Ralph Norton, Tom Madden, D.L. Lowrie, and James Porch.

"Barbara Owen's service of 31 years through the Tennessee Baptist family established a legacy of versatile

ministries and a priority of building good relationships," Porch said.

"Her years in public relations and through the Executive Leadership Group enhanced the servant identity of the Executive Board staff. She wrote well her chapter in Convention life," Porch observed.

Baptist and Reflector Editor Lonnie Wilkey related to Owen in her public relations role, both with the TBC and in her role as administrative coordi-

nator for Baptist Public Relations Association (now Baptist Communications Association) before he joined the paper's staff in 1988.

"Barbara has been a great friend and help to me over the years, and especially during my tenure with the paper," Wilkey said.

"Her knowledge of Baptists in the state along with her ability to communicate has been invaluable," he said.

"We are grateful for the ministry Barbara has had with Tennessee Baptists and we wish her well during her retirement years," Wilkey added.

Owen plans to enjoy traveling with her husband, Carroll, who she married in 1988. He is a retired TBC staff member and has filled numerous pulpits across the state during his retirement years.

She also hopes to enjoy time with their combined six children and 11 grandchildren, some of whom she plans to teach her hobbies of crocheting, knitting, and sewing.

But the TBC will continue to occupy a special place in her heart and her memories.

"The Lord had the Tennessee Baptist Convention picked out for me," she affirmed. □

Union partners to help students who delay entrance to college

Union University news office

JACKSON — Union University and Lifeshape Foundation have announced a partnership for Impact 360, a program that will help a new generation of Christian leaders to understand their calling in life.

Lifeshape Foundation was founded by John and Trudy Cathy White, affiliated with Chick-fil-A.

Union will work with Lifeshape to develop the curriculum and provide some instructors for the program. Impact 360 will host nationally prominent speakers, including Union faculty and staff members, who will serve as counselors, promoters, advisers, and mentors of Impact 360 students and staff.

"Not many traditionally

Christian universities understand the need to ground students in the biblical Christian worldview to prepare them to live the life that Christ intended for them," said Larry Cox of Lifeshape's executive leadership team.

"Union gets it. Union University has a heart for taking the gospel to all peoples, and Lifeshape wants to join hands with them to help prepare students to be God's agent of change in their culture."

Lifeshape's vision is that Christians should help to break "the cycle of spiritual poverty" around the world, according to the foundation's purpose statement. Impact 360 is targeting young leaders who will undertake this vision.

Impact 360 is a nine-month

"gap-year" residential program for students ages 18-20 between their high school and college years. It is geared primarily to students who wish to delay entrance into college for a year or who are unsure as to what they want to do with their lives.

Lifeshape developed Impact 360 to help such students develop a biblical Christian worldview through intense classroom work, discussion groups, service opportunities, and a month-long international experience.

The program will emphasize the importance of authentic community and responsibility within the community.

"These will be students who will end up becoming Christian doctors, lawyers, businesspeople, teachers — who have a strong heart for missions, a strong heart for service in the community, a strong heart for leadership with integrity," said Gene Fant, chairman of Union's English department and curriculum consultant for the partnership. Housed at Callaway Gardens

in Pine Mountain, Ga., the program will consist of four months of diverse service experiences and learning activities, followed by a month-long trip to an eastern European country. The final four months will be spent "unpacking" the international experience, Fant said, with additional service and classroom time. It will include guest speakers and time for small groups, reading, and reflection.

Participating students will earn 15 hours of credit from Union University. Union University President David S. Dockery will serve on the advisory board of Impact 360 as part of the partnership.

"Union's involvement in Impact is a natural overflow of our prioritization of Christian worldview that combines the Christian intellectual tradition and the idea of service," he said.

"These students will be effective in engaging our culture precisely because they have earned such a privilege through their commitment to service." □



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Christian Life Tours opportunities for 2006 and 2007 include Alaska, Hawaii, the Mediterranean, Jamaica, Europe, and the Panama Canal. For information, brochures, or to make reservations, call (877) 557-0073 (toll free). E-mail: ddale1950@aol.com.



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Car linked to church fires found by investigators

Associated Baptist Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — As they continue to evaluate evidence in a recent string of 10 church fires in rural Alabama, federal investigators have come one step closer to solving the case. They have found the getaway car.

"It was a key piece of the puzzle," Jim Cavanaugh, director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, told reporters. "That puts our investigation back more focused than before."

While the vehicle didn't prove to be the same dark-colored SUV authorities initially sought, it came as an "important discovery" in a case that continues to mystify investigators.

Arsonists burned 10 Baptist churches in rural Alabama in less than a month. Nine of the fires, including five on Feb. 3 and four on Feb. 7, are related. Investigators called a 10th fire on Feb. 11 arson, but they have yet to determine its relation to the others. They also continue to withhold some details of the case.

Subsequent fires in Mississippi and Georgia have caused alarm as well. A fire described as arson burned Spring Beulah Church in McComb, Miss., Feb. 26. Harmony Grove Baptist Church in Roswell, Ga., sustained major fire damage Feb. 27. Authorities said neither of the latest fires are related to the Alabama fires.

As they continue to wade through more than 700 leads, investigators suspect the culprits are two men in their 20s or 30s who may be close friends, based on information taken from witnesses and behavioral profiles. □

Yemeni executed for murder of SBC workers

Baptist Press

SAN'A, Yemen — The Yemeni gunman who killed three Southern Baptist medical workers in 2002 was executed by firing squad Feb. 27, according to wire reports.

Abed Abdul Razak Kamel was shot in the central prison of the southern Ibb province as judicial officials observed,

Yemen's Saba state news agency reported.

Kamel was convicted for the Dec. 30, 2002, shooting deaths of Jibla Baptist Hospital director William Koehn, physician Martha Myers, and purchasing agent Kathleen Gariety. A pharmacist was seriously wounded but later recovered. Kamel admitted in court to coordinating the attack with Islamic militant activist Ali al-Jarallah. Al-Jarallah was executed Nov. 27 for plotting the medical workers' deaths and for assassinating a prominent national politician.

Yemeni officials believe both were tied to the al Qaeda terrorist network. Police reported finding audiotapes of al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in Kamel's home after the murders. Yemen is bin Laden's ancestral home.

The Jibla Baptist Hospital provided care for thousands of people in the impoverished Middle Eastern nation for more than 30 years after it was started in the Ibb province by Southern Baptist workers. It was reopened in 2003 by the Yemeni government's health ministry and continues its work under the name Peace Hospital. □

Anthony Burger dies while on Gaither cruise

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — Pianist Anthony Burger, who played often with the Gaither Vocal Band and was one of Gospel music's top instrumentalists, died Feb. 22 of an apparent heart attack. He was 44.

Burger suffered the heart attack and died during a performance aboard a Bill Gaither Homecoming cruise in the Caribbean. Burger performed with the Gaither Vocal Band about 80 times a year, and took part in about 60 Gaither Homecoming videos.

He played at Billy Graham Crusades and in such locations as England, Ireland, Scotland, and the Caribbean Islands. He and the Gaither Vocal Band performed at the Southern Baptist

Convention annual meeting in Indianapolis in 2004.

Burger recorded his own instrumental albums, and his latest CD, "Tribute to Bill and Gloria Gaither," was nominated for this year's GMA Music Award instrumental album of the year.

He is survived by his wife, LuAnn, and three children. □

Grahams to lead crusade in N.O.

Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — For 10 years, an interfaith group here tried to get the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association to schedule a campaign in the Crescent City.

David Crosby, pastor of First Baptist Church in New Orleans and the group's chairman, said the Graham name has been "the name that is most able to unite the largest number of people in the New Orleans area for a spiritual event." But because not enough of a cross-section of the Christian community would commit to being involved, the Graham organization said the time wasn't right.

Then Hurricane Katrina hit. Within days, Franklin Graham's Samaritan's Purse organization was on the ground, assisting in

the disaster relief effort with chaplains, food, and water.

"They have made a long-term commitment to the Gulf Coast," Crosby said.

Some of the pastors spoke to Franklin Graham about the 10-year effort, and by November, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association agreed to fully underwrite a festival now set for March 11-12 in the New Orleans Arena, which seats 18,500.

In late January, Billy Graham joined the effort.

Crosby recounted that Graham went to his son's office and said, "New Orleans has been on my heart. I've been

praying for the city and I believe God wants me to go." With Billy Graham, longtime team members George Beverly Shea and Cliff Barrows also are expected.

"I feel that Billy Graham and his team returning to our city is just the favor of God in the wake of the storm," Crosby said. "We are sending His choice servants to proclaim the Good News and a message of hope in this storm-ravaged city." □

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — MUSIC

Round Lick Baptist Church, 43 W. Main St., Watertown, TN 37184, has an opening for the position of music director. Those are interested in this position please submit a resume and video to the above address.

Calvary Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, Ala., is accepting resumes for minister of music. Responsibilities include administration of the music program from preschool through senior adult ministries in addition to worship leadership during 8:30 a.m. traditional and 11 a.m. blended/contemporary services on Sunday mornings. Please send resume to Calvary Baptist Church, Attn. Music Search, 1121 Paul Bryant Dr., Tuscaloosa, AL 35401.

Thalia Lynn Baptist Church is seeking a full-time minister of music to lead both contemporary and traditional worship. Send resume and references by March 1, 2006 to Chairman, Music Search Committee, 725 S. Leaf Dr., Virginia Beach, VA 23462 or e-mail music@thalia-lynn.com.

First Baptist Church of Mt. Vernon is now accepting resumes for full-time minister of music. Masters degree desired. Video/DVD would be greatly appreciated. Please submit resume to FBCMO, Attn. Search Committee, 3200 Mt. Olive Rd., Mt. Olive, AL 35117, church phone (205) 631-4401.

MINISTRY — DOM

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

Sullivan Baptist Association, 32-church association, Kingsport, Tenn., is currently accepting applications for director of missions position. Send resume by March 3 to SBA DOM Search Committee, Attn. Arden Taylor, 171 Pro Land Dr., Gray, TN 37611. e-mail to ataylor@tcbchurch.org and include a statement to why God is leading you to this position.

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 N 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 346, Trenton, TN 38382. Post to the attention of Josh Johnson.

First Baptist Church of Arkadelphia, Ark., serving about 270 families in a small university city, is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resume to Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 623 Pine St., Arkadelphia, AR 71923, or to fbcarksearch@hotmail.com.

Ramer Baptist Church in Ramer, Tenn., is now accepting resumes for a full-time pastor position. Please e-mail resume to joeymaness1@yahoo.com or mail to Joey Maness, 333 Mulberry Ave., Selmer, TN 38375.

West Fork Baptist Church in Murray, Ky., is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resume to Kenneth Greer, 115 Shadow Circle, Murray, KY 42071. Resumes taken through March 31, 2006.

MINISTRY — COMBINATION

Spring Creek Road Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tenn., is currently accepting resumes for a full-time music and youth OR education minister. Resumes can be mailed to James Julian, 1312 Spring Creek Rd., Chattanooga, TN 37412 or e-mailed to springcreekpastor@yahoo.com.

MINISTRY — CHILDREN

Geyer Springs First Baptist Church, Little Rock, Ark., is seeking a minister to children. Send resume to jstallon@gsfbc.org or P.O. Box 31510, Little Rock, AR 72260. Information at www.gsfbc.org. Previous children's ministry experience expected.

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — STUDENT

Central Baptist Church, Spring City, Tenn., is looking for a part-time youth minister. If interested please send resume to P.O. Box 192, Spring City, TN 37381 or call (423) 365-6385.

Bethel Baptist Church, Henderson, is seeking a bivocational associate pastor/minister to students. This person will have responsibility for children and youth ministries as well as some pastoral duties. Please send resume to Bethel Baptist Church, 125 St. Hwy. 125, Henderson, TN 38340, Attn. Search Committee. Interested candidates can obtain information about our church at www.bethelfamilyoffaith.org.

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

First Baptist, Pulaski, is seeking a full-time minister of students for a growing youth ministry. Please send resume to dplumlee@bellsouth.net or FBC, P.O. Box 306, Pulaski, TN 38478.

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book review

Dawn Ferguson

The Hadassah Covenant

by Tommy Tenney & Mark Andrew Olsen
Bethany House, 2005

King Xerxes is murdered and Queen Esther is banned from the royal palace to live along side the new king's cubines. Xerxes' son, Artaxerxes — who was actually been Vashti's child but was raised by Esther after shti's death — assumes the throne and decides to follow in his father's footsteps and select a new queen from among the country's finest virgins.

Having been through a year of preparation prior to her night with the king, Esther — who takes back her Jewish name Hadassah — begins to coach one of the young women named Leah. But unlike Esther, Leah who is the love of the king is not chosen because he discovered — through a slip of her tongue — that she is Jewish and her heart is broken.

While Tommy Tenney and Mark Andrew Olsen's novel *Hadassah Covenant* is a work of fiction, it combines many biblical and historical accounts of actual people and events. The story takes place in modern day Jerusalem. Letters written by Hadassah to Leah are found in an archaeological dig and through Esther's story is told. The present day wife of Jerusalem's prime minister also named Hadassah — is a descendant of Leah's and trying to prove that Leah and Mordecai — Esther's uncle who raised her as a child following the death of her parents — actually bore a child and the descendant of Mordecai is the Exilarch — the high priest who would settle all disputes brought before him by Jews.

Establishing the authority of a new Exilarch is paramount to the current day aspects of the story because the Jews are asking for reparations from Iraq. While Leah is a fictional character, the authors admit that it is a common belief that Mordecai was an Exilarch (leader of the exiled Jews) and quite possibly the first official one — though this has not been proven. In addition, they state that the legacy of the Exilarch, and the tensions surrounding its office are accurately portrayed in the book. Currently, there is a secret campaign by squads of militant countries to retrieve stolen antiquities.

But the main thrust of the book is romance — the romance between Esther and her beloved Xerxes and that of Leah's — initially to Artaxerxes who breaks her heart and then Mordecai. And the account, the action, and the truth of the story are better than any Harlequin romance available.

While Esther's famous "such a moment as this" is written about in her letters to Leah, this book is about her life after her big moment. Esther shares that her life seemed over when Xerxes died. She lost her status and influence as queen and could not see any point in continuing to live. She discovers when she meets Leah that she may have a purpose after all and sets out to show her on her one night with the king.

The authors state that "while these characters and their stories are fictional, the fact that each of us can be called to make a difference even after our time in the sun passed is truth of the highest order. You are never too young, too inexperienced, too anything to make an enormous difference in this world."

This book is a sequel to the authors' *Hadassah, One Night with the King*, which is a fictional adaptation of the biblical account of Esther and has been made into a motion picture which will be in theatres this spring. □ — Dawn Ferguson is a correspondent for the *Baptist and Reflector*.

Keep praying

By Phil Taylor

Focal Passage: Luke 11:1-13

Jesus lived a life of prayer and He taught a life of prayer. It is the will of the Lord Jesus that your church is a house of prayer, and that the people are given to daily, prevailing prayer for personal needs, for the power of the Spirit, for the progress of the gospel, and for the glory of God's name.

Jesus teaches us to pray with a sense of security in the Father's love. Jesus doesn't want us to feel precarious and insecure in our prayers. He shows this mainly by teaching us to call God Father when we pray to him. The prayer in verse 2 begins, simply, "Father." And then in verses 11-13 He unpacks for us some of the security implied in this word, "Father."

The words "how much more" (v. 13) mean that God is much more inclined to hear us and help us when we pray than earthly fathers are. Why does Jesus talk this way? Surely, it's because He means for us to feel secure in the Father's love when we come to Him in prayer. He does not want us to feel precarious or unsure of our acceptance or fearful that we will find the Father out of sorts or unconcerned.

This sense of security is utterly crucial in the life of prayer and the life of worship. You can't sustain a life of prayer if you believe God is stonewalling you or angry with you or even neutral to you. Prayer is

sustained by the confidence that God is our Father and that He is concerned and that His disposition is just what Jesus says it is: He is MORE inclined to give what we need than the best human father is.

Jesus teaches us to prevail in prayer without doubting the Father's love. By prevailing I mean hanging in there. Persevering. Persisting. Not giving up. Keeping on asking and seeking and knocking at heaven's door until the answer comes, or until God says, Stop praying.

We are prone to ask, "If God is more caring than the best earthly father, then why would He sometimes be slow to respond to our prayer?"

He tells the story in verses 5-8 of the man who goes to his friend's house in the middle of the night to say that a guest just arrived and there isn't enough in the house to feed him; could you please get up and lend me three loaves of bread? The man says that the door is locked, the children are asleep in his room, don't bother me now. But his friend keeps knocking and asking until the man gets up, not because of his friendship, but because of the man's prevailing, persisting, persevering knocking. We all feel that this is a very unattractive image of the transaction of prayer.

Immediately in verse 9 Jesus says that there is a lesson to learn: Asking is the simplest and

Sunday School Lesson
Family Bible Series
March 12

requires no movement. Seeking turns asking into an activity of pursuit. Knocking on and on at the door again and again signifies utter earnestness and perhaps even desperation.

So what's the point of the whole section? The point is to show us that prevailing prayer — persisting, persevering prayer — is utterly important for us. And He stamps this truth on our memories with a



TAYLOR

shocking image of friend who won't help without being bothered into helping. But then Jesus qualifies His point in verses 11-13 by saying that God is NOT like that friend. He is like the most caring Father imaginable.

The promise that will encourage us in prevailing prayer is simply verse 10. God is not unresponsive to prevailing prayer. There is something in the prevailing — the asking and seeking and knocking — that we need, that is good for us. And He knows best. □ — Taylor is director of missions for Bradley County Baptist Association, headquartered in Cleveland.

Do you volunteer to serve?

By Marvin Nail

Focal Passage: Isaiah 6:1-11

Quite often in commentaries on Isaiah you will find speculations about why, unlike other prophetic books, Isaiah waits until the beginning of the sixth chapter to give us information about his call to be a prophet. Perhaps they need only reflect on their own calling and remember that God often makes us aware of the need for such a ministry before He calls us to it.

The words from God that Isaiah received as recorded in the first five chapters of this book lay a perfect foundation for God's call. Until he received those words from God, Isaiah was like the rest of his people, deeply religious but unaware of how God viewed him and his fellow Israelites.

In our passage for this week we will be looking at Isaiah's calling. It is similar to the calling on every believer's life. Each of us is called to proclaim the good news of what God can do even for those who have so far been disobedient to His law.

Who is God? (vv. 1-4)

The most difficult time in life is when the things we thought we could depend upon to always be there suddenly are gone. In Isaiah's time, the great king Uzziah had died and it seemed that the hand of God's protection and blessing was being taken away from Judah.

Isaiah appears to be carrying out his priestly service in the temple, perhaps burning incense offering up

the prayers of the people. Imagine his surprise at meeting God in His own house! Like many of us, Isaiah had been going through his own religious motions with little real thought of God. Though Judah's great king was dead, Judah's true King was very much alive. Isaiah saw God's glory fill the temple and was reminded of the holiness of God.

Who am I in His presence? (v. 5)

No matter who we may think we are, or how good we may believe ourselves to be, there is no place for pride in the presence of God. Many of us lack the proper perspective about coming into God's presence. This shows itself in the way we come to worship.

So many of us look upon worship as a program designed to make us feel good. We might even select the church we attend based on whether the worship service meets our needs. When Isaiah actually met God in worship he was humbled by his own sinfulness. When any of us is aware of being in God's presence he cannot escape the accompanying awareness of his own sin confronted by His holiness.

What has He done? (vv. 6-7)

After being confronted by his own sinfulness, Isaiah sees the picture of the grace of God as He sends

Sunday School Lesson
Explore the Bible
March 12

a seraph to purge away that sin. All Isaiah had done was confess his sin to God, claiming no merit that would make him worthy of forgiveness. Into that brokenness, God sent His healing.

Now Isaiah was capable of the mission to which God was about to call him. Isaiah's "works" religion had been shown to be worthless, because true worth lay in God alone.

What must I now do?

(vv. 8-11)

What a terrible mess would have remained for Isaiah had he only been thus prepared and then left with nothing to do. But God does not work that way. When He forgives us He always has some service in mind for us.

When God then came to Isaiah with a mission, He did not need to persuade or cajole him into service. Because of God's mercy that had been extended to him, Isaiah is more than ready to assume any burden, to take on any task, to go to any extreme.

The Lord Jesus has cleansed us from our sin through our faith, can we do any less than step forward as His call to service? □ — Nail is a former pastor and current member of First Baptist Church, Nashville. He is an employee of LifeWay Christian Resources.

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Leaders

◆ **Gregory Alan Thornbury** has been unanimously elected as the first dean of the School of Christian Studies at Union University. Thornbury, 35, has been on the Union faculty since 1999, and has directed Union's Carl F.H. Henry Center for Christian Leadership since 2000. Thornbury has co-edited two books:



THORNBURY

Who Will Be Saved? Defending the Biblical Understanding of God, published by Crossway Books in 2000, and *Shaping a Christian Worldview: The Foundations of Christian Higher Education*, published by Broadman and Holman in 2002. He has also written dozens of articles for various journals, magazines, and other publications.

◆ **Chad Williams** has been called as minister to students at Sharon Baptist Church, Knoxville. He is slated to begin his ministry in mid-March.

◆ Sequatchie Valley Baptist Association, Whitwell, will host a retirement reception for its director of missions **Buddy Strickland** and his wife, **Laura**, Sunday, April 2, from 2-4 p.m. (CDT) at First Baptist Church, Whitwell.

◆ The North American Mission Board has appointed **Tom Hodges** as director of the Montgomery Village Baptist Center in Knoxville. His wife, **Rose**, also has been assigned as a local missionary. A native of Maryville, **Hodges** earned a B.A. degree in sociology at Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Ky. Prior to his new post, Hodges served seven years as minister of education and student minister at Broadway Baptist Church, Maryville. The Hodges have one son, **Casey**.



HODGES

◆ **Leoma Baptist Church**, located in Leoma, has called **Troy McConnell** of Ethel, La., as minister of music, effective March 19. He and his wife, **Andrea**, have a daughter, **Emma**.

◆ **Pistole Baptist Church**, Sparta, called **Harlen Simmons** of Sparta as pastor effective Feb. 12.

◆ **Brown Springs Baptist Church** of Mosheim recently ordained **Samuel C. Wilker-**

son of Mosheim to the ministry. A senior at Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, he is the minister of students at the church. Participating in the ordination were Nola-chucky Baptist Association director of missions **James Williams**; Carson-Newman College professor of religion **Ron Brummett**; Brown Springs Church minister of administration **James Sauce-**man; and church pastor **Richard Long**.

◆ **Fellowship Baptist Church**, Millington, has called **Joel Rider** as minister of youth.

◆ **Woodlawn Baptist Church**, Ripley, has called **Barney Campbell** as pastor.

◆ **Shawn Lowery** has resigned as minister to high school students at First Baptist Church, Clarksville, to accept a call to First Baptist Church, Portland.

◆ **Monty Flanigan** has resigned as pastor of Gum Springs Baptist Church, Cunningham, to accept a call from a church in Kentucky.

◆ **Northside Baptist Church**, Clarksville, has called **Bob Meacham** as pastor.

◆ **Mark Gallaher**, pastor of New Salem Baptist Church, Clinton, has resigned.

◆ **C. David Davis** is the new associate pastor of student ministry at Oak Grove Baptist Church, Gray. His wife's name is **Becky**. Her name was incorrectly reported in last week's issue.

Churches

◆ **Eastland Baptist Church**, Nashville, will celebrate its 95th anniversary on March 26. All former members are invited to attend. If you plan to attend the luncheon following the service or sing in the choir, RSVP the church at (615) 262-9424 before March 17.

◆ **Stephen Hill**, who is seen on Bill Gaither videos, will be in concert at **Lee Station Baptist Church**, Pikeville, on March 11 at 6 p.m. The church also has revival services scheduled March 19-23 with **Tony Cates** as guest evangelist. For more information on either event, call **Bill Wolfe** at (423) 667-2287.

◆ **Point Pleasant Baptist Church**, Paris Landing, will present its sixth annual "The Living Pictures of Jesus," a live drama of the life of Jesus with 10 different scenes with biblical characters and narrations, Thursday-Saturday, April 13-15, beginning at dark. A free drive through event, there are 35 seat trolleys and



THE FELLOWSHIP OF Tennessee Baptist Evangelists elected officers during their meeting in January. Pictured from left are **Larry Gilmore**, director of evangelism for the Tennessee Baptist Convention who assists the fellowship; **Gary Buck**, Nashville, music coordinator; **Benny Jackson**, Germantown, president-elect, 2006; **Keith Cook**, Springfield, vice president-elect, 2006; and **Lammie Lammers McKenzie**, president, 2005.

vans available for those who wish to park and ride. Other buses and vans are welcome. For information call **Rosalie Setlech** at (731) 232-8340 or e-mail her at psetlech@wk.net.

◆ **First Baptist Church**, **Walter Hill**, Murfreesboro, will host a Royal Ambassador Racer race, Saturday, March 18. Weigh in will begin at 10 a.m. RA Leader **Bo Woodard** invites all to participate or come watch the races. For information, call **Woodard** at (615) 525-8967.

◆ **Brentwood Baptist Church**, **Brentwood**, will host a day of prayer Friday, March 10, entitled "Seeking God Together for Revival," from 6 a.m.-6 p.m. Featured speakers will be: **Claude King**, Tennessee National Day of Prayer honorary chairman; and **Bob Bakke**, Global Day of Prayer U.S. director. The event is sponsored by the Tennessee National Day of Prayer. For information, call (615) 371-2326.

◆ **Hermitage Hills Baptist Church**, **Hermitage**, will hold a "Pray Without Ceasing" prayer conference Friday-Sunday, March 10-12, featuring **Don Miller**. Miller has been leading international prayer conferences since 1976. A graduate of Baylor University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, he is the author of *A Room That's Like a Mountain*. His topics include "Simple Praying People," "The Prayerlife of Jesus," "The Yoke ... Are You In It?" and "God's Magnifiers." Music and worship will be led by **Richard Fuller**. For information, contact the Hermitage Hills church office at (615) 883-5034.

◆ **West Point Baptist Church**, **West Point**, will celebrate its 110th anniversary, Sunday, March 19, with Sunday School at 10 a.m. and worship service at 11 a.m.

◆ **West Jackson Baptist**

Church, **Jackson**, will have **The Crabb Family**, a South Gospel Group from Kent, Tenn., Sunday, March 12, at 6 p.m. during the evening worship service. A love offering will be taken.

◆ Twenty-two disaster relief volunteers from **First Baptist Church**, **Paris**, are working March 5-11 in **Bogalusa, La.**

Statewide Events

◆ The Tennessee Baptist Convention will sponsor **Church Administration Conference**, April 3-4, at **Brentwood Baptist Church**, **Brentwood**, for church administrators, pastors, church treasurers, and financial secretaries. For information, contact **Brittany Powers**, TBC human resources, at (800) 558-2090 ext. 2013.



THE BIVOCATIONAL Ministers and Wives Retreat held recently in Pigeon Forge drew more than 200 participants, the largest attendance in the retreat's history and a 45 percent increase over last year. About one-fourth of the participants were attending their first retreat. The theme was "Loving God, Loving Each Other," and featured speakers included **Gary Rickman** of the Tennessee Baptist Convention staff; **Randy Davis**, pastor of First Baptist Church, Sevierville, and his wife, **Jeanne**; **Randy Ponder**, Mississippi River Ministry, Trenton; **Ron Edmondson**, Mustard Seed Ministry, Clarksville; **Faris Jordan**, humorist, Knoxville, and **Brenda Morris**, former missionary to Hawaii of Knoxville; and **Shanon Jackson**, soloist of Scottsboro, Ala. A similar retreat will be held Sept. 8-9 at the Old English Inn in Jackson for bivocational ministers in West Tennessee. For more information, contact **Ray Gilder** of the Tennessee Baptist Convention at rgilder@tnbaptist.org or 1-800-558-2090, ext. 7907.