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# Baptist & Reflector

Wide Edition

Telling the Story of Tennessee Baptists

Vol. 172 / No. 17; May 3, 2006

## TBC and Belmont — questions and answers

**Editor's Note:** A special called meeting of the Tennessee Baptist Convention was held May 9 at Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville to deal primarily with the convention's relationship with Belmont University. As of yet, no specific recommendations have been made by the Joint Study Committee. Discussions with representatives from both Belmont and the TBC are ongoing. Belmont University listed several questions on its website to inform its constituency about the matter. We provided the questions to the TBC Executive Board's Belmont University Committee and asked for their responses.

Responses from both Belmont and the Joint Study Committee are used verbatim below. Belmont University's news information officer, Greg Pilon, was asked about our plans to use the questions along with a response from the Belmont University Committee. Read the questions and answers and pray for the Joint Study Committee. Also, do not forget the Call to Prayer on May 8 from 7-9 p.m. at Two Rivers Baptist Church. — Lonnie Davis Bushey

### Did Belmont's trustees have legal authority to amend Belmont's charter to change the method of trustee election without convention approval?

**Belmont:** Yes. Under state nonprofit law, Belmont's charter, and the Con-

vention's own bylaws, the trustees of Belmont University are the final governing authority over Belmont University in all matters. From 1951 to 1974, the Convention had the right to approve amendments to Belmont's charter affecting trustee election. In 1974, this provision was deleted from Belmont's charter with the consent of the Convention.

**TBC:** The question should be "did Belmont's Trustees have the authority to unilaterally amend its Charter without Convention approval?" Governance over the operations of Belmont is vested in its Board of Trustees as is the case in all nonprofit corporations under applicable Tennessee law. Amending a Charter, however, does not automatically fall within the scope of that authority. Under Tennessee law, the issue depends upon whether or not the nonprofit corporation has members. If a nonprofit has members, then in this instance the members would have to approve the action taken. Belmont declares itself to not have members. Tennessee law, however, defines a "Member" as a person, entity, or organization that participates in the election of Board members on one or more occasions in the past. Based upon this definition and the fact that the Convention has elected every Trustee of Belmont since 1951, the Convention is a "mem-

ber" of Belmont University. Accordingly, Belmont's Board of Trustees did not have the unilateral authority to amend its Charter without Convention approval.

### 2) Can the Convention remove Belmont's trustees from office?

**Belmont:** No. State law vests in Belmont's board of trustees the sole authority to remove its members. Belmont charter provisions in effect prior to November 2005 provided for removal only upon approval of the university's board of trustees followed by confirmation by the Convention.

**TBC:** Yes. Under applicable provisions of the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act, the members have the right and authority to remove from office the directors or trustees of the corporation. Also, pursuant to Convention governing documents which Belmont has recognized since 1951, the Convention, after study, report, and recommendation by Executive Board, has the authority to declare a trustee position vacant.

### 3) What consequence is the 1951 document to the current and future relationship between the Convention and Belmont?

**Belmont:** The 1951 document is a historical artifact the terms of which,

to the extent they can be discerned, have been negated by the actions of the parties. The TBC Annuals reflect no action or reliance on the document by the Executive Board or the Convention. If it represented a contingent liability, this liability would have been reflected in the audited financial statements of the Convention and Belmont. There is no reference to such liability in any of Belmont's audits which have always been performed by auditors selected and paid by the Convention.

**TBC:** The Convention published in the *Baptist & Reflector* the 1951 agreement in its entirety. Each reader can draw his/her own conclusions about the clarity and import of the agreement as written and as signed by Belmont. The 1951 agreement is not a "historical artifact". The import of the document has not been "negated". The Convention has been faithful to its commitments to Belmont since 1951. The agreement speaks of the consequences should the election of trustees be lost to the Convention.

### 4) When did Belmont learn of the existence of the 1951 document?

**Belmont:** On the evening of Thursday, November 10, 2005 the Convention's attorney alerted Belmont's counsel. — See TBC and, page 4

## Baptist apologist considers merits of The Da Vinci Code

Lonnie Davis Bushey  
and Reflector

**SPRINGFIELD** — Mike Bushey believes Baptists are making a mistake by not watching the movie, "The Da Vinci Code," which will be released May 19, or reading the book, "The Da Vinci Code."

Not being engaged with the cultural phenomenon of *The Da Vinci Code*, they are missing an opportunity to witness many folks interested in the book and movie, he said. They are confirming stereotypes of Baptists as narrow-minded and uninformed.

More than 40 million copies of the book have been sold, said the director of apologetics for the Southern Baptist Convention's interfaith evangelism of

the North American Mission Board, Alpharetta, Ga. He spoke to about 50 pastors, church leaders, and state convention leaders gathered April 25 at Springfield Baptist Church here. The conference, "Response to *The Da Vinci Code*," was provided by Robertson County Baptist Association, Springfield, and the Tennessee Baptist Convention Evangelism Team.

"A lot of people are reading and believing it," he said. A recent George Barna poll reported that about 52 percent of Americans who had read the book said it had provided some "wonderful spiritual insights" for them.

Christians should know *The Da Vinci Code*. — See Baptist, page 3



**ELECTED 2006-07 OFFICERS** of the Tennessee Baptist Convention Secretaries Association April 24-26 at its annual meeting were, from left, front row, Janice Nanney, Memphis, president; Pam Hazlegrove, Bolivar, West Tennessee representative; Liane Keaton, Dickson, vice president; back row, Lynn Roach, Morristown, East Tennessee representative; Linda Smith, Shelbyville, treasurer; and Dawn Frazier, Culleoka, Middle Tennessee representative. The group met at the TBC Baptist Center in Brentwood.



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## White House rep praises SBC disaster relief

Baptist Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — The White House director of Faith-Based Initiatives told Southern Baptist volunteers, "No longer are you considered a group of last resort, but a group of first resort. The government doesn't take for granted your contributions, but seeks to take advantage of them."

Jim Towe spoke to Southern Baptist disaster relief leaders at their Disaster Relief Roundtable April 25-27 at Fielder Road Baptist Church here.

Expressing the gratitude of President George W. Bush for Southern Baptists' response to last summer's hurricanes, Towe said, "The president knows the efforts taken during the disaster relief phase were extraordinary in scope and compassion because government can't love the way your people did."

The 26 hurricanes and tropical storms recorded in the United States during 2005 broke the record set one year earlier when 11 storms were reported. FEMA issued 48 emergency declarations for shelter operations, evacuating 1.4 million people. An unprecedented number of 1,355 shelters across 48 states housed evacuees.

## TBC called meeting — last minute reminder

Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — As the special called meeting of the Tennessee Baptist Convention approaches, details have been released through the TBC executive leadership office.

The meeting will be held May 9 at Two Rivers Baptist Church, Nashville.

Every individual entering the worship center at Two Rivers will need to register either as a messenger, visitor, or media representative.

Childcare will be provided 30 minutes prior to each session, during sessions, and 30 minutes following each session for the special called convention. Care will be offered to

children from birth to 5 years old. Volunteers will be on duty in the welcome center at the main lobby to direct guests to the childcare area.

A convention office has been set up at Two Rivers Room 130. The phone number is (615) 476-0884. Emergency calls may be directed to that number. □

During the 2005 hurricane season, 500 Southern Baptist disaster relief units representing 41 state conventions, including Tennessee, operated for 184 days, utilizing 21,000 volunteers whose time amounted to 165,748 volunteer days. That accounted for more than 14.5 million of the 17,124,738 meals prepared by Southern Baptist crews all year.

In the aftermath of the hurricanes, disaster relief volunteers purified 21,595 gallons of water — nearly a third of the 68,846 gallons offered in 2005; facilitated 103,556 of the 155,967 showers made available; completed 25,826 of the 28,253 loads of laundry; relayed 3,107 ham radio messages; and cared for 7,817 children of displaced families.

Activity throughout the year expanded to a total of 166 responses to disasters and included the removal of 13,986

cubic yards of debris and the repair of 7,246 buildings — far more than the 2,683 reported for 2004, which was double the prior year's number. NAMB reported 187 new units placed into service last year, including those focused on chain saw recovery, mud-out and rebuilding equipment, kitchens, command and communication lines, as well as childcare, shower, laundry, and water purification facilities. □

## Homosexual group sues Ky. governor

Baptist Press

FRANKFORT, Ky. — A homosexual rights group is suing the governor of Kentucky in order to prevent the state from giving \$11 million to the Baptist-affiliated University of the Cumberlands after the school expelled a student who touted his homo-

sexuality on MySpace, a social networking web site.

The governor, in turn, is a judge to determine the constitutionality of using tax money for private institutions.

Christina Gilgor, executive director of the Kentucky Family Alliance, said the governor is to give \$10 million to help establish a pharmacy school. Another \$1 million in scholarships for future pharmacists is an "unconstitutional appropriation and use of funds" for "a sectarian denominational school that Kentucky citizens unequally support," according to the *Lexington Herald-Leader* newspaper.

Kentucky Gov. Ernie Evers, meanwhile, said he plans to grant the money — rather than sue — until questions about the constitutionality are determined in court. He acknowledged "mixed feelings" about private institutions. □

## Tennesseans obtain vision of ministry in Puerto Rico

By Laura Erlanson  
Baptist Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Most planes, when landing at the international airport here, fly over the Moscoso Bridge.

Newcomers to Puerto Rico looking out their plane window are struck by the many flags planted on the bridge at even intervals — two U.S. flags opposite each other, then two Puerto Rican flags, then two U.S. flags and so on — alternating for the entire span of the bridge.

It is a poignant picture of the island itself — at once both decidedly American (think shopping malls, fast food, and highways) and thoroughly Caribbean, with a mix of Spanish, African, and island influences (think black beans, brightly painted houses, and palm trees).

It is in this interesting place that Baptist leaders are beginning an ambitious church planting operation — 50 in the next 10 years is the goal.

That would double the number of churches in the two-year-old Convencion Iglesias Bautistas del Sur de Puerto Rico (Convention of Southern Baptist Churches of Puerto Rico), which also covers the U.S. Virgin Islands.

In an effort to help the Puerto Rican leaders reach this goal, the SBC North American Mission Board hosted a Vision Tour to San Juan in the fall of 2004.

A Vision Tour is a way for the leadership from a newer or smaller Baptist convention to show outsiders the lostness of their area.

"The whole thesis [for the Vision Tours] is to get some of our key leaders, let them see, feel, touch the needs firsthand," said Richard Harris NAMB vice president for church planting.

David Thompson, NAMB trustee and pastor of North Pointe Community Church near Nashville, was NAMB's initial contact when trying to put the tour together. Thompson approached pastors in his area who he thought would be interested in partnering to help plant churches. He and the other team members were encouraged by the Baptist leaders in Puerto Rico.

"[We were] very impressed with their education, their abilities, their passion, and their desire to reach their cities for Christ," Thompson said. "They were extremely open and receptive to our being there to partner with them."

Thompson said he was keenly aware of the need there.

"It's a place of tremendous need and great opportunity," he

said. "The window for the gospel was open. People are receptive."

Harris said the spark NAMB hoped for was ignited during the tour. Thompson and other pastors began to envision ways their churches and other churches in the Nashville Baptist Association could help.

Kevin Shrum, pastor of Inglewood Baptist Church, Nashville, was on the tour. "We met some awesome people with incredible vision," Shrum said. "We looked at five different locations in San Juan where they were thinking about starting churches." Shrum said the Vision Tour team immediately started laying the foundation for a second trip.

Shrum already has ideas for

his church. "I see us partnering with a church and a group of people in an area of the island. I don't see us reaching the whole island, but I see us reaching with a church that would impact an area of the island."

Thompson has a vision.

"Our church is interested in participating — as well as encouraging other churches in the Nashville area to board and participate. We want to not only lead the way but also through the local association create at least a five-year partnership with Puerto Rican churches." □



**BAPTIST LEADERS** from Tennessee and Puerto Rico pray for Jorge, pastor of the Baptist Church of Arecibo. He had just shown them ministry to Arecibo's street people to the group. His church is one of the Baptist churches in the northern part of Puerto Rico.



# Baptist apologist considers myths of The Da Vinci ...

continued from page 1  
The *Da Vinci Code* "calls into question Christianity" and "the foundations for our faith."

By discussing the book and talking with folks, Christians can communicate to non-believers that truth matters to us," added Licona, "even if they want to throw it in your face."

Christians "need to know our history now. We have gotten lazy the years," Licona pointed out. Because of that, some have their faith rocked.

Licona suggested Baptists watch the movie rather than read the book, which takes less time. But after its release, they should read the major myths presented in the book, *The Da Vinci Code*, and the truth.

Licona, a graduate of Liberty University, Lynchburg, Va., discussed five major myths presented in the book by author Dan Brown. Then he countered with a fact check.

**Myth 1**  
Myth 1 of the book and movie is that Jesus was

married to Mary Magdalene and was covered up.

Brown refers to writings of Gnostic Gospels as the text for this theory. But the rest of many of these manuscripts have holes and thus are missing. One proof text is, "And the companion of the Mary Magdalene... her more... the disciples... kiss her... her..." Brown fills in the gaps with his own ideas to negate the myth of Jesus' marriage to Mary Magdalene, Licona. The other problem with the text is that the writing was done a century or longer after the Gospels in the New Testament.

Licona also referred to 1 Corinthians 9:5. "If Jesus had been married wouldn't it be mentioned here?"

**Myth 2**  
Myth 2 is that the doctrine of Jesus is the Son of God was created and approved by the Council of Nicaea in AD 325. For years skeptical New Testament scholars have debated whether Christians first thought of Jesus as divine, said Licona.

The Council of Nicaea was called in response to an Egyptian bishop in the 4th Century who believed and taught that Jesus was created by God and not eternally divine.

Churches voted once on his point and unanimously decided in AD 318. But the bishop was deposed, continued to teach the notion. The Council of Nicaea met to deal with the issue again in AD 325. They voted 290-24 against the belief. They were threatened by the head of the council and the vote was 316-2. A majority of biblical scholars

believe the divinity of Jesus evolves in the New Testament, said Licona. This is based upon the fact that the earliest Gospel writer, Mark, refers to Jesus as the Son of Man. Then Matthew refers to Jesus as the Messiah, Luke as the Son of God, and John as God.

Yet, Paul is believed to be the earliest writer of the New Testament and he debunks this evolution theory, said Licona. He referred to Philippians 2:6-11.

Licona also referred to the trial of Jesus. When asked whether He was the Messiah, Jesus said yes and added that He also was the Son of Man and was divine.

Jesus wasn't often called God because He and His disciples "had to be very careful so He could continue" in the political climate at that time, explained Licona.

He also mentioned the myth of *The Da Vinci Code* that God was feminine and later changed to a masculine God. This was not an issue of the Council of Nicaea, he said. And people shouldn't put any stock in the Lord's Supper painting of Leonardo da Vinci which *The Da Vinci Code* says portrays a woman.

Licona said it was usual to paint the youngest disciple in a feminine way. He also said that da Vinci lived too late to have any good knowledge about Bible times and was only a painter.

The New Testament only refers to a masculine God. A feminine God was introduced by the Gnostics in the 2nd Century, said Licona.

**Myth 3**  
Myth 3 is that Christianity is not unique but that it borrowed its major doctrines from pagan religions. For instance, other gods have died and risen and Sunday was originally a day of worship for pagans.

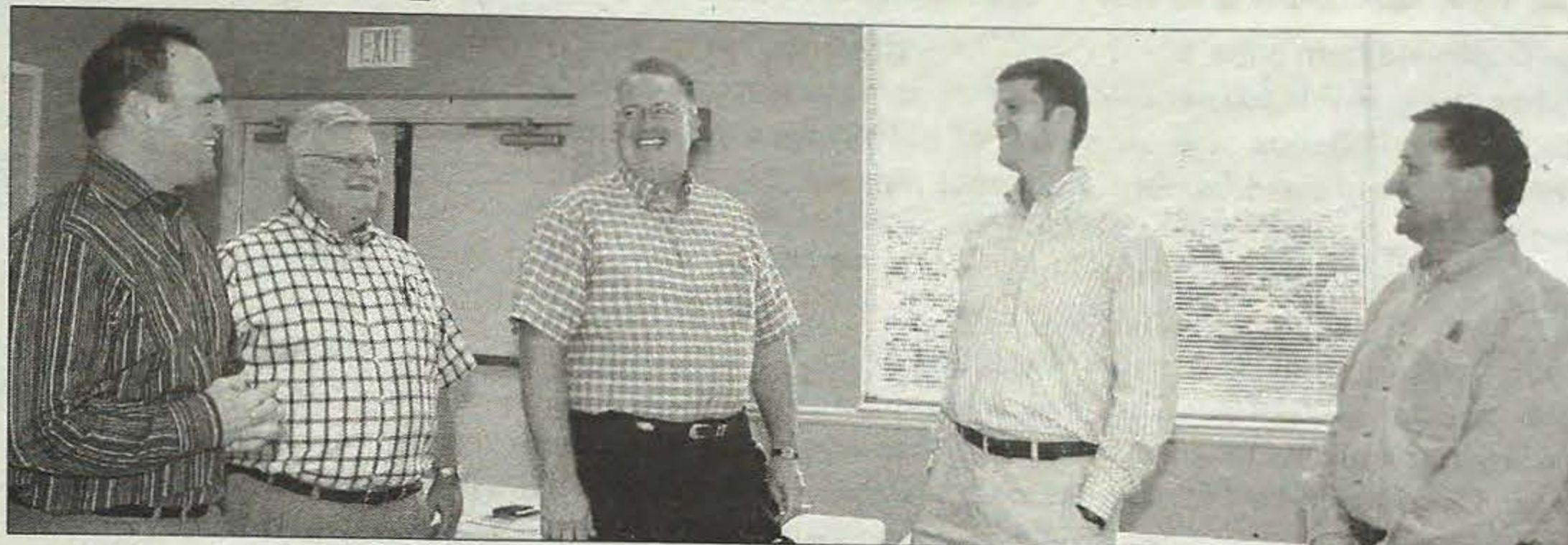
Licona said it is true that accounts exist of gods who died and lived again, but not in the physical way that Jesus did. And none of these accounts pre-date the resurrection of Jesus so who's copying whom? he asked.

One account is of the god Baal, the storm god, who was linked to rain. He was enticed to come to the underworld where he was swallowed up by another god. He is never seen again but his mother asks for him to be released. Then it starts to rain again and it is said he was reborn.

Another god was cut up and the parts of his body scattered. They were gathered and he was put back together and lived, but he lived in another, darker world after that.

It is true that pagans worshiped a sun god on Sunday. But Christians changed the day of worship from the Sabbath on Saturday to Sunday because of the resurrection of Jesus, noted Licona.

Sunday was the day of worship for early Christians as reported by Pliny, a Roman offi-



**VISITING AFTER THE** conference, "Response to The Da Vinci Code" are, from left, Joey Rodgers, pastor, First Baptist Church, White House; John Langlois, Greenbrier; David Leavell, pastor, Springfield Baptist Church, Springfield; Mike Licona, conference leader from the North American Mission Board; and Brad Shockley, pastor, Cedar Hill Baptist Church, Cedar Hill.

cial, said Licona. In the early 2nd Century he wrote that Christians worshiped on the first day of the week.

**Myth 4**  
Myth 4 is that the Bible has evolved through countless translations, additions, and revisions.

Instead, a fact check shows that 5,745 Greek manuscripts of parts of the New Testament exist. Nine of those were written in the 2nd Century and all of them within 150 years of the life of Jesus.

There are also more than 10,000 manuscripts in other languages and more than a million quotations of the New Testament written within 1,400 years of the life of Jesus by church fathers.

The writings of Thucydides and Herodotus, who are regarded as our greatest ancient historians, are preserved in only eight manuscripts, the earliest of which is more than 1,300 years removed from the original, added Licona.

"There's a wealth of evidence

for the purity of the text," said Licona.

For more information on this area of study, he suggested the forthcoming book, *Reinventing Jesus*, published by Kregel.

**Myth 5**  
Myth 5 is that the Bible as we know it today was collated by the Roman emperor Constantine and that much of 80 gospels which referred to Jesus as man were destroyed.

A fact check shows that 20 other gospels exist besides those in the Bible, but the four in the Bible were written in the 1st Century. The rest were written later and were not considered authoritative. First Paul and then Peter referred to portions of the New Testament as Scripture. Then the apostolic fathers from AD 70-150 began referring to books which are now in the New Testament as Scripture.

"Even heretics accepted the four New Testament Gospels as Scripture," said Licona.

Early compilers of lists of the canon or what was to become the

New Testament worked from AD 140-AD 1546. They all accepted the four New Testament Gospels as true Gospels and all accepted Paul's letters as authoritative, said Licona. Certainly the list of the 27 books which were accepted as the New Testament weren't chosen because Christians "preferred one over the other," he noted.

**Finally**  
Bart Ehrman, atheist and New Testament critic, said in his book, *Truth and Fiction in The Da Vinci Code*, Brown is "a novelist, not a scholar of history. ... Even though he claims that his descriptions of documents ... are accurate, in fact that are not."

Licona said what Dan Brown does in his book is "promote conspiracy theory" rather than "responsible research. As a historical account of Jesus and the early church it is unsalvageable."

He encouraged folks to use "Discussing The Da Vinci Code," a DVD ROM by Lee Strobel and Garry Poole to help in discussion groups of the movie/book. □

## B&H releases book on The Da Vinci Code

By Rob Phillips, LifeWay Christian Resources

NASHVILLE — It's only fiction.

That's the final line of defense when Dan Brown, author of runaway bestseller *The Da Vinci Code*, is confronted about shoddy research or challenged about his Gnostic beliefs, according to Kenneth Boa and John Alan Turner, who have authored a new book to set the record straight about Brown's postmodern worldview.

Broadman & Holman on May 1 will release *The Gospel According to the Da Vinci Code: The Truth Behind the Writings of Dan Brown*. B&H is the publishing arm of LifeWay Christian Resources.

The book refutes the worldview behind *The Da Vinci Code*, the best-selling hardcover adult novel of all time and soon to be major motion picture. In addition, Boa and Turner look at Dan Brown's other books, most notably *Angels and Demons*, to form a clearer picture of the spiritual relativism that guides his writing.

According to the B&H authors, Brown promotes a postmodern worldview akin to the age-old heresy of Gnosticism, which became the greatest doctrinal challenge to the church in the second century. While taking on many complex forms, Gnosticism is basically a philosophical approach to the gospel that promotes secret "knowledge" (gnosis in the Greek), resulting in a denial of both the full deity and humanity of Christ, among other false teachings. Paul, John, Peter, and Jude all addressed the germ of Gnosticism in their New Testament writings.

And therein lies the rub, according to Boa and Turner. Dan Brown claims, on the first page of *The Da Vinci Code*, that "all descriptions of artwork, architecture, documents, and secret rituals in this novel are accurate." In other words, he insists that he has built a work of fiction on solid church history. But in fact, his scholarship is slipshod and his sources have long been proven spurious, charge Boa and Turner. Still, because the church today lacks doctrinal depth and often ignores its historical roots, many Christians have gullibly swallowed Brown's alternative gospel.

Also all of the book's "secrets" are in fact unbiblical falsehoods. "Saying that Dan Brown's book is about Christianity is like saying 'Finding Nemo' is about marine biology," write Boa and Turner. "We have just as much evidence to suggest that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene as we have that clown fish talk."

Boa and Turner warn that *The Da Vinci Code* may do for orthodox Christianity what the movie "Inherit the Wind" did for the debate over religion and education — replace fact with fantasy. "Inherit the Wind" was a fictional account of the famous Scopes Monkey Trial and inaccurately cast evolutionists as reasonable men and women of science, while creationists were depicted as bumbling simpletons. *Monkey Business: The True Story of the Scopes Trial*, released last year by B&H, sets the record straight on that historic event.

"Ideas have consequences," said Boa and Turner. And saying his book is only fiction is no defense. □



# TBC and Belmont — questions and ...

— Continued from page 1

sel of the possible existence of such a document. Belmont was unaware of the existence of the document. Belmont personnel located the previously unknown document the following day (Friday, November 11) with other carbon copy onion skin papers in a storage safe on campus. Belmont notified the Convention officials that it had found a copy of the document the next business day (Monday, November 14) after Belmont learned that the Convention's search for the document had been unsuccessful.

**TBC:** We can not speak of "when" Belmont's current leadership learned of the existence of the 1951 document. However, Belmont's leadership has stated that it located the document around 9:30 on the morning of November 11, 2005. In any event, Belmont University, as a Tennessee nonprofit corporation, has known of the document since 1951. Between November 9-11, 2005, counsel for the Convention made numerous attempts to contact counsel for Belmont about the possible existence of a document. The last communication from Convention counsel occurred on the morning of November 11 and clearly stated that no document had been located. Counsel for the Convention received the following e-mail response message from Belmont's counsel at 11:16 on the morning of Friday, November 11: "Thanks for the heads up. Let me know if you hear anything else." Accordingly, Belmont's leadership was aware on Friday morning (November 11) of the unsuccessful search by the Convention, but they chose not to advise counsel for the Convention that the document had been located, not to provide a copy of the document to the Convention and not to bring a copy to the Annual Meeting of the Convention.

## 5) Does the Tennessee Baptist Convention own Belmont University?

**Belmont:** No. The Convention does not now nor has it ever owned Belmont's campus. Any claim of any other kind of ownership interest was abandoned in 1997, when the Convention voted to amend previous statements, including the statement describing its relationship with Belmont, to delete the words "owned and operated" and substitute in their place the word "affiliated." In 2000, the Convention amended its bylaws to specifically state:

The relationship between the Convention and the affiliated boards and institutions is grounded in mutual trust for the purpose of common ministry. The affiliated institutions are **autonomous nonprofit corporations, neither owned nor operated by the Convention. Governance of**

**the institutions is vested in their respective boards of trustees or directors in all matters** (emphasis added).

**TBC:** Tax exempt organizations are not "owned". Therefore, "owned" is an incorrect term if we are speaking of the organization. If we are speaking of assets, the Convention purchased all of Belmont's assets in 1951. These assets were subsequently transferred to the corporate entity — Belmont University. Belmont has referenced a change to governing documents which occurred in 1997 as a basis for some of its actions. In 1997, the phrase "owned and operated by" was changed to "affiliated with" to describe the relationship between the Convention and its Baptist institutions. This amendment to the governing documents had nothing to do with a "change" in relationship. The Convention has never "owned and operated" Belmont or any of its other Baptist institutions. The terminology was modified to properly reflect the true nature of the legal relationship between the Convention and its institutions. "Affiliated" is a term of art, not a general reference. Affiliated means that one organization has voting authority as to at least 80% of the governing body over another organization. With respect to Belmont, the Convention has voting authority over the election of 100% of Belmont's trustees. Accordingly and while the Convention does not "own" Belmont University, the amendment in 1997 did not alter the legal relationship or affect the 1951 document.

## 6) Has Belmont severed its relationship with the Convention?

**Belmont:** No. At no time has Belmont's board of trustees entertained a motion to sever the university's relationship with the Convention.

Per a request in 2004 from a committee of the Executive Board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, Belmont's Board of Trustees drafted a new covenant of affiliation between the Convention and the university, which included several important provisions: TBC funds contributed to Belmont would be used for Baptist student scholarships from Tennessee; Belmont trustees would elect their own successors; and 40% of the board of Belmont would be made up of active members of churches affiliated with other Christian denominations. This covenant was unanimously approved by Belmont's board, and was approved by the Education Committee of the TBC Executive Board. It was rejected by the Executive Board by a vote of 44 to 29 in September, 2005.

Following this vote, a new Resolution on Relationship was jointly drafted by Convention and Belmont leaders on October 7, 2005. It was unanimous-

ly approved by the Education Committee of the Executive Board at its meeting in late October and sent to the Convention messengers for action. Among the elements of this resolution are: acknowledgment by the Convention of the intent of Belmont's trustees to elect their own successors; Baptists will comprise at least 60% of the board of trustees with up to 40% of the seats made up of active members of churches affiliated with other Christian denominations; acknowledgement by Belmont of the years of support provided to the university by the Convention; Belmont will establish an endowed scholarship fund for students from Tennessee Baptist churches at the university; establishment of three positions on Belmont's board for the executive director-treasurer of the Convention, the chair of the Executive Board, and the chair of its Education Committee; and implementation of joint educational and mission service programs.

At the conclusion of the Tennessee Baptist Convention in Clarksville, messengers tabled a decision on the Resolution on Relationship and the Executive Board outlined a series of possible next steps. At its March 28, 2006 meeting, the Executive Board's Belmont Study Committee initiated one of those steps, recommending that the Executive Board convene a special session of the Tennessee Baptist Convention on May 9, 2006.

**TBC:** The answer to this is a "qualified" yes. Belmont's Board approved and filed a Restated Charter on November 10, 2005 (the 2005 annual Tennessee Baptist Convention convened on Nov. 13, 2005). By law, a Restated Charter replaces all earlier charters and amendments. Accordingly, Belmont negated its earlier Charter that contained the following provision concerning the elections of its Board of Trustees:

"The directors of this corporation shall be elected by the Tennessee Baptist Convention from nominations approved by the corporation and the Committee on Boards of the Tennessee Baptist Convention."

The above provision does not exist in the Restated Charter (see entire copy in earlier *Baptist & Reflector*). Without a provision for election of trustees, Belmont's Board becomes self-perpetuating. The reason for a "qualified response" is because it is our belief that this action by Belmont's Board of Trustees was improper. If such proves to be the case, then the Restated Charter would be null and void. If, however, the Restated Charter is upheld, then no one can conclude that Belmont has not severed its long-standing relationship with the Convention. In its own web site, Belmont states that it is looking "forward to a newly defined relation-

ship with Tennessee Baptists". If "new", the old relationship must. Based upon Belmont's desire for independence, the preferred method would have been for Belmont to wait for action by the Convention on the pending Resolution of Relationship which was to have been considered by convention messengers on November 16, 2005. If the Resolution had approved, then Belmont could subsequently file its Restated Charter. Belmont's Board filed the Restated Charter "before" the Convention even had an opportunity to consider the proposed Resolution.

## 7) What has Belmont done with the funds donated to it by the Convention?

**Belmont:** All funds donated to Belmont university by the Convention over the past 54 years have supported the university's mission to provide Christian higher education to our students. In these years 16,483 students have graduated from Belmont and distinguished themselves in their personal and professional lives. The university is proud of these graduates and is grateful for support from Tennessee Baptists who have helped Belmont positively transform so many lives.

**TBC:** Each year, the Convention asked for an allocation of funds for the Cooperative Program by each Baptist Institution including Belmont. Use of allocated funds is specifically designated. These funds allocated to a Baptist Institution are used as determined by the governing Board in light of the institution's mission.

## 8) Does Belmont continue to receive Cooperative Program funds?

**Belmont:** No. Though the Convention deferred action on the Resolution on Relationship, the Convention voted to re-allocate \$2,300,000 previously budgeted for Belmont for the current fiscal year.

**TBC:** No. Each year each Baptist institution makes a written request for CP allocation. This process was followed in 2005. The budget which was prepared and forwarded to the Convention for approval included allocation to Belmont for the year November 1, 2005 — October 2006. Belmont notified Executive Leadership of the Convention in November 2005. Upon receiving this notification, an amended budget was prepared to honor Belmont's expectation and submitted to the Convention. The funds formerly allocated for Belmont were re-allocated to other CP recipients. □



# Rudeness in communication leads to conflict

families  
after



By Paul Barkley

I recently read an article on the rise of rudeness in the workplace and the detrimental effect this rudeness had on productivity. The paper reported that 75 percent of workers surveyed reported having experienced put downs, condescending or outright rude comments or behavior on the job. Two-thirds of those who tried to resist the behavior or speak up against it reported that he or she experienced some sort of retaliation from others (not the person). There was also a recent report in the news media that the way that our language deteriorated with the common use of vulgar, slang, potty-mouth expressions. Emerson noted in his essay *Nature* that the corruption of language which leads to the corruption of society. I see this as a symptom of the disease that has already afflicted our society not as the cause of the problem we have in our day. I am like the preacher that I am, I want to invite you to think about the effects of this issue on our family and some possible solutions. The fallen nature of

man tilts us in the direction of the base and crude. There must ever be a vigilant effort on the part of the believers to make the course correction that is required to keep us from sliding down this slippery slope.

The erosion of language in our day is compounded in the family. I have noticed over these years as a counselor and pastor how freely we Christians tend to use our most hateful and hurtful language with our families. We will often time say things to our family members, especially in the heat of anger and argument that we would never dream of saying to those that we work with or socialize with. I guess that we figure that they have to love us and accept our trash. One of the comments made in the article on rudeness in the workplace stated that as "professionals" we are responsible for serving these people even though we don't like them at the time.

Christians often have a difficult time with assertiveness. I think this mainly occurs because we confuse assertiveness with aggressiveness. My down home differentiation between them is simple. Assertiveness is when I demand my space and aggressiveness is when I demand your space. I don't have the right to demand your space, but I have not only the right, but the responsibility to demand my space. If a family member is rude, condescending, or hurtful, we have the right and

responsibility to make sure that they understand how it makes us feel. We must do this in an appropriate manner. Most of the time when we are hurt and want the family member to know how much we hurt, we simply hurt them back.

I remember the story of the 6-year-old taking care of his 2-year-old little brother while mother finished supper. Mom heard the 6-year-old scream and ran into the den to investigate. The 6-year-old reported that the 2-year-old had bitten him. Mom scolded the 2-year-old and explained to the 6-year-old that the 2-year-old did not understand that he had hurt the 6-year-old. She had hardly gotten back in the kitchen when the 6-year-old screamed again. When the mom returned to the den, the 6-year-old reported that the 2-year-old had bitten him again. Mom, again, scolded the 2-year-old and explained to the 6-year-old that the 2-year-old did not understand that he was hurting the 6-year-old. When mom returned to the kitchen this time she heard the 2-year-old scream. Returning to the den to investigate, she asked the 6-year-old what had happened. The proud 6-year-old reported, "He understands now."

Christian families must learn to respond without retaliating. If we truly love each other we will want to do what is best for the other. Truly it would be best for the crude, rude, hurtful family member to learn that this

kind of behavior is not acceptable and will cause them problems in other relationships. In responding to this kind of insult and hurt, we can try to remember that the other family member may have spoken in anger that had nothing to do with us, or is frustrated over situations that they perceive out of their control that also could have nothing to do with us. We might confront this crude and hurtful communication by saying something like: "I can tell that you are upset. I don't think that I have done anything to upset you. Who are you upset with? What has happened to make you so angry?" This kind of communication says "I know you are angry, upset, or rude, but I don't think your behavior is because of me."

There is a sense in which I must receive rude, crude, hurtful language before it truly becomes mine. In the midst of the fight I can rise above the fray by focusing on the other person, his or her issues or concerns, and possible solutions. This would prevent me from being dragged down into the ditch with them.

Rudeness and crudeness will not go away on their own. They must be confronted and addressed appropriately. God bless you as you try to respond without retaliating. □ — Barkley is associate professor of psychology and religion at Baptist College of Health Sciences in Memphis.

reflections



By Lonnie Wilkey, editor

## Perfect timing

God always provides. He proves that over and over in every fact of my life, including the workplace.

Late last week as I was contemplating what to write I reread Paul Barkley's column on this page about rudeness. While Paul was talking primarily about relationships within families, it dawned on me how relevant this topic is for next week.

On May 9 Tennessee Baptists will gather at Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville for a special called meeting dealing with our relationship with Belmont University.

I have dealt with the issue in previous columns, so I will not get into that here. On page one of this issue we provide questions and answers from both the Tennessee Baptist Convention and Belmont University perspectives.

Tension will be present next week. People on both sides of the Belmont issue have strong feelings. Some will be more vocal and passionate than others.

Tempers may flare and it could escalate into rudeness and hurtful behavior.

Everyone attending the convention next week needs to make a conscious effort to behave in a manner that honors Christ. That does not mean we have to agree on the issues, but you can disagree respectfully of others and their opinions.

Come to the convention with a positive mindset. Come equipped with facts and be prepared to listen carefully.

Get to the convention early so you can get your registration material and not be rushed. Registration will open on Monday evening (May 8) from 6-9 p.m. and again on Tuesday, beginning at 7 a.m.

Remember that everyone who enters the worship center at Two Rivers needs to register either as a messenger, visitor, or media representative. Don't get upset if you are directed to the registration table. Convention leadership is trying to make things as orderly and easy as possible. Lunch will even be provided.

And, if during the sessions something is said to upset you, think about these words Paul Barkley used to conclude his column this week.

He wrote, "Rudeness and crudeness will not go away on their own. They must be confronted and addressed appropriately. God bless you as you try to respond without retaliating."

Continue to pray diligently for this special meeting. Let us set aside personal agendas and focus on God's agenda. His is the agenda that really matters. □

## letters to the editor

### Do make Baptists?

Thanks for your "Reflections" on the story by Hannah Elliott in the April 26 issue of *Baptist Reflector*. The Bible says "Go ye there and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). Nowhere does it say "Go and make Baptists of all nations."

Some of our SBC leaders need to be reminded that the mission of a Christian is to share the good news of Jesus' love.

Many also need to be reminded that the Baptist Faith and Message was written by men and is not part of our "Baptist" identity, even though it is based on Scripture. Let's each join in prayer for this precious couple (Wyman and Michelle Dobbs) as they are faithfully serving our Lord in Sierra Leone, West Africa. Pray also for the new Christians the couple are discipling.

We need to fervently pray for our decision makers as they consider policy and politics and their reaching effects of their action in this matter.

Lola Byrd  
Powell 37849

### Applauds couple

"Call upon the name of the Lord" (IMB (or Southern Baptist or insert any other denomination) and thou shalt be saved"? I don't think so.

Southern Baptists need to evangelize and quit worrying who gets the credit. So often, people want praise for what "they" did or what "they" contributed in the search for bringing the kingdom of God. People, get with it. We are being out-evangelized on every side by Mormons, Muslims, and any other group that is willing to share their faith.

I was a missionary in South America some 20 years ago and I saw 50,000 New Testaments stored away in a storage room in high humidity because those in the mission didn't want to share resources with other denominations.

I know it happened because I helped unload them. It didn't matter that there were only 5000 Baptists in a country of one million people. I was told that "Baptists gave the money for these Bibles and they will be used by Baptists."

Southern Baptists are, I believe, the most funded Protestant group doing evangelism in the world, but we

couldn't share with those (denominations) in need.

I applaud the Dobbs family. God will bless them. Their dedication to presenting the gospel to the peoples of the world should be commended. I'm sure the area in which they live is not a safe or comfortable one, but they have carried out the Great Commission.

Whether or not the SBC/IMB approves of what they have accomplished, God does and will reward them openly. IMB, don't make a mistake here. It will be a costly one, both now and through eternity.

Steve Cate  
Strawberry Plains 37871

### Lack of audacity

In the April 5 letters to the editor there was a thought provoking correspondence about the death of self esteem. It reported that the twin pillars of modern counseling, self love, and self esteem are being abandoned by a group of prominent psychologists in favor of self-control and self-discipline. It further stated if you accept one you must reject the other. Why can't both be operative in one's life balancing each other?

There is a virtue that enabled Moses to free the Hebrew slaves of Egypt, David to kill a giant

and later rule Israel, and the apostle Paul to bring Christianity to the Gentile world — all events of enormous historical significance.

This virtue is audacity, the first cousin of self-esteem not to be confused with egomania.

The subject of audacity for Christians was first introduced to our congregation in 1982 by our interim pastor, Ramsey Pollard. In a riveting sermon he gave numerous reasons for the church to cultivate audacity.

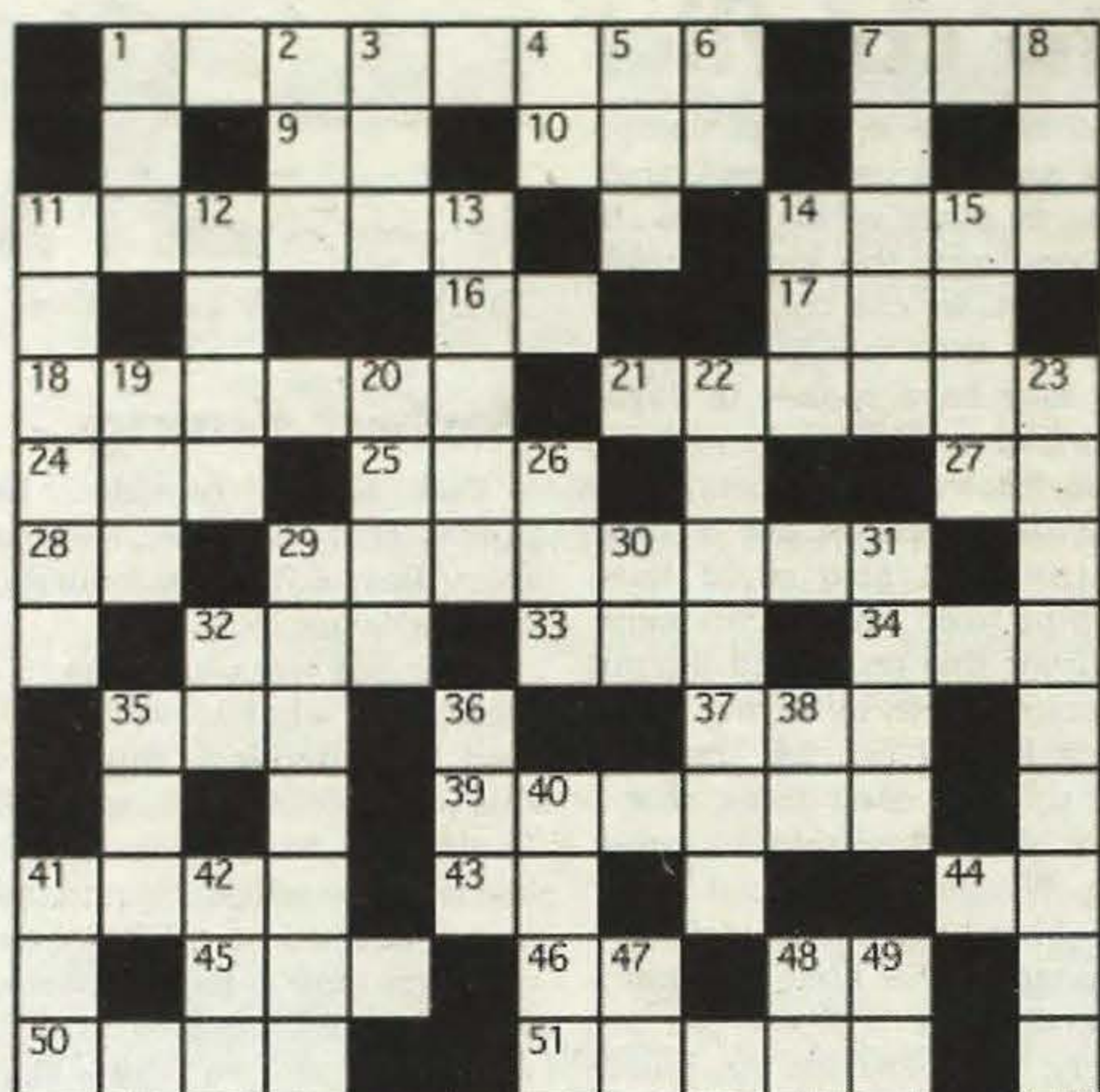
Audacity is admired, trumps fear, and wins wars. Audacity wins souls, empowers missionaries, and draws attention at the Throne of Grace. Audacity wins elections, improves entrepreneurship, and gets the girl. Audacity enhances speeches, music, art, and architecture.

Lack of audacity explains why many souls live in quiet desperation. Moses, David and Paul certainly did things they weren't proud of but did not let their shortcomings prohibit their great contributions.

Let's recognize our shortcomings not dwelling on them too long but boldly engage the world with the God-given abilities we've been granted.

John H. Townsend  
Memphis 38120





See answers on page 11.

Barbour Publishing

## ACROSS

1. Lot was told to go to the \_\_\_\_\_ (Gen. 19:17)
7. "There was no harm in the \_\_\_\_\_" (2 Kings 4:41)
9. Yes, Sp.
10. How many daughters Lot had (Gen. 19:8)
11. Who came to Lot (Gen. 19:1)
14. "He ... did \_\_\_\_\_ unleavened bread" (Gen. 19:3)
16. "Bring them out \_\_\_\_\_ the place" (Gen. 19:12)
17. Dessert
18. Informed on a person
21. "The Lord \_\_\_\_\_ upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah" (Gen. 19:24)
24. "This \_\_\_\_\_ fellow came in to sojourn" (Gen. 19:9)
25. Abraham's nephew (Gen. 12:5)
27. Pittsburg's state, abbr.
28. In the year of our Lord, Lat. abbr.
29. One of the cities destroyed by God (Gen. 19:24)
32. Large vase
33. Farrow's first name
34. "Is there any taste in the white of an \_\_\_\_\_?" (Job 6:6)
35. "I cannot escape to the mountain, lest ... I \_\_\_\_\_" (Gen. 19:19)
37. Held up Moses' hands (Exod. 17:12)
39. Lot was told to \_\_\_\_\_ (Gen. 19:17)
41. "Lot \_\_\_\_\_ out at the door" (Gen. 19:6)
43. Continent in the northern hemisphere, abbr.
44. Masculine pronoun
45. Corrida cheer
46. "Then said I, \_\_\_\_\_, I come" (Ps. 40:7)
48. "Their sin \_\_\_\_\_ very grievous" (Gen. 18:20)
50. "Now, this \_\_\_\_\_ is near" (Gen. 19:20)
51. "He overthrew \_\_\_\_\_ cities" (Gen. 19:25)

## DOWN

1. They compassed Lot's house (Gen. 19:4)
2. "Neither shall ye \_\_\_\_\_ enchantment" (Lev. 19:26)
3. Nothing
4. "There came two angels to Sodom \_\_\_\_\_ even" (Gen. 19:1)
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Jima
6. "\_\_\_\_\_ man hath seen God" (John 1:18)
7. God destroyed the cities of the \_\_\_\_\_" (Gen. 19:29)
8. Golf peg
11. "They ... brought them forth \_\_\_\_\_" (Gen. 19:17)
12. "Lot sat in the \_\_\_\_\_ of Sodom" (Gen. 19:1)
13. Another city destroyed by God
14. Bits per inch, abbr.
15. "They shall \_\_\_\_\_ the way of the Lord" (Gen. 18:19)
19. "Lot went out ... \_\_\_\_\_ shut the door" (Gen. 19:6)
20. Bashemath was her daughter (Gen. 26:34)
22. "God remembered \_\_\_\_\_" (Gen. 19:29)
23. They escaped with Lot (Gen. 19:16)
26. Thomas, for short
29. "He pressed upon them \_\_\_\_\_" (Gen. 19:3)
30. Japanese unit of distance
31. "Take ... thy daughters, which are \_\_\_\_\_" (Gen. 19:15)
32. Unemployment insurance, abbr.
35. Female deer
36. Male adults
38. "Lot ... rose \_\_\_\_\_ to meet them" (Gen. 19:1)
40. "She became a pillar of \_\_\_\_\_" (Gen. 19:26)
41. A woman in the army, abbr.
42. "I will \_\_\_\_\_ overthrow this city" (Gen. 19:21)
47. "\_\_\_\_\_, let me escape" (Gen. 19:20)
48. Island, abbr.
49. Southeast, abbr.

## Book designed to help Christians deal with epidemic of 'busyness'

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — "Professor of Busyness" Michael Zigarelli speaks from firsthand experience: Overload and burnout are at near epidemic levels in the Christian community, and leaders are the most dramatically affected.

This epidemic of activity came to Zigarelli's attention in an unusual way when a typo in a publication several years ago revised his title from associate professor of business to associate professor of "busyness."

"I got a kick out of the typo — for about 10 seconds. Then it hit me. Most weeks, that typo would be more accurate than my actual business card," said Zigarelli, dean of Regent University's school of business.

The revelation sent Zigarelli on a quest to examine the extent of the busyness problem, not only in his own life but in the Christian community as well.

He collected data from a sample of more than 11,000 Christians worldwide. Among his findings: 43 percent of Christians say they often rush from task to task; 51 percent say they're often exhausted at the end of the day; and 60 percent say that the busyness of their lives often gets in the way of developing their relationship with God.

The problem is especially pronounced for Christians in leadership positions, three out of four of whom admitted that their overloaded lives often crowd out God.

"I saw myself in those statistics," Zigarelli said. "As a husband and father of four grade-school kids, a professor and business school dean, a magazine editor, and owner of a small business, I simply had taken on too much and trapped myself in an escalating cycle of activity."

Zigarelli began to search the Scriptures for guidance "beyond the comfortable, well-worn passages that caution us not to hurry through life" and began writing about practical solutions to the problem.

Soon thereafter, LifeWay Christian Resources executives were searching for experts on this topic, hoping to find material they could publish, when they found an article by Zigarelli titled, "Are You Too Busy for God?" in the online version of *Christianity Today*.

Zigarelli attributes his "being discovered by LifeWay" as divinely orchestrated, noting, "It's amazing how God can use some-

thing as small as a typo to p author and publisher together."

Zigarelli has chronicled what he has learned from the Scriptures in a new book by LifeWay titled, *Freedom from Busy: Biblical Help for Overloaded People*.

"This is not a book about saving your time better so you get everything done," Zigarelli said. "There are plenty of 'busyness management' resources on the market. Instead, this is about busyness reduction and a permanent escape from the too much activity, too many responsibilities, too much and too little God."

"People will find a message that needs to be preached actively in our culture. Frankly, a message I needed to hear myself," he added.

The book is designed for individual or small group use and is organized as a 20-day study. It includes practical advice on "Freedom through Saying No," "Freedom through Simple Living," and "Freedom through Busyness." The book is supplemented by a DVD that contains five 11-minute video segments to accompany the weekly sessions.

An audio version on CD is available with the book "for those who do not have time to read it," Zigarelli said with a smile. □



ZIGARELLI

## Definition begins to change for 'Sunday best'

Associated Baptist Press

BIRMINGHAM — Depending on where you worship, wearing your "Sunday best" to church today might not mean what it once did. On Sunday mornings, more and more people are passing on dresses or ties and opting for blue jeans or khakis instead.

A dilemma now exists between the argument that casual clothing makes visitors feel welcome and the desire to dress in finer clothes out of respect for God's house.

Harold Fanning, pastor of Shoal Creek Baptist Church in Decatur, Ala., said his church is more "business casual" than anything else. "Personally, I wear a suit on Sunday mornings, but I usually dress casual on Sunday evening — more of a sport jacket, slacks and no tie," he said.

But when Cecil Taylor, dean of the school of Christian studies at the University of Mobile, says he's going casual, he's going for a slightly different look. Taylor wears jeans to church and said he doesn't mean any disrespect to God by doing so.

After all, Taylor recalled, David was anointed king of Israel after working in the fields.

In the biblical story, David's divine appointment is preceded by God telling Samuel of other candidates, "The Lord does not look at the things man looks at.

Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

"The important thing is to come before the Lord," Taylor said. "I think whether I wear jeans or a three-piece suit is immaterial before the Lord."

The definition of "casual" and how it's worn is immaterial — the real battle is against the suggestive clothing creeping into the churches, said Theresa Shadrix, a member of the Association of Image Consultants International.

"There is so much of the world in church today that we no longer stand out as a group of people by the way that we dress," Shadrix said.

Shadrix, who is also co-director for Miss Jacksonville State University, has helped women of all ages find their style and motivate them to dress in a way that is both enjoyable and true to their religious convictions.

The moment that Shadrix gave her life to Christ at the age of 19, she said, not only did her heart change but so did the clothes her closet flaunted.

"I was not raised in a Christian home, so when I dedicated my life to Christ and married my Christian husband, I had to clean out my closet — literally."

That was an issue that also concerned several women at First Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa. Bare midriffs, too-

short skirts and strapless dresses were becoming common day attire, they said. They wondered if fashion and modesty could be combined.

To that end, they hosted a fashion show. Ten vendors donated everything from casual clothes to dressy suits and eveningwear.

"We wanted to show young and old, that we can be feminine, stylish, and fashionable while still remaining modest in our dress," Robin Shadrix, who coordinated the event, said.

Between segments of the fashion show, Barbara G. provided a Bible study emphasizing biblical guidelines for dress and encouraging women to value themselves and the way they portray as Christians.

For teens, that image dilemma is a real issue. "It's a culture because they get mixed messages about fashion from the media and the church," said Shadrix, the image consultant.

Fanning, the Decatur pastor, said as long as his church teenagers aren't wearing sexually inappropriate clothing, he is thankful to have them in church, however they are dressed. Students with body piercings challenge the norm for church appearance. "But I'd rather have a kid looking like ... he felt first into a tackle box than somewhere other than church," he said. □





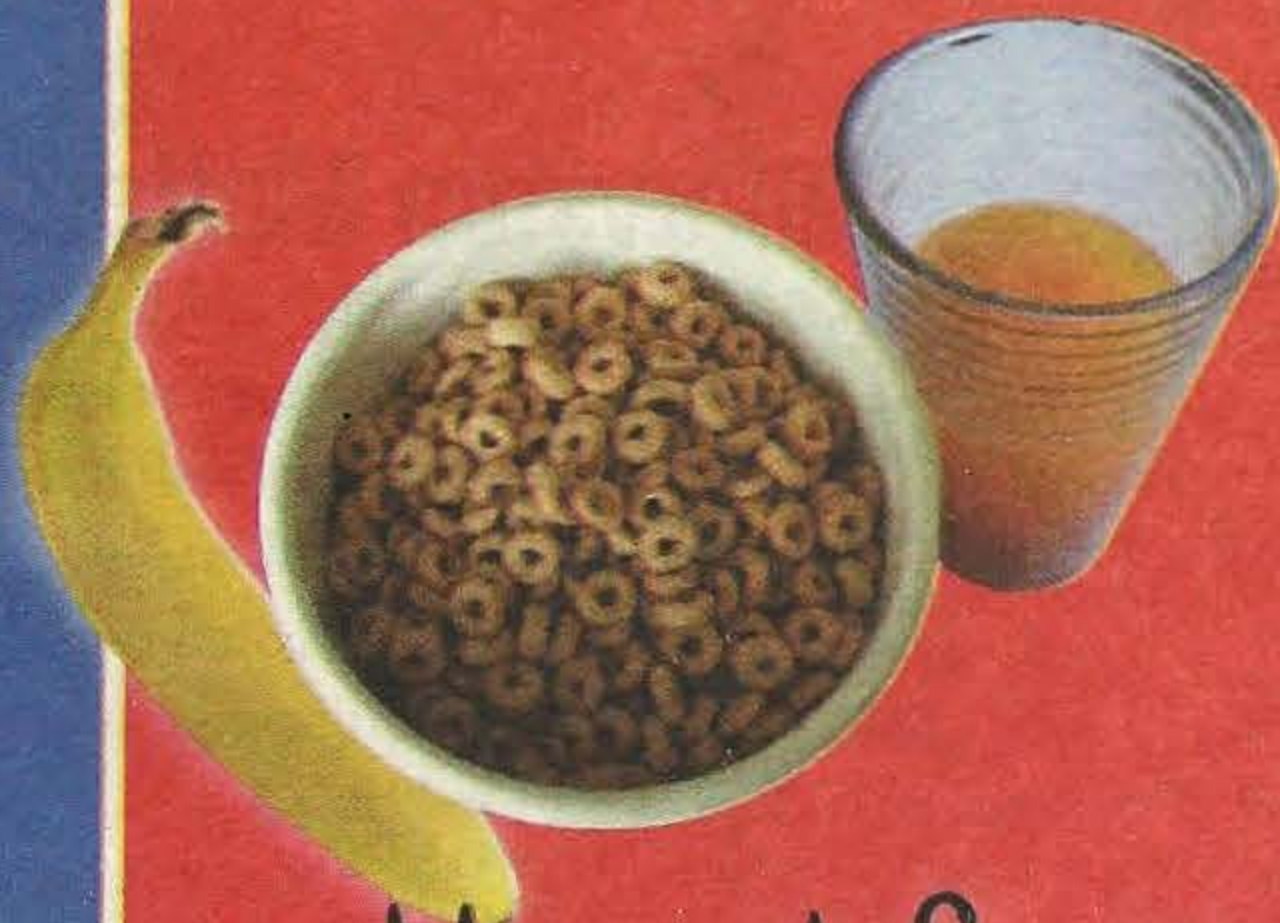
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# Church Health Matters

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

## ? Fellowship Matters?

This edition of Church Health Matters returns again to the issue of fellowship. The first topic related to fellowship is the assimilation of new members into the fellowship of the church. The second issue deals with some family dynamics that have great impact on the fellowship of the local church.

Please call on any of the following state missionary staff members to help your church strengthen its assimilation ministry.

### Sunday School & Small Group Fellowship

Mark Miller.....(615) 371-2048

### Youth Fellowship

Bruce Edwards .....(615) 371-2094

Kent Shingleton .....(615) 371-2077

Andrea Knight.....(615) 371-7919

### Children's Fellowship

Vicki Hulsey.....(615) 371-2081

Andrea Knight.....(615) 371-7919

### Family Ministry

Tony Rankin .....(615) 371-8136

## Keep the leaders in your church informed.

Subscribing to the *Baptist and Reflector* for your church leadership will ensure they receive not only state and national news each week, but pertinent information provided in the Church Health pages. The *Baptist and Reflector* provides a Church Leadership Plan at a reduced rate for two or more members. Contact Susie Edwards for circulation information at (615) 371-2003 or e-mail her at [sedwards@tnbaptist.org](mailto:sedwards@tnbaptist.org).

## How to Assimilate New Church Members

by Mark Miller

Every church wants to see new members and guests involved and "assimilated" into their fellowship. But what is an "assimilated member?" Assimilation is the process of helping newcomers become active, ongoing, integrated, and multiplying church members.

### An assimilated member is one who...

- Understands and actively pursues the goals of the church.
- Reports a sense of spiritual growth and development.
- Is regularly tithing to the church.
- Is sharing his/her faith with family and friends.
- Has several new friends in the church.
- Attends worship at least three times per month.
- Is actively involved in a Sunday School or small group.
- Has a role/task appropriate to his/her spiritual gift.

Several avenues are being utilized to help assimilate members and guests. The process begins with developing an adequate outreach program and a system to welcome newcomers and first time guests. Groundwork is laid at the altar during decision counseling. New member orientation and new Christian classes provide a solid foundation for spiritual maturity. Encouragers or host families may be assigned to new members.

One essential ingredient is connecting the new member and prospects to a small group. A small group ministry provides a community where friends can be made. Family needs are met. Expectations

expressed. A place of service and involvement in missions is encouraged.

Thom Rainer, president of Life Christian Resources, was surprised to find that an effective Sunday School solves assimilation puzzle. In Tennessee, churches have a Sunday School, Rainer's research concludes that "it's the mere existence of a Sunday School program that ensures the closing of the door... these churches... expect their members to make the program work."

How well the Sunday morning study supports assimilation is heavily dependent on the attitudes of leaders and members. They are:

- Do workers seem as interested in people as they do in getting their tasks accomplished?
- Do teachers feel they are teaching less or teaching people?
- Does the secretary see a visitor as a person or as a slip to be filled out?
- Does the teacher/director generally pronounce names right when they are introducing visitors?
- Do members seem as interested in meeting and helping new persons as they are visiting with friends?
- Are visitors often greeted briefly and then left to sit by themselves or with other visitors?

Sunday School leaders must understand that those who aren't there are just as important as those who are there. This philosophy, absentees are counted and never forgot.

What's your strategy for assimilation?



## Do You Love Your Spouse?

by Tony Rankin

Do you love me?

Yes

No

Maybe (Check One)

Do you remember the little love notes we used to send as children during church or at school? The notes were simple requests for a definite answer for a noncomplex issue. Yet as we became adults we seem to make the most fun things like relationships difficult.

Marriage is a perfect example. Here are some hints to improve your relationship with the person that you promised to love in good times and bad, for better or worse, and when you have and don't have money.

1. Understand the difference between men and women. Women tend to be more relational and men tend to place an emphasis on being good or competent at whatever their task is even if it's a relationship. Women tend to connect everything with everything and men usually don't see the connection or relationship with separate incidents or conversations.

2. Understand the core issues of abandonment and absorption. Persons that grow up in broken homes or ones where the parents were physically or emotionally absent develop fears of abandonment and will be more clingy and needy in times of stress or anxiety.

Persons who had parents who were commanding, demanding, or had high expectations, seem to be more fearful of absorption or being asked to do too much. They will desire distance or detachment during high stress times. The key is to say, "It will be loving when you..." and let your spouse know exactly what you need.

3. Understand that real passionate love means...

- Being sensitive
- Dropping the project/hostage mentality
- Being happy not right
- Giving appreciation
- Being intimate
- Offering encouragement
- Having and making time
- Offering grace
- Knowing what forever means
- Having fun

Do you have the desire? Are you willing to do whatever it takes? Are you willing to pay the price?

Do you love him or her?

Yes

No

Maybe (Check One)



## How To Preserve the Family: Becoming an Agent of Change

by Tony Rankin

**Definition:** Agent-1) one that has the power; 2) something done or caused; 3) a force that causes change; and 4) instrumental in change. To become an agent of change in preserving the family, try these suggestions:

**We must recapture our roles as spiritual leaders and examples.**

1. We must re-establish our positions on right and wrong.
2. We need to create lasting memories about the greatness of church.
3. We need to provide opportunities for application.

**Do something together.**

1. Ask the children to give some ideas and then follow some of them.

We need to quit trying to be "friend of the year" or "minister of the month" by keeping secrets or withholding information from parents that interferes with their parenting.

- Drug or alcohol use
- Sexuality

We need to affirm children and youth more often.

- "I think you are great!"
- "I can't wait to see what your future looks like."
- "I really like it when you..."

We need to help children and youth know how they can effect and impact their world.

- "You don't have to wait until you are an adult."
- "Your friends will listen to you first and then adults second."

We should rid ourselves of questionable practices, secret sins, double-standard type of living, and things that hinder our witness.

- "Are you willing for your family to be punished in order to continue your secret sin?"
- "Are you willing to be publicly humiliated in order to continue your secret sin?"
- "Are you willing to become spiritually irrelevant in order to continue your secret sin?"

We need to be accepting of all people, but passionate about the expectations of God.

We need to partner with parents and encourage them to fulfill their roles as the primary teachers of biblical truths.

## Lessons from Vacations: Learn More Than You Spend

by Tony Rankin

Last year my family and I decided to take a few days of vacation prior to one of my speaking engagements at Carson Newman College, Jefferson City. We went to the Pigeon Forge/Gatlinburg area on the Fourth of July weekend.

We anticipated caramel apples, Dollywood roller coasters and watching craftsmen, quiet, relaxing time at the pool, and some peaceful time with each other before our oldest son left for the Marine's trip to Iraq.

(What was I thinking?) The food was great, the company was wonderful, the weather was almost perfect, and the lessons learned were numerous. But the crowds were huge!

As you wrap up your summer and prepare for the fall, reflect on your days of summer vacation, trips, or experiences, and decide what lessons you learned.

Here are some life lessons I learned from the Fourth of July in Pigeon Forge:

1) If you are in need of rest and relaxation, use your brain and plan for it in a place that will allow you to experience peace and tranquility (100,000 people watching the parade and fireworks does not equal peace and quiet.)

2) Revisiting places of interest from your childhood can elicit pleasant and funny memories. Families are in need of some version of connection to our pasts in order for some legacies to develop. Laughing about and enjoying family memories provide meaningful futures, too. (My wife Amber and I can remember when Pigeon Forge was on the road to Gatlinburg. There was only one place to buy caramel apples, the ones at the Taffy Factory.)

3) Going to amusement parks, restaurants, putt-putt golf, and shops with long lines, hungry and rude people, and people just like you wanting to experience fun teaches valuable lessons. Remember somebody is watching you including your family, the employees, strangers, and the spiritually lost. Be patient, enjoy spending time with your family and friends, and refuse to let crowds and crowdedness ruin your day. (It helps if you get to the Apple Barn before the hundreds of hungry people do.)

The summer is another wonderful great chance to teach your family to enjoy, maximize, and celebrate life. Live it up with courage!

## Coming Up! Coming Up! Coming Up!

May 5-6 . . . . . State Xtreme Bible Challenge, State Youth Bible Drill, State Youth Speakers Tournament, Baptist Center, Brentwood

May 9 . . . . . Special Called Meeting of Tennessee Baptist Convention, Two Rivers Baptist Church, Nashville

May 11-13 . . . . . Language Missions Leadership Conference, Baptist Center, Brentwood

May 11-13 . . . . . Tennessee Baptist Religious Education Association Spring Retreat, Fall Creek Falls State Park, Pikeville

May 18-20 . . . . . Hispanic Basic Training, Baptist Center, Brentwood

May 22-23 . . . . . New Church Staff Orientation, Carson Springs Baptist Conference Center, Newport

For information on upcoming events, see the TBC web site at [www.tnbaptist.org](http://www.tnbaptist.org).



### Student minister, ClearView Church

## Katrina evacuee sees new, former youth groups work together

By Erin Roach  
Baptist Press

FRANKLIN — When Hurricane Katrina struck, Matt Tipton and his wife, Elaine, were living on the campus of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and he was serving on staff at a local church. They evacuated, lost everything they owned and had to start over with a couple of bags they managed to grab as they fled.

Tipton had been in talks with leaders at a Nashville-area church, ClearView Baptist in Franklin,



TIPTON

about becoming their minister to students before the storm hit. But he was deeply involved in his New Orleans-area church, Memorial Baptist in Metairie, where he was filling some key roles while the church was without a pastor. He and his wife were unsure which direction God was leading, and three days before Katrina they decided to stay in Louisiana.

For six weeks after the evacuation, the couple believed they would go back to New Orleans and continue to minister to the church family they had grown to love. But in various circumstances, God made clear His call to the position at ClearView, so they moved to Tennessee.

"One of the things that didn't go away in all of this was our heart for the city of New Orleans and for the people there that we left," Tipton, who graduated from New Orleans Seminary two years ago, told Baptist Press.

When spring break rolled around, Tipton took more than 30 of his new youth at ClearView back to New Orleans to help in the ongoing hurricane recovery efforts, in which ClearView already had been involved.

"When I came in they were very interested in partnering with the peo-

ple that I have relationships with down there and doing some trips," he said.

Tipton arranged for his youth at ClearView to work alongside his youth from Memorial in gutting houses, cleaning up yards, and assisting at another local church from March 27-April 1.

"We worshiped together each night, and the worship band from our student ministry in Louisiana led our worship time," Tipton said. "It was neat because a lot of the students from Louisiana have not really had a safe place to process what's happened, and students from ClearView for sure don't even begin to understand in this affluent area of Nashville even remotely what suffering is about and the benefits of that in our faith walk."

The two groups of students had a lot to learn from each other, he said, and it added to the experience in helping New Orleans residents in need.

"There were encounters every day with people. There was a lady right before we left that begged us to come to her house and gut her house," Tipton recounted. "She was in tears because she had not been able to find anybody to gut her house. That had an impact on our kids."

Another woman the groups encountered was so desperate to save her neighborhood that she was trying to purchase as many homes there as possible, Tipton said. One day she circled up some of the students in one of her yards as they were working and asked for prayer.

"She told us that historically New Orleans is a very spiritual city but a very lost and godless city and that, in her view, the only people who have really come through for the city of New Orleans are the hundreds of youth groups that have come down and spent

time over spring break and the last six months," Tipton said.

"She said that when we put our hands in the dirt in New Orleans and as we pray and do the work, it's as if we're claiming ground spiritually for them to kind of set the tone for revival down the road," he added. "It was neat how this lady helped our students understand that even though their role was to pull down trees and gut a house, their role was part of a bigger picture."

The youth spent half a day walking around the French Quarter tourist-style, Tipton said, and a few people stopped them and asked what they were doing in town.

"It was remarkable to see the gratefulness of the city that kids would take their spring break and show up down

was neat to see the kids view this work as people — work even though 90 percent of the work we did was in the dirt pulling nails and weeds."

A week after Tipton returned from New Orleans, his home near Franklin was damaged by some strong weather accompanied by tornados that swept through Middle Tennessee April 7. His experience with Katrina has taught him to keep the latest storm damage in perspective, he said.

"The damage to our home from last week is somewhat significant, but in the grand scheme of things it's not that big of a deal," he told BP. "I choose to see it as a blessing: new roof, new siding, and new gutters."

Tipton also has noticed God working on his heart in regard to material possessions and their fleeting pleasures.

"I think that the biggest struggle that my wife and I have encountered since leaving New Orleans is the focus in this culture on people's stuff," he said, noting that he is originally from Germantown, a Memphis suburb which he said shares a privileged culture similar to that of Franklin.

"During my time in New Orleans I realized how much of a barrier to the

gospel our stuff really is," Tipton said. "People in New Orleans don't have much; they tend to have a different set of barriers to the gospel."

The Bible clearly states that a Christian's life is not his own, Tipton said.

"I ask myself: What fits into life? I would say everything, including my clothes, my furniture, my house, my family, my job, and, yes, even my heart, soul, mind, and strength," he said. "All of this has heightened my awareness of things that are eternal. If you have been to the bottom of life, the speed bumps are not that noticeable." □

I think that the biggest struggle that my wife and I have encountered since leaving New Orleans is the focus in this culture on people's stuff. — Matt Tipton, minister to students, ClearView Baptist Church, Franklin

in New Orleans," he said.

Through the hard work and exposure to immense need, Tipton left New Orleans believing much had been accomplished.

"It was a great trip. I think a lot of times we go on a mission trip expecting to see people in an area where we're going give their lives to Christ and it be some kind of big revival-sort of situation, but this was a very, very hands-on, sweating trip," he said.

"These [kids have] been on mission trips lots of times but never to a place where it seemed on the surface that it was just this physical sort of work. It

### Tennessee Baptist Convention Secretaries Association to serve in Montana May 13-21



THOSE SERVING include, from left, first row, Pam Hazlegrove, Bolivar; Betty Harness, Knoxville; Carolyn Schlauch, Clarksville; and Mary Dye, Paris; back row, Debbie Combs, Lawrenceburg; Judy Escue, Goodlettsville; Millie Badgett, Knoxville; Marie Blackwell, Jackson; and Vickie Watkins, Knoxville.

Twenty-four church and association secretaries from the secretaries association and six spouses will serve in 12 different locations in Montana to support the Tennessee/Montana Baptist Partnership.



OTHERS SERVING IN MONTANA include, from left, first row, Diane Crain, Greenbrier; Jo Harris, Greenbrier; Linda Williams, Rogersville; Ginger Housley, Pikeville; and Lana Rose, Tennessee Baptist Convention; second row, Joy Clay-Corby, TBC; Debbie Griffin, Lawrenceburg; Rose Snoblen, Culleoka; Shannon Queen, Watertown; Dawn Frazier, Culleoka; back row, Rick Frazier, Culleoka; Diana Cox, TBC; and Dale Snoblen, Culleoka. Rick Frazier and Dale Snoblen are spouses who accompanied their wives to the commissioning service and will do handy-man work in Montana.



## An Open Letter to Our Tennessee Baptist Family

Belmont University is committed to its Christian mission and its Baptist roots. We will continue to be a student-focused, Christian community of learning and service with a rich Baptist heritage that we intend to foster and nurture. That is our promise and our covenant.

We look forward to an honest and frank discussion of our future relationship at the special meeting of the Tennessee Baptist Convention on May 9. Belmont representatives will be on hand to provide background information relevant to questions put before the Convention. Some of this background information is currently available at [www.belmont.edu/tbc](http://www.belmont.edu/tbc). We believe that our discussions will be respectful and reflect positively on the Christian witness of the Convention and Belmont as we serve God in our respective areas of service and ministry.

As we move toward the May 9 special meeting, we want Tennessee Baptists to know of our gratitude for the financial and spiritual support that you have provided to Belmont University over the past 55 years. We trust that our shared history has provided important groundwork to achieve common goals of the University and the Convention, and that our future will evidence this good work.

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For additional information, please go to [www.belmont.edu/tbc](http://www.belmont.edu/tbc)



## 41 Baptist leaders affirm Reccord

Baptist Press

NASHVILLE — A statement signed by 41 pastors and various other Southern Baptist leaders has been distributed affirming the integrity and achievements of Bob Reccord, former president of the North American Mission Board.

Reccord resigned April 17, citing "honest philosophical and methodological differences" with NAMB's trustees that "have brought us to this point of separate directions." Reccord had led the mission board since its creation in 1997 as part of the SBC "Covenant for a New Century" restructuring.

Reccord's resignation followed a March 24 special meeting of NAMB's 58-member trustee board, who voted to place Reccord under "Executive Level controls" concerning issues addressed in a 19-page report by a nine-member trustee task force. An article in the Georgia Baptist Convention's newsjournal, *The Christian Index*, prompted the creation of the task force in mid-February.

The 13-paragraph statement by Reccord's supporters, issued April 21, said Reccord had "acted with integrity and character throughout his nine year tenure as NAMB's President and never more so than in these last tumultuous weeks."

Among the signers were five former SBC presidents; three state convention executive directors; 27 pastors; and one

Baptist university president.

Former convention presidents signing the document were Jack Graham and H. Edwin Young of Texas; James Merritt of Georgia; and Jim Henry and Jerry Vines of Florida.

**Two of the 41 signers were Tennessee Baptists — Hollie Miller, pastor, Sevier Heights Baptist Church, Knoxville, and Jerry Sutton, pastor, Two Rivers Baptist Church, Nashville.**

The April 21 statement by various SBC leaders noted: "Where he [Reccord] has made misjudgments, he has freely acknowledged them and assumed responsibility. But these are mistakes of the head, not the heart — the kinds of misjudgments that innovative leaders make in an effort to accomplish things that have never been done before."

The statement affirmed Reccord's decision to step down as president "for the sake of the agency and its more than 5,000 missionaries."

It also commended Reccord for his leadership in several specific areas such as NAMB's focus on reaching large metropolitan areas. □

## Baptists plan to build 1,000 homes in N.O.

Associated Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — In a move that one official termed a "God-sized" task, Southern Bap-

tists have pledged a Herculean effort to rebuild homes and churches destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

Jim Burton, director of volunteer mobilization for the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board, said the organization will partner with the Louisiana Baptist Convention to rebuild 1,000 homes and 20 churches in the New Orleans area. "It is a huge task," he said.

Operation New Orleans Area Hope Rebuild — an expected \$10 million project — is already underway and making a difference in the greater New Orleans area, Burton said. Officials have begun referring to it by a partial acronym: NOAH.

According to Mike Canady, director of missions and ministries for the Louisiana convention, the groups have mobilized 3,500 building volunteers so far. But they anticipate 50,000 volunteers over the next two years.

Administratively speaking, managing this many volunteers would be a full-time job in itself, Burton noted. The organization, processing and managing of the on-site rebuilding efforts mean there must be a team of people dedicated solely to the project, he explained.

"The Louisiana staff is too small," Burton said. "There has to be some degree of structure on the ground to pull this off. If I don't put infrastructure in place, I don't help the people."

So far, two people have been hired for the two-year commitment to work on the team, Burton said. The two, whose names have not yet been released, are a

married couple. The husband will serve as the construction coordinator and the wife as the office manager. A project coordinator has not been named, but Burton anticipated it soon.

The project coordinator will work directly with the project's overall steering committee, which is made up of representatives of NAMB, the state convention, area associations, and local churches, Canady said. He will be the state denominational liaison on the committee.

He said the damage to churches is at varying levels. "Some have repairs going on now; some are just sitting there with nothing being done because there is no congregation or no pastor."

"We will probably integrate what we are already doing with NOAH," Canady said.

When it comes to selection of which homes to rebuild, he said the plans are to try to work with neighborhoods that are connect-

ed with local Baptist churches. The homeowners will not have to be Baptist, Canady said.

"We will help the people wherever they are," Burton said.

Canady said he anticipated using some of the Louisiana convention's disaster-relief funds for this project, but the source of funding — \$5 million — came from NAMB.

"We received about \$22 million designated for Katrina," Burton said. While "a great deal" of the money has already been distributed, he said \$5 million was recently earmarked for NOAH.

Anticipating a need for additional \$5 million before the project ends, Burton said a volunteer fee will be charged to help offset the cost. "We want the volunteers to have an investment in the project," he said, noting the fee has not been set but will probably be between \$20 and \$25 per day.

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# Hendersonville church pilots program in Tennessee prisons

Marcia Knox  
Artist and Reflector

## HENDERSONVILLE

Long Hollow Baptist Church is one of two churches in the state of Tennessee which is piloting the Tennessee Department of Corrections (TDOC) program, the "Good Samaritan Network," a re-entry program for inmates.

The network allows church- and faith-based, civic, and non-profit organizations to come mentors to inmates prior to the inmates leaving their prisons. Churches and organizations agree to provide an inmate's basic needs when the person moves outside the prison and support them spiritually, physically, and mentally. A GSN memorandum of agreement would be in place at churches and the organizations. "GSN provides basic life needs including mentoring," said Richard Dixon, TDOC director of volunteer services.

"Long Hollow Church was the first church to become a partner with the GSN to mentor an inmate from West Tennessee. Now there are two inmates being mentored by the church."

"At first I was surprised, but when I realized it was just like I'd be preparing our church- and the Tennessee Department of Corrections just in time for this partnership," said Gene Williams, Tennessee Baptist Convention Men's Ministry specialist.

"When I first heard of the GSN, I wondered how long it would take to train a church to properly respond to an inmate. Then I realized that Celeste Recovery (CR), a Purpose

Driven Church program, was functioning well, growing strong, and a perfect fit for this network."

Following meetings in October 2005 with Dixon and Bill Gupton, TDOC alcohol and drug director, Long Hollow Church officials, and CR representatives, TDOC was open to putting CR in all 15 prisons. During the first meeting, state officials indicated they were fellow believers, and that they would welcome a faith based initiative program into the prisons.

When Long Hollow Church's care and recovery pastor Tony Jessee advocated CR, Dixon pitched the state's Good Samaritan Network (GSN), which had already been planned to mentor inmates who were in transition to leave prisons. Gupton also looked at CR curriculum which complimented the substance abuse program already in the prisons.

The idea surfaced to bring the CR program into the prisons. At the same time the idea arose to bring all of the CR churches into the GSN program.

Jeff Ball, CR state representative and member of Tennessee Valley Community Church in Paris, was asked by Shaun Lyons, the catalyst member at Long Hollow Church, who led a 12-step program in the Charles Bass Annex minimum security prison in North Nashville for over two years, to organize the meeting for the two groups. Over 35 CR church directors and prison ministry leaders were invited to the February training meeting at Long Hollow Church.

At the training meeting at Long Hollow Church were 75 people including representatives from 19 Tennessee CR churches and interested people from Mississippi and Missouri present.

There were six training sessions including how to form a CR group inside a prison, orientation for entering a prison setting led by TDOC Tennessee Women's Prison chaplain Yolanda Walker, introduction of GSN by Dixon, and other topics.

Also in attendance was Rod Bragg, faith based coordinator under the Tennessee Department of Health, Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services, representing Tennessee Access to Recovery to explain funding for faith based initiative programs.

"It was a three-fold meeting at Long Hollow Church," Dixon said, "First was the training for CR ministry for churches; second was the introduction of the GSN; third was creation of a new volunteer certification for the prison system."

The meeting was to give the first public presentation of how the GSN program would work, according to Dixon. The TDOC was also able to give a report on the GSN pilot program's former inmates.

The GSN needs more member churches, and it is not limited to CR churches, Dixon observed. Another church that has joined the GSN is Bethel Church in Murfreesboro, which is a sister church of Bethel World Outreach Church, the other pilot church in Tennessee for the program, he added.

"The GSN is seeking faith based organizations to partner to help them out with a new

program to help in transitioning prisoners outside with housing, jobs, transportation, and mentoring.

"We invited the CR churches into the state prisons. We are very pleased with CR substance abuse program, because even President George W. Bush noted CR and endorsed the program and its work on faith based addictions program," Dixon noted. "We had a very good meeting and we were very fortunate how it was put together."

According to Dixon, about 250 churches from across the state are needed for the GSN. At least one church is needed to mentor inmates in each of the 95 state counties.

Others attending the meeting were Patty Seals, Tennessee Prison for Women (TPW) volunteer chaplain, who led an orientation on going into prisons; Diana Cox, TBC evangelism administrative assistant, who is part of the TBC affinity team on Restorative Justice; William's wife, Pat Williams, who is also involved in ministry at TPW; and Linda Knott, chaplain for "The Next Door," a women's prison transition program, which is housed in facilities provided by First Baptist Church of Nashville.

"We believe the Tennessee State Department of Corrections (TDOC) program, Good Samaritan Network (GSN) program, with CR is a wonderful fit," Lyons added, who was named CR state inside coordinator. "Especially since the people in charge of the state corrections program were open to CR after the first initial meeting."

"I find it totally a work of

God that our state government, through the GSN, is initiating a partnership with our churches," added Williams. "Faith-based programs are working in other states, and they know it can work here. They have recognized the benefit of connecting released inmates with churches who will help them transition into our communities as productive members of society."

"Now they are asking 'Where is the church?' God has placed some good Christian leaders in strategic positions in the TDOC. They have issued the call for our churches to fill in the gap."

Lyons noted that the GSN through Long Hollow Church has mentored one inmate at the Charles Bass Annex and a second inmate from the Whiteville Correctional Facility. Both men are involved in CR through Long Hollow Church. One has joined the church, and another is planning on attending Long Hollow Church.

"The GSN allows the inmate to prepare for the outside and transitions the person for the first 90 days, which is important for them," Lyons added.

"CR volunteers pick the inmate up at the prison, take them to the halfway house, give them clothes and basic necessities, and help them to be not distracted by the outside and worldly things."

"Long Hollow Church is providing money, time, and volunteers. The church is getting ready to mentor two more people through the GSN. The CR groups will provide volunteers to mentor the inmates and build relationships with them before they leave the prisons," Lyons noted. □



## Knoxville DR volunteer honored

Larry Triplett, left, a member of First Baptist Church, Concord, Knoxville, recently received the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief Distinguished Service Award, presented by Terry Henderson, national disaster relief director for the North American Mission Board. Triplett received the honor during the 2006 Disaster Relief Roundtable held recently in Arlington, Texas. The award recognizes Triplett's contributions through Tennessee Baptist Disaster Relief.

## Union engineering students minister in N. Africa

By Katie Beth Kelley  
Union University news office

JACKSON — From the edge of the Sahara Desert to the heights of the snowy Atlas Mountains, North Africa's terrain reflects the same diversity as its many peoples.

"I think that it struck me that I was no longer in West Tennessee when we were surrounded by North Africans in the first place that we ate and blessed our food with our eyes open as if we were talking with one another," said Jon Brasher, an engineering major from Union University.

Brasher and five others from Union University experienced many culture shocks as they spent spring break in North Africa on a mission trip. It was just one 11 Global Opportunities teams Union sent out worldwide over spring break to such places as France, Romania, Honduras, Guatemala, Canada, Boston, New York, and Chicago.

The purpose of the trips is to broaden students' worldviews and to give them a chance to serve across cultures. Three engineering majors, two French majors and an engineering professor made up the North African team.

The students used their strengths to work together for a common goal. They taught children in elementary schools about renewable energy and discussed the possibilities for an artesian well with university students.

The goal was to build relationships and maximize the usage of the region's resources in order for some missionaries who live in the area to have a platform for their ministry.

"Seeing the missionaries in action was encouraging," said Andy Robinette, a junior engineering major. "We knew that they were working under a platform that indeed served people, but that their motivation in being there was to share the

gospel with people."

The engineering students and professor worked on the technical aspects of the project beforehand and inquired about scientific details when in North Africa. The French majors provided cultural insight and translated for the group.

"It was amazing how the Lord used our passion for the French language to communicate with people in a useful way," said French major Kristin Schaefer. "It shocks me to think that before I even decided to pursue French in high school, the Lord had already planned to use this gift for His work in North Africa."

"We experienced grace after grace," said team leader Randy Schwindt, an engineering professor at Union.

"We had a wonderful time working and building relationships with the missionaries, the school children, the university students, and the university professors." □



## All expanded gambling will do is 'hurt people,' says gambler's wife

By Erin Roach  
Baptist Press

PIKEVILLE, Ky. — Suzi Flanagan Wright's husband liked to gamble every now and then and, early on, she'd gamble with him and use the winnings to help pay off her student loan. They regarded it as no big deal — they were just among the millions of Americans who gamble as a hobby.

But then things changed, leaving Suzi to deal with raising a child while her husband went to prison for embezzlement. She also faced large gambling debts and the ongoing challenge of loving an addicted gambler.

Her struggle began innocently enough.

"One time I had left him at home and gone to Lexington to pick up his sister, and I had only left him with enough money to buy stuff for Thanksgiving dinner," Wright, a member of First Baptist Church, Pikeville, said. "And I told him, 'I'm just leaving you with enough money. Don't you dare buy any lottery tickets.'"

Soon after she returned from the 280-mile round trip, Wright's husband revealed that he had won \$10,000 on a \$2 lottery ticket, "and that got him hooked," she said. The momentum of those earnings propelled him to more frequent gambling

at higher stakes, including trips to off-track betting parlors as far away as Charleston, W.Va.

The temptation grew worse when a betting parlor, where numerous television screens allow gamblers to bet on various horse races from a central location, opened in Prestonsburg, Ky. Wright said when the closest gambling source was in Charleston, her husband would not go as often. But when one opened about 25 miles from where he lived, the temptation was too great.

Now, with two bills before the Kentucky legislature for the expansion of gambling, Wright fears the temptation to gamble will hit a little too close to home for more Kentucky families like hers.

"It's very, very hard when you have a gambling addiction to not go. It's like if you were a diabetic and you couldn't have ice cream and you moved right beside Baskin-Robbins," Wright said. "The only Baskin-Robbins we've got right now is in Lexington, but every time I go to Lexington I go to Baskin-Robbins. If I had one in town, I'd eat there every day."

Wright said that her husband realized he needed to stop gambling and visited a psychiatrist who prescribed a heavy dose of Prozac. For him, the drug only made the gambling worse.

"It went to the point where he started taking money at work," Wright said. "He opened credit cards in my name and ran up balances. He would write checks on me. He would do anything he could to get his money, and then he embezzled money from work and that wound him up in jail."

Wright's husband spent 20 months in prison when their son was just over 2 years old, and he missed many crucial moments in the child's early life, she said.

During her husband's incarceration, Wright and her son became very involved in First Baptist Church in Pikeville. The family has found comfort and support through the church — support they continue to draw on.

Although the prison sentence got Wright's husband's attention, it wasn't enough to stop the gambling.

"It's a hard habit to break. He would be the first to tell you. Even coming out of jail, it was hard not to gamble," Wright said.

To make matters worse during her husband's recovery, another off-track betting parlor opened in Pikeville. That means the temptation to gamble now is nearly at his doorstep, Wright said.

Gambling has wrought damage on her family that may never be repaired, Wright said,

and sometimes she lives moment to moment just trying to trust her husband not to bring on more debt.

"It's just been a big mess. It's been seven years, and I really don't think I'm any better off," she said. "... I'm still paying on everything because I had to mortgage my home, I had to pay off all of those credit cards, I've got five and six and seven years left on bills."

"What makes me so mad is it takes away from my child," she said. "I make really good money, but you'd never know I had a dime because I have to pay it all out. [My husband] isn't working. Nobody will hire him and it's just a mess. And [my son] doesn't understand. How do you explain it to a child?"

But through it all, she hasn't left her husband because she realizes that gambling has had control of him rather than him controlling it.

"Gambling is an illness. It's a sickness. It's no different than cancer," she said. "[My husband] and I both have diabetes, which is an illness. All of these things happen. How would you like to go through something like that being that sick, and your spouse walk off just because they don't want to deal with it?"

Despite claims by gambling supporters, Wright has seen firsthand that it doesn't benefit

schools. In addition to working full-time, she volunteers often for her son's elementary school because the school system can't afford to hire people to do that, she said.

"I don't see expanded gambling helping anything at all. I think all it can do is hurt people," Wright said. "... It absolutely ruins more lives than it will help. I'm here to tell that." □

### 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, 11 Chestnut St., Monterey, 38574. Post to the attention of Sonny Gilpatrick.

#### MINISTRY — ADMINISTRATION

Full-time Administrator/Assistant Pastor: Please send resume to Search Committee, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 579, Campbell, AL 35581, or email: moorescott@aol.com

#### MINISTRY — EDUCATION

Parkview Baptist Church, Alexandria, La., seeks full-time minister of education. Send resume to Minister of Education Search Committee, c/o Parkview Baptist Church, 2101 MacArthur Drive, Alexandria, LA 71301.

#### MINISTRY — MUSIC

Music Minister. Part-time. Blend worship. Interested persons send resume to Attn: Music Committee, Wartburg, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 241, Wartburg, TN 37887 or call (423) 346- during business hours.

#### MINISTRY — POSITION

Sandy Plains Baptist Church seeks 2 staff members, staff pastor and a newly created position of pastor to young families and children. Anyone interested should submit a resume to Sandy Plains Rd., Marietta 30066, attention Gary Nunez, e-mail gary@sandyplains.org

#### MINISTRY — STUDENT

Part-time youth minister position: Energetic person to youth grades 6-12 in a growing evangelistic Southern Baptist Church in Shelby Tenn. This position has potential to become full-time. Please send resume to Search, 150 Fairfield, Shelbyville, Tenn., or e-mail edgemontbaptist@cafes.net

#### MINISTRY — OTHER

Part-time position: Receptionist/office assistant, 35 hours per week (8 a.m.-3 p.m. Fri), base pay: \$10/HR. Hope Baptist Church, Mt. Hope, Tenn. Call 883-6777 or email info@newhopeforyou.org

## NAMB appoints presidential search and executive level policy committees

Baptist Press

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — Barry Holcomb, chairman of the North American Mission Board's trustees, has announced appointment of two committees — a presidential search committee and an executive level policy committee.

The search committee, necessitated by the April 17 resignation of NAMB president Bob Reccord, will be chaired by Terry G. Fox, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Topeka, Kan., and co-chaired by David Crump of Broken Arrow, Okla.

Other NAMB trustees serving on the search committee are Bill Curtis, Florence, S.C.; Ellie Ficken, Montgomery, Ala.; Greg Faulls, Owensboro, Ky.; Barbara McCormick, Tigerville, S.C.; Michael Palmer, Salmon, Idaho; Ryan Palmer, Baltimore, Md.;

and Jeff Shirley, Rockwall, Texas.

Larry Thomas, director of missions for the Little Red River Baptist Association in Heber Springs, Ark., will chair the executive level policy committee, and the vice chairman will be Ron Wilson of Thousand Oaks, Calif.

Additional members of the executive level policy committee are Reva Daniel, Clinton, Miss.; Mack McCarthick, Lovington, N.M.; Tim Patterson, Jacksonville, Fla.; Paul Pope, Bonne Terre, Mo.; David Thompson, Old Hickory; and Rob Rogers, Rincon, Ga.

In a statement released to

Baptist Press, Holcomb said the policy committee "will be tasked with recommending healthy, accountability-focused policies for NAMB's next executive leader. This group will fulfill the spirit of the recommendations found in the Trustee Task Force Report adopted by the Board March 23, 2006."

That 19-page report contained the results of a special trustee investigation of concerns expressed in denominational press reports critical of NAMB's results, relationships, and executive leadership.

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staying fit

# Take a virtual journey to good health

Tamara Quintana

In December of 1991, a fellow employee at GuideStone, Lou, set out from her home in Plano, Tex., to visit her twin sister, Mary, in Nashville, Tenn. But it wasn't a normal trip. Lou set out to Nashville on foot, and she didn't return home to Plano for 13 years. No, nothing terrible happened to Lou. And she actually slept in her own bed every night. Lou's journey was a virtual one.

When she visited Mary in person at Christmas, Lou came inspired by the fact that Mary had recently lost weight as a result of her walking routine. That gave Lou an idea. After she returned home to Texas, she mapped out a visit to Mary; walking around her own neighborhood but counting the miles it would take her to get to Nashville. Lou covered the approximately 665 miles by September of that year and decided to keep walking.

"At first I was just going to walk to Nashville," Lou said. "When I reached that goal, I decided to go all around the USA."

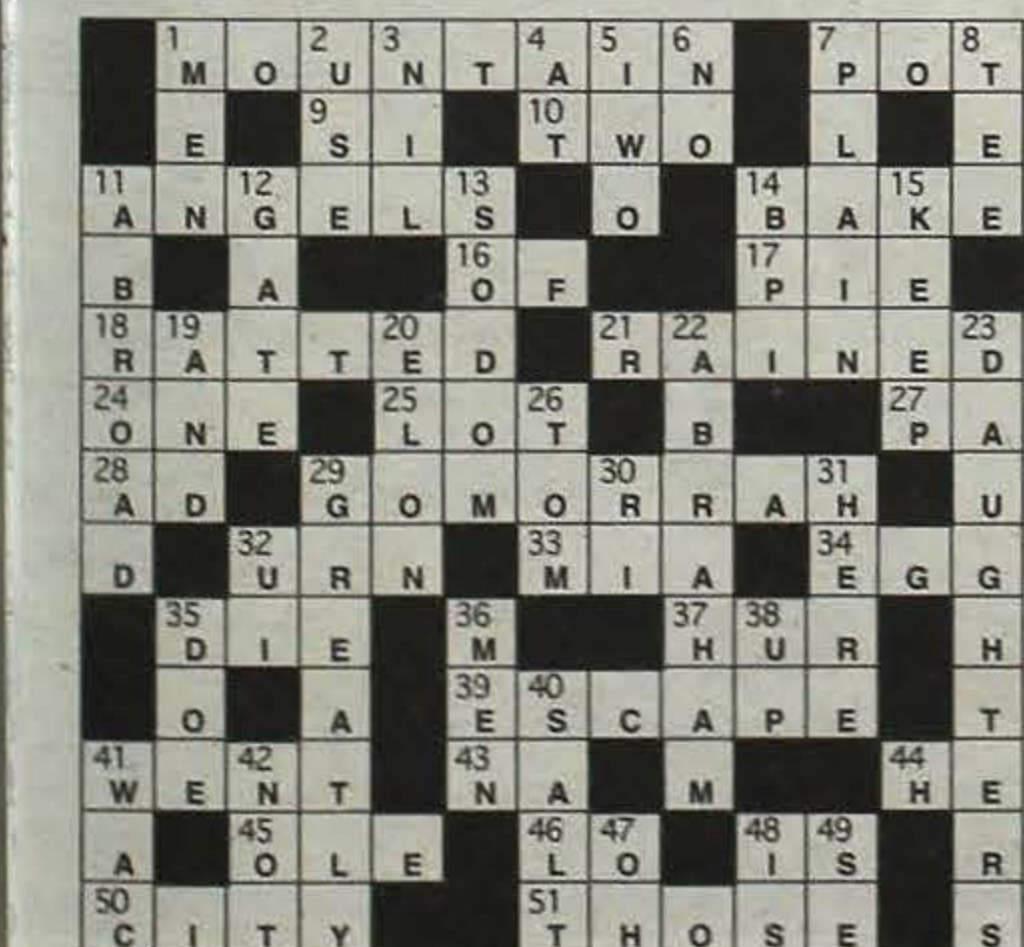
After Nashville, Lou headed up to Maine. She even ventured into Canada for a bit before heading back down across the northern U.S. On her virtual trip, Lou visited Washington, Oregon and California before heading into Arizona and Colorado and then back home to Texas. Lou's journey totaled 9,577 miles.

In addition to helping her control her weight, Lou says walking is a great stress reliever for her. "I have always been fairly healthy," she said. "But I now have more energy and it has been great for any stress I've had over the years. When I feel stress, if I go walking, that goes away."

What a great way to exercise! It's so easy to get started. Just choose your destination, map out your route and put on your walking shoes. To help you stay on course, you might want to post a map to chart your progress. Your map can be a great visual to keep you encouraged.

You might also want to get your family involved. This is a great opportunity for a fun lesson on geography and history. Say you want to take a family trip to Grand Canyon. Learn a little about the history and culture of the cities along the way. When you actually visit a part of the country you've traveled on your virtual tour, your family will enjoy the cities that much more.

And what do you do when you've completed your journey and arrive back home? Choose a new destination and start out again. Lou says, "As long as the good Lord keeps blessing me with good health, I'll keep walking." □ — Quintana is director of the employee wellness program for GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention



# Ruth: gracious caring

By Phil Taylor

## Focal Passage: Ruth 1-4

In our lesson today, we are given a story that shows how "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform." It's a story for people who wonder where God is when there are no dreams or visions or prophets. It's a story for people who can't imagine that anything great could ever come of their ordinary lives of faith. Finally, it is a picture of how my relationship with God can be reflected in my relationships with others, especially family.

The more you ponder these words, (ch. 1:15-17), the more amazing they become. Ruth's commitment to her destitute mother-in-law is simply astonishing. First, it means leaving her own family and land. Second, it means, as far as she knows, a life of widowhood and childlessness. Third, it means going to an unknown land with a new people and new customs and new language. Fourth, it was a commitment even more radical than marriage: *Where you die I will die and there be buried* (v. 17). In other words, she will never return home, not even if Naomi dies.

But the most amazing commitment of all is this: Ruth says, *Your God will be my God* (v. 16). Naomi has just said in verse 13, *The hand of the Lord has gone forth against me*. Naomi's experience of God was bitterness. But in spite of this, Ruth forsakes her religious heritage and makes the God of Israel her God.

Perhaps she had made that commitment years before, when her husband told her of the great love of God for Israel and His power at the Red Sea and His glorious purpose of peace and righteousness. Somehow Ruth had come to trust in Naomi's God in spite of Naomi's bitter experiences.

Here we have a picture of God's ideal woman. Faith in God that sees beyond present bitter setbacks. Freedom from the securities and comforts of the world. Courage to venture into the unknown and the strange. Radical commitment in the relationships appointed by God.

Besides meeting Boaz in chapter 2 verses 1-7, we see the character of Ruth, which is going to be very crucial. First, we see Ruth's initiative to care for her mother-in-law. Notice in verse 2, Naomi does not command Ruth to get out and work. Ruth says, *Let me go to the field, and glean along the ears of grain*. Second, we see Ruth's humility. She knows how to take initiative without being presumptuous. Third, we see her industry. She is an amazing worker. Verse 7 continues, *She has continued from early morning until now without resting even for a moment*.

Notice the merciful providence in verse 3. She "happened to come"? Ruth happened to come to Boaz's field because God is gracious and sovereign even when He is silent. As Proverb 16:9 says, *A man's mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps*.

The cloud over the head of Ruth

## Sunday School Lesson Family Bible Series May 7

and Boaz is big with mercy, and breaks with blessing on their heads in chapter 4 verse 13. *So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son*. But notice how the focus in chapter 4 verses 14-17 is not on Ruth at all, nor on Boaz. The focus is on Naomi and the child.

Why? To show that it was not true, what Naomi had said in chapter 2 verse 21, that the Lord had brought her back empty from Moab. And if we could just learn to wait and trust in God, all our complaints against God would prove untrue.

The point of Ruth's book is that the life of the godly is not a straight line to glory, but they do get there. The story began with Naomi's loss. It ends with Naomi's gain. It began with death and ends with birth. Thanks, Ruth, for helping us see the signposts of the grace of God in our lives, and to help us trust His grace even when the clouds are so thick that we can't see the road, let alone the signs on the side. □ — Taylor is director of missions for Bradley County Baptist Association, headquartered in Cleveland.



TAYLOR

# Recognize God's ways

By Marvin Nail

## Focal Passage: Isaiah 53:1-12

Time and again we are surprised by what we call "unlikely heroes." These are those persons who have no other characteristic about them that would have caused anyone to notice them until an occasion arises that calls them forth to do something no one would have imagined them doing.

One of the characteristics of our God that we have never been comfortable with is His habit of breaking into our lives in ways we could not predict. Try as we might, we cannot figure Him out; but must content ourselves with accepting that His ways are not the same as ours, and that is a very good thing.

## Who could imagine the person? (53:1-3)

Our passage for this Sunday is one of the "suffering servant" passages of Isaiah. In this one as with the others, scholars differ about who the servant is. Some see him as the nation of Israel, others as the prophet himself. However, for the believer this passage appears to describe the ultimate suffering servant, Jesus Christ.

As Isaiah describes this servant we are struck by the seeming sadness of his life and his incredible misfortune. Because of all his troubles no one wanted to be identified with him. He was the quintessential loser. Who in the world would have selected such a representative? Only One in heaven would

have found him useful. That thought can give hope to any of us.

## Who could imagine the method? (vv. 4-6)

Those who were witnesses to the life of the servant easily assumed that he was suffering because he had greatly offended the God of heaven and was being terribly punished for it.

However, in a way beyond our comprehension, his anguish was not for his own wrongs but for the wrongs of others. His suffering was ours to bear. The bruises and humiliation were

rightly ours, and yet God chose to put it on the shoulders of this servant. The prophet, along with the rest of us, seems in awe of God and His chosen one.

## Who could imagine the sacrifice? (vv. 7-9)

This is not a sacrifice like the ones offered by the Temple priests throughout the Old Testament. This was not an animal "without spot or blemish." Instead, this was a man without sin.

He was treated like the vilest of sinners, though He was a lamb prepared for slaughter. Through all His agony he offered no word of complaint because He understood that He was carrying out the purpose of God.

One word of caution must be

## Sunday School Lesson Explore the Bible May 7

added here. This sacrifice for the "iniquities of us all" does not provide an automatic atonement. Rather, it must be appropriated to each individual the way a person laid hands on the sacrificial animal indicating that he was taking that sacrifice for his own.

## Who could imagine the reward? (vv. 9-12)

Contrary to the cries of the mob that the true servant, Jesus of Nazareth, should demonstrate His identity by stepping down from His suffering on the cross, the servant in Isaiah's prophecy is vindicated only after his death.

In terms that surely the prophet did not comprehend, he spoke of the servant seeing things after his death that surely bear a shadow of belief in a resurrection. He will be able to "see" the results of his obedience in the lives of those he has delivered, and he will be glad.

Similar to the hymn to Christ in Philippians chapter 2, this servant is exalted because of His obedience to the command of God. His position after suffering death is to be lifted higher than before and be honored by all the righteous. □ — Nail is a former pastor and current member of First Baptist Church, Nashville. He is an employee of LifeWay Christian Resources.



NAIL



## Leaders

◆ **Don Dixon**, pastor, Highland Baptist Church, Tullahoma, has retired after serving the church for more than 21 years, effective April 23. He also has been pastor of churches in Kentucky, West Germany, North Carolina, Louisiana, and Tennessee.



DIXON

Dixon was a member of the board of trustees of Belmont University, Nashville, from 1990-2005. He serves on the board of Harton Hospital, Tullahoma, and was co-founder of Highland Rim Habitat for Humanity. Dixon preached the 1996 annual sermon of the Tennessee Baptist Convention annual meeting. He is a graduate of Georgetown College, Georgetown, Ky., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. He and his wife, Vicky, plan to retire in Tullahoma. He is available for supply preaching and interim ministry.

◆ Oaklawn Baptist Church, Jackson, has called **Richard W. Owens** of Jackson as its pastor.

◆ Gath Baptist Church, McMinnville, ordained **Steve Littleton**, minister of music and youth, to the ministry on April 23.

◆ College Street Baptist Church, Tullahoma, has called **Jim Growden** as minister of visitation and outreach.

## Churches

◆ **First Baptist Church, Mountain City**, honored 13 members who are 90 years old or older with a party April 30.

◆ **West Jackson Baptist Church, Jackson**, sponsored an 18-member construction mission team to Pascagoula, Miss., where they helped rebuild Ingalls Avenue Baptist Church and homes in the community damaged by last fall's hurricanes. The team served April 24-29.

◆ **Harmony Baptist Church, Whiteville**, will hold revival May 7-12. Danny Sinquefield, pastor, Faith Baptist Church, Bartlett, will

speak and Terry Easley, music minister, Faith Church, will lead the music. For more information, call (731) 254-8746 or (731) 780-2001.

◆ **Gath Baptist Church, McMinnville**, will host a prayer revival, Sunday - Wednesday, May 21-24, with special guest Don Pierson, Tennessee Baptist Convention prayer strategist. Sunday services will be at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Weekday services are at 6:30 p.m. For information, call (931) 934-2655 or visit [www.gathbaptist.org](http://www.gathbaptist.org).

◆ **Chewalla Baptist Church, Ramer**, will hold a homecoming, Sunday, May 7, during the worship service at 10:45 p.m. Following a noon meal, "4 by Faith" a Southern Gospel group, will present a concert beginning at 1:15 p.m.

◆ **Fairview Baptist Tabernacle Church, Tellico Plains**, recently sponsored a 36-member construction mission trip to help rebuild East Ridge Baptist Church in Lake Charles, La., which was damaged by last fall's hurricanes.

## Associations

◆ **Fayette Baptist Association, Somerville**, will sponsor a mission trip June 17-24 to Pass Christian, Miss., to help rebuild homes for hurricane victims. The association also will host an Outside Baptismal Service Sunday, May 21, at 3 p.m. in the Kroger parking lot in Oakland. Each church may baptize new Christians and new Baptists at the service.

◆ The Senior Citizens of **Haywood Baptist Association, Brownsville**, will meet May 11, Thursday, at 11 a.m. at Brownsville Baptist Church, Brownsville. John Adams, pastor, East Union Baptist Church, Jackson, will speak.

◆ **Cumberland Baptist Association, Clarksville**, will offer an Associational Vacation Bible School Music Clinic Friday, May 5, at **Spring Creek Baptist Church, Clarksville**, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Call the association office for information at (931) 358-9036.

◆ A 12-member team from **Hardeman County Baptist Association, Bolivar**, served April 8 at Restoration Ranch in Tuscumbia, Ala., where they helped in the renovation of a building. Restoration Ranch is a Christian-based alcohol and drug rehabilitation program.

## Schools

◆ The Baptist Collegiate



**SENIOR ADULTS** of Oak Hill Baptist Church, Fayetteville, are honored on the church's Senior Saints Day, April 23, during the morning worship service. The event recognized members who are 55 years old and older. A luncheon was held in their honor.

**Ministry, University of Tennessee - Knoxville**, will sponsor a mission trip to Pass Christian, Miss., where they will work in hurricane relief work on the Gulf Coast. It will be Wednesday - Sunday, May 10-14.

## Statewide Events

◆ The Tennessee Baptist

Convention will sponsor **Simultaneous Revival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**, Sept. 25-Oct. 3 to support **Tennessee/Rio Baptist Fellowship**. At least 30 teams of three volunteers are needed to share the gospel through personal evangelism, home visitation, music, and worship services. For information and contact Heather Wilson of TBC before the July 15 deadline at (800) 558-2090, (615) 371-2061, or [son@tnbaptist.org](mailto:son@tnbaptist.org).



**MEMBERS OF HERMITAGE HILLS Baptist Church, Hermitage**, who are disaster relief volunteers helped victims of April 7 tornadoes which struck north of Nashville. About 72 members served in the Goodlettsville area April 8-22, reported Paul Brady, disaster relief coordinator of the church. They began by responding to the need of fellow disaster relief volunteer and church member, Chris Marshal. "When the chain saws began roaring to life, the neighbors who needed help began showing up to ask for our help," said Brady. Church workers also helped coordinate the work of chain saw units from Tusculum Hills Baptist Church, Nashville, and Nashville Baptist Association. They may continue work by removing damaged trees in a cemetery.



**MEN FROM HOLSTON VALLEY Baptist Association, Rogers**, joined with men from two churches in Kingsport and a church in West Virginia to serve in Mississippi the last week of March to help hurricane victims. The 30-man team worked with Emmaus Baptist Church in Biloxi, Miss., doing construction on the church building and homes in the area. The men replaced the roofs of houses and cleaned yards of brush and downed trees. They removed a total of 30 trees from three homes. Some also accompanied the pastor on visits and hospital visits, reported Parrott, director of missions. **IN PHOTO ABOVE**, Gary Gerhart, pastor, First Baptist Church, Church Hill, works on the roof of a house with other team members.

